*Soteriology: The Application of the Merits of the Mediator by the Holy Spirit.* By Geerhardus Vos. Volume 4 of Reformed Dogmatics. 5 volumes. Translated and edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2015. ISBN: 978-1577996675. vii + 257 pp. £24.75.

Geerhardus Vos is most well-known for his masterful expositions of the history of redemption. Thanks to Richard Gaffin and the help of others, English-speakers now have access to Vos's early reflections on the order of salvation (*ordo salutis*). This volume on soteriology is the fourth instalment of Gaffin's translation of Vos's *Reformed Dogmatics*, originally published as a hand-written manuscript in Dutch.

Vos first provides a detailed discussion of the meaning, nature, and rationale of the *ordo salutis*. He then elucidates the acts of the *ordo* in turn: calling and regeneration, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, and perseverance (briefly). According to Vos, it is appropriate to deal with these divine acts as a consecutive series. As Vos puts it, 'The subjective application of the salvation obtained by Christ does not occur at once' (p. 1). Rather, each act in the *ordo* has its fixed place, its own basis and result (p. 2). Hence, Scripture presents subjective salvation as 'an ordered sequence (e.g., Romans 8:28–30)' (p. 2). Vos addresses the acts of the *ordo* by noting the meaning of the relevant theological terms and their biblical cognates, exegeting relevant biblical passages, and interacting with relevant historical theological debates. Five questions drive Vos's engagement with each act: Is this act judicial (legal/forensic) or recreative (renovate/transformative)? Does this act lie below the consciousness or in the consciousness? Provided it is recreative, does this act remove our old nature or establish a new nature? Is this act the beginning of a long development or involved in a series of similar acts? Does God execute this act immediately or mediately? Vos uses these questions to properly orient his discussion and shepherd his readers away from theological error (see pp. 8–10).

Vos argues that we must distinguish between judicial acts and recreative acts, for example, because the former address the consciousness of man, while the latter take place below the consciousness of man (p. 139). Moreover, judicial acts provide the ground for all recreative acts (p. 6). Thus, while the unconscious change of our condition effected in regeneration precedes our conscious change of state effected in justification, regeneration logically takes place only in light of impending subjective justification: 'For God, justification in His view is the basis, regeneration the consequent' (p. 7). If we ignore this distinct connection between judi-

cial acts and recreative acts, then we risk reversing the relation, making our recreated nature a basis for the judicial benefits of redemption. This reversal inevitably leads in the direction of Rome, rejecting the totally alien nature of our righteousness before God (pp. 140–4). One can see here how Vos's questions aid his navigation of the relations between the various benefits of redemption.

In this volume Vos offers helpful – and often brilliant – insights into the order of salvation. For having written it in his late 20s/early 30s, he frequently displays a surprising theological maturity usually resident in older theologians. When discussing the nature of saving faith, for example, Vos engages the question of whether Scripture or Christ is the object of belief. Rather than insistently landing on either side of this dichotomy, Vos asserts that it is a false disjunction:

> The genuine believer takes the whole of Scripture as a living organism produced by the Holy Spirit to present Christ to him. On every page of Scripture, he finds traits and traces of the Mediator. He regards each declaration of God in this light. One should purpose to grasp this close connection vividly—that we recognize and know nothing of Christ other than through and from Scripture. Thus, there are not two objects of our faith standing independently next to each other. It is not Scripture plus Christ, but Christ in Scripture, and Scripture in its center, Christ. While on the one hand, for the eye of faith, the word of Scripture changes imperceptibly into the image of a person, on the other hand that person bears completely the traits of a word, for we do not yet behold Him in concrete form but know Him only from the Word. (p. 117)

To use the words of one of Vos's greatest students, Cornelius Van Til, the object of our faith is nothing less or more than *the self-attesting Christ of Scripture*.

While this volume is shot-through with theological and scriptural precision, Vos at a few points lands short of his characteristic exactness. His discussion of union with Christ is a good example. Vos identifies mystical union with Christ as the 'personal bond with the Mediator' effected by saving grace 'at its onset' that 'brings saving grace with it' and on which saving grace is dependent 'in its further realization' (pp. 20–1). Here, mystical union appears to be the redemptive channel that connects the sinner with all the graces available from Christ (see also p. 23). Later, however, Vos seems to set mystical union with Christ over against being judicially 'reckoned in Christ' (p. 23). He states: 'Concerning the legal relationship, being reckoned in Christ precedes, and only from that does being in the Mediator follow. The mystical union is not the basis on which I appear just before God but a gift that is extended to me from God's justification' (p. 22). In light of these statements, one might inquire of Vos: 'You say

saving grace comes from, and to that extent is dependent on, mystical union with Christ. How, then, can I be justified in Christ before I am mystically united to him? Is justification not a grace? Surely it is! You say so yourself!' (see p. 22) I am inclined to think that there is another way to read Vos that does not leave him open to this criticism, although I am unaware of such a reading as of yet. His discussion of union with Christ could at least use clarification, since it initially appears deeply conflicted.[1]

Richard Gaffin has granted the church an invaluable gift. His eminently readable translation of Vos's *Reformed Dogmatics* is indeed 'like a lost Shakespeare play recently discovered,' as Michael Horton has put it. In Volume Four, Vos concisely exposits a wide range of soteriological topics with biblical nuance, confessional fidelity and historical balance. It is not perfect, but, on the whole, it is well worth the investment of students of reformed theology.

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*Gospel of Glory: Major Themes in Johannine Theology.* By Richard Bauckham. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8010-9612-9. xvii + 237 pp. £14.99.

Based largely on lectures given separately between 2010-2014, this collection of essays investigates various theological themes within the Fourth Gospel. As such, the volume as a whole functions as something of a sequel to the more historically focused essays in Bauckham's *The Testimony of the Beloved Disciple*. The essays in this volume provide fruitful and often insightful discussion of several themes, which lie at the heart of the Fourth Gospel, and consequently constitute a helpful introduction to the way the Gospel works and the way its author thinks.

Bauckham opens with a pair of essays that treat the themes of individualism and unity respectively. Following C. F. D. Moule, he observes that John places great emphasis on 'the relationship of the individual believer to Jesus Christ' (p. 1). This is reflected in the focus of many of Jesus' aphoristic sayings, the references to the mutual indwelling of Jesus and the believer, and the dialogues within the narrative between Jesus and various individuals. It is not the community of the Fourth Gospel, but Jesus himself who is the fundamental point of orientation for the individual believer. This is not to downplay the emphasis on community in

[1] [Review ed.: After reading Mr Baird's review I suggested he ask Professor Gaffin for comment on this paragraph. He responded to the author and 'completely agrees' with his critique. Mr Baird raises an important issue that would have to be addressed in any future study of Vos's doctrine of union with Christ.]

the Gospel. In the second essay, Bauckham addresses this issue by arguing that both the concepts of uniqueness and unity are combined in John's use of 'oneness' language to describe the relationships between Jesus and the Father, and his followers.

Two essays follow which focus on glory or glorification. In his essay titled 'Glory', Bauckham surveys 'glory' language in the Gospel, and argues that John draws on Exodus and Isaiah to present Jesus in his death as both glorified and the revelation of divine glory. The following essay ('Cross, Resurrection, and Exaltation') considers the Gospel's presentation of Jesus' death through the lens of the Johannine categories of love, life, glory, and truth. Jesus' death is the ultimate expression of love, the source of the life he offers, the visible manifestation of divine character, and the ultimate expression of God's faithfulness or 'truth.'

A series of unrelated essays follow. In 'Sacraments?', Bauckham responds to the diversity of scholarly opinion over whether John regards the rites of baptism and the Eucharist as sacraments (as in subsequent Roman Catholic tradition), or even whether he refers to these rites at all. He argues that John draws on the language of these institutions, not to highlight the importance of the sacraments themselves, but the faith in Jesus' death and participation in his life, which they symbolize. In his essay 'Dualisms', Bauckham brings clarity to a confused subject by identifying a variety of 'dualisms' between opposing polarities of good and evil as well as 'dualities' between two contrasting, but not opposing, realities. These dualisms and dualities are unified by John's soteriology: They provide a 'framework for portraying how the divine Son became mortal flesh in this world in order both to overcome the world and to save the world' (p. 126). The penultimate essay, 'Dimensions of meaning in the Gospel's first week', illustrates the multi-valency of meaning in John's writing, using John 1:19-2:11 as a test case. Bauckham discusses the double-meaning in the language of 'following' Jesus, 'remaining' with him, and questions regarding his origin. And he illustrates the meaning that is added to a surface reading when allusions to Old Testament passages are identified, such as the categories of 'Servant,' 'Lamb,' drawn from Genesis and Isaiah. He maintains, however, that the surface reading retains a 'realism' that should not be subsumed by symbolism and double-meanings.

Bauckham concludes the volume with an essay titled 'The Johannine Jesus and the Synoptic Jesus'. In contrast to the conflation of the Gospels represented by Tatian's *Diatessaron* on the one hand and the modern scholarly tendency to emphasize 'unharmonizable diversity' among the Gospels on the other (p. 186), Bauckham maintains that the selectivity and unique emphases which undergird John's distinctiveness reflect his

interpretation of the historical reality of the Jesus who lies beyond all the Gospels.

Some of the discussions in these essays will be familiar to those with some exposure to Johannine scholarship. The essay on 'glory' in particular does not engage with recent (2007) monographs on the subject by Nicole Chibici-Revneanu and Rainer Schwindt. However, Bauckham often brings a fresh approach to familiar topics—and the focus of his first essay in particular is a helpful corrective to an overemphasis within Johannine scholarship on the unity of believers in community. His attention to the detail of the text combined with his deep familiarity with the texts and traditions which make up the milieu in which the Fourth Gospel was produced result in model scholarship. Moreover, these essays are models of theological reflection on the text of John that seems to this reviewer to be of the sort John hoped for his readers (see John 1:14; 6:69; 20:28, 31). In particular, together they highlight the centrality and significance of Jesus' 'death-and-exaltation' for John's presentation of Jesus.

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*Theological Commentary: Evangelical Perspectives.* Edited by R. Michael Allen. London: T&T Clark, 2011. ISBN: 978-0-567-42329-0. ix + 220 pp. £19.99.

This collection of essays begins by noting the 'on-going conversation' of theological interpretation as it relates to the 'attempts among the communion of saints to do justice to God's written word' (p. 1). Allen understands the essays to be 'ventures in theological commentary on the Bible for the sake of the church's worship, witness, and wisdom' (p. 1). As such, the purpose of the book is not only to offer commentary on the written word of God, but also to offer explicitly theological commentary on Scripture.

The first five chapters of theological commentary deal with passages in the Old Testament. Ryan Peterson begins the volume by considering Genesis 1. His primary argument, rooted in Genesis 1:26-27, is for an understanding of the *imago dei* that is paradigmatically revealed in humanity over the course of biblical revelation (p. 23). In the next chapter Michael Allen explores Exodus 3. Allen reflects upon the naming of God found specifically in verses 13-15, suggesting that this dual naming, 'I am who I am' and 'the God of your fathers,' points to various dogmatic implications about God's transcendence and immanence. In Chapter Four, Kelly Kapic comments on Psalm 22 regarding how Jesus appropriated this Psalm as the sin-bearing representative of humanity. In Kapic's words, Jesus 'adopted' the words, 'proclaimed' the words, and 'transformed' the

words of the Psalm (pp. 50-55). In Chapter Five, Daniel Treier considers Proverbs 8, concluding with christologically rich reflection on Jesus as the ultimate fulfilment of the wisdom of God. In Chapter Six, Kevin Vanhoozer leads the reader through an exegetically informed and theologically insightful study of Ezekiel 14 in light of the concept of deception and the nature of God. Vanhoozer describes God's 'deceptive' actions as not contrary to his character, but as actually a part of his 'communicative righteousness' (p. 98).

In Chapters Seven to Ten, the focus of the theological commentary turns to the New Testament. In Chapter Seven, Scott Swain undertakes an exegetically rich study of Mark 12 and Jesus appropriation of the title, 'son of David.' Additionally, Swain offers a helpful definition of theological commentary. He writes, 'Theological commentary concerns itself directly and specifically with the textual mediation of God's self-revelation in the sacred writings of his authorized emissaries, the prophets and apostles' (p. 100). In Chapter Eight, Henri Blocher comments on the use of the Christological titles found in John 1, specifically considering the logos and the 'Son of God' titles. In Chapter Nine, Michael Horton provides a somewhat meandering assessment of Ephesians 4:1-16. Horton suggests that most evangelical biblical scholars have misunderstood Ephesians 4 regarding Christ's gift-giving work in the church. In Chapter Ten, Andrew McGowan concludes the theological commentary section of this work by considering Colossians 3 and its implications for theological conversation on the concepts of deification, *theosis*, participation in Christ and union with Christ. McGowan encourages the reader with the fact that scholars in Scotland are meeting regularly to discuss these 'vital theological questions,' which reflects the communal element of theological interpretation.

The book concludes with two chapters from different perspectives on theological commentary. Walter Moberly writes the first of these two chapters. His primary concerns regard how theological commentary can serve alongside other methods of interpretation, specifically in the Old Testament. Moberly concludes, 'theological commentary should open up new ways of reintegrating the Old Testament with contemporary faith and life' (p. 186). Compared to the essay that follows, Moberly offers a more sympathetic reading of theological interpretation. D. A. Carson, on the other hand, takes theological interpretation (as it is broadly understood and practiced) to task on many of its various weaknesses. Carson mentions six propositions of theological interpretation of Scripture (TIS) that he believes must be nuanced and clarified if they will be deemed genuinely helpful. Of the six propositions, Carson strikes hardest at TIS's commitment to grant 'greater credibility to pre-critical exegesis than to contemporary exegesis' (pp. 196-202). In summary, though, Carson's con-

cern regarding TIS is that is seems to be somewhat half-baked. Carson admits that there are good things motivating the theory and practice of TIS, but the full implications of its mindset and method are yet to be fully explored. While acknowledging the potential for ground-breaking work in the present volume and admitting to having not read the contributions of the specific essays, Carson concludes, 'At this moment, however, I am inclined to think that what is most valuable in TIS (and much is), is not new; what is new in TIS varies from ambiguous to mistaken, depending in part on the theological location of the interpreter' (p. 207).

On the whole, this collection of theological commentary fulfils its intended purpose of furthering the conversation of theological interpretation among evangelicals. It provides several helpful models for those who might be interested in adopting such unashamedly theological readings of Scripture from an evangelical perspective. To be sure, some of these essays are exegetically more substantial and helpful than others. Yet, with TIS growing in popularity and influence, it is a benefit for the evangelical church and academy at large to possess a volume of essays that attempts to wrestle with the important aspects of TIS without acquiescing to the potential pitfalls that Carson outlines in his essay. This balanced work of theory and practice is to be commended to all students of God's word.

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*Reformed Orthodoxy in Scotland: Essays on Scottish Theology 1560-1775*. Edited by Aaron Clay Denlinger. London: Bloomsbury, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-56735141-6. 304 pp. £70.

In 1960, the quatercentenary of the establishing of Scottish Protestantism called forth a host of overdue examinations of origins. At that time, R. S. Wright compiled a most useful collection, *Fathers of the Kirk* (1960) accompanied in the same year by studies such as Stuart Louden's *The True Face of the Kirk* and G. B. Burnet's survey *The Holy Communion in the Reformed Church of Scotland*. Character studies were also generated such as that of Ian Dunlop on *William Carstares* (1964). In the same period, John Knox biographies were produced by Elizabeth Whitley (1960), J. S. McEwen (1962) and W. Stanford Reid (1974). That same quatercentenary also occasioned the authoring of diverse histories of the Scottish Reform itself. Depending on the interpreter, one could survey the events of 1560 from an Episcopalian perspective (Donaldson, 1960), or that of a medievalist friendlier to the Catholic tradition (Cowan, 1982).

In the decades which followed 1960, what one might have called the 'confessional' era of writing about the Scottish Reformation clearly gave way to one in which not ecclesiastical historians, but social and public

historians – working outside the various Scottish faculties of divinity – became the main interpretative voices. This was a situation by no means unique to Scotland. Elsewhere in Western Europe as well as in North America, the interpretation of the Reformation era increasingly became a-confessional; it was not even thought necessary to identify with Christianity to be a Reformation scholar. Of course works of great usefulness were still produced: one thinks of the labours of James K. Cameron of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews in the editing of the *First Book of Discipline* (1972) and Glasgow historian, James Kirk whose studies, *The Second Book of Discipline* (1980) and *Patterns of Reform* (2000) have proved so illuminating. Yet overall, two trends have dominated in the period since 1980.

First, the religious history and questions of the period have been made mere subdivisions of the social and political narrative of the era in question. One thinks of Wormald's *Court, Kirk and Community* (1981). Of course, ecclesiastical history left to itself, can easily divorce its study from historical context. But one sees larger trends here. The church is no longer master of its own past.

Second, and in a way uncannily mirroring political realities within the U.K. and the European Union, history writing of the Reformation era has moved *from* what was briefly an intensely *local* focus. One thinks of such works as Lynch's 1981 study, *Edinburgh and the Reformation*, and Bardgett's *Scotland Reformed: the Reformation in Angus and Mearns* (1989); these mirrored investigations of Zurich, of Strasburg and the 'Imperial Cities'. From that passing local focus, there came a shift to multi-national approaches to the Reformation. One sees the spread of this multi-national approach in such anthologies of essays as those edited by Pettegree, *The Early Reformation in Europe* (1992) and *The Reformation World* (2001) as well as that of Scribner & Porter, *The Reformation in National Context* (1994). One *could* find slim chapters on Scotland's Reformation era in such anthologies. Yet this approach could not unfairly be likened to 'rationing'. And in single-author works produced within the U.K. in this same era, the Scottish Reform was designedly treated as co-participant with its neighbouring territories in such treatments as Hazlett's *Reformation in Britain and Ireland* (2003) or Heal's larger volume of identical name (2005).

One is entitled to ask 'in this trajectory of historical study since 1960 and its shift from ecclesiastical to social history, from nation-specific Reformation studies to pan-regional or pan-European studies, where remains *any* distinctive consideration of Scotland's Reform and its primary actors?' It is a question, asked from beyond Scotland as well as from within, which has been left waiting too long for an answer. Now the 2015 release of the volume under review holds out the prospect of a partial

redressing of this neglect. One can trust that the success of studies such as this volume edited by Denlinger can open the way to a different future.

The volume at hand has particular strengths deserving of mention. Not to be missed is a most helpful introduction by Carl Trueman showing how twentieth century estimations of Scotland's Reform and its leaders have been deeply influenced by a swinging pendulum which for decades blamed the generations which arose after 1560 for exchanging the primitive simplicity which characterized Reformation beginnings for an encrusted alternative named 'scholasticism' by the early decades of the following century. Trueman is able to show that this approach, which in effect drove a wedge between the earliest Reformers and their disciples, has now largely been discredited after substantial demonstrations of continuity of thought and emphasis.

The volume features fourteen studies of Protestant leaders in three eras: 1560-1640, 1640-1690, and beyond 1690. The best essays are those demonstrating methodological rigour, a preparedness to re-examine what has come to be considered the conventional wisdom, and openness to fresh ways of stating matters.

The greatest concentration of essays exhibiting these qualities, were, for this writer, located in the initial period, i.e. to 1640. Chapter Two (Holloway), portrays Andrew Melville's pioneering role as a Scottish Hebraist, and so placed this Reformed academic – faulted by James I for his 'overseas dreams' – in a completely different light for the reviewer. Chapter Three (Ellis) sheds light on an individual almost as elusive as Melville, Robert Rollock. Rollock's doctrine of election is shown to have been misrepresented as an example of a view which reduces Jesus Christ's role to that of the executor of a divine plan in which He had no formative role. Chapters Four (Thompson) and Five (Denlinger) had the effect of forcing this reviewer to consider whether he had not been unfairly prejudiced against the Aberdeen divines of the early Covenanting period. These 'Aberdeen doctors' may not have been Covenanting in sympathy, but they were most certainly in step with international Reformed conviction in their doctrinal writings in this same period.

In the period to 1690, especially notable is Chapter Ten (Gootjes), which shines light on the theological career in France of the Scots exile, John Cameron. The chapter's author is painstaking as he threads the proverbial needle in a discussion of Cameron's sympathy for schemes of hypothetical universalism.

In the final post-1690 period, Chapters Twelve (Helm, on Thomas Halyburton) and Thirteen (Muller, on Thomas Blackwell) also deserve special commendation. Here we have studies on that rarest of subjects: Reformed theology interacting with the literature of the early Enlighten-

ment and learning to state the orthodox faith with diminished reliance on the theological methods of the past. When one reflects on the strong nostalgic preference for pre-Enlightenment expressions of orthodoxy among conservative Protestants in our time, one is doubly grateful for essays which demonstrate the attempts at constructive theology in that time of considerable upheaval.

One volume of essays does not, of course, a revolution make. But if it will prove true that this volume is a stepping stone towards the recovery of Scottish Reformation studies for and by those who actually have a stake in Reformation resurgence, we will in hindsight be doubly grateful. Happily, the volume is now available in both cloth and paper covers.

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*Postmodernity and Univocity: A Critical Account of Radical Orthodoxy and John Duns Scotus*. By Daniel P. Horan, OFM. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-4514-6572-3. x + 219 pp. £19.99.

In recent years, John Duns Scotus has come under concerted attack from the Radical Orthodoxy school of theology. Until now, their treatment of the Subtle Doctor has met with surprisingly little resistance: those medievalists who know better have largely confined their critiques to specialist journals and have been ignored both by the proponents of Radical Orthodoxy and the wider theological world. However, in this little book the Franciscan Dan Horan offers a useful summary of both Radical Orthodoxy's Scotus myth and the critiques of Scotus scholars in the hope of setting the record straight.

The structure is straightforward: In the first two chapters, Horan summarizes the charges laid against Scotus by Radical Orthodoxy, then outlines the influence of their account of Scotus on contemporary theology and beyond. Chapter One, 'Radical Orthodoxy's Use of John Duns Scotus', traces the development of the Scotus myth from John Milbank and Catherine Pickstock to Conor Cunningham, Graham Ward, and Gavin Hyman. Horan clearly shows how Radical Orthodoxy presents Scotus as the antithesis of Thomas Aquinas. Since their appropriation of Thomism is at the heart of their anti-secular project, we thus find Scotus being identified as the key figure in the emergence of modernity (John Milbank), the father of nihilism (Conor Cunningham), and even denounced as a heretic (Gavin Hyman). In Chapter Two, Horan offers examples of the way in which Radical Orthodoxy's Scotus story has been adopted by a wide range of contemporary theologians and philosophers, including Stanley Hauerwas, Charles Taylor, and Terry Eagleton.

The remaining chapters set out the case for the defence. Chapter Three outlines the major critiques of Radical Orthodoxy's understanding of Scotus's theology. In summary, he argues that Milbank et al. have misunderstood Scotus's doctrine of univocity. By treating what is essentially a semantic theory as a metaphysical one, they create the false impression that Scotus has reduced the difference between God and creatures to a merely quantitative one, thus fatally distorting Western theology and enabling the emergence of the concept of the secular. Furthermore, he points out that their entire narrative is dependent on a narrow range of secondary sources and shows little evidence of engagement with Scotus himself (beyond a few well-known texts available in translation in introductory readers). Horan concludes the case for the defence in Chapter Four by offering a corrective to Radical Orthodoxy's reading of Scotus's doctrine of univocity. Finally, in a brief conclusion, he suggests that far from being the root of all postmodern evil, Scotus may in fact offer contemporary theologians a constructive way forward in engaging with postmodern culture.

The book is not without its flaws. In particular, I found it rather repetitive. Strangely, Horan chooses to leave his explanation of univocity (and other crucial Scotist concepts) until after his substantive critique of Radical Orthodoxy's view. As a result, he has to anticipate his explanation more than once while presenting his critique. The impression of repetitiveness is reinforced by his decision to structure his overview of Radical Orthodoxy via its key personalities rather than thematically. By contrast, his corrective explanation of Scotus felt rather compressed. It would also have been good for there to have been rather more in his conclusion about how Scotus might be used to develop an alternative to Radical Orthodoxy's eccentric neo-Thomist agenda.

However, those are minor caveats. Horan has done the wider theological community an important service by making accessible the reservations of leading Scotus scholars and thus raising important questions about the foundations of Radical Orthodoxy. This book should be required reading for anyone seeking a critical understanding of Radical Orthodoxy.

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*The Touch of the Sacred: The Practice, Theology, and Tradition of Christian Worship*. By F. Gerrit Immink. Translated by Reinder Bruinsma. (Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Liturgical Studies Series). Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6915-9. xi + 266 pp. £21.99.

This volume contributes a particularly Reformed but admirably accessible account of Christian worship from the perspective of a holistic practical theology. This is a rich work eluding simple précis and analysis. Nonetheless, how might we summarise its key components and signal emphases?

Chapter One, "Worship as Religious Praxis," concerns at least three things: (i) portrayal of the worship service as performative and communal act with analogues of 'agenda' and 'script'; (ii) the question of liturgical styles; (iii) a proposal regarding the distinctive feature of Protestantism's self-understanding, namely its pneumatological focus. If the entire worship service is a performative act (p. 24) then what does it seek to present? Answering this question seems to be the burden of the first three chapters. Immink's answer suggests that its elements contribute to *the active presentation of God's salvific action*. Accordingly Chapter Two, 'Sharing in Salvation', seeks to establish the role of salvation history in the service. At this point the title is illumined: 'The worship service is an event in which worshippers experience an inspiring and active power. The sacred touches the human' (pp. 38-9).

This focus on the worship service does not merely entail phenomenological or psychological description. Mindful that modern Protestantism tends to approach the reality of religion in reductively anthropological terms, Immink also engages in dogmatic depiction. There is a christological dimension, for 'The Christ in whom [worshippers] believe is the living Lord. Theology has the task of studying the essence of worship from the perspective of the mystery of faith' (p. 39). Chapter Two also develops the pneumatological understanding, highlighting *epiclesis*, identifying its 'invocative character' as a 'crucial element in the worship service' or even 'the core of Christian worship' (p. 52). Chapter Three, 'The Mystery of Christ', deepens this theological study of worship in soteriological terms, treating cross and resurrection.

Chapter Four, 'Backgrounds and Dilemmas', is especially insightful regarding the development of communion liturgies in various Reformed strands, drawing on a vast array of Dutch and to a lesser extent German and American sources, including a striking number retrieved from nineteenth and early-to-mid-twentieth centuries. Here as throughout, Immink sensitively surveys contemporary liturgy in both 'classical Reformed' and what he calls 'Protestant ecumenical' forms. Preaching, too, is considered

in historical purview and with helpful consideration of the relation of human eloquence and divine Word. The chapter concludes with the topic of baptism, including the question of infant baptism.

Informed by these historical forays, the book's second part refocuses on the praxis of the worship service in its discrete acts. Chapter Five treats the subject of 'Prayer'. In *The Touch of the Sacred* Immink repeatedly rehearses positions across a wide spectrum, from Pietist and liberal-Protestant to liturgical renewal movement. Most often, contrast is made between those who emphasise subjectivity and those who favour more orderly and pre-thought patterns, the author gleaning insights from both. The chapter on prayer displays his own non-competitive sensibility about these matters most succinctly: 'We should not play emotion and understanding off against each other; we should bring them together' (p. 149). Chapter Six considers the sermon from three perspectives, in terms of rhetoric, exegesis, and crucially in terms of listeners. Chapter Seven, finally, is a helpful study of the celebration of the Lord's Supper across Reformed traditions, exhibiting a characteristically keen sense for practices' exegetical and traditional provenance and enduring significance.

Overall, Immink commends established practices such as liturgical agendas and the Christian year as frameworks within which the sacred may touch us in our whole human selves; in and through these ecclesial actions we find communion with Christ in faith – Christian worship's aim.

I make two further observations in closing. Firstly, the frequency and sheer variety of quotations and occasionally digressive nature of the text sometimes leave the reader struggling to follow the particular thread of Immink's own argument—though perhaps this is also due to the infelicities of translated texts in general. At any rate, I suggest this work is perhaps best read as a *cumulative* argument, rather than a more tightly propositional one.

Secondly, as a resource this book may be classified neither as thoroughgoing doctrinal treatment of Christian worship or ethnographic study of a particular Christian community's act of worship, nor again a focused historical survey. Readers particularly at home in one of these disciplines may find themselves uneasy with Immink's integrative method. Nonetheless, it draws successfully on multiple approaches in rendering a rounded account of Reformed Christian worship; just so it fulfils the subtitle's promise of attention to 'practice, theology, and tradition'. In this sense, I recommend this book as an enriching practical-theological exer-

cise of attentiveness to what Reformed Christians do when they gather, and why they do it.

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*Gratitude: An Intellectual History.* By Peter J. Leithart. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-60258-449-5. 340 pp. £43.50.

The action of giving thanks has long been recognised to be more than a matter of good manners. It raises in fact some rather interesting philosophical questions which have attracted the attention of many thinkers, both around what is an appropriate response to a gift or favour received and indeed what in the first place constitutes a gift. Peter Leithart's book addresses what he has perceived to be a significant gap in the literature, namely tracing how thinking in the West about gratitude has shifted since first attracting the interest of the Greek and Roman philosophers. His work demonstrates how the emergence of Christianity in particular caused a very sizeable rethink on the subject, a radical redefinition which has been widely influential, and yet not often in all its ramifications. The leads given by Jesus and Paul, drawing from Jewish tradition, have been for the most part only partly heeded. The conclusions in Leithart's book point to the shortcomings within such selective approaches. For the degree to which we are thankful, and thankful not simply to those particular human beings who have condescended to show us favour, is significant; it shapes how we live.

In Ancient Greece, the word *charis* did double duty, signifying both grace and gratitude, the gift and the response. Where one said, I have grace (*echo charis*, later *eucharistia*), it addressed the showing of gratitude, and the regular assumption then explored in moral and philosophical literature was that the response should match the gift. As the Romans were to put it, I give that you may give (*do ut des*). Ingratitude was a failure in this regard, not to return favour in adequate proportion to that received. Thus the classical world taught, in a way which has continued to prevail well into our own times, that one favour deserved another in return. All very well except that it meant in the ancient world there was no notion of corruption, since this was just the way the world worked. In order to gain favours, you had to dispense them. Those in power had a ready means of control. Those without the capacity to be generous were forever beholden.

Jews were educated differently. Their monotheistic teaching moved them out of a world in which even the gods dispensed favours at a price, and furthermore they were taught to be generous even to the poor who could not repay. And Jesus most certainly continued on this line, harsh indeed against those who lived life expecting certain privileges, and reso-

lute against public displays of prayer or almsgiving. Grace in Jesus was about giving without thought of return, or at least return in any this-worldly, costed manner. And Paul in his writings showed a similar spirit, thankful to God first and foremost, refusing to buy into any calculations of obligation. The Romans branded such thinking as ingratitude, socially disruptive as far as they were concerned. The young Christian Sebastian was sent to his death for not inclining to be sufficiently 'grateful' to his emperor Diocletian. The higher allegiance of service to God was literally life-threatening in a world where the notion was only to serve others to the extent that they could serve you. Here incidentally also were the seeds of a kind of individualism.

The service of God alas is forever undermined by the overzealous service of man, and historically it was the thought world of Seneca which kept on pushing back to the fore. Leithart's treatment is patient and extensive, tracing methodically through the Western tradition how thinking on gratitude was shaped. The sixteenth century reformation recaptured for a time the mode of Jesus and Paul, but then what were the questions Shakespeare was exploring via King Lear and in other plays? Leithart gives attention to many of the significant figures in western thought, demonstrating the variable extent to which theology has been permitted to contribute its insights to what in the end is a matter of social cohesion as well as faithfulness. There may be nothing quite so simple as a pure gift, that is, a gift offered absolutely without thought of return, but to whom then do we owe thanks, and in what terms? More than half of the book attends to modern and postmodern discussions of this. For there are obvious and agreed risks in people being ungrateful, overly asserting what they feel they deserve.

Leithart's conclusions are drawn on the back of his at times demanding but nevertheless clearly written exposé of the various shifts of thought. Christianity offers comprehensive gratitude to God and so dissolves the bind of gratitude obligations between human parties. Many thinkers since have taken up one or another fragment of this tradition, yet none of these fragments is coherent or realistic in itself. Giving thanks to God, it releases the giving of gifts and insists that the one debt owed within human circles is for us to love one another.

*Peter Donald, Crown Church, Inverness*

*A Commentary on the Psalms, Volume 2 (42 – 89).* By Allen P. Ross. (Kregel Exegetical Library). Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8254-2563-9. 841 pp. £29.54.

This is the second volume in a three-part commentary on the Psalms. When complete, the combined total will be 2,775 pages. There are 179 pages of introduction, including selected bibliography, in Volume One, but in this volume Ross launches straight away into his exposition of Psalm 42. Anyone requiring access to introductory material will also need access to Volume One.

Ross takes a conservative evangelical approach, and has a very high view of Scripture. The declared intention of this commentary is to help the reader understand the Psalms better by addressing textual issues, poetic language, grammar and syntax. It does all of this admirably, and more, providing a detailed though accessible exposition of each Psalm. For anyone new to Hebrew poetry, however, the best explanations are found in the introductory essay in Volume One (pp. 89-101).

He takes a consistent approach to each Psalm. The "Introduction" has three subheadings.

First, under 'Text and Textual Variants', he gives his own translation, with full notes on textual issues, including differences between the Masoretic and LXX. There is no transliteration of the Hebrew (or the Greek when quoted); he expects the reader to understand Hebrew grammatical concepts such as verb patterns, constructs and infinitive absolutes; he freely discusses syntactical and translation problems, and occasionally accepts emendations. For example, in Psalm 69:26 he accepts the difficult *'áttā* is a corrupt form of the object marker, and translates accordingly as 'those whom'. Others such as Marvin E. Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Word Biblical Commentary, Nelson, 1990), p. 191, treat it as an anacoluthon. Ross has the rare ability of making these notes meaningful even to someone with minimal knowledge of Hebrew.

Secondly, there is 'Composition and Context'. This deals with form-critical matters, literary genre, date and composition questions, historical context. On the subject of which Psalms are Messianic, he takes a very conservative view, concluding, for example, that Psalm 69 is not Messianic. 'The psalm may have been applied frequently in the New Testament, especially to the suffering of Jesus, but it is not a Messianic psalm. The psalmist was indeed suffering without a cause in this case, but he acknowledged his folly and his sin' (p. 488). The distinction is possibly explained in the introductory essay "Theology of the Psalms" in Volume One, p. 168, 'There is a similarity that makes the application work, but

it is a general application of the text'. He sees both Psalms 45 and 72 as Messianic.

Third is 'Exegetical Analysis'. This consists of a 'Summary', which is usually a single sentence (though frequently a complex sentence), describing the Psalm in its Old Testament setting, followed by a detailed outline, typically down to three layers of indentation. Anyone preparing a sermon would find this particularly helpful.

The next major heading is 'Commentary in Expository Form'. This is the longest section for each Psalm, and provides a verse by verse commentary. Figures of speech are identified in some detail, not just 'metonymy', but 'metonymy of adjunct', 'metonymy of effect', 'metonymy of cause', etc. He interacts with other commentators, though at a fairly superficial level, and mainly with other conservative writers. Opinions may vary over this – some will be glad that the commentary is not crowded out with footnotes. Others may have preferred more exposure to different points of view. Hebrew words and phrases are again translated but not transliterated. This commentary is detailed and thorough.

The final major heading is 'Message and Application'. This is inevitably more subjective. However, Ross has set every preacher an excellent example of attending to translation, exegesis and exposition in detail, before addressing application. This section is kept brief, and Ross provides in italics within his text a one sentence summary of the main message of the Psalm as he has found it, for today. He also provides a link to the New Testament, commenting on the explicit use of the Psalm in the New Testament where appropriate, or provides other references to give a New Testament perspective.

Overall, this is a very helpful commentary with excellent material that will assist in Bible study and in sermon preparation. It is thorough but at the same time readable. Ross roots everything he says in the text, and if there are specifics where you may not agree with his conclusion, you can see why he thinks the way he does.

There are, however, some things I missed. There are a number of topics in the Psalms which require an excursus to provide a cohesive view. Examples abound, such as the view of death in the Psalms, imprecations, Zion theology, kingship, names of God. If you know the references, you can go to each Psalm, but an overview of such topics would be a great boon.

Secondly, Ross makes very little attempt to see the book of Psalms as a cohesive whole. In an introductory essay in Volume One, Ross describes the formation of the collection into five books, and the smaller collections that make up these books. He affirms there is evidence for the final arrangement that involves the messages of the Psalms, but throughout

his commentary he makes almost no attempt to develop this concept. Not all proposals regarding the canonical arrangement of the Psalms are convincing, but there are many instances where consecutive Psalms are linked thematically. To give just two examples, the common sacrificial theology of Psalms 50 and 51: 'What the God of the theophany in Psalm 50 demands, the person praying the following Psalm 51 promises' (Frank-Lothar Hossfield and Erich Zenger, *Psalms 2* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2005), p. 24). Secondly, Psalms 68 and 69 both have a strong theology of the poor. However, themes such as these in consecutive Psalms are not explored by Ross. Whilst the message of each Psalm is developed, there is an overall lack in developing the message of the Psalter.

In conclusion, Ross's in depth engagement with the text make this an excellent addition to the evangelical commentaries on the Psalms, but it would need to be complemented by others to make up for what is missing.

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*Holy Trinity: Holy People: The Theology of Christian Perfecting*. By T. A. Noble. Cambridge: James Clarke and Co., 2013. ISBN: 978-0-227-174135. xvi + 242 pp. £19.50.

Professor Tom Noble of the Nazarene College in Kansas, Missouri formerly taught at the Nazarene College in Manchester, where he remains a senior research fellow. While in Manchester, he helped to inaugurate the annual lecture series called the 'Didsbury Lectures'. It is, therefore, highly appropriate that he should be invited to give the 34th series of these lectures. It is even more appropriate that, as a theologian in the Wesleyan tradition, he should address the subject of Christian perfecting, or sanctification.

'The purpose of this book is to look particularly at the historic Christian teaching on Christian holiness as it was formulated by John Wesley' (p. 2). Others have investigated the subject in the context of moral theology but Noble approaches it from the standpoint of dogmatic theology. Indeed, he sets the whole subject in the context of the Trinity and almost sketches out a complete systematic theology, with holiness as the guiding principle.

Noble is conscious of the fact that Wesley has been often quoted but equally often misunderstood. Wesley's language has been taken in a simplistic way and the breadth of his own theological vision has not been properly captured. He has been dismissed as someone who believed in 'Christian perfection' which has been taken to mean that one could (in theory at least) be wholly sanctified while still on this earth. Throughout this book, Noble dismisses such simplistic and surface interpreta-

tions and delves deeply into Wesley's thought, so as to show the riches of understanding. In passing, he also demonstrates that there is much more common ground than many think between all the heirs of the Reformation, whether Lutheran, Calvinistic or Wesleyan.

In what he calls the 'Preliminaries', Noble discusses the traditional Wesleyan 'quadrilateral' as a means of reaching doctrinal conclusions but offers his own take on the subject by saying that the four axioms on which we build our theology are first, Holy Scripture ('the only source of Christian doctrine is the biblical revelation', p.6); second, tradition ('It is essential that the church should formulate its doctrines in doctrinal statements, creeds, and articles of faith, and hand these on in its tradition from one generation to another', p. 9); third, rational spiritual experience ('the phrase is intended to bring "reason" and "experience" which have been misleadingly separated, and to qualify the rational experience we are talking about as "spiritual" or "relational"', p. 12); and fourth, the Trinitarian, Christocentric shape of Christian theology (Christian theology 'is an organic whole in which the doctrines of Christ… are central and the doctrine of God the Holy Trinity revealed in Christ provides the overall shape and contours', p. 18).

Chapter Two involves a study of sanctification in the Scriptures. This provides a solid examination of the subject through each of the genres but also an interesting analysis of some controverted points. For example, Romans 7 is taken to describe the pre-Christian experience. Emphases on the communal holy life of the church (p. 31) and on union with Christ as the key to sanctification (p. 34) are very helpful. There is much here to stimulate interest. [In passing we should note that, through some printing error, page 28 is almost blank!]

Chapter Three looks at the historical development of the doctrine of sanctification. In this chapter Noble begins with the Fathers of the Church, as a good Patristic scholar and on through the medieval period before looking at Luther and the Reformation. By the time he comes to Wesley in Chapter Four, Noble is able to demonstrate that Wesley stands firmly in the mainstream of Christian theology in respect of sanctification. Contrary to the popular view, the only 'Christian perfection' which is possible, is to be perfect in love. When Noble seeks to argue that Wesley understood sanctification as being 'in Christ' and not in the believer, someone who knows Wesley better than this reviewer will have to judge whether this is accurate, or whether Noble is reading back into Wesley what he learned at the feet of T. F. Torrance!

In Chapter Five, we see an exploration of how Wesley's doctrine can be taken up and reformulated today. There is a clear resistance to simplistic ideas of 'entire sanctification' or Christian perfectionism while at the

same time a determination to hold on firmly to those passages of Scripture which speak of these things. The solution advocated is to distinguish between one's ontological condition and one's human, moral condition. This sounds a bit like the view of one of Noble's other teachers, J. B. Torrance, who argued that sanctification involves becoming in ourselves what we already are in Christ.

In Chapters Six and Seven the subject is further explored through an exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, particularly the economic Trinity. Chapter Six deals with the atonement and Chapter Seven deals with the Incarnation. This reversing of the normal order of the Person of the Son before the Work of the Son is actually quite fruitful, not least the way in which these doctrines are opened up from that Trinitarian perspective. In the chapter on the Incarnation we see again some familiar themes, not least the idea of Christ sanctifying our humanity by crucifying it. All of this is echoed in Chapter Eight as Noble helps us to see 'the gospel story, the story of salvation in Christ, as the story of God the Holy Trinity' (p. 199). In the final chapter, all of this is anchored in the life of faith and in the call to live holy lives by reflecting the life of the Trinity.

Anyone with an interest in the doctrine of the Trinity or the doctrine of sanctification (which should be all of us) will find benefit and challenge in this book. Noble is not simply a theologian but has a pastor's heart and this is reflected in his desire for Christians to become holy and so to serve the living God.

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*Interpreting Prophetic Literature: Historical and Exegetical Tools for Reading the Prophets.* By James D. Nogalski. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015. ISBN: 978-0664261207. xi + 130 pp. £22.94.

Nogalski offers an exegetical guidebook on the Prophets designed for beginning students who lack training in the Hebrew language. The book addresses matters such as textual boundaries, keywords, literary genre, rhetorical issues, contextual factors, prominent themes, and hermeneutical approach. Two dozen charts pepper the pages, while endnotes and a Scripture index round out the volume. Because most primers on OT exegetical methodology concentrate on narrative literature, an introduction to the prophetic genre enriches the stacks. This little volume stands out as more concise and basic than Gary Smith's *Interpreting the Prophetic Books: An Exegetical Handbook* (Handbooks for OT Exegesis, Kregel, 2014). Nogalski's critical outlook colours the discussion.

In this manual, students will learn the benefit of reading multiple English Bible translations in their study of a textual unit. They discover

a valuable lesson concerning the nature of Bible translation: 'All translations involve some level of interpretation' (p. 11).

Syntactical and literary features of the Hebrew Bible come to the fore. Nogalski rightly warns readers about the debates concerning the function of syntactical connectors (p. 81). He expounds staircase parallelism (pp. 41–42) and points out puns. For instance, in Amos 8:2, the 'summer fruit' (*qayiṣ*) signals that the 'end' (*qēṣ*) draws near (p. 86). 'Almond' (*šāqēḏ*) plays with 'watch over' (*šōqēd*), and the Hebrew of 'boiling' (*npḥ*) rhymes with 'break out' (*tipāṯaḥ*) in Jeremiah 1:11–14 (p. 71). The author calls attention to reversals (or contrasts) in the book of Joel: dry streambeds (1:20) eventually flow with water (3:18); a lack of wine (1:5) becomes wine overflowing (3:18); and, distress and threats become peace and rest (p. 83). Fifteen pages discuss the ever-important issue of identifying the speaker of a prophetic utterance (pp. 24–39).

On the other hand, some literary techniques go undeveloped, such as inclusio, anadiplosis, and merism. The explanation of chiastic parallelism fails to identify the exegetical significance of the device (pp. 42–43). In discussing the participle of the imminent future, Nogalski gives the impression that imminent action transpires only in the near future rather than the eschatological future (p. 24).

Not everyone will concur with the treatment of Bible places. The author regards Wadi Shittim in Joel 3:18 as symbolic, and assures readers that the valley of Jehoshaphat in Joel 3 constitutes an 'imaginary valley' (pp. 49, 55). Hyperbole marks the size of Nineveh in the book of Jonah, as it does the fertility of the land in Amos 9:13 (pp. 49–50, 89).

Interpretive conclusions remain unsubstantiated at times. For example, redaction played a major role in the formation of the prophetic corpus: 'the collections have been shaped with an eye toward their transmission for and reflection by later generations' (p. 4). Moreover, Obadiah's oracle describes the fall of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians in the sixth century (p. 104).

The author sees fewer predictions in the prophetic corpus than some scholars. He states, 'prophetic literature is not primarily predictive in nature. Rather, prophetic literature functions primarily as interpretive theological literature' (p. 14). Such a perspective coincides with the recognition of fewer messianic statements: 'Unfortunately, many churches and religious traditions have perpetuated a view that the primary purpose of the prophets was to foretell the coming of the Messiah' (p. 74).

Nogalski defines hermeneutics as 'The art of applying biblical texts to modern life' (p. 117). The chapter devoted to hermeneutics comes at the end of the book, suggesting that hermeneutics follows interpretation in the exegetical process. By contrast, other Bible readers distinguish herme-

neutics and application, and allow hermeneutics to inform their interpretation of a biblical excerpt.

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*The Election of Grace: A Riddle without a Resolution?* By Stephen N. Williams. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015. ISBN: 978-0-8028-3780-6. 229 pp. £17.99.

This volume began life as the Kantzer Lectures in Revealed Theology, sponsored by the Carl F. H. Henry Center for Theological Understanding at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The Kantzer Lectures in revealed theology 'are intended to be the evangelical equivalent of the celebrated Gifford Lectures in natural theology' (p. vi). They are also intended to address theological issues in a way that is beneficial to the church and not simply to the academy. In this volume, Professor Stephen Williams of Union Theological College in Belfast addresses the complex and often disputed issue of divine election. As both a highly respected theologian and also a man of the church, Williams was an ideal choice to deliver the Kantzer Lectures.

One might imagine that everything has been said about the subject of election and that the various positions are, by now, set in stone. The great value of this book, however, is that Williams does not simply mount a defence of one of these existing positions but rather genuinely seeks to review the doctrine, biblically and theologically, in order to offer new insights and proposals.

Williams believes that the impasse between the Calvinist and the Arminian positions in respect of election may be partly because of the way in which the cluster of questions at the centre of the dogmatic discussion are set up and the way in which Scripture is handled. He sets off boldly, insisting 'Scripture is my authority and exegesis my guide' (p. 6) and he does so with considerable humour, as well as with significant doctrinal expertise and historical awareness.

Williams begins by considering election as found in the Old Testament. He makes the point that the election of Israel, so often seen as divisive and exclusive, has as its purpose the coming of the Christ. He writes, 'There is no hope for the world if the Messiah does not grace it with his presence, and no possibility of his coming into it without the prepared and particular connection of nation and history' (p. 26). He also argues that the doctrine of election as found in the Old Testament has primarily to do with communion with God, rather than addressing the postmortem fate of individuals. As he says, 'Personal communion subsists in a relationship enabled by privileged election' (p. 42). This election is (as the title

of the book says) 'the election of grace', which is very important. Indeed, in passing, he makes the valuable comment that in many churches activism is seen as the evidence of faith, thus crushing in spirit those who cannot be active, whereas 'the election of grace puts paid to the notion that the value of the elect is dependent on their physical or mental capacities' (p. 44 n.107). He also insists on the relationship between election and mission, using both Isaiah and Leslie Newbiggin.

The second chapter is on "New Testament Election". A key element of this chapter is the attempt to understand the relation between election and predestination, beginning with Acts 13:48. Williams looks at the various ways of interpreting this text, including Augustinian and Arminian approaches. On the basis of exegesis, he favours the Augustinian view but with one very significant qualification: he advocates a single rather than a 'double' predestination. That is to say, he rejects the notion of a decree of reprobation. He summarises his exegetical conclusions in this way: 'God determines that unbelief will be the destiny of the disobedient. The metaphor which will inform our discussion is this: if God locks the door, it is because it has already been shut firm from the inside by those not wanting or willing to abandon unbelief and enter into the obedience of faith. God decides to ratify human decision' (p. 83). Similarly, 'The reason a person cannot leave the room is that the door has been locked, but the reason the door has been locked is that the person does not want to leave the room' (p. 84).

When Williams considers election as found in Revelation he comes to another striking conclusion, namely, that 'temporal' election, of Israel or the Church, may not necessarily be aligned with eschatological salvation. That is to say, those who will 'reign' with Christ may be a more limited group than those who are 'saved' by Christ. He admits that he has yet to put flesh on the bones of this proposal but offers it as a possible exegesis of the book of Revelation and as another qualifier of the Augustinian position which he is advocating. He writes,

> If those who are not classified in the NT as elect or predestined may yet be saved, some will find that this demurral from the Augustinian tradition will help to reconcile them to that component in Augustinian doctrine which I have sought to retain. If those who are not classified in the NT as elect or predestined may yet be saved, but may not reign, others will judge that the grounds for their demurral from Augustinianism remain firm. It should go without saying that those who partake of eschatological salvation, but not of temporal election, have not entered the city of God by some other means than the efficacy of atonement and the pardon of grace (pp. 101-2).

In the next chapter Williams turns his attention to the "Dogmatic Limits" of the subject. That is to say, how do his exegetical explorations fare in the cold, hard world of dogmatic theology? In particular, how is he to address the question of logic in relation to a single or double decree of predestination? Is not the one implied by the other? Williams quite rightly insists that logical processes must take second place to exegetical considerations. In other words, to set up some kind of logical argument, whereby several premises are shown to lead to the conclusion of double predestination, even where that is not clearly taught in Scripture, must be rejected. Such a propositional approach can undermine the teaching of Scripture and implies that God and his actions can always be scrutinised and explained by human logic. To put this another way, it undermines the place of mystery and the incomprehensible nature of God.

In this context, Williams introduces Charles Simeon (1759-1836). Simeon had pointed out that there are passages in Scripture which the Calvinist would happily remove and other passages that the Arminian would happily remove! Neither can get all of Scripture to agree with their position. Hence, Williams calls us to resist the 'urge to system' and implores humility on the part of the dogmatic theologian, to say nothing of the preacher. Where Scripture clearly affirms things which appear to the human mind to contradict one another we must not try to force them to fit together, rather we must accept that we are faced with complexity and seek further light to be shed by the Holy Spirit on the Scriptures. Being the philosophical theologian that he is, Williams also brings Kierkegaard and Kant to the table, to assist in making this case.

The final chapter is entitled 'Dogmatic Difficulties', and explores some of the problems associated with the proposals expressed in earlier chapters and anticipates some of the critique which might be forthcoming. Above all, Williams, quoting Martin Luther, wants to argue that our primary concern must be with 'the published offer of God's mercy, not of the dreadful hidden will of God' (p. 151). To put this another way, we must be willing to accept paradox and deal with what Scripture says about God's grace and election rather than what we think we can logically deduce from what is found in Scripture. He then shows the significance of this for discussion of assurance and perseverance. Having employed Kant and Kierkegaard previously, Williams drives his argument home with more Simeon and some Wittgenstein. He concludes the chapter (and the entire analysis) by reaffirming the modified Augustinianism which he has advocated throughout the book.

The book concludes with an appendix entitled 'Karl Barth on Election'. The appendix begins with what is probably the best quotation in the book, from Flannery O'Connor, 'I distrust folks who have ugly things to

say about Karl Barth. I like old Barth. He throws the furniture around' (p. 179). As Williams notes, the problem with Barth's doctrine of election is that, while it is at the centre of his thinking, it has been subject to diverse explanatory accounts. To that end, Williams mentions in brief compass the debate between Bruce McCormack on the one side and Paul Molnar and George Hunsinger on the other, as to whether the decree of election effectively constituted God's being as Trinity, that is to say, whether Barth offered an actualist rather than an essentialist account of God's being.

Williams, however, is not persuaded by Barth's doctrine of election. Speaking of Barth's view that election is universal 'in Christ', Williams responds, 'The plain reason for disagreeing with him is that to speak of universal election in Christ in to speak of election in a way not only different from but contrary to the way Scripture speaks of it' (p. 187) and again, 'Election, however we interpret its detailed theological content, is always discriminate in Scripture. Israel or the church or particular individuals are elected' (p. 187). This concern to be centred upon Scripture extends to Williams' critique of the way Barth uses biblical words but 'recasts the biblical witness… in a way that effectively undoes concepts which lie at its heart' (p. 201). He writes, 'Jesus Christ as the electing God and Jesus Christ as the elect man do not add up to universal election in Christ. They do not add up, either, to the belief that only the church is elect in Christ. If nothing else is factored in, they actually do not add up to anything with respect to election' (p. 201).

This is a stimulating and thought-provoking book which helps to break through centuries of debate, by insisting that the various positions which, as noted earlier, seemed fixed in stone, requiring us to choose one or the other, are not the only ways to approach this subject. All who are interested in a biblical and evangelical approach to the doctrine of election need to read this book.

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*The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us*. By Michael Graves. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6963-0. viii. + 201 pp. £17.99.

The field of early Christian studies has fully woken up to the reality that the writings of the Church Fathers are saturated with Scripture, and a key to understanding their theology is discerning how they *viewed* and how they *used* Scripture (e.g., Lewis Ayres' *Nicaea and its Legacy: An Approach to Fourth-Century Trinitarian* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), pp. 31-40). Michael Graves has given aid to this understanding by writing a highly synthetic work, *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture*, which aims at bring-

ing together the 'network of ideas' on the inspiration of Scripture reflected in the writings of the Christians in the first five centuries of the church (p. 3). As a succinct summary of the sometimes diverse views of the Bible in the early church, this book largely succeeds. But how these early Christians *viewed* Scripture is only half the story. Their views on inspiration had entailments for how they interpreted Scripture. At the forefront of their interpretive concerns was what the text said to the Christian reading it. Graves would like to bring this concern for contemporary meaning to the question of the early church's interpretation of Scripture. That is to say, he sees interpretive wisdom in the writers of the early church that can be applied in the church today, though in the opinion of this reviewer the criteria provided by the author for what he finds meaningful are overly subjective.

Graves completes his argument in just under one-hundred and fifty pages. The appearance of brevity, however, is a result of the choice to use endnotes instead of footnotes. This is too bad, because his thirty-three pages of notes often contain insightful comments on the original sources. Checking up on these proved quite cumbersome. In addition to indices containing Scripture references and modern authors, the book has a very helpful index of ancient authors, works, and figures. Unfortunately, there is no bibliography.

A real strength of Graves's book is its clarity, which is on display in its organizational structure. In addition to introductory and concluding chapters, there are five chapters that serve as headings under which he organizes a total of twenty summary points on the early church's understanding of inspiration and its entailments.

Chapter Two is on Scripture's 'Usefulness': (1) Scripture is Useful for Instruction; (2) Every Detail of Scripture Is Meaningful; (3) Scripture Solves Every Problem That We Might Put to It; (4) Biblical Characters Are Examples for Us to Follow; (5) Scripture is the Supreme Authority in Christian Belief and Practice.

Chapter Three is on 'The Spiritual and Supernatural Dimension': (6) Divine Illumination Is Required for Biblical Interpretation; (7) Scripture Has Multiple Senses; (8) Scripture Accurately Predicted the Future, Especially about Jesus.

Chapter Four is on Scripture's 'Mode of Expression': (9) Scripture Speaks in Riddles and Enigmas; (10) The Etymologies of Words in Scripture Convey Meaning; (11) God is Directly and Timelessly the Speaker in Scripture; (12) The Scriptures Represent Stylistically Fine Literature.

Chapter Five is on Scripture's 'Historicity and Factuality': (13) Events Narrated in the Bible Actually Happened; (14) Scripture Does Not Have

Any Errors in Its Facts; (15) Scripture is Not in Conflict with "Pagan" Learning; (16) The Original Text of Scripture Is Authoritative.

And Chapter Six is on Scripture's 'Agreement with Truth': (17) Scripture's Teaching Is Internally Consistent; (18) Scripture Does Not Deceive; (19) Scripture's Teaching Agrees with a Recognized External Authority; (20) Scripture's Teaching Must Be Worthy of God.

A structure organized around summary points is helpful for using *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* as a reference when one has questions on those particular points. Though I wish he would have given deeper attention to such consequential authors as Athanasius of Alexandria and Gregory of Nazianzus, Graves largely succeeds in substantiating his points with illuminating references from the daunting ocean of original sources. A minor weakness, however, is when he wields old dichotomies to categorize those sources. More than once he refers to an author being 'Alexandrian' or 'Antiochene' in his exegesis (e.g., pp. 15, 49, 73). Patristic scholarship since the 1970s has been questioning the accuracy and helpfulness of these divisions (for an excellent summary of this scholarship, see Donald Fairbairn's 'Patristic Exegesis and Theology: The Cart and the Horse', *WTJ* 69 (2007), 1-19).

A more significant weakness of this book is one sprinkled throughout its summary points, only to reach full flower in the conclusion. Graves comments at the close of each of his twenty points on whether the emphasis in question provides wisdom for Christians today. His judgment on the benefit of the early church view appears tied to what he considers plausible from a modern standpoint (without putting to question the very plausibility structures of Modernism). While Graves is willing to throw out ancient views as 'not workable' given modern assumptions, he is more than ready to accept the legitimacy of modern views so long as they are described as 'Christian'. What is revealed in his conclusion is that he thinks the final locus for interpretive authority rests in an individual's relationship with God (p. 141). Therefore, Graves has no room for subordinate authorities – such as creeds and confessions—that might provide boundaries for the Christian interpreter. He encourages his readers to submit to the descriptive reality of plurality in modern Christian interpretation as prescriptive for always 'listening' and never 'suppressing' the views of others in the 'Christian community' (pp. 143-5). I am afraid such subjectivity leads this reviewer to recommend the descriptive dimensions of *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* while considering its prescriptive elements as all-too modern.

*D. Blair Smith, Durham University*

*Thomas F. Torrance and the Church Fathers: A Reformed, Evangelical, and Ecumenical Reconstruction of the Patristic Tradition*. By Jason Robert Radcliff. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. ISBN: 978-1-62564-603-3. xx + 228 pp. £18.00.

Jason Robert Radcliff's book, a revision of his Ph.D. thesis, fills a big gap. On the one hand, increasing attention is being given through articles, dissertations, and monographs to themes found in the consequential twentieth-century Scottish theologian, Thomas F. Torrance (TFT). And, on the other hand, Protestant Evangelicalism has been experiencing a 'patristic revival' for several decades now. Given that the Fathers were constant sources for TFT's theology, critical attention to this aspect of his work has been sorely needed – both for evaluating TFT and the potential he holds as a model for faithfully retrieving the Fathers today. Radcliff was a student of one of TFT's most notable students working in patristics, George Dragas; and his doctoral work was completed at the University of Edinburgh, where TFT spent his academic career. Thus, he is positioned to provide insight on the *consensus patrum* advocated by TFT and what guidance he might provide for those seeking to appropriate the Fathers today. And insight he indeed provides on a number of key questions surrounding TFT's use of the Fathers, though it seems Radcliff's deep appreciation for Torrance at times overwhelms his ability to provide the level of criticism that is needed.

*Thomas F. Torrance and Church Fathers* has all the markings of a revised thesis. There are copious footnotes, which feature helpful background discussion. In the text, he is fastidious in displaying the overall structure of his argument and where the reader stands in any given section. On the downside, this makes for a fair amount of repetition. Positively, though, Radcliff's prose is remarkably clear and free of academic jargon. In addition to a bibliography and index of patristic writers, the book includes an illuminating appendix recording every Father's work cited in TFT's most patristic-saturated book, *Trinitarian Faith*.

Radcliff organizes his thoughts around TFT's sense of the *consensus patrum*, that is, what he judged as theologically accurate and fruitful in the Fathers. In Chapter One Radcliff gives an historical overview of the *consensus patrum* according to the three branches of Christianity. After brief summaries of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox approaches to the study of the Fathers, he provides a nuanced understanding of Protestant approaches in which he correctly sees the current interest as a return to early Protestantism. The conditions contributing to this 'return' were the opposing viewpoints that dominated the Evangelical and Reformed traditions in the early twentieth-century: 'a liberal

denial of the importance of the Fathers or the Biblicist avoidance of The Fathers' (p. 22). In the resulting wasteland grew a wild and inchoate interest in the Early Church. It is in this landscape, which is still among us, that Radcliff believes TFT's perspective can be of immense help. Radcliff uses Chapter Two to drill down further into 'discoveries' of the Fathers since the middle of the twentieth-century, especially within the Evangelical world. He helpfully delineates between those who 'discover' and then convert to another branch of Christianity, those who are guided by a subjective postmodern framework, and those, such as Robert Webber, Thomas Oden, and D. H. Williams, who have a more objective sense of appropriating the Fathers according to theological criteria. TFT has most in common with this third group, yet Radcliff spends Chapters Three and Four detailing how he clearly stands apart in his approach. In his opinion, 'Torrance stands unique as objectively Christocentric, faithful to his own [Reformed] tradition, and seeing both the interrelation between The Fathers and his tradition as dynamic enough to allow them to be mutually informative' (p. 53).

Chapter Three details the themes presented in TFT's *Trinitarian Faith*, a work that is neither 'a work of patrology' nor 'a systematic theology text'; rather, it seeks to draw out the 'inner theological connections that give coherent structure to…classical theology' (p. 58). For TFT, these connections begin and end with Athanasius and his interpretation of the implications of the *homoousion*. The most helpful emphases in this chapter are TFT's concern to illuminate from the Fathers the objective nature of theology as dependent upon receiving and conforming to God's initiative in revelation, and the necessity of approaching divine matters in the posture of prayer and worship. Regrettably, in what Radcliff considers as perhaps TFT's 'greatest contribution to patristic and theological scholarship' (p. 92), the vicarious humanity of Christ, he uncritically affirms (here and elsewhere in the book) the Torrancian division between Calvin and the Reformed heritage after him, particularly the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. Within this contested narrative, the Reformed tradition fell into 'hyper-Calvinism' (quite a misnomer) by stressing God's decrees over the person of Christ (p. 52 passim). Interestingly, in analyzing TFT's doctrine of the fallen humanity of Christ, Radcliff never references the incisive theological critique it received in Duncan Rankin's 1997 University of Edinburgh Ph.D. thesis (though Radcliff refers to Rankin's work on an unrelated matter).

Radcliff repeatedly highlights TFT as distinctive voice, because he is a Western theologian whose primary interest is in the *Eastern* Fathers. Chapter Five describes how this has established a theological rapport with the Orthodox, concluding that his 'evangelical, Christological, and

Trinitarian method of patristic appropriation' has produced a theological dynamism that, as opposed to more 'legalist' conceptions of what it means to be Reformed, enables fruitful dialogue with other traditions (p. 180). Whatever may be the merits of this conclusion, Chapters Four and Six throw into question TFT's tendency to pit the Western Fathers—particularly Augustine—against the Eastern, with the latter coming out the winners. Chapter Four establishes these various, often diverging, theological 'streams' that TFT discerns in the history of theology. In addition to separating Augustine as too 'dualistic' from his *consensus patrum*, Radcliff raises the issue of whether TFT's 'golden thread' approach to historical theology is overly simplistic (p. 145); and, in the case of dividing the Cappadocian Fathers from one another in their basic Trinitarian theology, whether his method is more informed by the Trinitarian debates he was facing in the 1980s with John Zizioulas than what was true in the 380s.

Radcliff answers these questions in Chapter Six, his conclusion, by situating TFT's approach to the Fathers within his overall theological vision, which, he admits, is hard to separate from TFT's interpretation of the *consensus patrum*. That is to say, Radcliff allows that TFT 'sometimes amalgamates modern and patristic theology and, even more so, Torrancian/Barthian and patristic theology in ways that can be unfair to The Fathers' (p. 193). Yet, Radcliff quickly pivots away from such a judgment to say, 'Torrance approaches the Fathers essentially on their own terms' (p. 196). He is only able to reach this conclusion through charging with oversimplification recent scholarship that questions an entrenched East/West divide in patristic theology. I'm not convinced Radcliff has sufficiently listened to the claims of such scholarship (scant interaction can be found on p. 197) and this results in an overly positive view of TFT as a faithful reader of the Fathers. Be that as it may, TFT's value—one which Radcliff ably draws out, contributing to the usefulness of this book—is in providing theological categories through which to appropriate the riches of the Fathers. Instead of being confronted in the study of the Fathers with a bewildering forest of names, dates, and places, one is invited to portals through which to study the Trinity, Christology, grace, and other biblical doctrines that renew our faith. And perhaps if one even 'crosses the streams', studying, say, the Trinitarian theology of an Augustine or a Basil, one will find these streams more often than not descend from common biblical headwaters.

*D. Blair Smith, Durham University*

*Divine Covenants and Moral Order: A Biblical Theology of Natural Law.* By David VanDrunen. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7094-0. xii + 582 pp. £32.99.

What we have is a big book in more ways than the obvious (its 582 pages). Just as James Barr once said that there was a Natural *Theology* to be found in the Bible, even though other theologies were also available, David VanDrunen sees 'Natural Law' as something biblical, even essential to the Bible's message. As he states it near the beginning (p.15): 'Natural Law consists in the obligations and consequences incumbent upon and known by human beings as image-bearers of God and participants in the protological moral order.' This does not mean a complete ethical system… 'But the natural moral order itself is divine revelation and precedes special revelation insofar as God always delivers the latter to human beings whom he created as participants in the natural order and designed by nature to respond to God in certain ways.' In this he foregrounds the importance of the Noahic covenant, 'a universal covenant by which God preserves the natural order and human society' (p. 13).

It is important for the book's thesis that the Natural Law or what he calls 'the protological' order and at times 'the penultimate' be distinguished and at times unraveled from what he calls 'the eschatological' (or the soteriological). In all this the author positions himself in regard to contemporaries such as David Novak's Jewish account and Thomas White's re-pristination of Thomist theory. The latter he dislikes for what nature/grace omits – the historical dimension into which grace appears, although one could argue that Thomist teleology requires a history before any *telos* can be reached; there seems to be some awareness of this in his praise of R. Hittinger in one of the book's appendices. The book did not need to be a longer one, but a page or two more to show that the Catholic and Jewish positions have been assimilated would have been welcome.

To turn to the book's substance: Adam and Eve as image bearers got off to a bad start by failing to exercise God-given dominion over the serpent. By nature they had been equipped to gain a participation in the Sabbath rest of the Lord. There is also a claim that the Reformed doctors were not wrong to claim that there was a covenant made in the Garden of Eden, even if a lot rests on the intertext of Hosea 6:7 ('like Adam they transgressed the covenant'). The author asserts: 'the creation of human beings in God's image *as itself* an act of covenant establishment' (p. 85). Perhaps. He seems on surer ground with the establishment *post-lapsum* of a covenant in Genesis 8-9. Just as Jon Levenson had blazed a trail for Michael Horton, again the Auld Alliance of Jewish and Reformed comes to the fore: Daniel J. Elazar was 'one of the few' to get the importance of Genesis

8-9 along with Meredith Kline's *Kingdom Prologue* (p. 98). One can appreciate the theological sense and soundness of giving a place to common grace: 'Thus, though its focus is upon preservation of human society, the natural law of the Noahic covenant also hints at a broader moral order and at a limited and penultimate human flourishing that God allows his image-bearers to attain, to some degree, through the blessing of common grace' (p. 129).

However what is slightly problematic in the attempt to distinguish protological and eschatological is revealed in his comment on Genesis 8:21, 'The Noahic covenant, therefore, reveals him as a God of *justice, tempered by forbearance*' (p. 122). But how different is forbearance from mercy? Is the point that God is simply allowing the tally of sins to add up for a reckoning at the Last Judgement? Second, to admit that Natural Law is quite abstract, so that different societies can fill it out in their particular application (p. 130) is perhaps a euphemistic way of saying that Genesis 9 is minimalist to the point of having little content, apart from a prohibition of violence. (Acts 15 expands on it.) Can the Noahic covenant really do the work that the author expects of it?

In any case, seeing the incidents of Genesis 18 (Sodom) and 20 (Gerar) as illustrative examples of communities that fail and manage to live up to the natural law respectively is very well done and full of insight into the meaning of these otherwise mysterious passages. The chapter on the Natural Law in the prophets is also largely effective. With a nod to John Barton, he contends that Isaiah 1:2 means that people not knowing the natural moral law leads to de-creation as consequence. Something perhaps needs to be said about why Israel of that day would not have been judged by a revealed law, but perhaps that would have necessitated diving into the muddy waters of the historical sequence of the Law and the Prophets. The author rightly observes the note of poetic justice when royal arrogance that persists in acting as God and perverting the idea of 'the image' is brought to shame, and laid low. Now it could be that it is the Noahic covenant that is the 'everlasting covenant' that is said to be broken in Isaiah 24:6, even if 'laws and statutes' language is Deuteronomic (p. 193). This 'apocalypse' is about universal desolation then a re-building project; Isaiah 26:20 relates back to shutting Noah in the ark (Genesis 7:16), and not to Passover. Likewise bloodshed is the issue (Isaiah 26:21). Although the Noahic covenant was unilateral it could still be broken by both parties and there was in Genesis 8:22 the condition 'while the earth remains'. I enjoyed and benefitted from this 'OT' section.

He then argues that Paul's strategy in Romans 1-2 echoes that of Amos 1-2, starting with the nations, before turning to Israel. The Natural Law cannot save but it can condemn. 'Therefore, when Paul begins 1:18 with

"for" he likely does not indicate that the wrath of God is an aspect of "the righteousness of God" but that he is beginning an exposition of essential background material for understanding what this righteousness is and why his gospel announces it as good news' (p. 213). To march into 'the righteousness of God' debate probably requires more attention to securing one's lines of supply. When he repeats: 'natural law continues to exist, but not in order to save or even to provide preparatory aids along the way to salvation' (p. 214), one wonders really how Mosaic Law can be said to be very much different from common or garden Natural Law, given what Paul says to his Jewish reader in Romans 2. The author could well be right that when Paul mentions non-Jews here he is speaking of pagans, and not of Christian Gentiles—despite Augustine (but not Aquinas), Gathercole and Wright (p. 232). Nevertheless hand-to-hand combat of exegesis is required, and that includes a sensitivity to the whole sweep of Romans.

It was at this point, as the discussion moved on to the NT, in order to shine light on the OT that this reader became less convinced. The point that Lot was saved while the people of Gerar were simply blessed because the former was a party to the covenant of grace seemed more asserted than it was demonstrated. 'Yet read in larger biblical perspective the rescue of Lot from Sodom was not a manifestation of God's forbearance through *postponement* of final judgment for him, but a picture of *deliverance from* final judgment' (p. 278). Lot's rescue foreshadows eschatological salvation of the godly mentioned in 2 Peter 2:5-9. Perhaps, but some exegesis of this NT passage and a consideration of its hermeneutical stance could have helped.

The author holds Mosaic Law to be protological too, but in displaying an ultimate negative outcome, it is 'a way of preparing God's people for their coming Messiah' (p. 283). It is a code with restraining effects from which the redemptive grace of Christ provides liberation (Galatians 3:19*ff.*). He concludes that Mosaic Law served to highlight the miserable state of humanity. 'God intended life under the Mosaic covenant, in part, to mimic the experience of the First Adam (p. 353). But simply relying on Galatians here makes the Mosaic Law appear to be deficient in the life-giving qualities of the Natural Law. How can such a law be 'holy' (Romans 7:12)? It is as if the 'New Perspective on Paul' never happened.

The last part of the book, from p. 431 onwards launches into 'the justification debate'. One feels that was probably not necessary or even a particularly good idea. The treatment of Romans 4-5 is not particularly well done. Also, when discussing 'New Creation' the secondary literature is dealt with in large footnotes rather than taken on in the main text. The claim that Jesus did not come to launch a theocracy, but something of

a less visible order, with its target of Neocalvinism is not without merit but needs more than writing that Christians have a new creation rule, with faith working through love and new *stoicheia* (Galatians 6:14; p. 444). Since under the New Covenant of Grace there will now be forgiveness, therefore in Matthew 5:38 Jesus commands are not a clarification of the law. He is giving something else while leaving law alone (p. 454). Our Lord's statements about divorce presupposed there would be no death penalty for adultery, so it 'cannot be an elaboration of the OT law' (p. 455). Christ brought the commandments to eschatological fulfilment by his words and deeds. This is a plausible case, but just what this means isn't totally clear.

The summary-like conclusion does not add very much. The index is a little odd: e.g., W. J. Lyons' book *Canon and Exegesis* is mentioned a few times in the text, but is absent from the index. Yet, notwithstanding that the first half of the book seems more successful than the second, the work as a whole is a major intellectual and spiritual achievement. Here we have a Christian thinker who can combine biblical studies, classical and Reformed theology with the history of political thought, and do it with some style.

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*William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England.* By W. B. Patterson. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-19-968152-5. ix + 265 pp. £65.

W. B. Patterson's *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* is an engaging, thematic study of one of the most influential theologians in late sixteenth and early seventeenth century Britain. This is not a linear, biographical account of William Perkins (1558–1602), but a close examination of the various roles that he fulfilled. Perkins is held up like a prized jewel and the reader is brought in to appreciate his life and thought from various angles, at each point having opportunity to consider the unique contribution that he made to English Protestantism.

The introduction and first chapter set the scene for the rest of the book. Patterson offers a brief overview of William Perkins's life in the introduction and the first chapter fleshes out the context for Perkins's life and ministry by providing an overview of the church during the reign of Elizabeth I. Patterson draws attention to the various flashpoints that occurred between conformists and Puritans, such as the vestiarian controversy of the mid-1560s, noting the unsettled, polemical and stormy nature of the church during this period.

The following five chapters examine William Perkins in a series of roles that he filled throughout his life: apologist, theologian, pastor, preacher and social reformer. In Chapter Two, Perkins's role as an apologist for the Church of England is given due consideration. Patterson argues that Perkins's *A Reformed Catholike* (1597) was written both to show those within the Church of England that where Protestant doctrine differed from Catholic teaching it did so because it had been reformed in light of Scripture and to win over those outside the church. Likewise, he argues that *A Warning against the Idolatrie of the Last Times and an Instruction Touching Religious or Divine Worship* (1601) was written to defend the Church of England's worship. This portrayal of Perkins as an apologist for the Church of England, and not only as one of its leading theologians, is perhaps one of the most important contributions of the book. Chapter Three assesses Perkins's soteriology, with particular reference to his doctrine of predestination. Patterson argues for the consistency of Perkins's doctrine of salvation with that of the Thirty-Nine Articles and demonstrates the influence of Perkins's publications on the Continent, especially in the lead up to the Synod of Dort. In Chapter Four, Patterson considers Perkins's practical divinity, claiming that Perkins was the 'founder of English Protestant casuistry' (p. 113) and that his teachings on conscience were of great importance in his own day. In Chapter Five, Perkins's instructions on preaching, as found in *The Arte of Prophecying* (1607), are considered. For Perkins the key aim of preaching was to deliver (by heart) the key meaning, doctrines and applications of the passage being expounded. Perkins was not the only person calling for clearer and more direct language in English preaching, but Patterson claims that his voice was important nonetheless. In Chapter Six, Patterson proceeds to consider Perkins's social ethics. He challenges Christopher Hill's selective reading of Perkins and instead argues that Perkins sought to further 'the common good' (p. 161). Patterson argues that the focal point for this social vision was the parish, which had gained increased importance in the sixteenth century.

The final two chapters focus on Perkins's legacy. In Chapter Seven, Patterson examines William Bishop's responses to *A Reformed Catholike*, which were published in 1604 and 1607 (after Perkins's death in 1602). As Perkins could not respond to these critiques, Robert Abbot and Anthony Wotton defended his arguments. Patterson argues that this dispute over Perkins's work highlights the on-going significance of his publications for the English Church. Chapter Eight provides a more wide-ranging survey of Perkins's legacy. Amongst other things, Patterson notes the widespread publication of Perkins's works; his influence on key individuals, such as

William Ames; and the importance of his works in theological disputes, such as those at the Synod of Dort.

Though Patterson offers an overwhelmingly positive account of Perkins, one of the central arguments of the book is likely to divide opinion. Patterson repeatedly insists that Perkins was not a Puritan. In his conclusion, Patterson offers his most explicit statement on the issue: 'Perkins was not a Puritan or even a moderate Puritan, terms that suggest opposition to the established Church' (p. 218). Whether one agrees with this argument or not depends on how one defines a Puritan. By his own terms, Patterson is of course right. Perkins cannot be regarded as a Puritan on the basis of opposition to the established Church of England, as he was a leading thinker within it. However, those that are inclined to think of the relationship between conformists and Puritans more in terms of a continuum, understanding Puritans as 'the hotter sort of Protestants', are less likely to be convinced by this in-out dichotomy. By Patterson's own admission, while Perkins did not identify as a Puritan 'he did not dismiss their efforts to achieve an inward purity, either' (p. 49). Perkins's strict Calvinist theology and Reformed piety might also be viewed as suggestive of a more Puritan spirit. Furthermore, Perkins's writings did exercise a great level influence on later Puritans. As such, the debate as to how closely Perkins should be aligned with the Puritan movement is likely to continue.

Though some readers will no doubt have misgivings over this line of argumentation, they will still find much to appreciate in this sympathetic study of Perkins. Patterson emphasises Perkins's leading role within the Elizabethan Church and reveals how he influenced English Protestantism in more ways than is usually appreciated. This is a highly readable study of a hugely important figure. It will no doubt be an important point of reference for those interested in William Perkins for the foreseeable future.

*Russell Newton, University of Edinburgh*

*Neo-Calvinism and the French Revolution.* Edited by James Eglinton and George Harinck. London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2014. ISBN: 978-0-567-65663-6. xii + 210 pp. £65.00.

This collection of essays addresses the Dutch 19th and 20th century theological movement called Neo-Calvinism and its relationship to the French Revolution. This publication is the result of the European Neo-Calvinism Conference, held in Paris in 2012 with the same title. As with most other 19th century movements, the French Revolution functions as an important intellectual point of reference for Neo-Calvinism. Its eleven chapters by a Dutch-American-Scottish group of authors put this relationship in

both historical and theological perspective. In both fields the book makes significant contributions and its relevance pertains to both the academy and the vicarage. For the latter, however, the historical chapters will be of less interest.

Five chapters concern the historical core of the encounter of Neo-Calvinism with the French Revolution. Interestingly, in all these chapters the classic view on Neo-Calvinism as an anti-revolutionary movement is nuanced significantly. James Bratt demonstrates in a highly informative chapter that Abraham Kuyper's views on the revolution are far from uniquely negative, but have different layers. While criticising its unbelief, Kuyper hailed its strive for freedom. George Harinck demonstrates that for Bavinck the Revolution was not really an important issue. The occasions Bavinck does address the issue, he has a much more historical approach different from Kuyper's and Groen's rhetoric. In a broad overview, Mark Elliot puts the Neo-Calvinist response in the context of the manifold 19th century reactions to the Revolution, with a particular focus on the work of François-René de Chateaubriand. In this very dense chapter he concludes that Chateaubriand's emphasis on providence could be of benefit to the Neo-Calvinist account of the Revolution. Furthermore, Hugo Den Boer argues that, unlike what is commonly claimed, the Neo-Calvinism should not be explained as a reaction to the French Revolution, but rather as rooted in what Den Boer terms the historical revolution: the slow and gradual birth of historical consciousness. Covolo's chapter has a different aim. He interestingly attempts to provide a thick account of the Revolution by looking not only at its ideas but at the bottom-up cultural practice of fashion. In doing so Covolo complements the focus on ideas as evidenced by Groen revealing both overlap and differences. Klei's chapter is also historical, but has a reception-historical focus. It reveals how Groen van Prinsterer's anti-revolutionary legacy has operated in Dutch Christian politics until the present day.

The remaining chapters have a more cultural-theological focus and understand Neo-Calvinism not as a mere historical phenomenon but as a theological tradition with contemporary relevance. James Eglinton's relatively lengthy but very interesting chapter deals with the issue of multilingualism. In line with the historical chapters, he shows Kuyper to be ambiguous towards the Revolution's strive towards monolingualism. Bavinck provides Eglinton with the tools to balance the negative view of many Protestants on multilingualism: 'God is found to be glorious in every language' (p. 60). Of great interest and relevance is also the chapter by Matthew Kaemingk. He creatively uses the way Neo-Calvinism identifies the French Revolution as a religion and applies it afresh to the contemporary French concept of *laïcité*. Using the ban on headscarves issued

by the French government in 2004 as a case study, Kaemingk convincingly demonstrates that *laïcité* has indeed all the characteristics of a religion, and what is more: a very dogmatic and proselytising one. The same relevance of this Neo-Calvinist analysis is shown by Alissa Wilkinson in a fascinating comparison as she sees Kuyper's criticism on the Revolution mirrored in Krzysztof Kieślowksi's *Three Colours* film trilogy. On entirely different note, Hans Burger deals with Kuyper's doctrine of Scripture. He points out that Kuyper's view on Scripture is ultimately unable to escape the quest for absolute certainty of modern foundationalism and is as such not sufficiently anti-revolutionary. In a beautiful chapter, Wolter Huttinga puts forward Bavinck's defence of theology as queen of the sciences. He argues that, in line with Bavinck, we can continue to see theology as queen of the sciences, albeit 'not as a ruler, but more as the *eschaton* of the sciences, as 'a mystical vision' (p. 154).

While the chapters in this collection of essays are of high quality, there are some weaknesses. The density of the chapters of Elliot and Den Boer is a hindrance to the reader. Unlike the other chapters, Klei's article lacks accuracy in English, spelling and references. One also wonders about the absence of a logical sequence of the chapters. More importantly, some chapters seem at odds with the overall theme of the book. The essays of Klei and Covolo do not deal with Neo-Calvinism, but with anti-revolutionary politics: an associated but distinct movement. To be clear, Groen was not a Neo-Calvinist, something which unfortunately remains unclear throughout the book. The other way around, the chapters by Burger and Huttinga, do not really cover the French Revolution. Instead, they are dogmatic essay on the theology of Neo-Calvinism. Consequently, the chapters of, for example, Klei and Burger are deprived of common ground. This endangers the focus and the unity of the book. Notwithstanding these critical remarks, this book deserves praise for its considerable contribution to the study of the history of Reformed thought and for demonstrating the lasting relevance of the Neo-Calvinist tradition.

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*For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America*. By Sean Michael Lucas. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Company, 2015. ISBN: 978-1-62995-106-5. 368 pp. £13.71.

As a prominent leader within conservative American Presbyterianism, Sean Michael Lucas's irenic efforts to expose the controversial history of Southern Presbyterianism are well known and greatly respected. This time he has given us a timely history of twentieth century Southern Presbyterianism in the midst of what may be a cultural shift in its conserva-

tive successor, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). Though not the first history of the PCA, Lucas's account stands apart from previous works in many ways. Indeed, most readers of Lucas's well-researched account will find very few issues to contend with. However, those few issues are very important if the purpose of this volume is to be honest about the PCA's roots and if further progress in the PCA is to be made.

Lucas begins with an overview of the entire volume by defining important dates, people, organizations, etc. and how the plurality of theological voices in conservative Southern Presbyterianism has contributed to an identity crisis that the PCA is still wrestling with to this day. Nonetheless, what continues to unite the continuing church, the PCA, and the previous conservative elements of the PCUS is the inerrancy of Scripture, the Reformed faith, and the Great Commission.

As with several other mainline Protestant denominations, the seeds for Protestant liberalism began to be sown in the late 19th century. With few initially expressing concern, several prominent ministers within the PCUS began spreading their progressive ideas through the existing pedagogical infrastructure – sermons, journals, and seminaries. The spread of their influence was so swift that conservatives were ill-equipped organizationally to confront this progressive wing within the PCUS. By the late 1920s, the doctrine of the spirituality of the church and full subscription to the Westminster Standards as the doctrinal standard of the PCUS came under attack at the General Assembly level. By 1940, conservative voices no longer were heard and historic doctrinal stances no longer defended.

The conservative response to these changes was slow and their attempts to win back the PCUS were ill-fated. Through several organizational efforts, they devoted the several decades to turn the tide in their favour. Their efforts culminated in the establishment of the *Southern Presbyterian Journal* in 1941 followed by several other organizations including Concerned Presbyterians (1964), Presbyterian Evangelistic Fellowship (1964), Reformed Theological Seminary (1966), Presbyterian Churchmen United (1969) and the Executive Committee for Overseas Evangelism (1970). However, the writing on the wall became clearer in later years and many within the conservative ranks began seriously entertaining the idea of departure from the PCUS. By 1971, representatives from organizations listed above were appointed to serve on the newly formed Continuing Church Steering Committee 'for the continuation of a Presbyterian Church loyal to the Scriptures and the Reformed faith' and by the end of 1973, the PCA was founded. Notably, conservatives did not universally embrace this endeavour and several prominent conservative leaders chose to stay within the PCUS to continue their efforts to reform from the inside.

In one of Lucas's most compelling arguments embedded throughout the narrative, he is able to demonstrate how both liberals and conservatives within the PCUS espoused social reform at different points in history despite the conservatives' doctrine of the spirituality of the church. Indeed, such engagement with the broader American society is one of the reasons why conservatives sought to maintain their status as a mainline Presbyterian denomination. To varying degrees, liberal Protestantism in the National Council of Churches, of which the PCUS was a member at the protest of conservatives, had indicated support for communism, centralization, and integration. In contrast, most conservatives within the PCUS advocated outright rejection of those positions and supported free market capitalism, decentralization, and segregation. But more than their positions, the real difference between the two tribes was *how* the reform was to be carried out – liberals pursued social reform often at the expense of personal salvation while conservatives pursued personal salvation and anticipated social reform as a consequence of the former. A commitment to this biblical imperative was exactly why conservatives had fought for confessional integrity and why segregation eventually took a back seat amongst conservatives.

Overall, *For a Continuing Church* provides a helpful and engaging history of the PCUS and the PCA. Yet, there are some issues in Lucas's historical narrative that remain unresolved. Though some might argue this particular issue is outside the scope of the author's intent, Lucas's disregard for any mention of the Korean Language Presbyteries in the PCA and how it was that such an entity could come into existence soon after the PCA's founding leaves us wanting. After all, if segregation was initially one of the major flaws, if not the only one, in the motivational axis for reform in the PCUS, it seems as though a thorough discussion is warranted for the creation of presbyteries dominated by a single ethnic minority that currently comprises roughly 12% of the PCA. At least a short discussion on how the founding narrative of the PCA could allow for such an entity to exist seems necessary. Similarly, we also wonder why such a significant minority (or any minority for that matter) is not represented in the ten endorsements listed in the first pages of the volume.

Secondly, and more importantly, the broader narrative of the conservative wing of the PCUS seems to warrant a discussion on the possibility of the vestiges of racism carrying over into the PCA during its early years and how that may have contributed to its current climate. Though Lucas mentions how the Continuing Church Steering Committee of 1971 officially reiterated its determination for racial inclusivity, we are left wondering how effectively this was actually carried out. Despite the fact that the majority of conservatives within the PCUS were advo-

cates for segregation in the decades prior to the PCA's founding, we are not provided with sufficient information regarding their views after they joined the PCA. We are given the impression that those particular PCA founders who had previously advocated segregation had a sudden change of heart when in fact several insiders and prominent founders who wrote the PCA's earlier histories continued to demonstrate indifference toward segregation and were vocal supporters of segregation leading up the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

History has shown us that ethnic/racial tensions can only be resolved at the satisfaction of the victims, not the perpetrators. Continued silence concerning the founding generation's ethnocentric tendencies and the climate they helped to create may actually hurt the PCA's ability to fulfil the Great Commission and its desire to be a mainline denomination. Analogically, attempts by the Japanese government to close the chapter on Imperial Japan's involvement in trafficking women for the pleasure of its soldiers by paying off these former victims have encountered great resistance and disappointment by historians, human rights groups, and the women themselves. With the current Japanese government continuing to whitewash history by failing to mention Imperial Japan's role in human trafficking and enshrining those who oversaw trafficking operations, the international community continues to rally around these women as the issue is clearly far from resolved. Though not similar in magnitude, similar failure to fully address the possibility of racism carrying over into the early years of the PCA may unnecessarily perpetuate a cynical attitude of unbelief by external observers in the progress that has already been made. Indeed, what is going to impress outside observers, particularly non-Christians, is not the precision of the PCA's Calvinism or Presbyterianism but the power of the gospel demonstrated through a love that transcends race, class, age, and culture.

Overall, Lucas has given us an impressive account of Southern Presbyterianism leading up to the founding of the PCA. The footnotes and bibliography alone will prove to be an excellent resource for further research. As questions of race and multi-ethnicity in the future of the PCA have recently come to the forefront, a thorough analysis of the historical context of Southern Presbyterianism can indeed be a useful aid to understanding the PCA's current situation and how the PCA can move forward. And yet, without undermining what has already been accomplished by the PCA's current leaders, this highly anticipated volume leaves us with some unresolved questions about the ethnocentric baggage of the PCA's founding generation and the culture they helped to initially create.

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