

REVIEWS & RESPONSES

Review: Terry L. Johnson, *Worshipping with Calvin: Recovering the Historic Ministry and Worship of Reformed Protestantism* (E. P. Books, 2014). ISBN 978-0852349366. Pb, 8.5 x 5.5, 433 pp. 23.99. And, *Serving with Calvin: Leading and Planning Services of Worship in the Reformed Church* (E. P. Books, 2015). ISBN 978-1783971176. Pb, 8.5 x 5.5, 400 pp. 20.99. Reviewed by Barry Waugh (presbyteriansofthepast.com).

Many years ago I was conversing with my friend, Rev. Doug Petersen of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, about this, that, and of course, books. I asked him if he had read a title that had been recently released, and he said that he had. I asked him what he thought of it. He responded, “It’s another ain’t it awful book.” You may know what an “ain’t it awful” book is. It goes on for page after page and chapter after chapter decrying the evils of some institution, organization, movement, or entity, then in the end the author offers no solution to the litany of problems he presented. Thus, an “ain’t it awful” book exposes what is wrong while offering no solution to the problem. Readers are left to gritting their teeth in defiance of the system, steaming over the wickedness of the situation, joining protest societies, or hopefully, looking for another book that does provide a solution. As I began Dr. Terry L. Johnson’s book, *Worshipping with Calvin*, I thought, another “ain’t it awful book,” as he discussed some of the views of worship common in churches today. *HOWEVER*, and I emphasize *HOWEVER*, *Worshipping with Calvin* and *Serving with Calvin* are *NOT* “ain’t it awful” books! The author not only points out the problems of some current perspectives on worship, but he also develops the historical-theological case for rediscovering Reformed worship through the writings of Calvin and many others. The second book, *Serving with Calvin*, takes the case developed in *Worshipping* and applies it comprehensively to the worship ministry of a church. What is more, Dr. Johnson has initiated and implemented the lessons of his books during the years of his ministry at Independent Presbyterian Church (IPC) in Savannah since he accepted his call in 1987.

First, a general overview of the plan of the two books will be helpful. For simplicity, the two books will be abbreviated in this review as *Worshipping* and *Serving*. Following his introduction, Dr. Johnson divides *Worshipping* into two main sections, “The Importance of Reformed Worship and Ministry: An Overview,” which presents the exegetical and

historical case, and the theological case for Reformed worship and ministry. The second section, lengthier by far, is “The Strength of Reformed Worship and Ministry,” which is subdivided into worship being “God-Centered, Bible-Filled” (two chapters), “Gospel-Structured,” “Church-Aware,” and “Spirit-Dependent.” The book concludes with a forty-seven page bibliography and end notes. The second book, *Serving*, has an introduction, with chapters titled, “Preparing the Minister,” “Preparing the Services,” two chapters on “Administering the Elements,” “Preparing the Setting,” “Preparing the Congregation,” “Mistakes to Avoid,” and “Final Considerations.” In this book footnotes were used instead of end notes. Included in the appendices is a copy of IPC’s order of worship. There is also a twenty page bibliography and both Scripture passage and name indices.

The books evidence the author’s life of study of, concern for, and practice of well ordered worship. He has read comprehensively in the field books by authors with a variety of views including those not friendly to his perspective. One aspect of the books is that he has found nuggets not only in the historical and current publications that support his views, but also in those that have a different perspective. The variety of sources read have been brought into his discussions of each topic of the books.

If there is a single word that summarizes Dr. Johnson’s perspective, it is *Scripture*. The foundation of scriptural principles presented in *Worshipping* have the walls of application built upon them in *Serving*. For the author, worship involves the use of the Bible from its call through the benediction. Scripture is to be read, prayed, sung, preached, and confessed in services. The author observed that in some services there is very little use of the Bible. Sermons may have a brief passage of the Word read and a sermon that may or may not come from the passage. Over the years of Presbyterian history there have been occasions when general assemblies have noted the biblical illiteracy of their day and adopted resolutions decrying the problem and encouraging churches to correct the situation. Could some of the biblical illiteracy problem in current churches, particularly noted by the Presbyterian Church in America, be due to the paucity of the Word used in worship? If Scripture is not read, prayed, sung, preached, and confessed, then members and officers have a limited exposure to the Bible on the day set apart for the worship of God.

RESPONSES critical of articles and reviews may be submitted for consideration for publication by sending drafts to the editorial address. Please contact the editor at editor@cpjournal.com, beforehand to obtain submission requirements and preferences. When possible, the subject of a negative or possibly controversial review may be contacted beforehand for any appropriate response for publication along with the review, and the reviewer will be given an opportunity for a response. If required, responses and replies may continue in subsequent issues.

The decline in use of the Bible may be because it is *perceived* by many as an obtuse, cryptic, inconsistent, tedious, boring, and irrelevant book. I have been in services when the minister reading the Word has apologized for reading what he thought was too long a passage, that is, eight or ten verses. In the case of some of the more tongue twisting and difficult to read passages in the Bible, when and if they are read, I have heard ministers comment that they were sorry for the dullness of the text and they hoped the listeners would be able to stay awake. I do not think that such comments come from malicious intent, rather they stem from a lack of consideration of the implications of the comments. John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, William Tyndale, and other persecuted translators of the Bible from history would find such an attitude to the Word of God not only strange but disconcerting. The Bible is the word of life, why should anyone ever apologize for reading it in worship? It should be remembered that the purpose of the Bible is to *reveal* and not *conceal* God's will. As observed in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1:7, those aspects of Scripture pertaining to salvation "are so clearly propounded and opened in some place of scripture or other, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." Yes, there are difficult portions of the Bible, yes, ministers and teachers sometimes have to dig for the meaning of a passage, but the great majority of the Word, especially as it is related to the Gospel message, is simple, plain, and clear. The Bible is not a cryptogram. If it is, The Gideons might as well give up their Bible distribution program. Yes, Philip interpreted Isaiah to the Ethiopian eunuch, but it must be kept in mind that the canon was not complete and the authoritative interpreter of the Old Testament, which is the New Testament, was not available and the church was still in the apostolic age. The completed canon gives us the full revelation of God's will necessary for glorifying and enjoying him and it should be used fully in his worship.

Historically, the Reformed and Presbyterian denominations have been proponents of well educated ministers, versed in the biblical languages and theology, which is the way it should be, but clergy thus educated sometimes tend to the more difficult passages, with concepts more complex to grasp, and texts suited more to their own exegetical interests than the guidance needed by the congregants. Even though Reformed ministry should involve the preaching of *the whole counsel of God*, pastors sometimes locate their texts for preaching based on how much *ordo salutis* and how many Calvinist distinctives are present in the passage. Ministers need to make themselves preach the whole counsel of God and break the habit of exposition of their favorite portions of the Bible. If, as Dr. Johnson suggests, the Word is present in worship services not only in sermons, but also in prayers, confessions, hymns,

and readings, it will help to bring the whole Bible to the whole congregation. Dr. Johnson says repeatedly in both *Worshipping* and *Serving*, the Bible should be read in each service with an extended plan to read Genesis through Revelation over the years, and in conjunction with that, the sermons should be planned to cover systematically the books of the Word. Just as Scripture should be read from both testaments, *lectio continua*, and not merely favored selections, *lectio selecta*, sermons should also follow the books of the Bible. The Bible should abound in all aspects of worship.

In conclusion, the debates and divides over the proper way to worship the Lord will surely continue. We know from Scripture that the sons of Korah were judged for offering strange fire to the Lord (Numbers 16); Jesus said to the woman at the well that God is to be worshipped "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24); and that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are to be worshipped with "reverence and awe" (Hebrews 12:28). Dr. Johnson's books provide a comprehensive historical, theological, and ecclesiological foundation in *Worshipping* that is applied in fine detail to every aspect of worship in *Serving*. He has given a balanced presentation of his case with consideration of those with differing views while providing answers to just about any question one can come up with respecting worship theology and practice. However, there is one great problem with the books, those who might benefit the most from reading them likely will not. However, I would like to encourage those who have not read regarding the theological and historical foundation for worship and its implementation to read *Worshipping* and *Serving*, then consider how services should be Scripture filled and God honoring as the gospel call goes forth and spiritual food for growth in grace is proclaimed.

Review: Nicholas P. Lunn, *The Original Ending of Mark: A New Case for the Authenticity of Mark 16:9–20* (Pickwick Publications, 2014). ISBN 978-1625646286. Pb, 390 pp. Reviewed by Benjamin Shaw, Associate Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary.

Introduction

In the 1880s, there were two publications that were to introduce a permanent change to New Testament (NT) textual criticism. One was the publication of the NT of the English Revised Version (ERV) of the Bible in 1881. This was the first official attempt to revise the KJV on the basis of new discoveries of Greek manuscripts and other NT textual resources. In 1882 B. F. Westcott and F. J. A. Hort (WH) published *Introduction to the New Testament in the Original Greek: With Notes on Selected Readings*.

Throughout the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries, many copies of the Greek New Testament and copies of

ancient versions had been discovered. These materials were collated by NT scholars. The differences between the resulting text and the Textus Receptus were of sufficient quantity and quality that it appeared to the community of NT scholars that it was necessary to reevaluate the NT text, and to produce a new translation on the basis of this new knowledge. The ERV was the translation that resulted. The work by WH set out the principles and theories that sought to explain how the variations apparent in the new discoveries had developed.

Though many passages in the New Testament were affected by these studies, perhaps none was more affected than Mark 16:9-20. The oldest extant Greek manuscripts, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, did not contain these verses. Given the age and quality of these two manuscripts, textual scholars began to consider the idea that perhaps these twelve verses did not belong to the original Gospel of Mark. That view soon became the majority view among NT scholars, though there was a vocal minority that did not agree.

In the following period, the consensus among NT textual scholars became the view that Mark 16:9-20 was a second-century attempt to give an ending to Mark, the original ending having somehow been lost at a very early stage. More recently, however, a new view has arisen, which is that 16:8 is the original ending of Mark. As a result of these views, modern translations of the NT include an explanatory note on Mark 16:9-20. The note in the ERV read, "The two oldest Greek manuscripts, and some other authorities, omit from ver. 9 to the end. Some other authorities have a different ending to the Gospel." Later translations had longer notes. The first edition of the RSV NT placed these verses in an italicized footnote, with a brief explanation of the rationale. At that point, there was a fair amount of negative public response, so that the second edition of the RSV NT placed the verses back in the main body of the text, but it retained the explanatory note.

More recent translations, such as the ESV and the NLT have followed the approach of the RSV second edition. The explanatory note in the ESV is typical of most recent translations: "Some manuscripts end the book with 16:8, others include verses 9-20 immediately after verse 8. At least one manuscript inserts additional material after verse 14; some manuscripts include after verse 8 the following: *But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation.* These manuscripts then continue with verses 9-20."

The 2011 edition of the NIV has a similar note, but has followed the approach of the RSV first edition, by placing Mark 16:9-20 in italics, in what is essentially a footnote under a heading that says, "The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9-20."

These explanatory notes seem to make it clear that Mark 16:9-20 is a section that was not part of the original Gospel of Mark. The result of this has been to create doubt in the minds of many readers of the Bible regarding these verses. Are they part of the Word of God or not? Some recent commentaries on Mark, such as that by William Lane, do not even cover these verses in the commentary. It also introduces problems for those who are preaching through Mark. What is to be done with these verses? Should they be preached? Should the preaching of Mark end abruptly with the ending of verse 8? How is a pastor to speak to his congregation about the notes in their Bibles that cast doubt on the originality of the Longer Ending of Mark?

Definitions

Before we go farther, it is necessary to define some terms for the uninitiated.

Manuscript. A manuscript is a hand-written copy of all or part of the Greek NT or an early version (translation). Some of these, such as Codex Vaticanus, are relatively complete. Other manuscripts are fragmentary, sometimes containing only partial lines of text.

Codex. A codex is a book-like manuscript in which separate leaves are sewn together. The codex began to replace the scroll early in the Christian era.

Codex Vaticanus is a codex that was held in the Vatican library, and known to some extent before the nineteenth century, but it was not fully treated until the late nineteenth century.

Codex Sinaiticus is a codex that was discovered at the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai, in the middle of the nineteenth century.

Collation is the careful comparison of manuscripts, making note of differences among manuscripts. It is a step in the process of deciding the correct reading of the text in cases of disagreement.

Longer Ending (LE) of Mark is the text of Mark 16:9-20 as found in most translations.

Shorter Ending (SE) of Mark is the following: "But they reported briefly to Peter and those with him all that they had been told. And after this, Jesus himself sent out by means of them, from east to west, the sacred and imperishable proclamation of eternal salvation."

The Freer Logion is an addition to the LE which is found in Codex Washingtonianus, between verses 14 and 15. It reads as follows: "And they excused themselves, saying, 'This age of lawlessness and unbelief is under Satan, who does not allow the truth and power of God to prevail over the unclean things of the spirits. Therefore reveal thy righteousness now'-thus they spoke to Christ. And Christ replied to them, 'The term of years for Satan's power has been fulfilled, but other terrible

things draw near. And for those who have sinned I was delivered over to death, that they may return to the truth and sin no more; that they may inherit the spiritual and incorruptible glory of Righteousness which is in heaven.” James Moffatt included it in his translation of the New Testament. The codex was discovered by Charles Freer in 1906, hence the name.

External evidence has to do with the content of manuscripts. The comparison of manuscripts by collation shows all the different variations that occur in the course of hand-copying texts.

Internal evidence is evidence drawn from within the text of the gospel itself. The significance of this evidence will become clearer in the following discussion.

Text-types refer to the development of the WH theory that we have four types of texts represented in the manuscript history: Alexandrian, which originated in Egypt; Western, which is found in the Old Latin, the Syriac Peshitta, and western early church fathers; Caesarean, which originated in the eastern Mediterranean area; and the Byzantine, which represents the majority of Greek manuscripts tracing to the eastern part of the Roman Empire,

The New Case

Given the current state of debate on the ending of Mark, Lunn became convinced it was time for a new examination of the evidence. His first chapter is an introduction to the problem, setting out the main issues. He follows this with two chapters dealing with the external evidence. Chapters 4-7 deal with internal evidences, devoting two chapters to linguistic evidence and one chapter each to literary evidence and thematic evidence. He then devotes a chapter to a comparison of the LE with the endings of the other gospels. He follows this with a chapter on miscellaneous issues. Chapter 10 deals with the cause of the problem, seeking to provide an answer to the question why the LE is missing in some manuscripts. The final chapter summarizes his conclusions. The book is by far the most thorough treatment of all the issues that has been brought into print.

WH, in their 1882 work, devoted about twenty-four pages of double-column small print to a discussion of the external evidence. In a 2015 publication, Philip Wesley Comfort devoted nine pages to a discussion of the external evidence. Internal evidences have been dealt with piecemeal in a variety of publications. But no work has attempted to draw all the evidence together in one coherent whole. If Lunn accomplished nothing else, he has provided a standard against which all future discussion of the issues must be measured.

For Lunn, there are nine problems with the current consensus that the LE is a late addition to a gospel that originally ended either at verse 8 or lost a different longer ending. First, there is the fact that early Christian preaching consistently

referred not only to the resurrection of Jesus, but to his appearance to witnesses and his meeting with disciples. If the LE is removed from Mark, these elements are not present. Second, early creedal formulations in the NT and in the early church refer to these post-resurrection appearances of Christ. Third, the other canonical gospels end not just with the resurrection, but with Jesus' appearance to witnesses and meetings with the apostles. It would be odd if Mark did not also include this material. Fourth, Mark includes predictions of the resurrection which are not fulfilled if the LE is eliminated. Fifth, if Mark ends at 16:8, there is no other ancient work that ends in such a fashion, so that Mark is without any comparison. Sixth, ending Mark at 16:8 leaves no parallel with the beginning of the gospel. Seventh, the view that Mark ends at 16:8 is a twentieth-century development. In the history of interpretation, even those who had doubts about the originality of the LE did not consider an ending at 16:8 to be a possibility. Eighth, if the gospel originally ended at verse 8, there is no mention of it in the anti-Christian polemic of the second and third centuries. Ninth, while ending the gospel at 16:8 is a common view in some circles, not all scholars are convinced by the argumentation.

The External Evidence

In these two chapters, Lunn produces the most thorough examination of the external evidence that has yet appeared in print. The manuscript evidence shows five different endings to the Gospel of Mark. Some manuscripts end at 16:8. Many manuscripts have the LE alone. One manuscript has the LE with the addition of the Freer Logion. No manuscripts end with the SE alone. Some manuscripts end with the SE followed by the LE.

Those manuscripts that end at 16:8 total about a dozen. Those that end with the LE alone total more than a thousand. Further, the LE is found to be a majority in all four text-types. The manuscripts containing the SE, or ending at 16:8 are limited to the Alexandrian text-type.

Scripture citations in the early church fathers also come into consideration under external evidences. While a handful of the fathers reflect ignorance of the LE, most are aware of it, and it is used by Irenaeus, a second-century writer. The LE is also included in Tatian's *Diatesseron*, which is a second-century interweaved harmony of the four gospels. There is also evidence that the LE was known by other second and third-century writers that Lunn discusses in detail.

Linguistic Evidence

The common view here is expressed in the fact that there are seventeen words in the LE that are not otherwise used in Mark, or that are used differently here than elsewhere in Mark. That seems like a very high number, and is usually taken as evidence that the LE was written by someone other

than Mark. Once again, Lunn tries the evidence. What he finds is that in sections of Mark that are of similar length, nine to twelve words unique in Mark appear. Further, the section immediately preceding the LE also has 17 unique words. He found similar results from an examination of sections of similar lengths in the other gospels. In other words, the seventeen unique words in the LE prove nothing about the “non-Markan” character of the text. After a careful and detailed consideration of the language of the LE, he concludes that the LE is as much Markan as is any other section of the gospel.

Literary Evidence

This portion of the book is really new to the discussion, because Lunn uses literary considerations that have only recently begun to be used in biblical studies. Thus he considers such things as the use of *inclusio* (language or terms that serve to bracket a larger section of material), microstructural elements, parallelism, and macrostructural elements. The conclusion of his investigation is that the LE establishes an *inclusio* with 1:1-20; that the LE conforms to microstructural elements found in other parts of the gospel; that there is a formal parallelism with the immediately preceding section; and that the LE also correlates with 5:21-6:13 (a major turning-point in the gospel) at a macrostructural level.

Thematic Evidence

Here Lunn considers key themes in the gospel and how the LE relates to them. Some of these themes are: passion predictions, the New Exodus, the new Elijah, the move from fear to faith, and the proclamation of the gospel. His conclusion is that “all point to an essential unity between the last twelve verses and the rest of the gospel.”

The LE and the Gospels

Here Lunn examines the common idea that the LE was cobbled together in the second century by drawing from material found in the other gospels. This would seem to be an intuitive explanation: someone finds the gospel of Mark without an ending, or with an entirely unexpected ending, and proceeds to develop one by referring to the other gospels. However, even though all four gospels end with the same general sort of material—resurrection, appearance to witnesses, meeting with and teaching the disciples—there are very few specific points of contact with Matthew and John, and it appears that Luke is more familiar with Mark than vice versa.

The Cause of the Problem

Obviously there is a problem. Some manuscripts do not have the LE at all. Others have the SE plus the LE. At some point some copies lost the ending of Mark, and other copies were made from those exemplars. Lunn has a proposal, connected

with the fact that all of the problematic manuscripts come from the Alexandrian text-type. The proposal makes a certain amount of sense, but there is no need to go into it here. The real question is whether the loss of the LE was accidental or deliberate and at this point it is really impossible to determine.

Conclusion

The textual notes in most English versions of the Bible present a skewed view regarding the LE of Mark. It is most likely the case that if this were one verse missing from Codex Sinaiticus and from Codex Vaticanus instead of twelve even WH would have argued, based on the preponderance of the evidence, that those two manuscripts simply got it wrong. But a careful examination of all the evidence, both external and internal, makes it clear that in this case the two earliest and most complete extant manuscripts got it wrong.

My sense is that most NT scholars who hold that the LE of Mark is a late addition probably hold to it for the same reason most scientists hold to evolution. It is the common view and it is too much trouble to examine the case for oneself. Now that Lunn is in print with a thorough examination, the next generation will have to reevaluate what has been the majority opinion for over a century.

My own recommendation to each reader is to examine the work for himself. Even if the reader finds some of Lunn’s arguments less than convincing, the preponderance of the evidence is in favor of the LE of Mark being entirely original. As such it can be preached faithfully and without fear from the pulpits of our churches.

Review: John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson, *The Incarnation of God: The Mystery of the Gospel as the Foundation of Evangelical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015). ISBN 978-1433541872. Pb, 256 pp. \$21.99. Reviewed by Scott Cook.

The evangelical church of our age appears to be on a quest to discover everything except the deep theological truths of the Scripture. This sad reality is the impetus for John C. Clark and Marcus Peter Johnson’s new book, *The Incarnation of God*. Clark and Johnson have a diagnosis for the modern Evangelical delight in triviality, namely, that the modern church does not “sufficiently see and savor” (11) the essential, foundational mystery of the Christian faith, the incarnation. Hence, they offer this new volume on the incarnation as a stimulant for theological students, pastors, and informed laymen in order to draw our attention back to the mystery of God becoming man in Christ Jesus.

The Incarnation of God is laid out with eight chapters, spanning from the initial argument that the incarnation is the very center of Evangelical theology, all the way to how the

incarnation affects our view of marriage and sexuality. Chapter one sets out the incarnation as the highest mystery of the Christian faith that is at the center of the Christian message. After giving some basic principles of theological reflection on divine mystery from an orthodox orientation, Clark and Johnson summarize the ancient church's formulation of who Christ is in relationship to God and also to mankind. Then, they lay out the basic principles of their overall approach in the book: that *The Incarnation of God* is a theological rather than a practical reflection on the incarnation, that the goal of this work is to reflect theologically on the incarnation from the standpoint of confessional theology (particularly referring to the ecumenical creeds), and that the authors see themselves as working from an evangelical theological framework—that is, working from the standpoint of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation (40–43).

Chapter two reflects on the relationship of the incarnation to the Trinity. Clark and Johnson argue that the incarnation is essential in order to restore our fallen, broken knowledge of God. Through the incarnation, God reveals Himself as eternally and essentially triune. The incarnation, therefore, gives us insight not only into Christ, but also into the other two members of the Trinity. Christ reveals the Father to us not merely cognitively, but also as the only way to the Father. Because Christ unites us to Himself, we are thereby savingly united to the love of the Father which he shares with the Son eternally. Furthermore, it is through Christ that we come to know the Spirit of the Father and the Son, Who eternally proceeds from them both. Then Clark and Johnson give an able summary of the two words from the confessional tradition that summarize the relationship between Christ and the other members of the Trinity: *perichoresis* (the mutual indwelling of the three persons in one another) and *homoousias* (that the Father, Son, and Spirit share the exact same essence eternally).

Chapter three lays out how Christ reveals the attributes of God in and through His incarnation, focusing particularly on God's love, holiness, omnipotent freedom, and glory. While these different attributes are revealed to us in "parts" if you will, they are none the less metaphysically one in God, because God is a simple being. The great mystery of God's existence is revealed in that His attributes are fundamentally one, yet they are also indelibly Trinitarian and hence, are all equally properties of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (77).

Chapter four focuses on the humanity of Christ by raising the issue of whether Christ assumed a fallen human nature. After summarizing the standard Catholic, Protestant, and liberal Protestant answers on this question, Clark and Johnson argue that the most scandalous yet satisfying answer is that Christ assumed a fallen human nature in His incarnation. The authors clearly knew that this would be a controversial assertion, which might explain why they go to some length to argue

that this doctrine is found in numerous church fathers, as well as Luther, Calvin, John Williamson Nevin, and Abraham Kuypers. Helpfully, Clark and Johnson conclude this chapter with a section of affirmations and denials in order to clearly communicate what they do and do not intend in arguing that Christ assumed a fallen humanity (119–125).

Chapter five unfolds the vicarious nature of Christ's saving work. Every stage of Christ's life—birth, baptism, life, death, resurrection, and ascension—was all done in order that we might be saved. Christ assumed a fallen human nature that He might live a reconciling and redeeming life, and that through His flesh we might meet God and have an atonement for our sins.

Chapter six explains the contours of how Christ's atoning life brings us the blessings of salvation. Clark and Johnson channel the Calvinistic emphasis that all the blessings we gain from Christ are inseparable from His Person. We must be joined to Christ, therefore, in order to gain any benefit from the atoning life of Christ. After giving some explanation of the nature of union with Christ and how this brings us into union with the Triune God, the key parts of our union with Christ are explained (justification, sanctification, and adoption).

Chapter seven continues the theme of explaining salvation from the standpoint of union with Christ, focusing on how union with the incarnate Christ is fundamental to ecclesiology. Exploring the theme of how the incarnation influences our view of the nature of the church, the Word, and the sacraments, Clark and Johnson argue that one's ecclesiology can only go as far as one's soteriology; that is, only if one has a rich view of salvation as participation in the incarnate Christ will one have a high ecclesiology wherein the church corporately shares in the life of the Son through the Holy Spirit.

Chapter eight reflects on the importance of the incarnation for two areas of the Christian life not commonly associated with the enfleshing of the Son of God: marriage and sex. This chapter begins by arguing that the interpersonal *perichoretic* union of the Persons in the Godhead is analogically mirrored in the life of men and women who dwell with one another in communion as the image bearers of God. While this fallen world distorts marriage and sexuality, God's atoning life in our flesh paves the way for restored fellowship with God, and also mends the broken and marred marital and sexual relationships.

The Incarnation of God offers us a thorough, systematic, theological reflection on Christ's assumption of our flesh. Clark and Johnson offer a fairly technical presentation of the incarnation that will be of use to the professional theologian, while also making the work accessible to pastor, students, and serious laymen. All of this is certainly commendable. And yet, our overall evaluation of *The Incarnation of God* is negative due to serious theological concerns with Clark and Johnson's

approach to the incarnation. While this evaluation will not exhaust the various issues involved in the book, there are at least five concerning aspects of *The Incarnation of God* that those coming from a Confessional theological perspective will find highly problematic.

Concern for Classical Theism

While the idea of classical theism is not Clark and Johnson's central focus, their deviation from the classical doctrine of God is significant. In discussing the incarnation and the immutability of God, Clark and Johnson rightly note that any notion of divine immutability that renders God as "static, non relational, and unresponsive" is foreign to the Biblical conception of God. However, they then define the immutability of God as "the sense that he is perfectly consistent and constant in his nature and character," drawing this definition from John Leith (96). This is certainly true; but this definition does not do justice to the classic concept of the immutability of God. This language could be used to undercut the traditional view of immutability, that God is essentially unchangeable not only in his character but also in his very being. The idea of the eternity of God—that God does not experience time in his essence and hence experiences no successive moments—works hand in hand with God's unchangeability so that God is said not to experience any change whatsoever in His nature. It appears that Clark and Johnson have opted for this weaker metaphysical definition of immutability on purpose, and this concern is validated when Clark and Johnson discuss the corollary truth of the impassibility of God.

The notion of immutability that Clark and Johnson put forth causes them to reject *apatheia* as the "notion of the Greek philosophers" where "God cannot be affected by anything outside himself, and thus that God is without passions, or *pathos*. Not only incapable of suffering, God is without emotion, painful or pleasurable" (97). The problem here is that Clark and Johnson are not only rejecting unbiblical Greek notions of God; they are also rejecting the *apatheia* the very substance of classical theism. Stephen Charnock provides an excellent example of the classical view of the immutability and impassibility of God when he defines God's immutability as His being "unchangeable in His essence, nature, and perfections." Charnock includes far more than moral character in his definition, as is made more readily evident when he writes that God's "wisdom and power, his knowledge and will, are always the same. His essence can receive no alteration, neither by itself nor by any external cause" (editor's emphasis).¹ And it necessarily follows from this metaphysical view of immutability that God cannot experience any human emotion, which requires change, response to external factors, and biological responses. This connection is so necessary that Muller argues many Reformed Orthodox writers, like Charnock, felt no need

to speak on impassibility *per se*. Immutability itself implies impassibility.²

Classic theism, as it has been received by the Reformed tradition, has never accepted the idea that the immutable and impassible God is a meaningless abstraction; God is no pure *deus absconditus*. God is genuinely involved in the world and known by His creatures, but without compromising His perfect being that cannot change or experience emotion. The immutable and impassible God makes Himself known to us truly, though analogically. The Reformed tradition has argued that language that appears to imply God experiences emotion is actually anthropopathic³—that is, God is using human emotions as metaphors to express His will. The tradition makes the same sort of claims about those Scripture passages which appear to imply God changed Himself or His mind. Clark and Johnson are implying that we should jettison this conception of God as cold, sterile, and unbiblical. The metaphysical implications of such a move would require a whole sale rewriting of our doctrine of God and, hence, is rather problematic.

Concern over the fallen humanity of Christ

One of the central intentions of Clark and Johnson is to promote the Barthian/Torranceian notion of Christ's fallen humanity. They survey the contemporary options on this issue of Christ's human nature (the liberal Protestant position and the Catholic/Evangelical position) and conclude that both options dichotomize the incarnation: the liberal Protestant dichotomizes the incarnation from God, making Christ just like us, while the conservative Catholic/Evangelical dichotomizes the incarnation from us by teaching that Christ's human nature was a pure human nature, unlike our fallen nature (110).

Finding both of these options problematic, Clark and Johnson propose a more "satisfying" and "scandalous" answer, that Christ assumed our fallen nature. Christ invaded our fallen human condition "by penetrating the depths of our actual fallen human existence, cleansing our corruption at its root and eradicating our estrangement from God in his very person" (113). The idea that Christ assumed a fallen human nature in the incarnation is no mere theological speculation for Clark and Johnson. Christ assuming hypothetical (pre-fall) human nature, they argue, would only produce salvation for hypothetical sinners (113). They also use Basil of Caesarea to argue

1. Stephen Charnock, *Discourses upon the Existence and Attributes of God* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1979), 380.

2. Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, Ca. 1520 to Ca. 1725* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2003), vols. III, 310.

3. See Samuel Renihan, *God without Passions: A Primer* (Palmdale, CA: RBAP [Reformed Baptist Academic Press], 2015).

that failing to grasp the need for the fallen nature of Christ “is to fundamentally misunderstand the incarnation” (114).

Knowing that this position will prove controversial for most Evangelicals, Clark and Johnson offer five detailed points which outline their Christological proposal. First, they argue that they are following the teaching of the Apostle Paul, who taught in Romans 8 that Christ was made “in the likeness of sinful flesh (*sarx*).” They argue that *sarx* “generally” refers to our post-fall sinful human nature. Hence, Paul is arguing that Christ condemned sin by taking our sinful human nature. Second, they argue that the fallen human nature of Christ is necessary from a dogmatic standpoint. If Christ did not take on sinful flesh, then the incarnate flesh of Christ is merely a vehicle for the atoning death and resurrection of Christ. But the incarnation itself must be seen as an atoning act, and hence the assumption of human flesh needs to be of our sinful flesh in order for this assumption to be fundamentally redemptive. Third, they argue that Christ’s sinful human nature was sanctified immediately in His incarnation (121–122). Christ sinlessly assumed our fallen human nature by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit, so that the assumption of human flesh does not entail Christ actually sinning in any way. Fourth, the sanctification of Christ’s fallen human nature is immediate sanctification, not glorification. Christ’s humanity is not that which we will experience in heaven; Christ’s human nature was “continually and progressively sanctified” (123) throughout His life by the mortifying and vivifying power of the Spirit. Fifth, Christ must not be dichotomized from either God or man, He must be able to be fully united to both in order to be our mediator.

Despite these arguments, the notion of the fallen humanity of Christ remains problematic and should be rejected on several grounds. First, Paul’s use of *sarx* is rather complicated and should not be given a quick gloss when making such an important doctrinal argument. Paul uses *sarx* to refer generically to human nature without regard to sin in Romans 1:3, so Paul does not necessarily have fallen human flesh in mind in Romans 8:3. Clark and Johnson also ignore Paul’s language that Christ came “in the likeness of sinful flesh.” Lloyd-Jones argues convincingly that Paul uses the word “likeness” in order to safeguard our reflection on the incarnation from the idea that Christ assumed a fallen human nature. Christ, Lloyd-Jones argues, assumed flesh that was patterned off of our sinful flesh so that Christ experienced all the infirmities of living in a sinful world, yet His human nature was sinless like Adam’s in the garden. If Christ had come in sinful human

flesh, Paul would have no need to use “likeness;” he could have said “in sinful flesh” and left it at that. Hence, Clark and Johnson have come nowhere near proving that Romans 8:3 requires Christ to have assumed a fallen nature.⁴

As for the notion that the incarnation loses its atoning power if Christ assumed spotless human nature, this again needs further consideration. The Westminster Standards argue that Christ executes His role as Redeemer in all three of His offices, both in His estate of humiliation and in His exaltation. The catechism places Christ’s birth in the category of humiliation, giving the incarnation an important role in redemption. Far from treating the incarnation as a mere vehicle for redemption, those who do not wish to hold to the fallen humanity of Christ have other options for making the incarnation a significant act of redemption without resorting to Christ assuming a fallen human nature.

Clark and Johnson are forced to argue for the immediate sanctification of the humanity of Christ in order to safeguard His impeccability. However, this is the most significant feature of their Christology, and it is at this most fundamental point that their Christological position, which they appear to get from T. F. Torrance,⁵ begins to fall apart. Christ’s assuming fallen human nature would make his nature one with our post-fall nature, and this is essential for our redemption. However, according to Clark and Johnson, Jesus never existed in the state that we did after the fall and prior to redemption. Christ assumed a fallen human nature, but that nature was immediately sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This means that other than perhaps the very first second of Christ’s life, He did not live in our fallen human nature; He lived in a nature indwelt by the Holy Spirit, which means that Christ’s human nature was actually identical to the redeemed Christian’s nature after regeneration and before the resurrection. Why then could Christ make atonement for our sins in flesh which only corresponds to our nature post-regeneration any more than He could do so in flesh that corresponds to our nature pre-fall?

One must then also wonder whether Clark and Johnson have sufficiently guarded the impeccability of Christ in their construct. They claim that Christ both assumed a nature (and hence a mind, will, and affections) which was “decisively bent towards sin” (123) and also that the sanctification of Christ’s human nature was gradual throughout His life. How then could it be the case that Christ had an incompletely sanctified, fallen human nature, and yet did not sin even once? How could every area of Christ’s human nature have the effects of sin, yet that sin never influence a decision which Christ made? It would appear that there are two possible ways to solve this problem. First, if the human will of Christ was conceived in libertarian terms—so that even the most serious sinful inclinations in His human nature would not determine His decisions—then Christ’s fallen human nature would not

4. See Lloyd-Jones’ comments on Romans 8:3 in David Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Romans: An Exposition of Chapters 7:1-8:4: The Law: Its Functions and Limits* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974).

5. See Kevin Chiarot, *The Unassumed Is the Unhealed: The Humanity of Christ in the Christology of T.F. Torrance* (Eugene, Or.: Pickwick Publications, 2013).

necessarily lead Him to sin. However, Jonathan Edwards long ago demonstrated how problematic libertarian notions of the will are in general, and this would be no exception. To posit some relationship between the human will of Christ and the rest of His fallen nature such that He never sinned would actually, then, make the will of Christ similar to the pre-fall will of Adam. This would further make this an unattractive position for Clark and Johnson.

Second, one could argue that the nature of the incarnation, where the divine and the human are joined together, makes it so that the divine nature of Christ ensures that the human will would never succumb to temptation. The issue must be raised as to whether or not this is a violation of the Christological principle of dyothelitism. If the human will of Christ functions, metaphysically, as an extension of His divine nature and not His human nature, is there really a separate human will in Christ? I tend to think this construction could not adequately say that. Therefore, one can see how complicated and difficult the anthropology of an impeccable mediator with a sanctified but fallen human nature is, and, therefore, how unattractive this theological move is.

Concern over Incarnation and Revelation

Clark and Johnson speak of the incarnation from the very outset of the book in ways that indicate they might hold to a form of supralapsarian Christology (that Christ's incarnation is necessary for revelation, and not just for accomplishing and applying redemption). They argue that the incarnate Christ is "the very content and meaning of reality" (36). "The incarnation teaches us," write Clark and Johnson, "that just as there is no true knowledge of God the Father to be had independently of or remotely from God the Son, there is no true knowledge of humanity to be had independently of or remotely from the God who comes to us in and as the man Jesus" (36).

One might argue that Clark and Johnson are making these assertions in light of the reality of sin—that we can have no true knowledge of God apart from the incarnate Christ because of the effects of sin on our minds. The complication with this reading is that Clark and Johnson do not directly address this particular issue in the book. However, they speak of the incarnation as fundamental for Christian epistemology in general, not just for Christian epistemology after the fall (52–59). This reading is further confirmed in an interview about the book, when Johnson argued that the incarnation would be necessary for true knowledge of God regardless of the fall.⁶ This implies a fundamental reordering of the Reformed view of revelation, where Christ's incarnation is seen more as a vehicle for salvation than for revelation.

Concern over Union with Christ and Justification

One of the most troubling aspects of this work concerns the

nature of union with Christ and its relationship to justification. Following T. F. Torrance and John Williamson Nevin, Clark and Johnson formulate union with Christ in fundamentally realist and participationist categories. The category of participation appears fundamental to the believer's relationship with God through the incarnation, as may be seen in Clark and Johnson's definition of union with Christ (159). In the case of Torrance and Nevin, a fundamentally realist conception of union with Christ led to a rejection of or inadequate formulation of justification.⁷ Clark and Johnson appear to be on the same trajectory. They describe the Protestant emphasis on the doctrine of justification as God's declaration of our being righteous because of the forgiveness of sins and the imputation of the righteousness of Christ as a "salutary emphasis." But they then go on to say,

This salutary emphasis, however, has often led where the Reformers never went—into merely, or one-sidedly, forensic formulations that take no account of the prior necessity of union with the incarnate Christ. When this happens, justification loses its moorings in the concrete reality of our participation in the justified flesh and blood of Christ—through which we really do share in his righteousness—and so runs the risk of dissolving into a legal fiction, a forensic illusion (171).

Positing that justification has another side which is non-forensic is problematic, to say the very least. While no thoroughly Reformed scholar would want to speak of justification apart from our comprehensive union with Christ, the root problem for Clark and Johnson is their one-sided definition of union with Christ. The similarities with Nevin at this point are striking.⁸ Clark and Johnson define union with Christ in such exclusively realistic, and hence participatory terms, that they are not sufficiently able to guard justification from turning into a fundamentally realistic, participatory declaration. Therefore, justification becomes an analytic declaration rather than a synthetic declaration which is wholly forensic. This reading of Clark and Johnson's partially non-forensic conception of justification is further confirmed when they provide an example of a "merely, or one-sidedly, forensic" formulation of justification in the work of Wayne Grudem. Grudem argues that justification is an "instantaneous legal act of God"

6. For further details, listen to "The Incarnation of God," *Reformed Forum*, July 17, 2015, <https://reformedforum.org/atc394/>.

7. See William Evans, "Twin Sons of Different Mothers: The Remarkable Theological Convergence of John W. Nevin and Thomas F. Torrance," *Haddington House Journal* 11 (2009): 155–73.

8. John Williamson Nevin, *The Mystical Presence; or a Vindication of the Reformed or Calvinistic Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1846), 189.

where God considers us forgiven and that “Christ’s righteousness belongs to us,” and because of this, we are then declared righteous in His sight (171). While Clark and Johnson refer to Grudem’s view of justification as “merely” forensic, Grudem is only channeling the Reformation insight that justification is not *merely* forensic, rather it is *exclusively* forensic.

Concern for a Torrance/Nevin Ressourcement

The Incarnation of God’s bibliography reveals that the author with the most works cited in the book is T. F. Torrance. While not as ubiquitous as Torrance, John Williamson Nevin also comes in at key points in the book, and several of the most important sections of the book (i.e. the section on union with Christ and justification) mirror some of the fundamental concerns of Nevin, even if he is not quoted explicitly. Moreover, the two most distinctive aspects of this work (promoting the fallen human nature of Christ and promoting a salvation that is fundamentally realistic and participationist) obviously align with both Nevin and Torrance in their theological approach to the incarnation. This raises the question, “Should the evangelical world look to Nevin and Torrance as primary sources for theological reflection in general, and for reflection on the incarnation in particular?” Clark and Johnson think we should; those of us who come from a confessional Reformed background are going to be less sanguine about a Torrance or Nevin revival in American evangelicalism. Following Torrance and Nevin, Clark and Johnson’s conception of the way in which the incarnation relates to revelation, union with Christ, and justification fundamentally recasts these theological *loci* in ways that are contrary to the Westminster Standards. This makes the underpinning of Torrance and Nevin a concern for the confessional Presbyterian community.

Review: *Confessing the Impassible God: The Biblical, Classical & Confessional Doctrine of Divine Impassibility*. Edited by R. Baines, R. Barcellos, J. Butler, S. Lindblad, J. Renihan. Foreword by Paul Helm (Palmdale, CA: RBAP, 2015). ISBN 978-0991659920. Pb, 466 pp. Reviewed by Dr. Peter Sanlon, author of *Simply God: Recovering the Classical Trinity* (IVP: 2014).

In an age when too many Christian leaders are obsessed with cultural trivialities and passing fads, this substantial multi-author volume unashamedly engages with that which ought to supremely concern all Christians: God. The work *Confessing the Impassible God* (hereafter *CI*) is an “interdisciplinary exposition and so a cumulative defense of divine impassibility and of the doctrine of God of which that is an aspect” (26).

Divine Impassibility is a doctrine that many either have never heard of or instinctively reject—wrongly thinking that

the teaching implies that God is in some way non-relational, unloving or impassive. *CI* patiently guides readers through Scripture, church history and contemporary debates, showing that impassibility is not only a truth revealed in Scripture, but that it also has been treasured in church history and today is undermined by evangelical theologians who really ought to know better.

CI builds its cumulative case through seven Parts:

1. Theological and Hermeneutical Prolegomena
2. Biblical Foundations
3. Historical Theology
4. Systematic Theology
5. Confessional Theology
6. Practical Theology
7. Closing Comments

One of the distinctive features of *CI* is that it is authored by Baptists seeking to demonstrate that their confessional heritage upholds divine impassibility. Thus, they point out that the Second London Confession of Faith insists that God is “without body, parts or passions” (356). As a reformed Anglican minister, I subscribe to the 39 Articles, from which this statement is lifted. Too often, Baptists and Anglicans have focused on matters which divide them, such as polity and baptism. Yet here on the central mystery of our shared faith we use the same words to describe the God we worship. There is such a thing as a well-intentioned but naive ecumenism which ignores genuine differences of conviction. Is there not also a rich and godly unity which flows from meditating on the shared beliefs confessed in these Statements of Faith?

This book is consistently insightful, careful and generous. Without implying any lack in the other sections, I can share that one of the parts of *CI* from which I particularly benefited was the portion which dealt with Biblical Foundations.

The reason the Biblical Foundations section was so satisfying was that a good five chapters were given to exploring the claim that impassibility is revealed in the Old and New Testaments. The considerable number of pages given to this task is itself a rebuke to those who imagine that impassibility is a philosophical concept alien to Scripture. I was struck by the detailed and patient exegesis on display—demonstrating that a confessional stance drives theologians to more, not less, engagement with Scripture. The power of Scripture is faced in these chapters—“the anthropomorphisms of this text are not empty, but serve to highlight and communicate something of the truth regarding the infinite God” (143). The subtle interaction between Scripture, confessions, church history and hermeneutics is well summed up:

Classical theism insists that the change is solely in

man; there is no change in God. This explanation of the scriptural data has not only the weight of history and the Confession behind it, but avoids the complications of the modified doctrine of divine impassibility view that has God creating and assuming certain covenantal properties which often display the very opposite nature of God himself. In summary, it is not necessary that a change in men elicit a change in God. The classical view, in which there is no change in God at all, better accounts for the scriptural data. (161)

Inevitably, a book such as this contains polemical elements. It is necessary to explain one's position and to engage with those who take a different view. This is done very effectively throughout the book; alternative views are selected, summarised and graciously refuted. Scholars who reject impassibility are allowed to speak at length, in their own words. It is, to the reviewer at least, rather troubling that so many evangelical scholars attempt to reformulate the classical vision of God by claiming that opposites can be reconciled, or that God is what he is by an effort of his will, or by caricaturing the teachings of great theologians such as Augustine, Aquinas or Calvin. If we live in an age where Christianity is seen by many as little more than a lifestyle choice for the weak of body or mind—much of the blame must lie at the door of evangelical teachers who have been given so much, yet so casually dismiss the insights of the classical church.

For readers who wish to encounter a Christianity that is spiritually satisfying, weighty and able to stand firm amidst all the passing fads and fashions, one could do a lot worse than prayerfully reading this excellent book. God's Godness is not a problem; without God being who he is he would not be able or willing to save sinners such as us. "Too much of contemporary discussion tends to treat God's transcendence as an ontological problem that needs to be overcome" (299). The God-centered vision of this book is most refreshing and I am delighted to commend it to you.

Review: Benjamin Morgan Palmer, *The Broken Home; or Lessons in Sorrows* (2nd ed., 1891; rpr. Pb. Sprinkle Publications, 2015). Reviewed by Dr. C. N. Willborn.

Once again a notable reprint has issued which will be unknown to many readers, even of this journal. Because it is largely unknown even within the limited community of the Reformed, it is fitting to review it in hopes many others will come to benefit from this little classic. The volume is a paperback edition of a volume published originally in 1890 and has seldom been issued in reprint editions.

We are indebted to the folk at Sprinkle Publication for

this touching contribution to biography and pastoral theology. Sprinkle has been known for many years as providing out-of-print books, which most often originated in the 19th century. They have provided the ecclesiastical world with notable works from Calvinistic Baptist as well as Presbyterian authors. Both monographs and collected works have emanated from their presses, including the multi-volume, clothbound offering of the notable Scotsman of Princeton, John Witherspoon.

The Broken Home was written by Ben Palmer, who was born in Charleston, South Carolina and died in New Orleans, Louisiana. His remains await the resurrection in the Metairie Cemetery in The Crescent City. Young Palmer was educated at Amherst College where he often verbally jostled with Henry Ward Beecher, brother to Harriet Beecher Stowe, and long-time Congregational minister. Palmer completed his college days at the University of Georgia before studying theology at the Columbia Theological Seminary, then in Columbia, South Carolina. Palmer pastored the First Presbyterian Church, Savannah, Georgia; First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, South Carolina; and for forty-six years served as pastor of First Presbyterian New Orleans. In New Orleans he lived in a beautiful home at 1415 Prytania Street, which is now part of the Creole Gardens of that city's garden district.

Palmer is, of course, known for his grand oratory, spell-binding sermons, and doctrinal discourses. While in Columbia, prior to his move to New Orleans and again during the war years, he taught in his alma mater, Columbia Seminary. He was the biographer of his contemporary, James Henley Thornwell, as well as author of notable volumes such as *The Theology of Prayer*.

The Broken Home is a unique volume. It is biographical in the sense that it relates the history of the lives of seven members of Palmer's family. It is pastoral theology in that he takes the subject matter and labors to relate to each case theologically. It is his wish to aid fellow pilgrims in their Christian walk by setting forth the providential dealings of a benevolent and sovereign Father to His covenant children. In his own words, "From the simple desire of comforting those who mourn, this story of repeated bereavements is here told." The content for these stories of "repeated bereavement" do not flow from a mind aging and forgetful, but "are copied verbatim from notes taken at the time. They are recited without enlargement or embellishment, that they may be the more touching in their simplicity."

In this little book of "simplicity" we read of a man's love for family and his loss of family. Palmer was married to Mary Augusta McConnell in 1841. Miss McConnell was the step-daughter of "the venerable" Dr. George W. Howe of Columbia Seminary. To this couple was born six children. Five were daughters—Sarah Frances (Fanny), Mary Howe (Molly),

Augusta Barnard (Gussie), Kate Gordon (Kate), and Marion Louisa (Marion).

In *The Broken Home* Palmer recounts the lives and deaths of five of his six children. The children to precede him in death were: Benjamin Blakely (1842-44), Fanny (1844-63), Kate (1853-71), Marion (1856-73), and Gussie (1849-75). In addition, Sarah Bunce Palmer, his mother, died in 1847 and Mary Augusta, his beloved wife, died in 1888. These seven loved ones he memorializes in this book by telling of the covenant faithfulness of God in life and death. Molly (Mary Howe) lived to marry Dr. J. L. Caldwell and became her father's mainstay and care-giver in those lonely, latter years.

In the first chapter, Palmer tells of the struggles of a young father when death took his namesake: the emotional and intellectual wrestling with God's sovereignty, God's covenant relationship to believing parents and their covenant children, and God's peace through trials. Faith in and comfort from God's covenant—that is a lesson in sorrow. The same year Blakely died, just days short of his second birthday, God gave Ben and Sarah their second child, Fanny. Nineteen years later, the parents would exhume Blakely's remains in the Elmwood Cemetery of Columbia, South Carolina so that he and his sister could be buried side-by-side. A touching account of that ordeal is rehearsed by the Prince of Southern Preachers. In recounting Fanny's death, Palmer leads the reader through the questions of how much to tell a sick child, how to speak of eternal matters, and when to say, "you are dying." But in Fanny's life we see a child of nineteen years, always on the timid side, being released from her fears and becoming a spokesman for God's mercy and grace—a lesson in sorrow. In the story of Kate's death, Palmer describes the familial love of a household, which included house servants. There was in that Southern *milieu* an affection that transcended class and culture. Upon gathering the "household"—parents, grandparents, servants, and siblings—around the dying one's bed, Palmer lovingly assured his precious daughter, "You see, Kate, we are all here." The lesson in sorrow in Kate's case was one of previous experiences on earth, which so prepared her for heaven that the dying process was one of heavenly example. Then there was Marion, the gentlest of the children, according to her father. The lesson in this sorrow? How God hates sin, to deal so harshly (in death) with the most gentle of lambs.

These snippets serve as a sampling of the pastoral marrow encompassed in this little gem of a book. While this reviewer cannot recommend the content of this volume highly enough, there are some necessary comments for the prospective buyer and reader. All the deficits of this present printing stem from it being a photocopy edition. For the historian it is respected for preserving the "original" manner in which the book appeared in 1890. However, that means the print is not always as sharp, as had it been re-typeset. Second, the chapters do not provide

identification of the parties under review. That is the reason for the list of names given earlier in this review. Finally, there is no formal introduction to tell 21st century readers who the author is. Thus, the overview of Palmer given above. Hopefully, with this review in hand, the present Sprinkle edition of *The Broken Home* can be enjoyed by a new generation. Lessons in sorrows so that saints may live and die well; that's what Palmer provides for the pilgrim in his journey.

Review: Sean Michael Lucas, *For a Continuing Church: The Roots of the Presbyterian Church in America*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2015). ISBN 978-1-62995-106-5. Paperback, pp. xviii +343. \$19.99. Reviewed by Lane B. Keister, Pastor of Lebanon Presbyterian Church, PCA, in Winnsboro, SC.

Sean Lucas has done the Presbyterian and Reformed worlds a good service through this book, which can be viewed not only as an examination of how the Presbyterian Church in America (hereafter abbreviated PCA) was formed, but also as a history of Presbyterianism throughout the twentieth century. While a thorough discussion of the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church is not present (see his biography of Machen for more on the topic), a clear parallel exists between how the OPC and the PCA were formed. Lucas demonstrates that the founding fathers of the PCA were well aware of Machen's story, and that they saw themselves as following in his footsteps in some ways, though not in others.

Lucas writes clearly and engagingly. Indeed, the work is a very quick read for 343 pages. Being a Presbyterian minister himself, Lucas has the wisdom to have a sense of humor in addressing the foibles of Presbyterianism. For instance, in relating the story of the PCUS's conservative Central Mississippi Presbytery's refusal to approve the transfer of Rev. Hart, Lucas notes that the matter became extremely complicated, "even by Presbyterian standards" (p. 236). No doubt the research prying into hundreds of Presbyteries and General Assembly minutes has given Lucas a profound appreciation for just how complicated Presbyterians can make anything!

It was more than a little eerie to read about the doctrinal trials in the Southern Presbyterian Church wherein the conservatives sought to bring discipline to ministers who were straying from confessional boundaries. Recent doctrinal trials in the PCA bear a shocking resemblance to the older trials. Killing the messenger, playing the misunderstanding card, the "good ole' boys club" of wagon-circling; these were all present in the Southern Presbyterian mainline denomination decades before anyone had ever heard of the Federal Vision. Of course, the same things happened in the much older issues surrounding the Remonstrants at the Synod of Dordt.

These methods seem to be ubiquitous in church history on the part of those espousing heterodox or heretical views. After one reflects on these methods, maybe the shock value is diminished somewhat.

Lucas tells a coherent story focused on the reasons for the founding of the PCA. The liberal drift of the Southern PCUS, following its sister denomination the Northern PCUSA, happened because of an abandonment of commitment to the authority, inerrancy, trustworthiness, and infallibility of the Word of God. Lucas targets Barthianism in the seminaries, particularly Columbia Seminary in Decatur Georgia, as a leading cause in the minds of the founding fathers.

As happens in most of these situations, there were those who believed that leaving the parent denomination was not the answer. The case of Nelson Bell, father-in-law of Rev. Billy Graham, is a good illustration. Although he sympathized greatly with those who left to form the PCA, Bell himself never did leave. The fall-out from such situations is very painful, and is therefore a healthy warning: division always brings pain, even when the division is justified. Lucas clearly believes that the PCA's founding was justified. It is salutary to point out, however, how much hardship the division caused. On the one hand, that should not discourage those seeking a better church situation for the right reasons. On the other hand, it should discourage those seeking to leave for the wrong reasons.

Lucas analyzes the differences between conservatives and progressives in a way that should resonate with many today: "The difference between progressives and conservatives centered on what was primary: did the church lead with gospel proclamation based on an inspired and inerrant Bible, which would result first in moral and then political and economic transformation, as the conservatives believed? Or did the church lead with a prophetic word to the culture and a priestly activity of social concern, which would interest women and men in the gospel's spiritual and moral focus, as progressives believed" (p. 100).

The main reason this reviewer was interested in reviewing this book is because of current issues in the PCA concerning race, and because Lucas was involved with a personal resolution in 2015 concerning race relations, during the course of the consideration of which he mentioned the research he was about to publish. Several overtures will be coming before the PCA's General Assembly in 2016 dealing with the issue of race. In fact, as of the writing of this review, no fewer than 23 overtures are addressing the question of racial reconciliation. Lucas argues that the PCA was formed in a way that was reactionary to the liberalizing tendencies of the mainline Presbyterian church. One of those liberalizing tendencies was racial integration. As a result of reaction to this leftward drift, some of the leaders of the PCA were very outspoken in favor of segregation.

While Lucas makes a good case that many early PCA churches and leaders favored racial segregation, there are some important points lacking in Lucas's analysis. Firstly, Lucas does not make clear any kind of distinction between the white-sponsored racial segregation of southern conservative Presbyterians, and the black-sponsored segregation of, say, Malcolm X. Of course, the contexts of the North (where Malcolm X was working) and the South were very different at the time. It still would have been helpful to have at least a footnote addressing this question. Why is it racist for Southerners to propose segregation, but not racist for Malcolm X to propose it?

Secondly, Lucas almost completely ignores any indications contrary to his thesis concerning race relations. For example, there is an unconfirmed and undocumented story floating around that a wealthy churchman had offered a large sum of money to a group of twelve leaders of what would become the PCA, on condition that it be a white-only church, whereupon the leaders showed him the door. Apparently, Rev. Jim Baird has told this story. Given Lucas's expertise in all matters having to do with First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, this omission seems rather surprising. This would, at the last, have been an interesting and intriguing story either to confirm or disprove.

Another counter-indication is the document "Minutes of the Advisory Convention of the Continuing Presbyterian Church" that met in August of 1973.¹ These minutes, in item 47, clearly state "All Races Welcome—It was resolved that the Continuing Presbyterian Church movement welcome fellow believers in Christ regardless of race." At the very least, Lucas could have explained how this statement cohered with the overall picture he was painting.

Lastly, Lucas fails to address the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod's impact on the PCA's situation with regard to race before and during Joining and Receiving. The evidence suggests that the RPCES was strongly integrationist in its stance.² The problems this creates for Lucas's position are two-fold. Firstly, the RPCES's impact on the PCA in regard to race has not been measured. Secondly, the fact that this Joining and Receiving was so actively cultivated by the PCA at the time, should certainly indicate that a shift was occurring at the very least between the formation of the PCA and J&R. In short, it seems to me that Lucas's analysis of the race issue in the PCA is fairly one-sided, and ignores some fairly strong counter-indicators. This is not to say, of course,

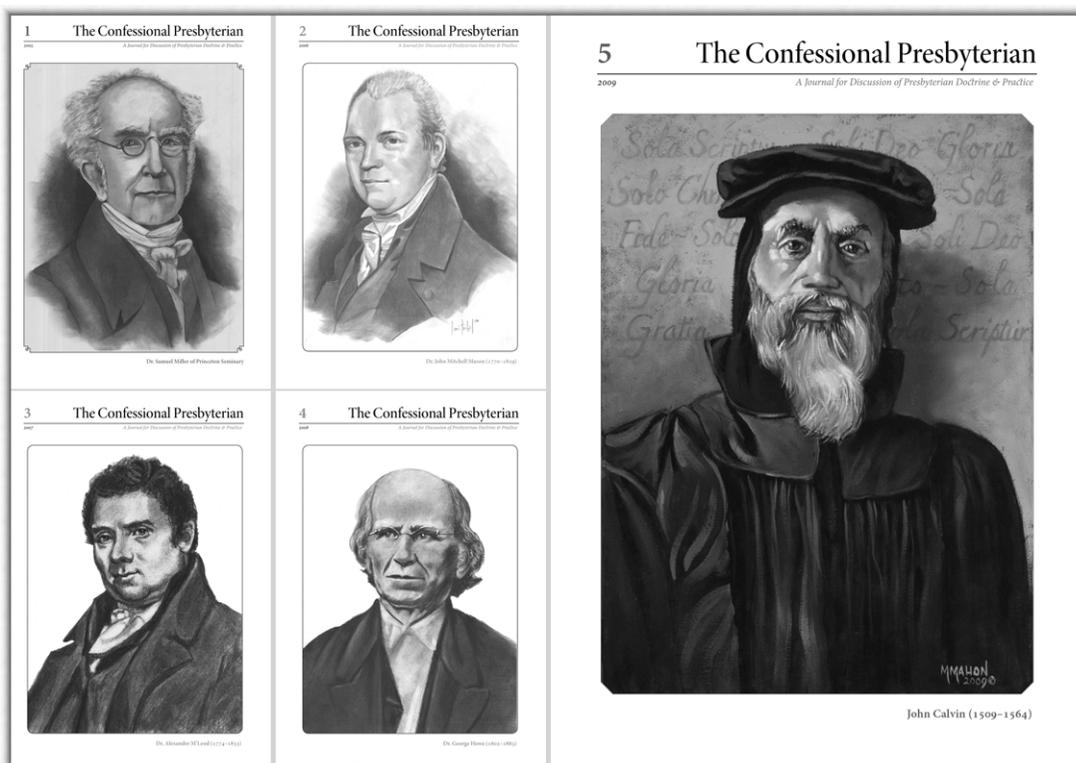
1. The document is available in pdf on the PCA's Historical Center website at the following address: http://pcahistory.org/ga/advisory_convention.pdf (accessed 4/6/2016). Thanks to Wayne Sparkman, the director of the Center, for the reference.

2. See the following two documents, also available at the PCA Historical Center: <http://pcahistory.org/findingaids/rpces/docsynod/385.html> and <http://pcahistory.org/findingaids/rpces/docsynod/388.html> (both accessed 4/6/2016). Again, thanks to Wayne Sparkman for pointing me to these resources.

that the PCA is blameless with regard to race relations. However, it never helps to have a one-sided view of what happened. There might have been things done which were wrong, but there also seem to be things done which were right.

To be fair, Lucas does note progress in conservative leaders' views over time. Nelson Bell's views on race changed over time to a position much closer to integrationism, and he wasn't the only one. However, the situation does not seem to be nearly as simple as pure evolution over time. It wasn't as if all Southern Presbyterians were racist, and then gradually became less racist as time wore on. There are firm indications of racial inclusion even at the beginning. It would be more accurate, then, to say that some of the founding fathers and churches were segregationists, and these gradually changed. Others, however, were integrationists from the start.

The strengths of Lucas's book are the clear presentation of the why's and how's of the PCA's founding. If a person did not know why the PCA was started, he would get a very good education through Lucas's book. In this respect, Lucas's book succeeds admirably in accomplishing the main goal of the book, which is to examine the roots, or origins, of the PCA. The parallels with the OPC, the way in which liberalism takes over a denomination, the constantly losing battle that conservatives fought, the underhanded tactics that liberals used to silence conservatives, all of these are well documented. Those who are conservative within the PCA can learn a lot about how the PCA was founded, and those who are disgruntled conservatives within the PCA can learn things that will both encourage and warn them about this kind of battle. ■



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