

BOOK REVIEWS

Die Frühzeit des Apostels Paulus, by Rainer Riesner. Tübingen, Germany: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1994. Pp. 509. DM 168.00.

The German publisher, J.C.B. Mohr, continues to add scholarly volumes to its series, "Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament" ["Scientific Investigations of the New Testament"], a growing number of which have been reviewed in this journal from time to time.

In 1981, Riesner's doctoral dissertation, *Jesus als Lehrer* [*Jesus as Teacher*], was published as a volume of this series, and was reviewed in the May 1983 issue of this journal (vol: 47-48). Riesner has since authored a growing number of monographs, of which the title under review was originally his *Habilitationschrift* [probationary treatise] received by the faculty of the Eberhard-Karls-Universität in Tübingen during the 1990-1991 winter semester (p.VII).

With this work Riesner demonstrates his growing competence as a New Testament scholar. Not only is he well-versed in the actual text of Scripture but he also reveals fluency with the Greek and Hebrew original languages, as well as Latin, English, French, Dutch, Swedish, and Italian.

As the title indicates, the book is a comparative study of the early period of the Apostle Paul as it is given by the book of Acts and Paul's early epistles, though in this section Riesner actually covers the chronology of the events from Paul's conversion to his journey to Rome. However, Riesner focuses attention upon Paul's missionary strategy and theology (which Riesner considers "early") as it is reflected in the Galatian, Thessalonian, and Corinthian epistles.

After a thirty page introduction, the book's contents are divided into three major parts: I. Early Pauline Chronology – from Jerusalem to Achaia (31-203); II. Stages in the Pauline Missionary Strategy (204-296); and III. Early Pauline Theology – the First Epistle to the Thessalonians (297-365). Then a brief summary follows (366-369), together with several one page diagrams, a seventy-eight page

bibliography of sources, commentaries and monographs, plus fifty-five pages of indices (Scripture, author, and subject).

In Part I Riesner points out the various dates connected with Paul's ministry as it is found in Acts and his epistles and as it may be compared with extra-biblical historical sources. Here we learn about such interesting details as, for example, that: Jesus was crucified on A.D. 30 April 7 (46), with Paul being converted two years later (61); Paul's stay in Arabia and flight from Damascus and King Aretas (79); a good summary of Emperor Claudius's reign is given, since it coincided with much of Paul's early missionary activity (94f.); Paul as a Roman citizen, together with its advantages (132f.); his fight with "wild beasts in Ephesus" (1 Cor. 15:32) which Riesner regards as a likely symbolic reference to Paul's enemies (190); his appeal to Nero and journey to Rome in A.D. 60 where he stayed for two years, according to Acts 28:30 (201). Riesner does not speculate about Paul's possible release and later martyrdom under Nero in A.D. 64 (202), choosing to end where the book of Acts does.

In Part II Riesner, for the most part, successfully relates the Lucan chronology of Acts with that given by Paul in his epistles, in order more effectively to uncover the missionary strategy of the apostle. While much of this is technical in nature, the reader learns that the important facts which governed Paul's strategy were the data given in Old Testament revelation about the Messiah's being "a light to the Gentiles" (cf. Num. 24:17, Isa. 9:1, 49:6, and especially 66:19). Riesner even sees Isaiah 66:19 as giving Paul those actual nations in broad outline to whom he subsequently carried out his missionary work (222-224), with Spain being regarded as the western boundary of the civilized world (272). This would be the reason for Paul's reference to Spain (rather than, more logically, Gaul) as the ultimate goal of his missionary work (Rom. 15:24), for which, incidentally, a knowledge of Latin would almost certainly have been an imperative need. An added reason for Paul not including Gaul in his missionary itinerary might well have been that it was already before his time an object of the missionary endeavor of others, a factor confirmed by an alternative reading of 2 Timothy 4:10 which speaks of Crescens having been sent to Gaul (Codex A) rather than to Galatia (271).

In this section the reader also learns, among other things, that Riesner supports the “south Galatian hypothesis” (256); that the hypothesis of a third and now lost epistle to the Corinthians is not necessary, since Paul’s actions can satisfactorily be covered by the two epistles we have (266); that the Pastorals are not considered to be a part of the Pauline epistulary corpus (271); and that Acts, while containing minor historical errors, is nevertheless a coherent whole (287), having been written by Luke circa A.D. 80 (296).

In Part III, Riesner concentrates attention upon Paul’s theology as it is present in 1 Thessalonians and as it relates to the pastoral needs of that young congregation. While in this epistle Paul gives more enlightenment with regard to Christ’s return and its implications for His people, Riesner points out that Paul says nothing about the doctrine of justification. However, Riesner properly adds, by way of reply to critics, that this church evidently was not troubled with problems about law-keeping as obviously was the case with the Galatian churches. His balanced conclusion about this is, “Perhaps it is particularly difficult on our horizon of experience to recognize that there can be times in which not everything is a matter of controversy, but that a broad basis of agreement may exist in matters of faith” (358).

In this section Riesner also brings to the reader’s attention such things as: ancient Thessalonica’s importance (297-301); the cultural background of members of the Thessalonian church (301-317), and the pressures they faced in their pagan environment (329). As in the other sections, the reader is given numerous interesting details as, for example: the nature of the then current pagan religions and their spiritual bankruptcy which, however, did not lessen their danger to the new converts to Christianity (336); some of Paul’s eschatological terms could be misunderstood politically (338), hence at times their cryptic nature; and that “vessel” (ὄχημα) in 1 Thessalonians 4:4 is not a possible reference to a wife but, rather, to the individual’s own practice of self-control (332). However, Riesner’s interpretation of 2 Corinthians 5:1-10 as teaching a reception of a spiritual body at death (344) may be questioned, for the context of this passage makes it clear that Paul has the continued existence of the unclothed soul in mind during the intermediate state between death and the resurrection (vv.2-4), and which would be avoided by believers if Christ were to return

while they were living, which was also the hope and longing the Apostle expresses here.

In his book throughout, Riesner shows his familiarity with scholarship, both earlier and modern. While at times he appears to be unnecessarily concessive to the views of higher criticism, which seems to be an almost universal “failing” of German scholars, he is nevertheless refreshingly conservative in maintaining the integrity of Scripture as a whole. For those who possess a reading knowledge of German, consulting Riesner’s work will be well worth the effort. While the book is well-bound with hard covers, its price is hardly an inducement for its purchase.

Raymond O. Zorn

Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics, Vol.2, by Richard A. Muller. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993. Pp. 543. n.p.

This volume is the second of a projected three-volume analysis of post-Reformation Reformed theology by the author who is the P. J. Zondervan Professor of Historical Theology at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids, U.S.A.

The first volume, published by Baker in 1987, was a theological prolegomena of the orthodox, or so-called “scholastic,” Reformed systems of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This second volume is a historical study that sets forth in great detail the doctrine of Scripture, or as it is put in the sub-title of the book, “The Cognitive Foundation of Theology” of that period as it developed particularly in the Reformed churches.

The book consists of two major divisions: Part 1, which in two chapters sets forth the doctrine of Scripture in Medieval scholastic theology, and then in its Protestant development; and Part 2, which presents the development of the Reformed Orthodox doctrine of Scripture in five further chapters. In them such things are dealt with as is indicated by the chapter titles: “Scripture as Word of God and *principium cognoscendi theologiae*” (chapter 3); “The divinity of Scripture” (chapter 4); “Scripture according to its properties”

(chapter 5); “The canon of Scripture and its integrity” (chapter 6); and, “The interpretation of Scripture” (chapter 7).

The thesis of Muller’s work is that the development of the doctrine of Scripture by seventeenth century orthodoxy was continuous with the views of their sixteenth century predecessors who, in turn, while for the most part rejecting the fourfold method (*quadriga*) of Scripture’s interpretation by the Medieval church (i.e., *historia*, or literal; *allegoria*, or the deeper meaning; *tropologia*, or the moral meaning; and *anagoge*, or the heavenly meaning, 17), nevertheless advocated a literal approach to Scripture’s interpretation that was also continuous with the early church and, moreover, with such Medieval theologians as Hugh of St. Victor and his disciple, Andrew, and Thomas Aquinas. The latter’s *Summa Theologiae*, for example, “is characterized by an emphasis on the literal meaning of texts” (29) and contains a very good commentary on a major portion of the New Testament.

The views of Scripture by Reformed orthodoxy of the seventeenth century, therefore, did not, like Minerva, spring full-grown from Zeus’s head, though it is true that Reformed orthodox theologians further developed the earlier heritage which they had received from their predecessors and in particular the Reformers of the sixteenth century. Muller gives an abundance of citations, both from the sixteenth century Reformers (Musculus, Bullinger, Calvin, Ursinus, etc.) and the seventeenth century “Scholastics” (Turretin, Cocceius, Hoornbeeck, Owen, Leigh, Rollock, Mastricht, etc.), by which he conclusively verifies his contention that this indeed is the case.

Like the Reformers before them, the Scholastics carried on a continuing debate with Rome’s differing view of Scripture as it was particularly set forth by Bellarmine, the great Roman Catholic theologian and apologist. Muller also points out that their view, like that of the sixteenth century Reformers, was not that of modern Neo-orthodoxy, though the latter theologians sought to enlist the Reformers as exponents of their views in contradistinction from the Scholastics whom they charge with making Scripture an infallible “paper pope.”

The Reformers, however, like their spiritual successors, the Scholastics, considered the whole of Scripture as inspired and whose self-attestation (*autopistia*) is that it is the God-breathed (*theopneustos*) Word of God, which therefore makes it infallible and authoritative.

While this view also asserts that the internal and illuminative testimony of the Holy Spirit is necessary for a saving understanding of Scripture, this concurrent activity of the Holy Spirit, while inseparably linked with Scripture, neither makes it inspired nor is it an activity to be confused with revelation. By contrast, Neo-orthodoxy regards Scripture as only a fallible witness to the Word of God rather than being the Word of God. As a fallible pointer to the Word of God, it becomes the Word of God when a revelation "event" takes place by "personal encounter." Scripture therefore at best can only contain the Word of God rather than being the Word of God. This view is a far cry from that of the Reformers and their successors (92).

Muller's book, in addition to being an apologetic for harmony between the views of the Reformers and their seventeenth century successors, is virtually a complete theology of Scripture. He presents in abundant detail such things as: the authority, necessity, perspicuity, and sufficiency of Scripture (in contrast particularly with Rome); the canon as over against the Apocrypha and pseudepigraphical books; the debate about whether or not the Massoretic vowel pointing of the Hebrew is to be considered a part of inspiration; whether the Hebrew and Greek original texts are to be considered as more reliable than the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate; what principles of biblical interpretation are to be followed; what is meant by the "different senses" of Scripture; the unity of the Old and New Testaments; the foundation and scope of Scripture as it is expressed by the Christological center, the Covenant of Grace, and Federalism; etc., all of which were hammered out by the Reformers and their successors in interaction, first with Rome, and increasingly thereafter with the growing threat of modern rationalism with its undermining approach to Scripture's integrity by means of its methods of higher criticism.

Muller concludes by noting, "the Protestant orthodox doctrine, for all of its formal and occasionally substantial differences with the doctrine of the Reformers, was, like the Reformation view of Scripture, directed toward the exposition of the text in and for the church as the fundamental rule of faith and practice" (542).

Although the book is a fine work on Scripture from which the reader may gain much benefit, there are a few critical comments which

a potential buyer should take into account before he purchases the book.

1. The book is dauntingly massive for a subject of a rather narrow scope such as Scripture. All the necessary details could be preserved and the book's size reduced if Muller were to make a more selective choice of quotations and limit the range of authors quoted, while at the same time eliminating repetition where it needlessly occurs. This would make the book appealing to a wider range of readers than simply specialists in theology.

2. A virtual present necessity is that the reader knows Latin. Otherwise, some guesswork will doubtlessly occur with some untranslated words and phrases.

3. Although Muller tells the reader that he purposely "takes no theological sides," for he does not wish "to muddy the historical waters with claims about the doctrinal rectitude or usefulness of one view or another . . ." (xi), it might have been better, since even the advertising comments on the book's back cover admit "that much discussion of the early Protestant view of Scripture has an agenda – to justify some twentieth-century view," for Muller to hoist his colours in a firmer way than he has done, if only in the interests of truth.

4. Finally, the lack of indices is a handicap at the present time when authors, book titles, Scripture references, etc., are sought by the reader. Moreover, this lack practically ensures the necessity of the reader's procuring the projected third volume.

Raymond O. Zorn

Christ Before the Manger: The Life and Times of the Preincarnate Christ, by Ron Rhodes. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992. Pp. 299, including indexes. \$13.95.

This popular study of the person and work of Jesus Christ attempts, as its striking title suggests, to summarize the biblical teaching about the preincarnate Christ. The author, Ron Rhodes, is convinced that many contemporary believers have an inadequate grasp of the person and work of Christ, limiting their understanding to what the Scriptures reveal about the incarnate Christ, but

ignoring their teaching about the preincarnate Christ. As he remarks in his introduction, "More often than not, books on 'the life of Christ' assume that what Christ was *before* the Incarnation is either not sufficiently revealed in Scripture or is not important enough to warrant serious study" (15).

After an opening chapter, in which he sets forth the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity as this has been defined by the ecumenical and credal consensus of the early church, Rhodes treats under a number of headings various aspects of the biblical teaching about the preincarnate Christ. Since Christ is the eternal Son of God become flesh, it is not surprising that the Scriptures reveal his preincarnate deity and work in a diversity of ways. The chapter headings Rhodes chooses give a fairly accurate account of the biblical material covered: "The Preexistent, Eternal Christ," "Christ the Creator," "Christ the Preserver," "Christ the Angel of the Lord," "Christ the Shepherd," "Christ the Savior," "Christ the Eternal *Logos*," "Christ and His Divine Names," "The Virgin Birth," "Eternal God in Human Flesh," and "Christ and His Eternal Glory." A series of helpful appendices provide a glossary of names of Christ, the messianic prophecies fulfilled in Christ, the types of Christ in the Old Testament, a discussion of Melchizedek as a possible preincarnate appearance of Christ, treatments of various difficult passages, the important Christological creeds, and a catalog of common Christological errors.

Though not intended to serve as an academic or technical theological study, Rhodes has written a readable and helpful book on the subject of Christ's person (including a helpful statement of the doctrine of the Trinity). He is careful throughout to develop and defend the doctrine of Christ's person expressed in the church's ecumenical creeds and confessions. As an introduction to the doctrines of the Trinity and Christology for a general readership, this volume might prove quite useful.

This does not mean that Rhodes's study is without any problems. It is evident that he holds a premillennialist (dispensationalist?) eschatology (143, 180). In his zeal to find biblical evidence for his description of the life and times of the preincarnate Christ, Rhodes has a tendency to push some texts beyond their limits. For

example, in his chapter on the “Angel of the Lord,” though he rightly follows an ancient tradition of the church in regarding this Angel to be in some instances a preincarnate theophany of the eternal Son, he sometimes simply assumes this to be the case in passages that are disputable. In his chapter, “Eternal God in Human Flesh,” he also develops the relation between the two natures of Christ in ways that are either unclear or problematic. Admittedly, the mystery of the union of God and man in the incarnate Christ, particularly the union of the two natures in the one Person of the Mediator, is a subject that has challenged Christian theologians through the ages. Nevertheless, it is not clear whether Rhodes believes Christ to have two wills (divine and human) or one (204). And, though he does not teach the heresy of a *kenotic* Christology, in which the eternal Son *surrenders* certain attributes of deity in the incarnation, he does speak of the incarnate Christ *not using* certain attributes of deity subsequent to the incarnation. The latter formulation does not seem consistent with his usual insistence, following the tradition of the church, that the incarnate Christ retained and continued to exercise all of the attributes of deity, though emptying himself of his preincarnate glory and manifestation.

One feature of Rhodes’s study requires special comment. Though his title suggests that he is primarily interested in the *preincarnate* life and times of Christ, he frequently (e.g., 152, 175, 190) acknowledges that much of the biblical teaching he is considering has to do with the incarnate and even ascended Christ. In this respect, Rhodes’s title is misleading. He is really addressing the broader subject of the deity of Christ and its importance for a comprehensive understanding of his saving work.

Cornelis P. Venema

Luther's Theology of the Cross: Martin Luther's Theological Breakthrough, by Alastair E. McGrath. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990. Pp. 199. \$21.95.

McGrath has benefited Lutheran scholarship with his erudition and vast research into Luther's progress and development from his earliest education to 1518-1519, when he had significantly developed his "theology of the cross." McGrath presents a formidable case for the centrality of the theology of the cross in Luther's theological corpus rather than the traditionally accepted centrality of justification. McGrath posits a priority of the theology of the cross, while viewing the "Reformation breakthrough" of Luther's justification as a methodological step toward the development of his cross theology.

The author cogently argues that Luther early embraced the *via moderna* nominalist position, colored by a conditional covenant in which God made a pact (*pactum*) with man to bless man with "congruent" (proportionate) merit as man did "what he was able to do" (*facienti quod in se est*). Congruent merit then led most assuredly to a state of "condign" (worthy) merit which would lead to participation in grace. McGrath exonerates this works righteousness theology on the basis that the 529 Second Council of Orange semi-Augustinian pronouncements were not known in the Middle Ages. Thus, while exonerating this *pactum* theology from Pelagianism, McGrath finds Luther squarely in this tradition.

Correlatively, the early Luther was medieval in his hermeneutics, embracing the fourfold *Quadrigata* method of literal, allegorical, tropological, and anagogical interpretation. McGrath attempts to demonstrate that the tropological method assisted Luther in arriving at his theology of the cross. Neither did Luther escape other late Roman Catholic errors such as viewing grace as "created grace" (*inhabitus*) rather than his later "uncreated grace" wrought by the Holy Spirit. Or, again, Luther early on embraced a faith "formed by love," a construct later replaced by *sola gratia, sola fide*.

Perhaps the most difficult thing for Luther was to divest himself of the *pactum* covenantal theology which viewed God's

righteousness only in retributive terms. God was indeed regarded as gracious to those who fulfilled the demands of “doing what in them lay,” (*facienti quod in se est*), but how could any one be assured that he had fulfilled all that he was able to do according to God’s righteous demands? Had not Gabriel Biel, whose nominalism Luther followed, taught that one could never know with apodictic certainty that he had performed everything God demanded and, therefore, he could have no assurance of salvation? Thus, Luther’s enormous dilemma and grievous temptations or strivings (*Anfechtungen*).

McGrath places the greatly controverted “Reformation breakthrough” during the period of Luther’s study and lectures on Psalms 70 and 71, in 1515. It is particularly at this point that McGrath maintains that Luther’s tropological hermeneutic is significant in determining Luther’s progress from pactum theology to a sola gratia position. Luther’s search for the meaning of the righteousness of God (*iustitia Dei*) has in the delivering of these lectures ended in a faith that terminates upon Christ for righteousness.

By 1518, Luther came to a position on the centrality of the theology of the cross, according to McGrath. The culmination came with Luther’s delivering the Heidelberg Lectures. Central to these lectures was the jettisoning of Aristotelian philosophy and making central the revelation of God in the cross. God reveals Himself as the “hidden God” (*Deus absconditus*) and the “revealed God” (*Deus revelatus*). God’s revelation is hidden to unbelief and human reason but revealed to those who believe in God’s redemptive passion and suffering on the cross. Because the righteousness of God which justifies man must be “alien” righteousness (*ab extra*) the passion and death can alone save man.

Faith apprehends the Christ of the cross with joy but, contrariwise, reason is scandalized. Thus while all men, by virtue of creation *imago Dei*, are cognitively aware of God’s existence, yet only those who believe God’s will and work in Christ perceive correctly the hidden and revealed God. Further, it is insufficient to hold to the theology of the cross in general. Rather, the cross must be believed for each of us (*pro nobis*) to enjoy its benefits. Faith

always focuses on the will of God as viewed in the cross rather than on God's essence.

There is yet one aspect relating to *Deus absconditus* that is very problematic for McGrath. Luther, in his debate with Erasmus over the bondage of the will, presents a God whose ways ultimately are inscrutable. Since God wills many things that He doesn't disclose, Luther concludes that God doesn't reveal Himself completely. The problem for McGrath (and for Luther, if McGrath is correct, which the reviewer denies) is that one cannot have a God who is fully revealed in the theology of the cross and yet have a God who wills unrevealed things. By declaring that this ostensible change in 1525 in Luther's definition of the hidden and revealed God was outside his scope for treatment, McGrath deftly avoids tackling the problem of the hidden God with regard to God's hidden decrees by stating that Luther could provide no solution, by 1525, to the "riddle of predestination." This is precisely the weakest point of the book. This reviewer maintains that we may press back of the cross to a Father's heart, who gave us the Christ of the cross. Thus predestination is not to be viewed as a problematic, which skews the understanding of the revealed God in the Christ of the cross, but it is precisely the reason for that cross. Instead of a "riddle" for Luther, predestination became a matter of doxology in his *The Bondage of the Will*.

But there is another observation that needs to be made. Perhaps it is endemic to the historical approach that it becomes difficult to plot a "centrality" theological position. Without question the cross is the *sine qua non* of salvation. Luther knew that and we know it, too. But it becomes very plain in both Luther's *The Bondage of the Will* and his Catechisms (the two works that Luther hope survived him), that the cross is viewed as the means for calling a people, the church, to redemption in order that the church might live in worship and Christian vocation to the praise of God who gave the Christ of the cross. Viewed from that perspective the cross must be considered not as some "central" theological end in itself, but rather, as a means toward justifying and sanctifying a people for God's own glory.

Luther scholarship is indeed indebted to McGrath for his erudite and cogent research that presents a formidable case for the centrality of the theology of the cross in Luther. But we must take the Luther of *The Bondage of the Will* and of the Catechisms into consideration as well in any search for centrality.

Joseph H. Hall

The Mediation of Christ, by Thomas F. Torrance. New Edition. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1992. Pp. 126. n.p.

This new edition is a revision of the earlier work which was published in 1983 by the Paternoster Press.

In this new edition a fifth chapter, "The Atonement and the Holy Trinity," has been added, together with a number of clarifying sub-titles in chapters three and four. Otherwise, it is basically the same as the earlier work.

This reviewer had occasion to review the earlier work in a religious magazine more than ten years ago. Comments in the review then for the most part still apply.

I mentioned at that time that the book consisted of four lectures which were originally given by the author at the British Isles Nazarene College, Manchester, in 1982, and as he stated then, the purpose of these lectures was "to help students, ministers and pastors, and other Church leaders and workers, to think theologically about the Gospel, so that they may get a firmer grip upon its content for their various ministries" (9, 1983 edition).

The gospel, of course, centers in Christ, the divine-human mediator between God and man. The titles of the chapters are: the mediation of revelation; the mediation of reconciliation; the person of the mediator; and the mediation of Christ in our human response. As he presents these subjects, Torrance touches upon numerous facets of theology besides those indicated in the chapter headings, such as: Christ's atonement, His vicarious suffering, the covenant of grace, conversion, worship, the sacraments, evangelism, etc.

A high Christology is maintained throughout, for as Torrance correctly states, "Christ is God of the nature of God, and man of the

nature of man, in one and the same Person" (56). He then points out the consequences if this were not true: how could one less than God forgive sins? How could he properly reveal the Father? How could he fully manifest the love of God? How could we ever know that God is really like Jesus? And even more pointedly, if Jesus is not God, then salvation is a matter of morality (works) rather than deliverance from the penalty and power of sin (62).

Since the Foreward and the fifth chapter are new in this latest publication, it was an interesting exercise to see if Torrance had taken into account any of the criticisms that applied in connection with the earlier work. There he considered as schismatic the separation between Judaism and Christianity. In chapter five he seeks to clarify this by making use of Ephesians 2 and following, where Paul talks of the wall of partition between Jew and Gentile as having been broken down by Christ's making a new body of the two. But then, as in the earlier work, Torrance seems to miss Paul's specific point that the new body is made up of *believers in Christ*, whether Jew or Gentile. Outside of Christ, neither Jew nor Gentile has a part in this new body. Hence, it remains puzzling as to how Torrance can consider schismatic the separation of unbelieving Judaism, which specifically rejects the Messiah, from Christianity (cf. his statement at the top of 38).

Since there is no change in this new edition, earlier criticisms still apply, such as Torrance's disparagement of verbal inspiration (he feels that it may be considered as being on a par with the Roman Catholic doctrine of the immaculate conception, 40). Unreformed also is his view that the sacraments may be considered converting as well as confirming ordinances (97).

In his Foreward, Torrance does offer clarification in connection with the criticism that, in the earlier work, his view of the atonement betrays universalism. His answer, however, seems less than satisfying, for to plead mystery for the relationship between the sovereignty of unconditional divine grace and the human response of repenting and believing (xii) while true, does little to allay the suspicion that Torrance is still reflecting a Barthian universalistic bias (i.e., to be is to be in Christ) rather than what the Reformed creeds have to say on the particularity of the atonement (cf. the *Westminster Confession of Faith* VIII, Articles 5 and 8).

But then, Torrance does not agree with the *Westminster Standards* elsewhere either, since he regards their definition of God (*WCF* II) as “not essentially or distinctively Christian” (101); for his view is a more dynamic conception which he develops in relation to the triune nature of God. But again, as he develops his view, a certain uneasiness on the part of the reader emerges, especially when he makes a statement such as, “God’s being and act are inseparable” (118). Torrance may be opposed to what he considers a dualistic view of God, but a statement like this is no better if it identifies God with His works which, if true, would make both equally ultimate and thus deny the freedom of God’s will and the sovereignty of His determination.

These criticisms, though they can hardly be overlooked, should be tempered by the positive comments about the book which were already made in the earlier review. Torrance has much that is worthwhile to say about a subject of vital interest to all Christians. And they will be benefited from reading him as long as they are prepared to measure his teaching in the light of Scripture.

Raymond O. Zorn

Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell, edited by Nigel M. de S. Cameron. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1992. \$15.99.

The doctrine of hell has never been an attractive subject. It reminds us too starkly of the terrible consequences of sin and the just wrath of God against the impenitent sinner. But the unpopularity of this subject has perhaps never been so evident as it has become in the twentieth century in which many, if not most, pulpits have fallen silent on, and a great deal of confusion surrounds, this matter. Though there may have been a substantial consensus in this history of the church that the impenitent will suffer torment eternally in hell, this consensus has eroded significantly, even among professedly conservative and evangelical writers. Furthermore, in lieu of the doctrine of hell has come the attraction of universalism and “wider hope” teachings that seek to present a gospel more palatable to the modern taste.

This collection of papers, edited by Nigel Cameron, formerly Warden of Rutherford House, Edinburgh, and now Associate Dean for Academic Doctoral Programs at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Deerfield, Illinois, illustrates well this trend among evangelicals. The papers were originally presented at the Fourth Edinburgh Conference in Christian Dogmatics, 1991, and provide an interesting cross-section of opinion on the subject of universalism and the doctrine of hell. Though the editor maintains in his introduction that all of the authors are committed to a common evangelical faith, particularly the conviction that there is salvation only through the person and work of Jesus Christ, it becomes evident in reading through this collection that they differ on many other issues regarding the ultimate destiny of humankind. Not only do the authors differ substantially in viewpoint, the papers themselves also address the subject in a variety of ways; some are historical in nature, others are more exegetical and doctrinal.

The first chapter, "Universalism: Two Distinct Types," by Trevor Hart, argues that universalism takes more than one form and is not always born out of an undesirable accommodation to the spirit of the age, especially the pluralism of the modern era. Hart distinguishes between "pluralistic universalism" and "Christian universalism." Pluralistic universalism, represented by Ernest Troeltsch in the nineteenth century and John Hick in the twentieth, denies the exclusive claims of the Christian faith and maintains that believers of various religions can find salvation by different routes. Christian universalism, represented by Bishop J.A.T. Robinson, does not deny the exclusive claims of the Christian faith but argues for the final effectiveness of Christ's work to save all. Hart himself is not convinced by Robinson's argument for his Christian universalism, but is nonetheless persuaded that "Christian" universalism is not an oxymoron. Further reflection is needed to answer some of the concerns of universalism and to ameliorate the unattractiveness of traditional Christian particularism.

Frederick W. Norris authors the second chapter, "Universal Salvation in Origen and Maximus." In a careful and scholarly manner, Norris demonstrates that the textbook account of Origen's universalism (that Origen taught the universal salvation and

reconciliation of all things, the devil included; a doctrine known as *apokatastasis*) is based largely upon the caricature of Origen's viewpoint by his opponents. Norris maintains that Origen's eschatology was more complex than is usually acknowledged, and contained divergent strands of emphasis. In some of his writings Origen implies the salvation of all, the devil included, in other places he expressly rejects this teaching. Though Norris arrives at a conclusion that leaves open the question of Origen's final position, he nicely shows how a popular, but not well-established, conception of the teaching of a Christian theologian can take on a life of its own.

This historical study is followed by another chapter whose focus is also historical. D. A. Du Toit writes on the subject, "Descensus and Universalism: Some Historical Patterns of Interpretation." Du Toit wrote his doctoral dissertation on the subject of Christ's descent into hell and, therefore, this chapter is something of a synopsis of his earlier findings in this area. Du Toit notes that in its earliest use, this article of the Apostles Creed never served to support a doctrine of universal salvation. Typically, in the early traditions of the church, the article concerning Christ's descent into hell was understood to confirm the truth of Christ's death and burial, and to refer to Christ's preaching to the Old Testament saints who awaited his victory. This chapter contains some interesting surprises, one of which is the fact that 1 Peter 3:19 and 4:6 played little or no role in the early discussions of this article in the creed.

The historical chapters in this collection are concluded with a study by David J. Powys on "The Nineteenth and Twentieth Century Debates about Hell and Universalism." Powys shows that the recent evangelical interest in these subjects has substantial antecedents in nineteenth century English evangelicalism. Therefore, it cannot be argued that more recent evangelical attempts to defend some form of universalism are inconsistent with all previous evangelical history. According to Powys, the arguments for revising the traditional Christian position have not been directly biblical but broadly theological and philosophical. Many of the arguments against the doctrine of eternal punishment

and for universalism contest the assumption, for example, that all human beings are immortal. Others allow for a post-mortem conversion. Powys's chapter introduces a history of debates about hell and universalism that is little known, especially by North American theologians. Thus, it provides historical depth and context for the contemporary discussion within evangelicalism.

The first chapter in this collection which is more specifically theological addresses the much-disputed question whether Karl Barth was a universalist. Written by John Colwell, who wrote his dissertation on Karl Barth's doctrine of election, this chapter is entitled, "The Contemporaneity of the Divine Decision: Reflections on Barth's Denial of 'Universalism.'" Colwell insists that Barth's critics have not understood the significance of Barth's understanding of the contemporaneity of the divine decree of election for resolving the issue of universalism. Barth's critics conclude from Barth's doctrine of the election of all human beings in Christ, an election that *ontologically* defines who they are and makes the human decision of unbelief an "impossible possibility," that this entails the salvation of all. However, Barth is able, according to Colwell, to resist this apparently irresistible conclusion by his understanding of the dynamic and co-relative connection between the divine decision and the human decision in the movement of history, past, present, and future. Though Colwell is quite hard on Barth's critics in this chapter, his defense of Barth does not really answer their concerns. No amount of vague talk about the "dynamic" and non-"static" character of the divine decision will resolve the contradictions and ambiguities of Barth's theology at this point. If God has decided for all human beings in Christ, and this divine decision, however dynamic, is consistent and ontologically defining of the being and status of all, then it *follows* that the decision of unbelief has no decisive significance in history.

John W. Wenham, in a chapter entitled, "The Case for Conditional Immortality," illustrates the growing evangelical interest in a modified form of universalism. Echoing the arguments of authors like Edward Fudge (*The Fire That Consumes*), John R. W. Stott, and Clark Pinnock, Wenham maintains that the Bible does not teach a doctrine of everlasting punishment in hell for the

wicked. The traditional Christian position, according to Wenham, is born not of biblical exegesis but of presupposition and extra-biblical prejudice. The Bible teaches that immortality is not universal, but a gift of God's grace, granted alone to those who believe and put their trust in Christ (hence, "conditional" immortality). All others will perish, that is, be destroyed and cease to exist because of their sins and unbelief. To his credit, Wenham makes his case by considering a number of biblical passages that traditionally have been regarded as the biblical foundation for the doctrine of eternal punishment in hell. He weakens his case, however, by noting in his conclusion that he regards the traditional position to be a "hideous" doctrine which has been "a terrible burden on the mind of the church for many centuries and a terrible blot on her presentation of the gospel" (190). Clearly, Wenham's exegesis is ideologically driven.

Strikingly, the next chapter, "The Case Against Conditionalism: A response to Edward William Fudge," by Kendall S. Harmon, rebuts the position of Wenham and argues from a number of biblical texts that the Bible does teach a doctrine of hell. Harmon's chapter, as the title indicates, deals particularly with the arguments of a recent and important book on the subject of hell by Edward Fudge. Though Wenham in the previous chapter complained that Fudge's arguments have not been answered by his critics, Harmon proves him wrong by doing the very thing Wenham finds lacking. This chapter is one of the more important and useful chapters in this collection, because it defends the traditional doctrine of hell, not for reasons of nostalgia or traditionalism, but for biblical reasons. Harmon adeptly exposes several flaws in Fudge's appeal to the biblical texts: first, Fudge overemphasizes the Old Testament background to several New Testament texts, ignoring the significance altogether of the intertestamental period; second, Fudge often introduces a chronological feature into New Testament texts that is not present (distinguishing between penal suffering *before* and destruction *after* this suffering has occurred); and third, Fudge without warrant distinguishes various aspects of the wicked's final state as though they did not refer, simultaneously, to the same reality. Harmon adds to the usefulness of this

chapter by concluding with a discussion of the biblical understanding of hell, one which does not over-emphasize the physical sufferings of hell but emphasizes its other features (being cut off from fellowship with God, not “being known” by God, etc.).

Thomas F. Torrance writes the next chapter, “The Atonement: The Singularity of Christ and the Finality of the Cross: The Atonement and the Moral Order.” In this chapter Torrance repeats a number of theological themes for which he has become well known. Though Torrance wants to affirm the historic confession of the church regarding Christ’s person and the exclusiveness of his saving work, he contends that the logic of the incarnation and the atonement demand a universal atonement for all human beings. Unfortunately, Torrance’s argument is highly abstract and theological in nature, and is not based upon a treatment of relevant biblical texts.

The last two chapters are broadly theological as well. Paul Helms, in a chapter addressing the question, “Are They Few That Be Saved?,” argues for a modified version of Shedd’s view that some people may be saved by some other method than the preaching of the gospel and the revelation of Scripture. Using a rather technical understanding of God’s attributes, Helms maintains that when someone cries to God for mercy or seeks after God he confesses one or more of God’s attributes (say, his mercy or his love). This confession, though it is not a full-orbed understanding of Scriptural truth, is an *implicit confession* of the true God who is revealed in Jesus Christ. Thus, Helms argues for a kind of “wider hope” view that falls short of being total universalism but goes beyond the traditional understanding of the church.

Henri Blocher concludes this collection of studies with a chapter that sounds a more traditional note throughout, “Everlasting Punishment and the Problem of Evil.” In this chapter, Blocher answers a number of the pressing arguments against the traditional Christian position and articulates afresh the historic view of the church. He concludes with an excellent cautionary note from Calvin about speculations in this area of doctrine that go beyond what is biblically warranted.

There are several observations that I would like to make about this collection of essays.

First, the chapters strike a nice balance between historical, theological and exegetical approaches. Many of the authors are specialists in the areas addressed, and this makes the volume quite useful as an introductory survey of a number of issues relating to the subject of universalism or the doctrine of hell. This collection of papers will serve well as an introduction to nineteenth and twentieth century evangelical discussions of these difficult doctrines. The reader will come away struck by the diversity of opinion that exists and the extent to which the traditional position is being revised in ostensibly conservative circles.

Second, there are some chapters in this collection that are especially good. Though the chapter of Wenham argues what I regard to be an unbiblical position, conditional immortality, it is a provocative statement of the critique presently being offered against the traditional view. It serves well to challenge those who are committed to the traditional position to review the biblical evidence to confirm that it indeed sustains that position. The chapter of Harmon is also, as previously noted, a helpful contribution to an evaluation of the massive study of Fudge, a study that may prove quite influential. Several of the historical chapters are also beneficial, particularly the chapter of Powys tracing the history of the discussion of this subject within nineteenth and twentieth century evangelicalism.

And third, this collection of essays suffers the almost inevitable deficiency of a collection of papers originally presented at a conference. The reader is left informed and provoked by the debate and by many of the arguments. But he is not helped to arrive at a resolution of the problem. The collection serves well as a mirror of the present diversity within evangelicalism. But it does not serve well as a defense of anything like the traditional Christian position on universalism or the doctrine of hell. For the reader who lacks discernment, this collection could tend to confuse rather than to enlighten. For this reason, this present collection can serve a limited purpose as an introduction to the parties and positions

represented in the present debate. But it is not able to lend much help to a resolution of the debate.

In many ways, this collection of essays invites a response. As Wenham maintains, there has not been a comprehensive defense of the traditional standpoint in recent years that elucidates its biblical, confessional, and theological foundations. This collection of essays demonstrates the pressing need for such a defense.

Cornelis P. Venema

To Glorify and Enjoy God: A Commemoration of the 350th Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly, edited by John L. Carson and David W. Hall. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1994. Pp. 308, including index. \$32.95.

In September, 1993, several hundred people from England, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, the United States of America, the Netherlands, Brazil, Korea, and Australia, converged upon London's Westminster Abbey to commemorate the 350th anniversary of the convening of the Westminster Assembly. Most interestingly, the principal impetus for convening the meeting came not from Scotland, nor from England, but from the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC).

NAPARC determined that the lectures and sermons given at the commemorative event were to:

- Give thanks to God for the work of the Assembly.
- Promote unity among Reformed churches around the world.
- Advance the reformed faith by focusing attention on the work of the Assembly.

All attending were feted to a smorgasbord of significant, informative lectures as well as challenging preaching following the thematic pattern of the Westminster Assembly. There were sermons by the eminent Scot Glasgow preacher, Eric Alexander, the well-known Christian Reformed "Back to God Hour" minister, Joel Nederhood, and the radio Bible teacher and minister of Tenth Presbyterian Church,

Philadelphia, James Boice. The book before us is the printing of those lectures and sermons.

Following the introduction comprising a history of previous commemorations, the lectures launch out into the contextual history of the Westminster Assembly (Section I), the enduring results of the Assembly (Section II), Grand themes of the Assembly (the sermonic Section III), the influence of the Assembly in the Afterword, and very useful appendices containing both historical and bibliographical material.

Collections of essays are almost as difficult to review as to assemble. In the assembling process, one runs the risk of overlapping materials, unevenness of treatment as to style, breadth, and depth of coverage in the articles. Time constraints also figured into the lecturing process itself. Had there been more in-depth or broader coverage, the conference would have been unbearably long.

Happily, the areas covered were, for the most part, fully treated. A couple of lacunae exist in material not treated, those of the nature of subscription to the Westminster standards and the influence of the standards upon modern Christendom. The treatment in the Afterword concerning influence is far too summarily done.

At the risk of leaving out addresses that are valuable, this reviewer will focus on those he believes are especially helpful for the proper understanding of the Westminster Assembly and its work.

Dr. Samuel Logan provides an excellent historical entree into the context and work of the Assembly. One might have wished he had treated in more depth internal movements such as the anti-prelatic Root and Branch movement that sought to jettison episcopacy for a more Reformed church government. His emphasis upon the internal tensions among the assembly members, Presbyterian, Independent, and Erastian, is most helpful.

Rev. Robert Norris tackled one of the most difficult topics of all – Puritan preaching. Puritans were nothing if they were not people of the book. Puritan preachers were nothing if they were not faithful to the Word and Testimony. Norris charts Puritan reaction to the “courtly” Anglican style of preaching to the “plaine style” begun by William Perkins and continued by the Stuart Puritans. The Westminster divines appropriately outlined the method of Puritan preaching in the Directory

of Public Worship. While Puritan preachers found many examples in biblical texts that could, in their estimation, be applied to contemporary situations, Norris does not cite the Puritans for what might be termed “exemplarism.”

Norris views such exemplaristic methods as appropriate if they are “grounded” in the text. The Scot Samuel Rutherford, for example, failed to ground his sermon preached before the Assembly, in the Scripture and, therefore, ran afoul of the Puritan method. Puritan preaching found its internal structure in doctrine, its edification and application to the covenanted people, the church.

Professor Wayne Spear gave an excellent lecture on the Westminster Confession of Faith and Scripture which appears in this volume. This is particularly important, not only for the foundational Puritan doctrine of the inerrant Word, but also to rebut the novel and undocumented position of Rogers and McKim that the Westminster divines disbelieved the doctrine of scriptural inerrancy. Spear points to the Tudor Cambridge professor, William Whitaker, as the source of chapter one of the Confession on Scripture. Whitaker followed John Calvin’s inerrancy and, although the Confession does not use the term “inerrant,” nevertheless, the concept is most assuredly there.

Professor Douglas Kelly also afforded hearers, and now readers, one of the most scholarly defenses of the Westminster Shorter Catechism in its breadth and faithfulness to biblical doctrines. Especially helpful is Kelly’s defense of the catechism’s teaching on salvation by grace alone through faith alone. One critic of the catechism avers that the document has replaced the sovereign grace of the Reformation with a grace more Arminian than Calvinistic. Kelly shows that nothing could be farther from the truth. Professor Kelly is careful to show that because the catechism is theocentric, it is viable for every epoch of culture.

The Reverend Iain Murray treated one of the obscure documents of Westminster, The Directory for Public Worship, and in doing so presented a veritable feast. The Directory was a worship replacement for the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. In the discussion of principles of Puritan worship, the foundational principle is the “regulative principle.” Simply put, this principle teaches that true worship must be explicitly grounded in Scripture. Where Scripture

leads, we follow; where it stops, we stop. Murray shows that prior to the writing of the Directory, there did not exist complete unanimity on certain points of worship, as in the practice of the Lord's Supper. The Scot practice in partaking of the elements had been in successive small groups at the table, whereas the English Puritans argued that practice was unbiblical. The latter prevailed and the directory declared that "the communicants may orderly sit about it, or at it." Murray thus shows that the Regulative Principle, from a totally pervasive point of view, does not answer all questions concerning worship. Thus he concludes that the Puritans really meant by "Regulative Principle" a common commitment to a faithful, biblical simplicity in all matters of worship.

Other highlights of this lecture were the reminders of the great emphasis the Directory places upon the need of the Holy Spirit's uniting members of the congregation in worship; of the fact that men should be fervent in spirit or "hissing hot" as the Puritans put it: that men should go to worship to hear Christ and not the preacher. Whereas the Directory is conceded to have a weakness in its treatment of prayer in worship, the Puritan practice was anything but weak. Perhaps the tension among those denying set liturgical prayers and those espousing them, as well as a third group who believed "studied prayer" (those prayers carefully considered but not written and read), conducted toward the lack of as thorough treatment in the Directory as was accorded prayer in Puritan practice.

Both the appendices assembled by the Reverend David Hall are most useful. The first is a documentary account of important events leading to the calling of the Assembly. The second is a very helpful bibliographical guide to the material on the Assembly.

This book should find its place on every theological library shelf and upon the shelves of every adherent of the Westminster standards, and should be read by all who desire a more thorough knowledge of what the Westminster Assembly sought and achieved by the grace of God.

Joseph H. Hall

A Hot Pepper Corn: Richard Baxter's Doctrine of Justification in Its Seventeenth-Century Context of Controversy, by Hans Boersma. Zoetermeer: Uitgeverij Boekencentrum, 1993. Pp. 387. n.p.

Richard Baxter, whom Iain Murray has termed, "the reluctant Puritan," was, together with John Owen his contemporary, one of England's greatest theologians in the seventeenth century, though he is perhaps best remembered for his remarkable catechetical ministry at Kidderminster, and for his book, *The Reformed Pastor*, a work of enduring worth even today.

Baxter, however, as his theological opponents – of whom Owen was one – were quick to point out, had less than orthodox Reformed views in matters regarding soteriology. Hans Boersma comprehensively points them out in his doctoral dissertation under review.

Baxter was an opponent of the antinomians of his day who, in their sustained emphasis upon the grace of God, thereby neglected to do justice to the needed response on man's part. Baxter correctly saw that doctrinal defection inevitably is reflected in moral and social decline. The solution therefore was to tackle errors at their source by exposing doctrinal defection. A major error of the antinomians was their teaching of justification from eternity, a doctrine if true would put it in the *ordo salutis* prior to the exercise of faith in Christ, a view which further de-emphasized man's responsibility and reduced his actions either to puppetry or of no real consequence.

While Baxter was correct in combating this form of hyper-Calvinism, his own soteriological views unfortunately were not above criticism in that they too fell short of fully biblical teaching.

In similarity with Roman Catholic teaching about justification, Baxter considered no one justified who was not actually righteous. This of course affected the doctrine of imputation. Baxter maintained that the active and passive obedience of Christ is not imputed to the believing sinner, becoming the sole ground of his acceptance with God. Rather, in similarity with Grotius's governmental view, Christ's atonement rendered satisfaction to the Lawgiver, not to the law. Baxter thus left the door open for the contribution of the believing sinner's

good works to his salvation, even if such might be considered as the size of a mere “pepper corn.”

Because Baxter saw no qualitative but only a quantitative difference between common grace and special grace, he considered that even unregenerated people may have faith and love for God and Christ, and this attitude may well be a preparation for their reception of saving grace. Faith, too, is to be considered quantitative, saving faith not being an instrument in the act by which God forensically justifies the believing sinner. Rather, saving faith means God’s granting a person the right to Christ and his benefits. “Thus, he is constituted righteous, being justified constitutively [provisionally]” (190). Since works are involved in salvation, constitutive justification differs from “sentential justification” which will take place at the last judgment. To be justified “sententially,” man is under the obligation to manifest the sincerity of his faith by the addition of the “pepper corn” of his righteousness in conformity with the evangelical law of Christ (285). Baxter sought support for his view about justification from James 2:24 and concluded, “We are justified by our words and works” (310).

As has already become obvious, Baxter’s deviant view about justification (which confuses justification with sanctification) had ramifications affecting other aspects of his view of soteriology. The doctrine of Amyraldianism was congenial with it, for Amyraldianism promulgates a twofold will of God; i.e., according to God’s revealed will, Christ died for all, thus providing a universal salvation; but according to God’s secret will, Christ’s death was only for the elect. Thus, “the redemption acquired by Christ remains hypothetical. It is only a hypothetical universalism. God wills the salvation of all men hypothetically. If someone does not fulfill the condition God also does not decree to save such a person. Christ’s acquisition of salvation remains *in suspenso* until the condition is fulfilled” (200).

Moreover, since salvation was bound up with the works of the law, theoretically even heathen without Christ could be saved, with the help of course of God’s common grace, though it was highly unlikely that salvation for any was attained in this way. Hence the need of Christ’s atonement *for all*, even though many do not avail themselves of it by repentance, faith, and obedience. Baxter’s view of perseverance is also less than Reformed, for, since salvation is also tied to man’s works, it

was logical for him to consider that perseverance was achieved only by relatively few.

Boersma, in his dissertation, painstakingly presents Baxter's soteriology point by point, all the while also giving the objections of Baxter's opponents in interaction with his views. Boersma also patiently points out where they may have misunderstood or misrepresented Baxter's position, though at times the reader is left wondering if Boersma's distinctions between Baxter and his opponents aren't too finely drawn. Moreover, Boersma's surprising conclusion is that, "Baxter remains firmly entrenched within the Reformed tradition" (330), though in reading his dissertation, many readers may conclude that he is perhaps being too charitable.

The book has four appendices, a select bibliography of nineteen pages, and an index of names. There are no subject and Scripture indices.

The book can be recommended, not only because it is a thorough presentation of Baxter's heterodox views on soteriology, but because it provides the reader with a review of such subjects as: God's covenants, common and special grace, the atonement, justification, the relationship of faith and works in salvation, etc.

Raymond O. Zorn

Revival & Revivalism: The Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism, 1750-1858, by Iain H. Murray. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994. Pp. 455. \$27.99.

Among the many books published on the renewed revival interest, Ian Murray's book must be accounted one of the very best, if indeed, not the very best on American revivals.

What sets Murray's book apart is its insistence on viewing American revivals historically in the classically Reformed sense as originating with God. Thus, Jonathan Edwards's earlier definition of a revival as "an extraordinary work of God," becomes normative for Murray's assessment of this later period of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries of revivals. Or, to quote a Presbyterian author of the nineteenth century which echoes Edwards, "Revivals are always

spurious when they are got up by man's device, and not brought down by the Spirit of God."

Moreover, Murray distinguishes between "revivals" and "revivalism." The former term is defined as above, whereas by the term "revivalism" is meant an attempt to change man's character by human effort apart from divine initiative. Typically, leading revival historians view revival history in light of the latter definition. Thus, revivals are viewed solely empirically and thereby discount the sovereignty of grace.

We are greatly indebted to Murray who has shown this revisionist historical approach to be a misinterpretation of revival history caused in great measure by the legacy of revivalist Charles Finney. It was, after all, Finney, the "father of modern revivalism," who defined a revival as the "purely philosophical result of the right use of the constituted means." With such an empirical, pragmatic definition, Finney proceeded to adopt the famous "new measures" – the use of extreme psychological pressures to effect emotional and psychological changes. Thus Finney was not above singling out persons by name from his audience and subjecting them to humanistic methods of pressure tactics at the "anxious bench."

The study of Finney becomes more intriguing when one can speak of the early and later Finney. In an early edition of his famous *Memoirs*, Finney admitted to certain errors in his revivalist work, including semi-pelagianism. However, later editions have omitted this recognition of error.

Most interestingly, Finney charted not only the future course of revivalism, but offered the paradigm for revisionist revival historiography. Thus Finney's legacy has been extremely large and hurtful to Christianity. Murray, however, is cautious not to deny that God may have used Finney to bring His elect to fruition.

Not only is Murray's book valuable as a corrective for both the erroneous practice of modern revivalism, as well as its revisionist history, the book is extremely helpful inasmuch as it sets forth historically much of the true revivals of the period of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The work of Presbyterian Samuel Davies, Congregationalist Asahel Nettleton, as well as Reformed Baptists of the nineteenth century second awakening, forms the historical foundation of Murray's premise that great revivals have always come from divine

initiative. Moreover, Murray's treatment of the famous 1858 urban revival as divinely initiated as well underscores his central theme.

Finally, Murray's addenda reveals the deleterious effects of revivalism methods imported by Finneyan devotees into the British Isles.

The book is "must" reading for those wishing to understand the nature of revivals in their authentic historical context. We are deeply indebted to a Scot who has taken an objective look at American revival history.

Joseph H. Hall

Princeton Seminary: vol. 1, Faith and Learning, 1812-1868; vol. 2, The Majestic Testimony, 1869-1929, by David B. Calhoun. Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1994, 1996. \$29.99 each.

Princeton Seminary had a remarkable history. From its founding in 1812 until 1929, it was a bastion of Calvinistic orthodoxy and catalyst for the propagation of that faith worldwide, principally for the Presbyterian Church, while also training men from numerous denominations.

Dr. David B. Calhoun, Professor of Church History at Covenant Theological Seminary, has placed us in his debt by giving us the definitive history of Princeton Seminary. While modern academic heirs at Princeton Seminary may demur as to the place and importance of the "old Princetonians," they can hardly dispute the author's factual research and accurate portrayal of its godly founders, its nineteenth and early twentieth century professors.

First a word about the author's sources and methodology. These volumes are the result of painstaking research of mainly primary sources – official institutional documents, official seminary publications, but principally the writings and personal data of Princeton professors. Calhoun's indefatigable labors in the treasure trove of original documents make the work one of first-rate authenticity and integrity. These volumes reveal the very heart of Princeton Seminary and the men who made it, by God's grace, what it was.

Calhoun's methodology is to allow the Princetonians to speak for themselves. Where value judgment is necessary, Calhoun makes it with balanced, fair, reasoning drawn from the sources.

Preparation for the Presbyterian ministry, prior to the founding of Princeton in 1812, had been largely classical college courses plus apprenticeship in-service programs in regular church situations. There had been the precedence of the log cabin seminaries such as that established by William Tennent, Sr., but they were small, frequently isolated and operated by the "New Side" ministry of the larger church.

In 1812, due to a downturn in the number of ministerial candidates in Princeton College and a weakened theological orthodoxy exhibited by the Princeton College president, there were increasing considerations for the establishment of a seminary separate from the college. The goals for the seminary were to safeguard orthodox Calvinism and to establish a new pattern of theological education whereby the student would be largely fitted for ministry by formal academic training.

Princeton Seminary was founded in 1812 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, within a generation of that denomination's nationalization subsequent to the Revolutionary War. The seminary began with three students and one professor, Archibald Alexander.

Professor Alexander established the theological tenor of Princeton for generations to come. Ironically, he thoroughly imbibed both Puritan experimentalism (he held in highest esteem Puritan John Flavel, having thoroughly read Flavel's works), and Scottish Common Sense philosophy. These traditions left an indelible mark upon Princeton Seminary, so much that Princeton piety became a large legacy along with Common Sense philosophy. One can point to Benjamin B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen as modern heirs of both traditions. One misses a critique of Scottish Realism.

Within a year of its founding, Princeton Seminary engaged its second professor, Rev. Samuel Miller, as Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government. He also taught homiletics.

Together Alexander and Miller developed the seminary curriculum. The “plan” called for an oral exam for graduates receiving certificates to show that a “foundation” had been laid to become an effective minister. Further, the graduate must show himself to be a “sound biblical critic” having biblical language skills. He should be able to define the faith, and must support the doctrines of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms by “a ready, pertinent, and abundant quotation of Scripture texts.” By his study of theology and Christian history he must become an able and sound divine. He must read a considerable number of the best writers on the subject of religion. He must be skilled in sermon preparation and know duties of pastoral care in order to become “a useful preacher and a faithful pastor.” He must, finally, know the Presbyterian form of government to effect good church discipline.

Princeton Seminary was thus grounded in a firm reliance upon the trustworthiness of Scripture, the Westminster standards, the apologetics of Common Sense philosophy, Turretin’s theology, and strong pastoral preaching and discipline.

Although it is hard to overestimate the foundation laid by Alexander, Miller, and later Ashbel Green, it was overshadowed by the labors of their esteemed student, Charles Hodge, who began teaching at Princeton in 1820. Hodge, the teacher of several thousand Princeton Seminary graduates, purportedly taught “nothing new.” He viewed himself faithful to biblical data, to Turretin and to Scottish Common Sense philosophy. Hodge’s three-volume *Systematic Theology*, published in 1871-1872, would replace Turretin as the theological standard.

Most interestingly, Princeton Seminary orthodoxy became something of a family affair. Two sons of Archibald Alexander, James Waddel Alexander and Joseph Addison Alexander, served on the Princeton faculty. Among third and fourth generation faculty members were Charles Hodge’s son, Archibald Alexander Hodge and grandson Caspar Wister Hodge, Jr.

The year 1869 was a watershed year for the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., marking the reunion of the Old and New Schools, an event of immense consequence for the denomination. Charles Hodge opposed the reunion, to no avail, and the downward

trend of theological orthodoxy began. It was, indeed, anomalous that during the period of declension, Princeton Seminary would remain a bastion of orthodoxy.

Dr. Calhoun treats the period from 1869 to 1929 in volume two. With respect to Princeton, the period was one of crowning achievement: Hodge's *Systematic Theology*, publication, the appointment of professor Benjamin B. Warfield and his successful "battle for the Bible" against professor Charles Briggs, culminating in the defrocking of Briggs. Abraham Kuyper gave his famous Stone Lectures on Calvinism. It was the period of professorial appointments also of Geerhardus Vos and J. Gresham Machen, the former with his seminal important publication, *Biblical Theology*, and the latter with works both popular (*Christianity and Liberalism*) and scholarly (*The Origin of Paul's Religion*).

But toward the end of the sixty year period decline set in, beginning with the presidential inauguration of Dr. J. Ross Stevenson, who, though not himself a liberal, set in motion in 1914 the reorganization of the Princeton controlling Boards which would ultimately spell the defeat of "Old Princeton." The reorganization served also as the catalyst for the formation of Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929, by Machen and others.

Princeton Seminary was paradigmatic for American Presbyterian conservatism throughout the nineteenth century. Not only did it inform conservative Presbyterianism but it was also highly influential for other denominations. The Calvinist Baptist, J. P. Boyce and later German Reformed J.W. Nevin were among those gaining national prominence, who were educated at Princeton. Moreover, nothing of religious significance on the American scene failed to be evaluated by Charles Hodge or other Princetonians. A ready vehicle was at hand in the Princeton-published *Biblical Repertory*. The Princetonians strongly inveighed against the "New England theology" of Nathaniel Taylor of Yale. The entrance of the "new measures" of Charles Finney led to Princeton charges of mechanistic unadulterated humanism. When the country was split over the slavery issue, Princeton Seminary took an anti-slavery position. At the same time, Hodge could take issue with the famous Spring amendment, which virtually made the Presbyterian Church

subsidiary to the federal government. When Horace Bushnell, a Unitarian, produced his evolutionary, one-dimensional religious education program, he was opposed by Charles Hodge.

At a later date, Hodge's theological and social efforts would be carried on by Warfield and Machen in large measure.

No theological library is complete without these volumes. Moreover, every Presbyterian pastor ought at least to read, if not own, them. Finally, they should be on the required reading list for students in seminaries preparing men for the Presbyterian ministry. If we are to conserve and propagate the Calvinistic faith once held, we must surely know the legacy of that faith.

Joseph H. Hall

A Heart for God, by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1985. Pp. 176. *Children of the Living God*, by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Colorado Springs: NavPress, 1987. Pp. 163. *Grow in Grace*, by Sinclair B. Ferguson. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1989. Pp. 139.

Professor Ferguson is a member of the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, U.S.A. He is the author of a number of popular books whose aim is to teach biblical truth in an attractive manner for the conversion and edification of the reader.

The above three books are typical examples of Ferguson's writing ability and theological skill. He also reflects an accurate knowledge of the original biblical languages and makes use of them in a way that is of help rather than a hindrance to the average reader.

In the first of the above books Professor Ferguson expresses the hope that it "will contribute, in some way, to more God-centered living" (9). Oriented toward biblical exposition, its eleven chapters are a progressive development of the doctrine of the triune God as He has been and is active in creation and redemption. As he unfolds the history of redemption, Ferguson elucidates truths with an abundance of Scripture references and examples, together with repeated practical application that reflects a warm pastoral heart.

In the second book which consists of nine chapters, Ferguson's aim is to set forth the grand biblical doctrine of adoption which he correctly considers a central feature of the gospel. Hence, he here seeks "to recommunicate to the living Church the privileges and responsibilities of being able to call God 'Father'" (13). The book is a refreshing antidote to "liberal" theology's unbiblical and fatally misleading teaching about "the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man," which obliterates the distinction between the saved and the lost of mankind and even worse makes unnecessary the need of redemption and of urgency in responding to the gospel call by means of repenting of sin and trusting in Christ for salvation. As Ferguson correctly points out, the unparalleled blessings of adoption into the family of God include: intimacy of the father/child relationship; family privileges and freedoms; victory over sin and oppressions that belonged to membership in the "old" family of unredeemed humanity; the divine fatherly discipline that ultimately reaps the harvest of the ripe fruits of divinely bestowed all-sufficient grace in full conformity to the image of Christ and in the experience of eternal felicity in fellowship with the divine Father and His family forever.

The third book has four sections and eleven chapters, and develops the subject of how growth and development in the Christian life takes place toward the goal of adult maturity. As Christ grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:52); so He has furnished His people with a pattern that they are to follow in being progressively conformed to His image. Basic principles are set forth, i.e., essential marks such as growing in the knowledge of God, gaining a deeper understanding of Christ and His redemptive work and how it is applied to the Christian in salvation, cross-bearing, non-conformity to the world, longing to know God better as He reveals Himself in His Word and in experience, etc. Concluding chapters present the case histories of Daniel, Peter, and Timothy, and provide an analysis of human failings and struggles, together with the biblical remedy, namely, abiding in Christ and making full use of the means of grace.

Professor Ferguson has written books which will be of benefit to all who read them, for not only are they biblically sound,

doctrinally correct, and theologically accurate; but they are also warmly devotional and practically useful.

Raymond O. Zorn

Psychotherapy and Religious Values, edited by Everett L. Worthington, Jr. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1993. Pp. 291, including index. \$15.99.

This volume is the last in a series of seven books attempting to give an up-to-date picture of psychotherapy, Christian counseling, and the relationship between them. The series is entitled, "Psychology and Christianity." Series editor is Dr. David Benner, professor of psychology at Redeemer College in Ancaster, Ontario, who also writes the preface for our present volume. From a utilitarian point of view, this series does provide what it sets out to provide, containing a myriad of chapters on various aspects of psychotherapy and counseling, written by a myriad of authors, who write from a myriad of perspectives. There can be little doubt that this multiplicity of perspectives accurately represents the state of affairs in modern psychological studies.

Everett Worthington, editor of this final volume in the series, is professor of psychology at Virginia Commonwealth University. He is the author of two books on marriage counseling. In this book he proffers an anthology of thirteen chapters authored or co-authored by some twenty-three scholars in the counseling field, most of whom are professors of psychology, social work and counseling at various colleges and universities across the North American continent. They include a sprinkling of Christian counselors, a professor of psychiatry and a couple of Mormon psychology professors at Brigham Young University. What unites them all is their participation in that amorphous bag of opinion called "modern psychological theory." Their theologies vary from outright paganism to serious biblical Christianity.

While it is doubtful that biblically Christian pastors and counselors would find great value in every chapter of this book, it does make an excellent research resource because it contains a

great deal of information about modern psychological approaches, and the writers generally seek to deal honestly with the question of "values," that is morality, in psychological work. In the first chapter, for example, Stanton L. Jones and David A. Wilcox not only conclude that "Theories of psychotherapy are founded upon metaphysical and ethical assumptions of a religious nature," they argue that this truth ought to produce "a spirit of humility" as we test these theories, including our own, empirically.

With a volume of this kind it is usually useful for a reviewer to include some indication of content. Chapter headings often suffice for such an introduction. A sample from *Psychotherapy and Religious Values* includes (numbers indicate chapter number in the book): "Religious Values in Secular Theories of Psychotherapy" (1), "Psychiatric Factors Predicting Use of Clergy" (2), "The Relevance of 'Religious Diagnosis' for Counseling" (4), "Boundary Areas of Religious Clients' Values: Target for Therapy" (6), "Self-Reported Professional Practices of Christian Psychotherapists" (7), "Practitioners, Religion, and the Use of Forgiveness in the Clinical Setting" (8), "Proposed Agenda for a Spiritual Strategy in Personality and Psychotherapy" (12).

As we have indicated, this book is of solid value as a research resource. Unfortunately it provides only occasional insights into biblical principles or psychological realities. Mainly it provides insights into the thinking of psychologists; that is its strength, and also its weakness from a pastoral point of view. It contains a concluding chapter by the editor on future perspectives in Christian psychotherapy, and a complete index.

Robert E. Grossmann