

REVIEWS & RESPONSES

Review: *Martin Bucer's Ground and Reason: A Commentary and Translation*, by Ottomar Cypris (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017). ISBN 978-1540468116. Pb, 204 pp. Reviewed by the Rev. Dr. Walter L. Taylor, pastor of the Oak Island Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Oak Island, North Carolina.

I first came across Martin Bucer's *Ground and Reason* (*Grund und Ursach*) in its form as a doctoral dissertation from the late Ottomar Cypris, which he completed in 1971. This year, as a part of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, this work is now available, with some editorial revisions, thanks to the work of the Rev. Brian Nicholson and others. Written by Bucer and endorsed by the other reformers of Strasbourg, *Ground and Reason* remains one of the earliest expressions of a "Reformed" approach to worship different from the (then) emerging ideas of worship by Martin Luther. Yet, what is striking about Bucer's work is how many of his concerns would continue to be fundamental to Reformed understandings of worship into the future, even among those who may not have ever come across this work.

Martin Bucer's *Ground and Reason*, written in 1524, is essentially a defense of the reforms made in the Reformation in Strasbourg. Bucer's work reveals a profound pastoral sensitivity, as throughout it weighs the need for reform against the need for time to educate and prepare the people for these changes. While it maintains that such reforms, based on the Word of God, are necessary, it also displays a deep concern that they be inaugurated in such a way that they would not harm the faith of the people, but that the people would be duly prepared for them. Throughout, Bucer lifts up the dual concerns of "faith and love" as standards by which to gauge the reform of the church. Everything must be done to encourage and protect faith and to embody the command of Christ to love (described as "brotherly love" or the "love [or good of] one's neighbor"). Hence,

... we, too, must handle the Word of God in such a way that Christ is fully known, so that the abolition of human inventions should strengthen our trust in Christ, and should not frighten anyone away from the Word, excepting only the outcasts and vessels of the divine wrath, who never, ever may enter.

In these matters the right proportion is hardly ever kept, yet he who trusts in God, practices and obeys the Word of God with all sincerity, and is a careful shepherd of the flock of Christ, him the Lord will enlighten so that he too will not depart too far from the right proportion. (§46–47)

That Bucer and the reformers of Strasbourg struggled with this principle for reform is made evident in the details of the *Ground and Reason*. Several practices and customs were judged by the reformers of Strasbourg to be worthy of abolition, but were retained long enough to allow for the education of the population first. Among these were the use of the Roman vestments and the elevation of the elements at the Eucharist.

The largest portion of *Ground and Reason* is concerned with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. In the opening section (§1–8) Bucer introduces the points that he will develop in the body of the work, including his rejection of the mass as a sacrifice, the proper name of the sacrament, the elevation, vestments, and that all these reforms are for the proper edification of the believer. He appeals to the authority of Scripture, and so bases all his reforms on the Word of God.

In the second section of his work (§9–11) Bucer discusses the name of the sacrament, rejecting the term "Mass" and using instead "Lord's Supper" (*Nachtmahl des Herrn*). Bucer prefers this name since there is scriptural warrant for it, and rejects "Mass" given the lack of any biblical example for it. In fact, Bucer calls for rejection altogether of the term "Mass," given the abuse that it had wrought on the church (§9–10). Yet again, the irenic disposition of Bucer comes out in this work, as it would come to the fore later in his ministry, particularly in the eucharistic controversies between Zwingli and Luther. He will not make the use of the term in itself a test of fellowship: "However, we admonish that no one should start a quarrel over the name or that anyone should condemn the others as long as, along with the name, they do not accept also the error, that we give and sacrifice anything to God" (§11).

Section three of *Ground and Reason* (§12–31) deals with the doctrine of the sacrifice of the mass, a "most pernicious and most abominable error to believe" (§12). Bucer appeals to the clarity of scripture, inasmuch as there is no basis in it whatsoever for holding to this notion of the sacrifice of the mass:

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He who is not convinced by what we have said, let him read the Scriptures and he will find that all Scriptures point to the one and only sacrifice of Christ, when He sacrificed His body on the cross, through which enough is done for the elect, and not a single word that such a body should be sacrificed a thousand times daily by the priests. (§15)

While the main thrust of the section is his argument against any hint of eucharistic sacrifice in the Lord's Supper, Bucer appeals to the command of Christ that all eat and drink as warrant for giving the cup to the laity.

Section four (§32–58) of the *Ground and Reason* deals with Strasbourg's abolishing of the elevation of the bread and the wine in the celebration of the sacrament. The reason for its abolition is because of the connection—theological and pastoral—of the elevation to the notion of sacrifice. Bucer maintains that the elevation is essentially an expression of the doctrine of priestly sacrifice, and thus it served to reinforce this doctrine in the minds of the people. Bucer counters the argument apparently given at the time that this practice was grounded in the Old Testament in the lifting up of portions of the sin offering. Rather, he maintains that it, like many other Roman ceremonies, is rooted in paganism.

Yet, there is a significant discussion in this section about the practice, because it was tolerated for some time by the Strasbourg reformers so that the people could first be educated in the Word of God, and thereby understand the reasons for its abolition. Likewise, Bucer acknowledges that in Strasbourg they maintained use of the Roman vestments at the eucharist until, likewise, the people could be educated as to why they ought to be abolished. Bucer reveals here a profound pastoral desire to protect the faith of the "weaker brethren," so that their faith would not be damaged by sudden change.

We see something of the pastoral strategy for reform embraced by Bucer and the others. While the elevation was retained for some time, it was nonetheless reinterpreted in such a way as to encourage the people "that they should remember how Christ was lifted up on the cross for us and was offered as a sacrifice to the Father once, and that they should in no way think that we wanted to sacrifice the body and the blood of Christ over again through such an elevation" (§34).

Bucer then deals with criticisms directed at the Strasbourg reforms over this decision with appeals to Paul, and how he used the same sort of approach in the circumcision of Timothy (Acts 16), in his own vow and hair cutting at Cenchrea (Acts 18), and in his submission to Jewish purification (Acts 21). He appeals to Paul's dictum in 1 Corinthians 9:22: "I have become all things to all men in order to save some" (§35). He likewise, draws comparisons between this issue and the sacrificing of meat to idols and Paul's approach to dealing

with that matter (§40). Bucer has a fairly detailed discussion of this issue, exemplifying his concern that those weak in faith, who might be scandalized by a sudden change, be well prepared and biblically informed for these coming changes. Indeed, these were "external matters and therefore in themselves they are harmless when they are not used in unbelief or to cause offense" (§39). They were "an accommodation to the weaker brethren, in order to clear the way for the preaching of the Word of God" (§40). Once this was accomplished to the satisfaction of the reformers, the elevation was abolished in Strasbourg (§56). Ultimately, the reforms brought about the removal of any physical object or action that was not instituted by Christ himself (§57).

Following the same line of thought, the fifth section (§59–72) of *Ground and Reason* goes on to discuss the abolishing of Papist vestments from the worship of Strasbourg. Curiously, Bucer embarks here on a detailed description of these vestments, indicating a belief that they will no longer be remembered by the reader, so thorough will be their abolition:

This is the magnificent armor of the Mass-lovers, which I have described in such detail because I have no doubt that in a few years a knowledgeable Christian will be brought, by the Word of God, to the point where he would hardly believe it if he heard that amongst Christians there had ever been such a masquerade. (§61)

In the place of the elaborate vestments, the Reformed clergy wear "only a choir gown" (§62). As with the practice of the elevation and other Roman practices, Bucer maintains that the Roman vestments find their origins in pagan practice, which the church adopted over the years. Furthermore, Bucer condemns the use of these vestments due to their expense, as it does not serve the purpose of love to spend so much money on decorations like these when the money would be better used for the poor (§65). Bucer condemns how vestments had become ways for people to make donations to the church so that a nameplate bearing their name be placed on the vestment (§66). Bucer ends this section with an appeal that worship be done without the prideful ostentation so often engendered in it, that in it "Christians learn thereby to despise physical splendor and adornments" (§71).

In the sixth section of the *Ground and Reason* (§73–83), Bucer explains the changes in prayers used in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, the abolishing of the gestures used by the celebrant, and why the altar has been replaced with a table. Regarding the canonical prayers, Bucer relates that all manner of superstition had become attached to them as well as the unscriptural contents and notions found in them. In

addition, they were often “mumbled and jumbled together in any old way” (§130). Bucer refers the reader to a work of Zwingli (*De Canone Missae Epicheresia*) for a more detailed discussion of these points. As to the gestures used by the priests—“bowing, making the sign of the crossing, kissing, beating the bread, raising and lowering the hands, turning away from and toward the people”—Bucer states that such a state of affairs had developed that the piety of a priest was judged by his ability to master such theatrics, “which they themselves called shadowboxing.”

For this reason it took a tremendous effort on the part of the young priests to master them; and he who knew how to perform them well was considered a devout, spiritual priest by the others, and the dear, little, old ladies loved to have him officiate, and paid him to read the Mass for them. This quite obviously meant a violation of both faith and love, that is, of the total Christian life: of faith because it was believed, contrary to all Scripture, that one showed God a favor by such buffoonery, for if such performances were not supposed to be a service to Him, it would not have been considered a sin either to omit something or not to perform it properly. (§74).

The sixth section closes with discussion of the use of the table, rather than an altar, with the minister facing the people, and the use of the vernacular. In this they rejected notions that the minister must face the direction of the rising Sun or any other such concern. Rather, quoting from Paul, the concern is for all things to be done “decently and in order.” Bucer also points out here that the New Testament does not speak about an altar at all, but a table (§83).

Section seven (§84–93) lays out Bucer’s rejection of daily eucharistic celebrations, and in place of this practice provides for its celebration on Sunday alone. He discusses the abolition of private communions (§85). Yet, this section is intriguing for Bucer’s description of the state of affairs spiritually among the people of Strasbourg, and how this has affected the reforms there. Bucer argues for frequent communion, and for a situation, ultimately, where all who are gathered come to share in the bread and cup. However, this is not the situation as yet in Strasbourg, nor is it yet completely encouraged:

Therefore, since the time of the apostles, when the congregation of Christ assembled and observed the Lord’s Supper, we, too, have followed that custom of assembling every Sunday, however, for the time being, with some partaking instead of the whole congregation, until such time as the Lord should lead us further through His Word and reform us completely. (§90)

Bucer contrasts the situation of the early church, where everyone observed the Lord’s Supper, to the situation of Strasbourg: (1) In the early church “no one received baptism and was received into the congregation, unless he completely surrendered himself to the word of Christ.” In Strasbourg, however, many come to hear preaching, but they have not so surrendered themselves. (2) Secondly, in the early church the “ban” was observed “with which they excluded those who did not live or teach properly.” In Strasbourg, however, they “have put up with a hodge-podge situation.” (3) Lastly, the early church had not suffered what the church of Strasbourg had, languishing for centuries under false doctrine regarding the Lord’s Supper (§91).

Thus, Bucer admits that much is still left to be reformed in the church. Their practice is essentially an interim situation, which will be fully corrected once they have had time to teach the people.

In section 8 of the *Ground and Reason* Bucer gives a summary of the manner for observing the Lord’s Supper in use at Strasbourg. It can be laid out as follows (from §95):

**Confession of sin and prayer for pardon,
spoken by the minister¹**

- Absolution declared by the minister
- Sung response by the congregation, being either a psalm or a short song of praise
- Prayer by the minister, followed by readings from “writings of the Apostles”
- Brief explanation of the above reading(s)
- Congregational singing of the Ten Commandments or some other song
- Reading of the Gospel and the Sermon, both done by the minister
- Congregational singing of the Creed
- Prayers of intercession, by the minister, for rulers, all people, and the congregation with attention to the right use of the Lord’s Supper (i.e.-eucharistic prayer)
- Admonishing of those who wish to partake
- Reading of the Words of Institution (from the synoptic gospels and 1 Cor. 11)
- Distribution of the bread and cup
- Congregational song of praise
- Short prayer to conclude the Supper
- Blessing and departure

1. The Strasbourg Liturgy is available in English translation in Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (Fortress Press, 1980), 159–184.

This is followed by a justification for several of the components of the service mentioned above. Then, Bucer adds a remark about the controversy of the presence of the Christ in the Supper, and is rather dismissive of the questions posed to Luther by Carlstadt (who had been in Strasbourg). Bucer's position on this controversy, at this point, is summed up: "they should be more concerned about why He instituted these rather than what they are in themselves" (§100). At this point, Bucer does not wish to argue over the nature of Christ's presence, but is more concerned with observing the command of Christ. Yet, even at that, Bucer betrays a position that is Reformed rather than Lutheran. In §107 this comes out more clearly. Yet, Bucer here uses an expression that was his attempt to mediate the positions of Zwingli and Luther: "... in this way His body is eaten and His blood is drunk spiritually and truly" (emphasis added). But his is also a position that is pastorally and practically grounded:

This remembrance will become so important without any doubting whatever in every believing heart, that there will be no time to worry about bread and wine, but the whole heart and all endeavors will be directed to proclaim, to praise and to glorify such a death as [a death for] one's salvation... (§104).

Ironically, however, after laying out in several paragraphs what is a firmly Reformed approach, Bucer says this about Luther and Carlstadt:

Dr. Martin Luther, in everything that he has written about this, has always pointed to the Spirit and to faith; and it would have been a good and proper thing if Dr. Carlstadt had never written his devious, envious and foolish words against him. (§113)

In section 9, Bucer lays out his understanding of baptism, in which he rejects any notion of baptismal regeneration or that it is essential to salvation. He also rejects all of the extraneous rites to the service—charism, oil, salt, bread, candles, and consecrated water (§119). He makes a sharp distinction in baptism between the sign and that which is signified, even marking a distinction between baptism by water and by the Spirit (§120–121). Also, Bucer holds as equal the baptism of John and the baptism of the apostles, and spends several paragraphs defending his position (§121–129). Bucer then elaborates on his rejection of extraneous rites, and his call that baptism be devoid of ostentation (§131–132).

This is followed by Bucer's defense of infant baptism (§133–143), in which he responds to the arguments of the Anabaptists. One sees already in Bucer several characteristics of Reformed baptismal theology. Bucer cites the various

examples of household baptism mentioned in the New Testament, as well as argues that not all who were baptized in New Testament times had an abundance of faith, even asserting, "the apostles themselves many times even baptized those who had no faith at all, for example Simon the magician (Acts 8:13), with many others" (§135). He also argues that the children of believers "are sanctified" appealing to 1 Corinthians 7:14. In addition, Bucer cites the example of Christ blessing the children, and states, "why then should we not baptize them, just as those in the Old Testament circumcised theirs? Especially, since baptism is, for us, what circumcision was the for the Jews" (§136). Yet, while Bucer argues in favor of the baptism of the infants of believers, he ends his discussion of the subject with an appeal to unity and even tolerance of those who do not share his views:

Should there be, however, someone who delays baptism and desires to do so among those with whom he lives, without destroying love and unity, we in no way desire to quarrel with him about this, nor to condemn him. Everyone should be certain of his convictions. "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking," neither is it baptism with water; "but righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." He who serves Christ in this way "Pleases God and is held in high esteem by men" (Rom. 14:17–18). Therefore I conclude here and now with the Apostle: "Let us strive after those things which serve for peace and for growth amongst us" (v. 19). So much on baptism. [§143]

What is lacking from Bucer that shows up in later Reformed theology, and is stated clearly in the Westminster Confession, is any assertion that it is necessarily a sin for believing parents to withhold or delay the baptism of their children.

Section 10 of the Ground and Reason (§144–161) contains Bucer's rejection of any holy day or feast day other than Sunday. This is an intriguing section, inasmuch as he approaches this subject in a way quite different than how he approaches the issues of the elevation and clerical vestments. Here Bucer rejects, unequivocally, any feast days, and does not observe some sort of interim period. He describes at length the abuses of observing these days (drunkenness and profligate behavior), how they are characterized by many pagan customs, and how they lead to economic hardship, given the number of days the people were not allowed to work. Thus, given the pagan elements of these days and the economic hardship they bring, they are a violation of both faith and love.

Yet, Bucer would change his position on this issue (ironic, given that some of his most strident language concerns their abolition). By 1537, he allowed for the celebration of Christmas, and in his later work, *De Regno Christi*, he endorses the

observance of “the day of his Incarnation, Nativity, Epiphany, Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, and Pentecost.”² In this respect, Bucer came to represent what has been termed a “continental” Reformed view (which later finds confessional expression in Bullinger’s Second Helvetic Confession of 1561, chapter 24), rather than the view that took hold in Scottish Presbyterianism and in English Puritanism, and is reflected in the Westminster Directory for Worship.

The eleventh section of the Ground and Reason deals with the abolition of images and pictures in the churches. Bucer appeals to the leaders of the church in Zurich as having “given more than sufficient, clear, Scriptural proof” for their removal, and therefore there is little more that needs to be said in Strasbourg (§162). Bucer does, however, lay out a biblical justification for their removal, and appeals to the First Commandment (which includes what we know as the Second Commandment, since Bucer here is still using the Roman Catholic/Lutheran numbering—§163).

Bucer gives attention in this section to the varying responsibilities of the pastor and the magistrate regarding the removal of images. The primary function for the pastor is to teach and preach the Word of God, making clear that the use of images is expressly forbidden in Scripture. However, the actual removal of the images is an action which is to be carried out by the magistrates. Thus, this work needs to be carried out by the two, each working in his own area of authority.

Bucer also points out that at issue for the church in the matter of images is the priority of the Word over images: “The lay people should be taught with the Word of God and not with dumb blocks, stones and paintings, for little was accomplished by the Fathers through idolatrous practices.... If you are a Christian, then listen to this: the Word is sufficient to inspire you to do all that which is good” (§173).

In the final section of his Ground and Reason, Bucer defends the changes in Strasbourg relative to the use of songs and congregational singing. Of course, such singing is done in the language of the people, and “in the congregation of God we use neither songs nor prayers which are not based on Holy Scripture” (§180). Principally, for singing this would have meant the use of Psalms (though Bucer does not seem to advocate exclusive psalmody, but rather holds up the principle that it be based on Scripture), and provided the example that Calvin took with him on his return to Geneva, once he was called back to serve the Genevan church.

Bucer then mentions a few other matters which have been eliminated in the practices of the Church of Strasbourg (elimination of candles, salt, holy water, and commendation of the dead—§185). Finally, Bucer ends the work with a reiteration of the basic principles of the Strasbourg reforms. The book, while from the hand of Bucer, contains the names of the other reformers of Strasbourg, with whom Bucer shared the work of reform.

The significance of Bucer’s Ground and Reason lies in the fact that it is one of the very first examples of the reform of worship from a Reformed perspective, over against Luther. While praising Luther, Ground and Reason goes further than Luther had gone. Furthermore, since it provides the basic statement of the reformation at Strasbourg, its influence was wide ranging, given the role that Strasbourg had in setting the direction for the Reformed churches that followed (most notably Geneva). Despite all of this, however, eventually the High Lutherans would gain the upper hand in Strasbourg, and Bucer would go into exile in England.

Martin Bucer’s Ground and Reason was a significant work in setting the stage for the future of worship in what would become known as the Reformed Tradition. Even so, it was a “work in progress.” It was not the last word that Bucer would speak on the matter.

Review: *Reformation Theology: A Systematic Summary*, edited by Matthew Barrett (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2017, 2017). ISBN 978-1433543289. Hb, 784 pp. Reviewed by Harrison Perkins (M.Div, Westminster Seminary California; licentiate PCA; pastoral intern, Presbyterian Church in Ireland; Ph.D student, Queen’s University Belfast, studying the covenant theology of James Ussher). Mr. Perkins has published several book reviews on covenant theology and Reformed history for *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology*, *Journal of Northern Renaissance*, and *Unio cum Christo*.

October 31, 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of Martin Luther nailing his ninety-five theses to the door of the church at Wittenberg. Protestants have traditionally taken this date as the start of the Reformation, and with the five-century anniversary, we can expect a vast amount of literature to appear on Luther and the Reformation more generally. Matthew Barrett’s edited volume offers a large set of essays that introduce what the early Reformers thought about most of the traditional topics in systematic theology. Although it would be too much for a book review to summarize every chapter in a book this size, I hope to provide some summary insights into the contents and value of this work. This, I hope, will help readers understand the arguments and purpose of the book, as well as be aware of its strengths and the best ways it can be used.

Before the chapters that address theological topics, there are four essays that set the context of the book. I will give attention to the first two of these essays, and then highlight some of the strengths and weaknesses of the remaining essays. Michael Horton provides a prologue, arguing that there

2. Martin Bucer, *De Regno Christi*, in *Melancthon and Bucer*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck, Library of Christian Classics Volume XIX (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1969), 252.

are many things to celebrate about the Reformation, but the current climate of world Christianity actually has strayed far from the roots set by it. The Reformation was a movement that sought to be specific in its theology. Protestants obviously split into various groups, most notably Lutheran and Reformed, and these divisions formed because of theological dispute. Their confessions addressed issues of debate not only with the Roman communion, but also with other Protestants. Yet, modern evangelicalism tends to be minimalistic in its doctrine (p.14–18). Horton sees this as a problem because Protestants are supposed to cherish the Bible, and the Bible teaches doctrines.

In my view, this first essay is a needed admonition, and a fitting preface to a work devoted to analyzing the doctrines taught by the Reformers. All the essays of this volume are written from an evangelical perspective, and, more specifically, from a perspective sympathetic to the views of the Reformers. The thrust of the whole volume is an effort to understand how Christians of the past formulated their ideas in light of their own contexts. This essay, however, also places the work in an odd position. Most academic volumes are hesitant to endorse what their subjects of study taught. This volume does endorse the Reformers as people worth hearing for the truth they teach, but at the same time does engage the sources at a scholarly level. I do not raise this as a criticism per se. There are many ways in which a volume like this is incredibly helpful, and I will highlight these below. My observation here is simply that Horton's essay, which issues a correct message in my view, positions the volume slightly outside of "objective scholarship" (if such a thing exists).

Barrett's own introductory essay argues that the Reformation was fundamentally a theological movement fueled by concern for right doctrine. This is a helpful essay because there are competing interpretations of the Reformation that cast it as a social coup or economically driven uprising. Barrett highlights how those who wrote for reform focused on issues of remaking the church. They criticized medieval practices that they deemed out of accord with Scripture, and worked to renew the worship of the church in faithfulness to God's revelation. This included reforming liturgical and preaching practices, as well as what was expected of clergy. Whereas medieval practice included only a few sermons at specific times during the liturgical calendar, the Reformers insisted on regular preaching in the vernacular. Pilgrimage sites, as well as veneration of Mary and other saints, was replaced with the regular motions of church attendance and worship (p.49). Additionally, clergy in the middle ages were often absent from their posts because ecclesiastical offices could be bought and were treated simply as sources of income. The Reformers, in contrast, insisted that clergy needed to be in their assigned churches in order to provide spiritual nourishment to the

people in their care (p.50–51). All of these changes created a shift in the tenor of worship. As Barrett states, "For Rome, the service was most fundamentally a visual experience." Yet for the Reformers, "the focal point was the gospel inscripturated, and its pages they read, prayed, sung, and expounded" (p.52). The rest of this chapter focuses on the importance of the Word for Protestants as it takes central place in preaching, sacraments, and worship generally. This marks that "the Reformation was a return to a gospel-centered, Word-centered church" (60).

Barrett makes clear that this collection of essays is a work meant to aid theological retrieval. He comments that many of churches and Christian learning institutions have never actually grasped the teachings and meaning of the Reformation (p.61), and this is a problem that needs to be addressed. The movement of theological retrieval looks to understand the theology of past theologians, and understand it properly within its own context. Then it seeks to make appropriation of past doctrines, methods of exegesis, or theological reasoning in a modern context. In other words, it is an effort to circumvent "proof-texting" from past theologians as if their positions exactly match what we hold today. This is a helpful new emphasis in historical theology to which students, ministers and academics should give attention. It is crucial for the future of Reformed theology that we understand our heritage and grasp how questions and answers evolve as we move back and forth between exegesis and theological formulation in our own context.

The final two introductory essays provide historical background for understanding the doctrines taught during the Reformation. Gerald Bray gives a survey of the state of medieval theology on the eve of the Reformation. He describes what major sources were used in theological training when the Reformers studied theology. He also covers the medieval practices that became the point of contention behind efforts at reform. These, of course, include medieval sacramental views like penance and the Roman Mass as a real sacrifice. Purgatory and the selling of indulgences were also highly contentious. Additionally, the medieval understanding of grace was questioned in the Reformation. Instead of grace as an infused substance with which we cooperate unto justification, the Reformers saw grace as God's favorable disposition toward sinners. Carl Trueman and Eunjin Kim then write a survey of the various Reformations in the sixteenth century. Although we often refer to "the Reformation," they helpfully point out that it was not a monolithic movement. Instead, reform took shape in several different ways in various countries as it was led by different figures. The political contexts varied widely from country to country, as did the response of the magistrates to reform. This also helps us to understand the various features that shaped Lutheran, Reformed and

Anglican efforts at renewal of the church in their local settings. This is an incredibly helpful essay in that it reminds us that Reformation took place in a particular time and in specific places. It was not an ethereal movement free-floating from the issues of the day. This perspective reminds us, firstly, that disagreement between the Reformers is not quite so simple. Some of them had governors that would permit certain reforms and not others. Political climates did affect how far some of the Reformers would go. Only Zwingli died on the battlefield. This essay also reminds us that education was not monochrome and various streams of thought produced different answers from the various Reformers. All of these factors are important for us to remember in trying to recover the past. It reminds us not to criticize disagreement between them too quickly because often we need to understand more of the context that informs their disagreement.

The remaining essays explore the major topics in systematic theology from the viewpoint of the Reformers. There are several major strengths of these essays. First, several of the essays provide discussions on the medieval background of the given doctrine. Most notably, J. V. Fesko's essay on union with Christ, Korey D. Maas' essay on justification, and Aaron Clay Denlinger's essay on baptism all delve heavily into the medieval doctrines and point out not only the obvious points of dispute, but also the philosophical and theological issues that undergird those disputes. Quite frequently, a shift happened in the intellectual apparatus of their day that brought specific doctrinal formulations into practice. The material in these chapters is some of the most helpful coverage of changing issues in medieval theology I have read. Although there are more comprehensive treatments, such as works by Heiko Oberman, the connections between medieval thought and Reformation development are often left implicit. The helpful contribution made by the authors of *Reformation Theology* is that they have digested that material and made the connections and development explicit.

The second major strength of this work is its engagement with secondary literature. The contributors to this volume are aware that many of these topics are debated, and that there is more than one interpretation of the issues at stake. Most of them are very clear about which side they are taking and provide helpful guides to scholarly debate. There are many works in historical theology that fall into the trap of being merely descriptive. Before reading this book, I had feared that it might be no more than a collection of quotations by the Reformers, strung together by sparse commentary from the authors. I was happily mistaken on this count. This volume contains substantial analysis of the Reformers' works. There are plenty of primary source quotations, as is necessary in a work on historical theology, but those are complemented with good contextual analysis and helpful insights about their

significance. Readers are alerted to most of the major debates in the secondary literature regarding various figures and their positions.

Readers should note that this volume focuses on the Reformation in the sixteenth century. This means it does not intend to provide a history of Reformed, or Lutheran thought for that matter, but specifically focuses on the emergence of Protestant thought in early years after breaking from the Roman communion. This narrows attention to first and second generation Reformers. The strength of this approach is that sources from various factions of Protestantism are explored. Both Reformed and Lutheran thought gets a lot of attention, and Anabaptist thought is also included at relevant places. Rarely do volumes set Reformed and Lutheran thought next to each other in order to provide responsible examinations of both. Most often, these differing branches of Protestantism are brought together in a polemical context. It is to this volume's credit that it provides us with good, analytical descriptions of all the major trajectories that developed in Protestant thought in the sixteenth century. As might be expected, Robert Leatham's essay on the person of Christ is incredibly insightful and responsibly describes the differences between Reformed and Lutheran approaches to Christology.

There is also a downside to the narrow focus on the sixteenth century, at least in my opinion. There is little variation between chapters of the figures examined. Luther and Calvin are essentially the stars in every chapter. To be fair, some authors do give balanced attention to other Reformers, but this tends to be the exception. Even at this, Calvin tends to get even more attention than Luther. Although Calvin was unquestionably important, the 500th anniversary of Calvin's birth in 2009 saw a massive output of secondary literature on his theology. It might have been more helpful to balance that by giving more even attention to other Reformers in this volume. To this point, even the focus on Luther and Calvin makes this volume particularly focused on the continental Reformation. There are only a few sections devoted to the early stages of Reformation in England. Thomas Cranmer should have been an important figure that featured throughout this volume, and possibly even William Perkin, although granted he was significant later in the sixteenth century than most of these other figures. Where the Reformation in England is considered, it is largely through Martin Bucer. Yet, Bucer began as a continental Reformer and only later moved to teach in England. None of this negates the usefulness the contributors make by examining Luther and Calvin, but I mention this simply to point out that there is an unbalanced focus to many of the essays.

The only major issue I have with this volume is, surprisingly, the essay "Creation, Mankind, and the Image of God" by Douglas F. Kelly. Kelly is generally a very good scholar,

and I appreciate his other work. Even here, I have no issue with what he presents as the doctrine of the Reformers. In that respect, this essay is a reliable guide for those who want to pursue the primary sources further. I do take issue with Kelly's method in this essay. He seems more concerned to argue that the Reformers would not share the post-Enlightenment views of science than he does to present their views from within their own context. It seems clear to me that the Reformers did not hold views that modern science would consider in line with the Enlightenment, but to address what they would have thought had they existed after the Enlightenment developments is a completely separate issue, and, in my view, speculative. Quentin Skinner's work on historical method has shown that we have to consider the wider intellectual apparatus of a given period to see what makes a specific doctrine reasonable to an historic figure. Kelly seems to think that if the Reformers had lived after the Enlightenment, they still would have maintained early-modern presuppositions about what was reasonable. The fundamental flaw with this approach is that it forces modern questions about evolution and science back into sources that did not seek to answer these questions.

It may be useful to provide final comments on the way this volume can be used. For students, I think this volume is an incredibly useful way to be exposed to the early stages of Protestant thought. It is steeped in primary sources, and provides a helpful guide to the debates in the secondary literature. Even given my criticisms of Kelly's essay, it is still a reliable guide to relevant material in the primary sources. In this way, it is a great introduction to the history of Protestant thinking. For ministers, this book might provide quick access to primary source quotations that could be useful for sermons. Often times there is not time to look through all of the volumes by Calvin or Luther to find their explanation of a given topic. This book is helpfully organized into systematic categories and can provide quick access to numerous quotes on a given topic. For scholars, these essays are high caliber historical treatments, and many of them could be cited as surveys of the issues involved with the intellectual shifts occurring in early Protestant thought. The only reservation I have about this is that the book is explicitly evangelical. Although this is a great strength that makes it even more useful for other purposes, it might limit the way it can be cited in mainstream historical scholarship. This, however, is only a possible limitation, and the essays are extremely valuable summaries of Reformation thought. In the end, no matter how you use this volume, it is a worthwhile read. It is highly informative, and contains incredible amounts of information that will take some time to digest.

1. This is Michael Horton's puff on the dust jacket of the volumes.

Review: Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume One: Theology Proper* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2014). ISBN 978-1577995838. Cloth, 243+x pp. \$34.95. *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Two: Anthropology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2014). ISBN 978-1577995845. Cloth, 153 pp. \$34.95. *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Three: Christology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2014). ISBN 978-1577995913. Cloth, 269 pp. \$34.95. *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Four: Soteriology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015). ISBN 978-1577996675. Cloth, 257 pp. \$34.95. *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume Five: Ecclesiology, The Means of Grace, Eschatology* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016). ISBN 978-1577997320. Cloth, 341 pp. \$39.95. Reviewed by Lane Keister, pastor of Momence Orthodox Presbyterian Church in Momence, IL.

Introduction

It is a great honor for this reviewer to introduce to the readers of *The Confessional Presbyterian* journal a work that has been hitherto unavailable to anyone who does not read Dutch, and yet a work that has been equally desired in English translation by anyone who knows about it. Vos being this reviewer's favorite theologian, it will be difficult for the reviewer to restrain his language and keep manageable the superlatives!

Geerhardus Vos (1862–1949) is most famous for being the “father of Reformed biblical theology.” What is less well-known about him is that the start of his career in teaching was at Calvin Theological Seminary. In 1888, at the ripe old age of twenty-six, he began to teach systematic theology at Calvin Theological Seminary. He only taught there for four years before moving to Princeton, where he took up the newly created chair of biblical theology. In only four years, and mostly before he was thirty years old, he created a textbook which Michael Horton likens to “a lost Shakespeare play recently discovered.”¹

Content

In the order in which Vos treats the subjects, there are no huge surprises. The loci are evident in the subtitles to the volumes: theology proper (doctrine of God), anthropology (doctrine of man), christology (doctrine of Christ, or, in Murray's terms, “redemption accomplished”), soteriology (doctrine of salvation, or, in Murray's words, “redemption applied”), ecclesiology (doctrine of church), means of grace (word and sacrament), and eschatology (doctrine of last things). The biggest disappointment, and probably the only one for Reformed readers, is that Vos wrote no prolegomena to the *Reformed Dogmatics*. We do not have a systematic treatment from Vos on the issues of theological encyclopedia, or the *principia* of theology. These issues have to be gleaned piecemeal from his

other work. One last comment before diving in is that Vos structures the *Reformed Dogmatics* (hereafter abbreviated RD) in a catechetical fashion. This might be off-putting to some. However, as each volume has a list of all the questions in the back, this functions as a very handy way of finding the discussion of the exact point desired. It is not very different from Francis Turretin's method in his *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, where each question is very carefully stated as to what it is and what it is not. Vos was steeped in the post-Reformation scholastic tradition, and does not shy away from such scholastic precision of thought and care for distinctions.²

Though there are five volumes (one hopes that the whole may eventually be published in a less expensive single volume, thus making it more widely available), the volumes are not large, and so it must be observed that Vos's RD is not nearly as exhaustive as Turretin's or Bavinck's. Indeed, Vos celebrates a terseness of phrase that includes a condensed pithiness. Selected highlights of each volume follow.

Volume one treats theology proper, the doctrine of God. The seven chapters cover God's knowability (some prolegomena are treated here, actually, but only in the briefest fashion); the names, being, and attributes of God; the Trinity; predestination; creation; and providence.

In discussing the incommunicable and communicable attributes, Vos notes that "[T]he former determine the latter... The two sets are at no point separated from each other; they penetrate each other" (8).

Vos rejects middle knowledge, friend of Arminianism, by the simple objection that "whatever is free and uncertain in itself cannot be the object of knowledge" (19).

Vos accepts the distinctions between *condign*, *congruent*, and *pactum* merit, and argues that all merit is only and ever *pactum* merit (31). At this point, some might demur. Didn't Adam's sin merit eternal condemnation on the basis of *condign* merit? Of course, that is hardly a reward. But what about Jesus' merit? Didn't Jesus' perfect life match up perfectly with the law's demands as to what would constitute an earning of eternal life? Jesus' agreement with the Father can introduce an element of *pactum* merit as well; but it seems to this reviewer that the categories are not always completely distinct when it comes to Jesus' merit.

The description of perichoresis as "a kind of internal circulation of the Godhead, an eternal movement within the being of God" (46) is helpful, whereas it is usually described as an "interpenetration" of the persons.

The exegetical acumen of Vos is on display quite often throughout the RD. Commenting on John 15:26 (still in volume one), Vos asks why Jesus does not say that the Spirit proceeds from him as the Son. The answer is that "Because the Son speaks here as Mediator, He does not include Himself" (69).

As all the best theologians do, Vos curbs his own possible curiosity when it comes to unsolvable dilemmas, and exercises great caution concerning mysteries. For instance, he says that "We must pronounce the origin of the first sin in Adam an unsolvable problem" (88).

Predestination is connected to human inability after the Fall, inseparably so (98). A denial of predestination "includes, so viewed, a denial of the actual merits of the Mediator" (99). This is because "Christ cannot have merited for us what we ourselves provide" (*ibid.*). Vos helpfully exegetes Romans 8:28–29, eliminating the interpretive possibility that God's "foreknowledge" means only "foreseeing" (101–102). Later on, he also answers the objection that Romans 9 is only concerned with an external, national election (112–115).

Vos's RD is not a dry, cold business, even in discussing the doctrine that gives Calvinism the reputation for being so. He says, "This knowledge or foreknowledge of God is not an act of cold arbitrariness but an act of love in which the Lord, as it were, has been absorbed in knowing and contemplating His beloved from eternity" (105).

Vos's treatment of double predestination guards against an arbitrariness in God, even if humanity cannot see God's reasons (134–135).

When Vos comes to look at the first chapter of Genesis in the chapter on creation, he effectively argues that Genesis 1:1 cannot be a heading for the rest of the chapter, since, if it was, the second half of that heading would not receive any treatment in the rest of the chapter (164). He also senses the all-important distinction between light and light-bearers (166), though he misses the apologetic intent against the sun-gods and moon-gods of the Ancient Near East.

On the terrifically important topic of the relationship of faith and science, he holds that those who hold a day-age view are not heretics (Vos espouses a literal interpretation of the days in Genesis 1), but this question would become an essential question "if it provided the occasion for granting priority in principle over the Word of God to the so-called results of science" (169). He also opposes evolution most emphatically (171).

In the RD there are resources also for discussing with atheists the question of causality. He remarks, "Creation out of nothing does not violate the law of causality. For the law of causality does not teach us that all matter must come from other matter but only that all change must have a cause. Thus every origin must also have a cause" (181). God, not being susceptible of change, cannot have a cause. What we believe concerning God puts Him in a different category than the type of person who must have an origin. This goes a long

2. See, for instance, his magnificent article on the history of covenant theology in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1980), 234–267.

way to answer the atheists who insist that God must have had a cause.

Volume two addresses anthropology, which its three chapters covering the nature of man, sin, and the covenant of grace.

Vos rejects the idea of trichotomy, understanding 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 as instances of Scripture making use of human language (4). He is in favor of creationism, not traducianism (7–10).

His (partial) definition of sin is helpful: “It is not selfishness as such that constitutes the essence of sin, but selfishness as shutting oneself off toward God, as seeking after our own honor while *not* wanting God’s honor” (23, emphasis original). This definition should not make the reader think that God’s law has nothing to do with sin. It is clear in what follows that “Sin always has reference to a law” (25). He holds to the standard distinction as to the effects of sin: guilt and pollution (*ibid.*).

In view of recent attempts to jettison the covenant of works from Reformed theology, Vos’s treatment is salutary (31–36). Included in this is a discussion of the relationship of creation to covenant (he argues that the relationship is logical and judicial, but not temporary, 32). As R.C. Sproul would say much later, he describes the covenant of grace as Christ accomplishing the covenant of works on our behalf (33, 36). He is not afraid of discussing what would have happened had Adam been obedient (40–41), based on the analogy of Scripture. In the chapter on the covenant of grace, he delineates just where the covenant of grace and the covenant of works differ and where they are similar (93).

Vos makes a fascinating attempt at explaining the nature of the probationary command of the tree. Many people reject it as arbitrary, but Vos turns that seeming arbitrariness into a rational explanation of why God made it that way: “That God made a morally neutral thing the point of decision appears, as was just noted, to have had the purpose of ridding sin of all incidental features and to lay it bare at its core. If man sinned against this command, then it could be for no other reason than that he choose evil as evil and rejected good as good” (48).

In Vos’s discussion of free will, he makes the penetrating comment that bringing something good out of evil “is the exclusive prerogative of the omnipotence of God” (60). In other words, man at his most free is unable to do this. He can bring evil out of good, evil out of evil, and good out of good, but not good out of evil. The inability of man after the Fall to will that which is good does not lessen man’s responsibility (62).

The covenant of grace in the administration of the New Testament differs only in form, not in essence, from the Old Testament versions (136). The Christ-centered description tells us where the greatness of the new administration lies: in the fact that He has come, and the antitypes now take the place of the types.

Volume three takes up Christology. The chapters are divided into the person/natures; the offices; and the states, with an introductory chapter, and a chapter on names as well.

Here it is interesting to remark one development that occurs in Vos, noted by Gaffin in the Preface. In the RD, Vos interprets Romans 1:4 as a proof-text for the deity of Christ, having to do with the two *natures* of Christ. In his later work, Vos would amend this view, interpreting Romans 1:4 as concerning the change in *states* from humiliation to resurrection, thus marking the eschatological in-breaking of the new age. The two-age construction, for which Vos is so well-known, does not appear in the RD (see Gaffin’s Preface, vii; confer page 212 of volume three on Vos’s earlier view).

Vos’s treatment of the two natures of Christ threads through the many pitfalls that can assail attempts to describe the fact that Christ is one person with two complete, inseparable-yet-distinct natures. He quotes John of Damascus approvingly in his statement that the human nature of Christ is not inherently personal or impersonal, but rather *in-personal*, in that “[t]he divine assumes, the human is assumed—not so that from these two a sort of third is forged together” (43). This is a helpful way of thinking about the hypostatic union. Later, Vos says that “the human nature is borne by the divine person” (52), which has important implications for understanding Christ’s death on the cross. In working out how the two natures work together in a particular action, Vos says this:

Each of the two natures only works in common with the other nature, so that, in truth, every act of salvation is an act of the whole Mediator. Nevertheless, each nature works in such a way that befits it as either divine or human nature. In the incarnation, it is the divine nature that assumes, the human nature that is assumed. In doing miracles, it is the eternal power of the Logos that alters the course of nature, but it is the tangible-visible and audible humanity that announces the miracle and commands the miracle. Nowhere does the one nature work without the co-working of the other. Thus, in every act of salvation there are two *ἐνέργειαι* or actions. (64)

Vos treats the three offices of Christ as interdependent (he says that they interpenetrate one another, 87). This means that Christ’s kingship is priestly and prophetic; His priesthood is kingly and prophetic; and His prophetic office is kingly and priestly. Vos sticks close to the Westminster Shorter Catechism’s description of the three offices. The kingly office has to do with establishing a kingdom and conquering enemies; the priestly office has primarily to do with dealing with sin; and the prophetic office has to do with communicating God’s will.

Vos interestingly connects the two states with imputation directly. He defines a state as “[T]he relationship to the judicial power within which one stands...In its original meaning, then, a state is nothing other than an imputed condition” (183). This can help explain why Jesus can be regarded as guilty when He never sinned. It can also help explain Romans 4:25, which describes Christ’s resurrection as “for our justification.” Therefore, the state of humiliation is the Surety’s status of guilt (184), and the state of exaltation is “the status of righteousness of the Surety before the justice of God” (ibid).

Volume four tackles the issues of soteriology in six chapters that treat the *Ordo Salutis*, regeneration and calling, conversion, faith, justification, and sanctification. Questions concerning glorification are addressed in volume 5’s chapter on individual eschatology.

In line with standard Reformed systematics, Vos distinguishes between judicial acts and re-creating acts (5): “The first kind changes the status; the second changes the condition of the one regarding whom or in whom it takes places.” He also distinguishes between events that take place on the conscious level and events that take place below the conscious level, arguing that the latter precede the former (7). Vos does not appear to take a position on union with Christ being an all-embracing umbrella concept. Mystical union, he argues, cannot be the basis for justification (21). However, there are other aspects of union that might, and Vos does not address the question. He does, however, echo Calvin’s *Institutes* 3.1.1 in saying that “God cannot declare me just on the basis of what the Mediator did as long as the Mediator remains a stranger to me” (21).

Regeneration is an action that is re-creative, and below the consciousness (29). It cannot be observed (34). I could not help but think about Arminianism’s espousal of decisional regeneration, and the realization came to me that Arminianism fails to note this distinction between what is conscious and what is below the consciousness. If regeneration is below the consciousness, then it cannot be observed to come before faith. Because the Arminian cannot *feel* it happening, it must not *be* happening. This is the logical problem with the Arminian position.

Conversion, however, does happen in the conscious mind (58). Here Vos also addresses the question of repentance (61). Conversion, unlike regeneration, has an active component to it (63), even though it also has a passive component.

Faith does bring one into union with Christ. He notes the language of believing into Christ in the New Testament, and says that “There is a relocation of the resting point of life. Where it formerly lay in the self-righteous sinner himself, it now comes to lie in Christ” (80). Vos distinguishes among the different types of faith: historical, temporary, miracle-based, and saving (107). The distinctions are fine, but salutary. Faith

consists of knowledge, assent, and trust (115), positing yet again that these three elements (contrary to the more radical of Gordon Clark’s followers) are all essential to saving faith, and is not a formulation derived from Van Til as a precursor to the Federal Vision.

Vos’s treatment of justification has absolutely no deviations from standard confessionally Reformed theology. It is a judicial act of God’s declaration that a sinner who comes to God-given faith is not guilty, but has the right to eternal life, based on the imputed active and passive obedience of Jesus Christ (see 143, 151–153, and 155). The final judgment will see believers’ works given in evidence of a genuine faith, not as the basis of the judicial declaration (171). Justification is the root of sanctification (172).

Vos’s treatment of sanctification stems from the seminal idea that God’s holiness has to control all our theology concerning sanctification. For example, he says, “To be holy never means something that one is in himself, apart from God” (188). Then again, “The moral transformation of man, too, his subjective change, must from the outset be regarded from this point of view: It is for God and not for ourselves” (189). Interestingly, even though he will later say that sanctification does involve effort on the part of the believer (212), the primary work of sanctification occurs below the level of consciousness (192). This is because our good works flow from the sanctification that God works in us (212). This distinction could help many people avoid the headaches of legalism and antinomianism. Perseverance is treated under sanctification, and Vos rejects the idea that the warning passages in Scripture presuppose a fallible salvation (221). A brilliant riposte to the idea is found on page 221: “Believers can no more give themselves supernatural grace than they can deprive themselves of it.” Then the usual Reformed answer as to the warning passages follow: that they are designed precisely to keep believers from falling, and that they have that effect (222–226).

Volume five treats two loci: ecclesiology and eschatology, though Vos treats the means of grace as a separate part. The chapters address the essence of the church; its organization, discipline, and offices; word and sacraments; baptism; Lord’s Supper; individual eschatology; and general eschatology.

The distinction between the visible and invisible church receives a fascinating analogy: “The invisible is oriented toward the visible and vice versa, as the soul to the body and the body to the soul. When the Church is perfect, it will also be entirely visible as well as invisible, and the former will be an adequate manifestation of the latter” (16). This way of putting things avoids the error of dividing the two aspects too far from each other, or denying that the invisible aspect even exists (as Rome does), or denying the visible aspects of the church, as some overly-confident elders do.

Vos states the relationship of the church to Christ’s

kingship over the church quite strongly: “The church, in its deepest essence, is a kingdom, for Christ is anointed king over it. Accordingly, no authority may be exercised in the church unless it is derived from the kingship of Christ and remain bound to it. To want to make the church entirely into a free association shortchanges this kingship. Believers are not free to unite or not to unite, but from the outset stand under the command of Christ, their king” (37). This consideration should have an impact on those who think of church membership as optional. In addressing the question of elders, he posits, “That elders are chosen by the congregation does not mean that they are representatives of the congregation” (58). This is a vitally important point to remember, since elders who think that they represent the congregation often turn against the pastor.

According to Vos, only Word and sacrament are means of grace (79). The relationship of Word to sacrament is not reciprocal, for we can think of the Word without the sacrament, but we can never think of the sacraments without the Word (81). Vos accepts the law-gospel distinction (84), as a hermeneutical category dividing certain texts into law and certain other texts into gospel. Sacraments, when received by faith, convey grace (96), but not a converting grace (98).

Vos argues that a distinction exists between the OT sacraments and the NT sacraments that affects their provenance:

The difference lies ... in the fact that in Israel the sacraments, besides their significance for the covenant of grace, also had a national aspect, from which a difference in practice arose between them and the new Testament sacraments on a few points. For us, one comes to the table of the Lord only after one has learned to discern the body of Christ. In Israel the children also ate the Passover. This was because the Passover together with its covenantal significance had national significance. The same is true for circumcision. Baptism in the new Testament is administered to both sexes of the children of believers. In the old Testament, circumcision was only for infant boys. Indeed, in the national life of Israel only the men counted and represented the women, and this also had to come to light outwardly. (103)

This consideration should have more of an effect in the discussions surrounding paedocommunion.

Time will tell if Vos gave too much to the Baptists in his discussion about the New Testament words for baptism. He says that the words mean “immerse” (121). Why then is immersion not practiced? He argues that immersion was a secondary aspect, not primary, and that cleansing was more important

(123), and furthermore, that immersion militates against the universal aspects of the church (125).

If one reads too carelessly, or is inclined to cherry-pick quotations from Reformed authors, the Federal Vision authors might be able to use this statement from Vos to support their position: “Because by his baptism the Christian has been brought into union with Christ, that union must continue in all its aspects and parts” (130). And, later, he says, “[T]he meaning is that by baptism one comes to stand in a personal relationship with the triune God, who is called by the name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit” (133). One must read on to discover that Vos is using sacramental language here, not speaking of an instrumental use of baptism. He says, “In baptism we have to see in the sign not so much the goal as the means to that goal” (135). He says later that the grace conveyed in baptism is not a regenerating, converting, or justifying grace (144). Instead, it strengthens faith (148). In fact, he guards against an earlier form of Federal Vision theology in his comment on page 171: “Here and there in some Reformed theologians a conception intrudes that appears to function at the boundary of the orthodox system, so that one may doubt that it may still be called Reformed. There have been those who posit a kind of justification and regeneration at baptism, signified and conveyed to all the children of covenant members, without exception, but then not necessarily connected to salvation, since it can be lost through the fault of the children in growing up.”

Vos rejects Calvin’s position on the Lord’s Supper, in terms of the literal interpretation of “a spiritual eating of a material thing” (232). Vos exegetes the famous “This is my body” to be full of tropes and metaphors (234), and he rejects paedocommunion (244–245).

In the chapter on individual eschatology, Vos addresses the questions concerning the resurrection of the body, the intermediate state, the Roman Catholic doctrine of purgatory, and soul sleep. General eschatology addresses the questions regarding Israel, the millennium, and eternal punishment. On all these matters, Vos’s positions are non-controversial within Reformed circles.

This reviewer found only seven typos throughout all five volumes, which speaks well of Dr. Gaffin, the editor, and the folks who helped him. The translation is excellent and understandable, even though the edition is not meant to be a full, critical edition. This will be the first work I recommend to someone who wants something more than a small book, but less in size than Bavinck. Vos is a great example of a vanilla, confessionally Reformed theologian, who had very incisive thoughts, even at such an early age. This translation is most warmly to be commended.

Book Review: *Religion and Politics in America: An Encyclopedia of Church and State in American Life*, edited by Frank J. Smith (2 vols.). ABC-CLIO, 2016. ISBN 978-1-59884-435-1. Hb. 899pp. \$189.00. ISBN: 978-1-59884-436-8. E-book. 968 pp. (no list, Amazon.com price at press time, \$151.20). Online access via ABC-CLIO Information Services. Reviewed by the Rev. Benjamin P. Glaser, M.Div.

The author and editor, Rev. Dr. Frank J. Smith, is a B.A. graduate of Covenant College in Lookout Mountain, Georgia and received a M.Div. and a Th.M. from Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.¹ He completed his Ph.D. at the Graduate Center at City University of New York. Dr. Smith currently labors at an inner-city church of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America in Atlanta, Georgia and is on faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College. He also serves as President of Tyndale International University, a Korean-language school in Los Angeles, California. Dr. Smith is the author of *The History of the Presbyterian Church in America: The Silver Anniversary Edition* (Coeburn, VA: Presbyterian Scholars Press, 1999), and *Tales from the City: Real Stories of Urban Christian Ministry* (Coeburn, VA: Presbyterian Scholars Press, 2000) and is editor with David C. Lachman of *Worship in the Presence of God: A collection of essays on the nature, elements, and historic views and practice of worship* (Greenville Seminary Press, 1992; repr. Reformation Media & Press, 2006).

Giving a full review of a volume totaling 968 pages is difficult, and much of the actual content will by necessity be left out. The hope is that while all of it cannot be given its fair due, enough will be presented in order to give any future reader enough information to make an informed decision. As the title makes clear, Dr. Smith is presenting the reader with an encyclopedia of articles written by 109 contributors covering “religious motivations for political action” (pg. xix). The entries are by no means restricted to only Christian topics, but cover a myriad of faith groups and activities. The breadth and depth of the book is without peer in the area of resources of this type. The reviewer was not able to find any example of a work like this present in the bibliographic world. As noted above, to properly give a full impression of a volume of this nature is likely too much for a brief review. So what will be done is to provide a bird’s-eye view of the contents of the book, deliver a guide to the subjects entertained, examine a few examples of the particular articles, and lastly give an overview of how a work like this can be used by those to whom it is directed.

This work is organized like any other encyclopedia. Working from the beginning, after the title page is a content page, then an alphabetical list of topics, followed by a guide to related topics, then a preface with acknowledgements. An introduction written by the author gives background and his

reason for the work, defining why and how it is important for people to understand the intersection of religion and politics, as well as some points of instruction as to how to use this volume. After this introduction there is a brief chronology of pertinent events in North America and the way the subjects under review affect the historical record. The tome is divided into two volumes: the first volume covers topics A–J and the second K–Z. The second volume does not have the preface and introduction, but does provide for the reader the lists which populate the beginning of the first volume.

The second volume closes with several appendices: a list of recommended resources, biographical information on the contributors, and an extensive index. Each of these appendices are vital to properly understanding the articles and should be used liberally. It is worthwhile to take a moment to give more background about these add-ons. The recommended resources contain a list of books, articles, and journals where the reader can find more information on each topic. If a person is interested in the qualifications and background of the author of an article, then the section “About the Editors and Contributors” is the place to find that data. The material contained includes the author’s name, his academic credentials, and where the work of the person listed is focused. One could use this section to certify if the author is qualified to provide a knowledgeable presentation of the articles that they bring forward. One thing that you will discover is that nearly all the contributors have terminal degrees in the field they are contributing for in this book.

In each of the volumes, following these introductory materials, the book gets into the meat of the matter. It is organized by alphabetical order according to topic. For instance, the first article is “Abolition” which is then followed by “Abortion.” The articles themselves follow a pretty standard pattern: the item is defined by the contributor, historical background is given, and a note of the current state of the issue is provided at the close. After the article, there is provided a list of other books, pieces of writing, etc. for further reading. The entry is normally around three pages in length; some entries

1. Ed. Dr. Smith as a contributing editor of *The Confessional Presbyterian*, has supplied our pages with a significant amount of material over the years. In addition to a number of reviews the articles he has contributed include: “Reframing Presbyterian Worship: A Critical Survey of the Worship Views of John M. Frame and R. J. Gore” (v1, 2005; with David C. Lachman); “The Regulative Principle of Worship: Sixty Years in Reformed Literature. Part One (1946–1999)” (v2, 2006, with Chris Coldwell); “The Regulative Principle of Worship: Sixty Years in Reformed Literature. Part Two (2000–2007)” (v3, 2007, with Chris Coldwell) “American Presbyterianism, Geology, and the Days of Creation” (v4, 2008); “Presbyterian Quintessence: The Five ‘Heads’ of Church Government (v5, 2009); “American Presbyterianism and the Cold War” (v6, 2010); and “Politics, International Relations, and the Sabbath: The 1915 International Lord’s Day Congress” (v12, 2016).

receive a bit more room, but not much. Each article follows the one before it regardless of where on the page the prior one concludes. A bold title presenting the next topic is all that separates each portion. In the next portion of this review the actual contents of two of the articles will be brought forward to illustrate exactly what the reader is to expect and gain from what is provided, but first a consideration will be given again to the larger work of this encyclopedia before coming to the substance itself.

But What About the Articles?

The content of the pieces are written for the scholar and for those with sufficient background to be able to understand the issue being described without otherwise needed contextual clues. What this does is allow the reader to get the information they desire without having to weed through what might be unnecessary filler. While each of the pieces have their own authorial flair there is not a bias given by the writer as to their own opinion on the subject under review. In this way the articles are, as should be expected in a work like this, straight encyclopedic information and are not seeking to provide a final judgment or offer some of kind of editorially oriented conclusion as to the goodness or badness of the subject under review. To illustrate what this looks like, two totally different articles will be examined to deliver as wide a range as possible to help understand the uniformity of this approach. The two selections will also focus on a “weaker” example and a “stronger” example to show the editorial range of the book.

The first selection covers the topic of the “Eighteenth Amendment.” Written by N. Scott Cole (whose Ph.D. is in political science from Miami University; he is a professor at Longwood University in Virginia where he teaches comparative and international politics), this piece covers the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution which made the production, sale, and usage of alcohol illegal (except for religious and other specific practices).

Beginning in the 1850’s with historical background, Cole dives directly into the subject. As an aside, throughout it is assumed the reader knows the process of adding an Amendment to the United States Constitution, and other important particularities are taken for granted; the reader is anticipated to have sufficient background to understand the unspoken details which are to be implicitly known in a work of this kind. After introducing the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and the work they did to stir up anger and discredit the manufacturers of liquor, beer, and wine, Cole then provides for the reader the political response, starting with Woodrow Wilson’s veto and the eventual reversal by the United States Congress, and then the article gives a nod to the effects of Prohibition and closes with a statement on the Eighteenth Amendment’s own repeal in 1933 and the

Twenty-First Amendment passed under the leadership of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

After the close of the article there is one “See Also” entry: “Prohibition.” Likewise provided for further reading are three books which cover the time period covered, including one work that explicitly deals with the moral question surrounding this issue.

To provide a bit of commentary on the piece itself one of the things that seem strange for a work that ostensibly deals with the interaction of religion and politics is that there is very little (really no) commentary on the Amendment leading to Prohibition, outside of mentions of temperance leagues and the like. It would have been better if more time was taken with this question than the exploits of Al Capone and other gangsters during the interregnum between the implementation of the Volstead Act and Prohibition’s repeal appeal in the 1930’s. There is reason to wonder if the number of topics covered in the whole volume results in entries that are not as full as they may need to be to sufficiently fulfill the mandate given in the preface and introductory materials. But, as I noted at the beginning of this review, it is hard to give a full testimony in a review of this length. Each article is going to have its stronger points than others.

Having given one example of what one can expect from an article in this work, of an historical situation that covered a political issue, the second example article will be a biographical piece of a religious figure, in order to provide as different a portion as possible and to give a fair representation of the breadth and depth of this two-volume book.

The second selection reports for the reader the life and ministry of Walter Rauschenbusch. The title of the article provides his birth and death year. Written by Mark Lempke (who completed his Ph.D. at the State University of New York, Buffalo; he is a lecturer at the Singapore Institute of Management and is currently completing a book on George McGovern and liberal Christianity), this article covers both the pertinent biographical details of Rauschenbusch’s life as well as his effects on American politics and religion, as should be expected.

Seemingly to provide a defense of why Rauschenbusch deserves a place in this work, the opening paragraph of the article gives a full and complete overview of his work. It then goes on to a more traditional memoir, and closes with a word about the long-term effects of Rauschenbusch’s ministry. Like the aforementioned article on the Eighteenth Amendment the end of the piece gives a “See Also” (“Martin Luther King, Jr.” and “Social Gospel”) and “Further Reading” which includes two primary sources from the subject’s own hand, two dedicated biographies, and a social-commentary work on Rauschenbusch’s effects.

After the overview, the more traditional biographical part

begins with comments on where Rauschenbusch was born, what he experienced as a youngster, and how he came into his own as an adult and flowered into his place in American religious and political history. Going from his introduction to books that changed his thinking (which are named, and serves to provide the reader with “Further Reading” without taking up space at the end of the article) the author then weaves the growth of his influence upon American politics and the church. Lempke closes with some comments concerning the immediate failure of Rauschenbusch’s project, yet makes clear his long-term effect on future examples of the Social Gospel.

Lempke deserves praise for his ability to give a plethora of information in a short space, and to really draw the reader’s interest to a person not as well-known as the subject of the following article (Ronald Reagan). Much as with the initial paragraph, the middle portion of the article is also very tightly organized and does much to give the reader a fully orbbed understanding of why Rauschenbusch went the way he did and used the political avenues he sought to find solutions for the problems his ministry focused upon.

Closing Thoughts

As noted this is a compendium of pieces that grant an audience to a wide range of subjects. Subjects covered in this work include everything from Abortion to Zionism, Faith-Based Initiatives to the Salem Witch Trials. Its scope is a bit daunting, but as thorough as one will find anywhere. In this last portion of the review a few critiques will be made, as well as some positives for a more thorough assessment of this work for those who shall most benefit from an encyclopedia like this.

In examining the vast majority of articles provided in this book, there are the expected lyrical and substance differences which are not a major plus or minus but just the reality of a work that covers so many subjects and has as many contributors as this one does. While only two examples were given for the sake of space, the reviewer can say that the vast majority of the articles were informative and will provide a great help to anyone seeking more information about a given topic. Likewise, the real benefit of a work like this for the researcher is the extras that populate the ends of the pieces, and especially the appendices. Another excellent help for the reader is the guide to related topics at the beginning of the first and second volumes. For someone just beginning their work on a subject, a book like this could be very beneficial to spurring thought and focus. The academic focus is good for the audience a work like this is seeking to assist.

If any critique can be made, it is that its size and scope has the limitations of any kind of work of this type. That is inescapable. And as was remarked earlier, the quality of some of the articles can cause one to skip over them for more helpful pieces elsewhere in order to find the pertinent information for

those seeking more knowledge on a given subject. However, that is hardly a reason not to recommend these volumes for any person seeking assistance. It is truly a monumental work that is being brought forward at this time.

In closing, much has already been written about the advantages of a work like this. I would like to express a word of thanks to the editor who took on what must have been a very difficult task. To organize something of this size just in itself (speaking to the authors, figuring out which topics to cover, etc.) is a lot to ask of anyone, but that the quality is so high is a great commendation itself for the book and for the editor. The work is not inexpensive, but the material is available via ABC-CLIO’s database which is carried by many universities and colleges. This work is highly recommended as a resource for those writing journal articles, papers, or even for one’s own personal enrichment.

Review: *The Genesis Account: A Theological, Historical, and Scientific Commentary on Genesis 1–11*, by Jonathan Sarfati (Powder Springs, Georgia: Creation Book Publishers, 2015). ISBN 978-1921643910. Hb, 786 pages. \$35.00 USD. Reviewed by Wes Bredenhof, Pastor of the Free Reformed Church, Launceston, Tasmania.

Outside of sermon preparation, it is not often that I read a commentary from front to back. If my reckoning is correct, this is only the third time and certainly the longest of the three—but it was well worth it! Dr. Jonathan Sarfati of Creation Ministries International has provided the Church a monumental resource on issues relating to the first 11 chapters of Holy Scripture.

Sarfati has produced a thorough commentary on Genesis 1–11 which takes Scripture seriously as the inerrant Word of God. The greatest strength of this volume is its commitment to the inspiration of the entire Bible and everything that necessarily must follow from that. For example, one of the foundational issues that confronts Genesis commentators immediately is authorship. Commendably, Sarfati appeals to all of Scripture to prove the traditional view that Moses wrote Genesis, though quite possibly collating materials from earlier. Throughout the commentary, he also refutes the arguments of the “documentary hypothesis,” the old liberal idea that several authors were responsible for the Pentateuch, authors who lived much later than Moses.

Generally, Sarfati lands on the right side of the issues in the interpretation of these chapters. He defends creation in six ordinary days—a creation which happened thousands of years ago, not millions. He maintains that Adam was created on the sixth day out of literal dust from the ground, while Eve was created from Adam’s rib. There was a literal snake which

led to a historical fall of the first man and first woman. Later, Sarfati makes the case for a global flood in the days of Noah. He gets full marks on the big-ticket items.

When we get down to some of the interpretive details, I disagree with Sarfati on some points. For example in Genesis 6:2, we read that “the sons of God saw that the daughters of man were attractive. And they took as their wives any they chose.” Sarfati vigorously argues the old view that “the sons of God” were angels. In other words, angels were married to human beings and had sexual relations with them. He argues that Jude 6–7 proves that angels engaged in sexual immorality. He argues that since angels can eat, surely they could also reproduce. I am not convinced. In their essence, angels are spiritual beings, not physical beings and therefore cannot engage in sexual relations, much less reproduce by inter-breeding with humans. I find the “Sethite interpretation” to be correct. People descended from Seth (the line of the Messiah) married rebellious unbelievers. However, I would also grant that Sarfati’s view falls under the umbrella of what we call “the freedom of exegesis.”

As a Reformed reader, regrettably, there are other areas where I cannot be as forgiving. While I have a lot of appreciation for the work Sarfati has done here, I would be remiss if I did not highlight several serious theological issues. One issue that arises here and there is Sarfati’s dispensationalism. He often quotes from (and refers to) fellow Messianic Jew Arnold Fruchtenbaum, another dispensationalist and figure on the “biblical prophecy” scene. This view emerges when, for example, Sarfati argues that Genesis does not speak directly about the church. For a Reformed believer, Genesis is all about the church! Sarfati makes a distinction between the Old Testament people of God (Israel) and the church, but the Belgic Confession says in article 27, “This [catholic] church has existed from the beginning of the world and will be to the end, for Christ is an eternal King who cannot be without subjects.” Not unrelated to this is the muted development of covenant theology in this commentary. For example, there is hardly a word about God’s covenant with Adam and Eve either before or after the fall into sin.

Another issue which caught my attention was Sarfati’s occasional references to followers of philosopher Gordon Clark, particularly Gary Crampton and John Robbins. Clark was part of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church when it first began in 1936. However, theological complaints lodged against him eventually led to his departure in the late 1940s. In Clark’s thinking, logic and God are to be identified with one another. God is pure logic, according to Clark and his followers. Clark famously translated John 1:1, “In the beginning was Logic, and Logic was with God, and Logic was God....” Critics of Clark (like John Murray and Cornelius VanTil) argued that Clark had confused creation with the Creator. God stands sovereign

over logic; he is not subject to it nor equal to it. Unfortunately, Sarfati seems to follow Clark’s reasoning in several places. It leads him to assert that maintaining the presence of any paradoxes, antinomies or tensions in Scripture (even apparent contradictions or humanly irreconcilable statements) is very dangerous. However, I would argue that this makes God, the author of Scripture, subject to our notions of what must be logical—far more dangerous! There are things taught in Scripture that are simply not capable of rational explanation. For example, the one God eternally existing in three persons. This is why the Belgic Confession says in article 9 that “this doctrine far surpasses all human understanding.”

Enough about the theological and interpretive issues. This commentary also promises to shed scientific light about the first chapters of Genesis. This is where this commentary is most helpful. A few examples will illustrate. Genesis 2:21 says that God created Eve from Adam’s rib. Sarfati notes the fact that human ribs can actually regenerate. Hence, Adam would eventually have had a complete set of ribs again. When discussing the Flood, the commentary points out that catastrophic plate tectonics can explain the mechanism of this deluge. How do we explain the formation of canyons that appear to be millions of years old? Sarfati describes how canyons have rapidly formed following catastrophic events like the eruption of Mt. St. Helens in 1980. Off the coast of Iceland, an island (Surtsey) appeared due to volcanic activity in 1963. Scientists have since been dumbfounded at how quickly Surtsey developed a “mature landscape,” including cliffs that would otherwise have been dated as far older. In many instances, I was skeptical of Sarfati’s claims. However, I did my own research on many of them and in every instance, so far as I could tell, his claims proved accurate.

This commentary aims to be scholarly in many respects. The author has used the original biblical languages (Greek and Hebrew are found throughout, but always transcribed). A lot of research is in the background, both biblical and scientific. However, an incongruent feature is the informal style of writing often used. This can be distracting in a commentary that strives to have an academic calibre.

The Genesis Account would especially serve well in the context of Christian education. Christian science and Bible teachers should have this volume on hand and refer to it often. They will find that their teaching on creation-related issues will be greatly enhanced! Preachers would also appreciate it, especially when confronted with questions from parishioners. I regularly give my catechism students the opportunity to ask me questions. I am always surprised how many of the questions have to do with either the beginning (protology) or the end (eschatology). This book has already helped me to be better prepared to deal with the former. Last of all, all Christian households could benefit from having a book of this

nature on hand as a reference tool. When you hear or read the claims of the world, Sarfati will typically lead you back to the solid ground of biblical teaching on origins. Yes, as noted above, there are some caveats, but overall this commentary can be recommended.

Review: *Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin's Geneva: Volume 1, Courtship, Engagement, and Marriage*, by John Witte, Jr. and Robert M. Kingdon. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005). ISBN 978-0802848031. Pb. xxxii + 512pp. 46.50. Kindle edition. \$18.70. Reviewed by Frank J. Smith.

Well, in twenty-first century America, what could be more relevant than a discussion of “Sex and the (Reformation) City”? Even though this volume was published a dozen years ago, it remains a tour de force, as well as constituting, as we have suggested, a most significant topic for church and society.

The two authors brought considerable expertise to their work. Dr. Witte is a professor of law and ethics at Emory University who has specialized in legal history and marriage. The late Dr. Kingdon, a world-renowned scholar of Calvinist Geneva and France, was a professor emeritus of history at the University of Wisconsin and had been an editor of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*.

While many in the Reformed world who write on the Reformation and Post-Reformation concentrate on theology and doctrine and the practice of the institutional church, there is a body of literature that approaches the expression of Protestantism through the prism of social and cultural history. Starting in the 1960s, there were noteworthy purveyors of this perspective, including Steven Ozment (concentrating on the Lutheran Reformation), Natalie Zemon Davis (early modern France), Christopher Hill (seventeenth-century Britain and the English Civil War), and James Jacob (history of science and radical Protestantism). We could also mention Carlo Ginzburg, whose writings focus more on the scene in Roman Catholicism. His *The Cheese and the Worms* chronicles the heresy of a miller who ran afoul of the Inquisition in Italy and was burned at the stake in 1599.

Cultural and social historians continue today to research and write as they weigh cultural and social matters of the Reformation “instead of the disembodied theological beliefs of its religious leaders.”¹

The book being reviewed participates in that same genre. In the words of the blurb on the back of the book: “Bringing to light and life hundreds of newly discovered cases and theological texts, Witte and Kingdon trace the subtle historical forms and norms of sex, marriage, and family life that still shape us today,” with a resulting work that is “fascinating, even sensational.”

The authors began their study this way:

... Building on a generation of Protestant reforms, Calvin constructed a comprehensive new theology and jurisprudence that made marital formation and dissolution, children's nurture and welfare, family cohesion and support, and sexual sin and crime essential concerns for both church and state. Working with other jurists and theologians, Calvin drew the Consistory and Council of Geneva into a creative new alliance to govern domestic and sexual affairs. Together, these authorities outlawed monasticism and mandatory clerical celibacy, and encouraged marriage for all fit adults. They set clear guidelines for courtship and engagement. They mandated parental consent, peer witness, church consecration, and state registration for valid marriage. They radically reconfigured weddings and wedding feasts. They reformed marital property and inheritance, marital consent and impediments. They created new rights and duties for wives within the bedroom and for children within the household. They streamlined the grounds and procedures for annulment. They introduced fault-based divorce for both husbands and wives on grounds of adultery and desertion. They encouraged the remarriage of divorcees and widow(er)s. They punished rape, fornication, prostitution, sodomy, and other sexual felonies with startling new severity. They put firm new restrictions on dancing, sumptuousness, ribaldry, and obscenity. They put new stock in catechesis and education, and created new schools, curricula, and teaching aids. They provided new sanctuary to illegitimate, abandoned, and abused children. They created new protections for abused wives and impoverished widows. Many of these reforms of sixteenth-century Geneva were imitated and elaborated in Calvinist communities on both sides of the Atlantic, and a good number of these reforms have found their way into our modern civil law and common law traditions (1f).

That's quite a list! It illustrates the scope of the Calvinistic reforms which impacted not only theology per se, but the whole society. And for the next almost 500 pages, the authors demonstrate the numerous ways in which Calvin and his colleagues sought to ensure that Geneva would indeed be a manifestation of God's kingdom on earth.

Witte and Kingdon utilized seven types of sources: systematic writings; sermons, lectures, and Biblical commentaries;

1. See “The Cultural History of the Reformation: Current Research and Future Perspectives” (accessed on 3/7/1017 at <http://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/tagungsberichte-6862>).

correspondence and *consilia* (formal opinions in response to questions); catechisms and didactic materials; polemical writings; statutes; and cases considered by the Consistory. About half of each of the chapters featured analysis, followed by various primary texts, many of them overlooked through the years and many of them in translation into English for the first time.

Chapter 1, “Making and Breaking Intimate Bonds,” is subtitled “An Overview of the Reformation of Engagement, Annulment, and Marriage in Geneva.” After reviewing the traditional theology of marriage and the elaborate canon law that had developed in Catholicism, the chapter evaluates the Reformation’s critique. The Protestant criticism, as enunciated by Calvin in the original edition (1536) of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, included tyrannical imposition of non-biblical laws upon the conscience; the Romanist view that marriage is a sacrament; and inconsistencies in theory and application that had caused confusion. A decade later, in 1546, a draft version of the Marriage Ordinance circulated widely in Geneva, though the document was not formally adopted until 1561.

In contrast to canon law, the Marriage Ordinance removed several formal impediments to engagement, including a man becoming a priest, either the man or the woman taking a vow of chastity, and mutual consent by the two parties. The fact that the engaged couple could not mutually call off an engagement underscored the point that engagement contracts were “sacred” and therefore not to be entered into lightly.

Chapter 2, “The New Alliance of Church and State,” considers the cooperating spheres of Geneva’s Consistory (ecclesiastical) and Council (civil). Calvin acknowledged that pagans themselves “have always recognized the natural duties of sexual restraint, heterosexual monogamy, marital fidelity, procreation of children, bondage to kin, and the like, which are essential to sexual morality and the survival of marriage and the family.” The civil courts, therefore, had a role to play in order “to maintain a modicum of civil and domestic order.” But believers also needed the law in order to help them toward “spiritual righteousness” rather than merely “civil righteousness” (78). About six in ten of the cases adjudicated by the Consistory consisted of sexual, marital, and familial matters.

Chapter 3, “Looking for Love in All the Right Places,” notes that

Calvin ... addressed in detail what was forbidden to couples who chose to court with an eye to marriage. No sexy dressing. No fancy jewelry. No makeup. No immodesty. No exhibitionism. No dissolute plays, songs, or poems. No ribald letters or jokes. No excess in food. No drinking in taverns. No seduction. And,

certainly, no premarital sex. All these were forms and forums of fornication and lust that Calvin condemned and that the Consistory punished with increasing alacrity ... (94).

Nevertheless, Calvin “recognized and even celebrated the importance of the sexual human body,” which was the Lord’s temple. “Physical beauty was thus properly part of the natural calculus of courtship and marriage.... It was thus essential to Calvin that couples spend some time together before considering marriage so that their ‘natural disposition’ towards each other ‘could be ascertained.’ If there was no natural and mutual attraction, there was no use for a couple to go forward toward marriage” (96). Calvin’s own courtship was considered, including several abortive attempts before he happily wed Idette de Bure, an Anabaptist widow who was apparently quite attractive. Though the efforts of others to try to find a wife for Calvin were unsuccessful, he encouraged matchmaking, particularly by fellow ministers who would naturally be in a good position to know many eligible people.

Chapter 4, “Love Thyself as Thy Neighbor,” deals with the idea of individual consent. The Consistory had to deal with numerous cases in which it was alleged that consent to engagement or marriage had been coerced rather than freely given. Frivolous, drunken, mistaken, and conditional promises also came under scrutiny. The only conditions that could annul an engagement “had to go to the essence of the marriage, and not involve ancillary matters,” such as a failure to provide a promised dowry (138).

Parental consent is the topic of Chapter 5, “Honor Thy Father (and Thy Mother).” At least eight of the first ten articles of the 1546 Marriage Ordinance enunciated Calvin’s views on the matter. For example, no one could marry without parental (especially a father’s) approval below the age of majority (twenty for men, eighteen for women). For those under those ages who entered into marriage without approval from those in charge of them, those marriages would be dissolved and the young people punished. And no one could be compelled to marry another—that is, the individual must himself or herself consent to the arrangement. Interestingly, Calvin, along with Theodore Beza, appealed to natural law more than the fifth commandment with respect to this matter. Calvin accorded the same respect to young women with regard to the necessity of their consent as he did to young men.

In Chapter 6, “Capacity to Contract Marriage,” Witte and Kingdon discussed the impediments of infancy and of mental inability. While the age of majority was twenty for boys and eighteen for girls, the age of consent—that is, the age at which an individual had the mental capacity to give consent—was initially determined on a case-by-case basis. In later years, the Consistory, having been wearied by the adjudication of

such matters, set the age of consent at eighteen for boys and fourteen for girls.

The impediment of polygamy or precontract occupies Chapter 7, “The Two Shall Become One Flesh.” Calvin’s condemnation of polygamy found expression in his sermon on Deuteronomy 21:15–17, preached in Geneva in 1555. For him, polygamy was worse than divorce.

Because of the Genevan insistence on honoring a lawful engagement, an intent to marry sealed by a contract was binding. Therefore, anyone who was lawfully engaged was guilty of polygamy if he or she married someone other than his or her betrothed.

Chapter 8, “Fitness for Marriage,” discusses the impediments of lack of virginity, contagion, sexual incapacity, and disparity in age. As Witte and Kingdon observed,

For Calvin and Beza, sexual intercourse was an essential part of marriage. Married couples were expected to retain a healthy sex life, even if they were not, or no longer, capable of having children. “Satan dazzles us . . . to imagine that we are polluted by intercourse,” said Calvin. But “when the marital bed is dedicated to the name of the Lord, that is, when parties are joined together in his name, and live honorably, it is something of a holy estate.” For “the mantle of marriage exists to sanctify what is defiled and profane; it serves to cleanse what used to be soiled and dirty in itself.” Husband and wife should not, therefore, “withhold sex from the other.” Nor should they “neglect or reject” one another after intimacy or intercourse (282).

Each of the four impediments was obviously related to the necessity of sexual relations for marriage (though the lack of virginity was offensive fundamentally because of the dishonesty). Dishonesty also characterized sexual dysfunction: “Those who were eunuchs, frigid, or permanently unable to engage in sexual intercourse betrayed the fundamental nature and purpose of marriage. They were not capable of becoming ‘one flesh’ in the expectation of marital love and in the hope of having children” (283).

Incest as an impediment is elucidated in Chapter 9, “Thou Shalt Not Uncover the Nakedness of a Relative.” The early Reformers had attacked Catholicism’s complex and complicated casuistry concerning consanguinity and affinity, and sought to implement *sola scriptura* as a principle. Calvin, however, reversed his usual appeal to biblical law and resorted to natural law as a fuller explanation of morality with respect to incestuous relations. According to Witte and Kingdon, “Geneva was to be a new biblical commonwealth, Calvin and Beza insisted. But this did not mean that the Bible alone was its only valid source of law. God had moved in history to reveal

other norms, habits, and procedures for his people to use to govern themselves, and some of these even the pagans could exemplify. The key was making use of these laws in a way that enhanced rather than eclipsed biblical norms of Christian discipline and discipleship” (331).

Interreligious marriage is the theme of Chapter 10, “Be Not Unequally Yoked with Unbelievers.” Calvin and the other Protestant leaders rejected the Catholic view of marriage being a sacrament. Their new theological understanding with respect to the nature of marriage led them to tolerate interreligious marriage. At the same time, these churchmen did discourage such an arrangement.

Chapter 11, “For Richer or Poorer,” describes the economics of engagement and marriage. In medieval times, there were three types of property usually in play. One, a man customarily gave an engagement gift, usually a token of his love and a seal of his promise. Two, the woman’s family commonly gave a dowry to the man. Three, the wife acquired rights to at least part of her husband’s property. Calvin and colleagues did not change these basic provisions. However, they did move disputes over marital property from the sphere of the church to that of the state. Also, in another departure from traditional practice, they held firmly to the principle that since property matters were not of the essence of marriage, a failure to follow through on the bestowing of property could not dissolve an engagement or a marriage.

Chapter 12, “The Perilous Interval,” notes that a man and woman engaged to each other were required to take their wedding vows within six weeks of the engagement. This period was to allow an adequate time to prepare for the nuptials, but not such a long period, so as to minimize the temptation of engaging in premarital sex—something which could bring public shame and even brief imprisonment. Furthermore, if they delayed the wedding, they would be summoned before the Consistory for admonition and could also be summoned before the Council to be compelled to wed.

Chapter 13, “I Now Take Thee,” deals with the bans—public declaration in church for three consecutive weeks of the intention of a couple to marry. The bans not only allowed opportunity for objection to be lodged, but also served as a public invitation to the wedding. The fact that a civil officer had to sign the bans while a minister had to publish the bans “underscored a central point of Calvin’s marriage theology—that marriages were at once public and private, spiritual and temporal, ecclesiastical and political in nature” (447).

The ceremony itself featured three themes: “(1) biblical exhortation on marriage and its duties; (2) the consent of the couple and congregation and exchange of vows; and (3) blessing, prayer, and further exhortation” (449). In contrast to Catholic and other Protestant liturgies, “Calvin’s wedding liturgy was long on instruction and short on ceremony” (450).

Not just the wedding ceremony but also the feast that followed was a matter of interest for Geneva's authorities. Following Calvin, who counseled modesty and moderation even when there was an obvious reason for celebration, laws on public morality adopted in 1560 included "several pointed restrictions on diet, dress, and drunkenness at wedding feasts" (454).

In Chapter 14, "Concluding Reflections," Witte and Kingdon wrote that Calvin, in the last ten years of life, synthesized "his theological and legal thinking on courtship, engagement, and marriage" (482). The doctrine of covenant was the glue that held together the various themes. Not only was the covenantal relationship between God and His people presented in the Old Testament in marital terms by way of analogy, but marriage itself is, according to the Bible, a covenantal relationship. Calvin understood that, in addition to the couple getting married, there were four other parties: parents, peers (as the two witnesses), minister, and magistrates, all of whom were necessarily present as representatives of "different dimensions of God's involvement in the marriage covenant. They were essential to the legitimacy of the marriage itself. To omit any such party in the formation of the marriage was, in effect, to omit God from the marriage covenant" (484). Indeed, "Marriage was, by its covenantal nature, a public institution, involving a variety of parties in the community. To marry secretly or privately was to defy the very nature of marriage" (485).²

The authors noted that

Calvin grounded various biblical rules against illicit sexual unions in this created structure of marriage. Marriage was created as a heterosexual monogamous union—a joining of two opposites, "male and female," who have the physical capacity and natural inclination to come together in love. Citing Moses and St. Paul, Calvin condemned as "monstrous vices" sodomy, buggery, bestiality, homosexuality, and other "unnatural" acts and alliances—arguing cryptically that to "lust for our own kind" or "for brutes" was "repugnant to the modesty of nature itself" (485).

But Calvin especially inveighed against adultery, which

2. As one reviewer noted, however, saying that Calvin's view of marriage was covenantal "is not very informative until it is clear what sort of covenant is in view. Professor Witte is not much help here, since his own view of covenants and covenant theology is distinctly hazy, telling his readers that the covenant with Israel was a 'covenant of works.'" See Paul Helm, "Sex, Marriage, and Family in John Calvin's Geneva, Volume 1: Courtship, Engagement, and Marriage," www.reformation21.org (July 2006).

3. Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

included not only "illicit sexual activities per se" but also "various acts leading to the same."

Calvin condemned with particular vehemence the sin of fornication—sexual intercourse or other illicit acts of sexual touching by non-married parties, including those who were engaged. He decried at length the widespread practice of casual sex, prostitution, concubinage, pre-marital sex and cohabitation and other forms of bed-hopping that he encountered in modern-day Geneva, as well as in ancient Bible stories. All these actions openly defied God's commandment against adultery and God's commendation of chaste and holy marriage (486).

After observing that Calvin "superimposed" on the Lutheran two-kingdom schema "a doctrine of marriage as covenant," which added "a spiritual dimension to marriage life in the earthly kingdom, a marital obligation to spiritual life in the heavenly kingdom, and complementary marital roles for both church and state in the governance of both kingdoms," Witte and Kingdon concluded their book with these words:

Marriage was an earthly order and obligation for all persons, said Calvin. But it also had vital spiritual sources and sanctions for Christians. Marriage required the coercive power of the state to preserve its integrity. But it also required the spiritual counsel of the church to demonstrate its necessity. Marriage was grounded in the will and consent of the parties. But it was also founded in the creation and commandments of God. Marriage deterred sinful persons from the lust and incontinence of this earthly life. But it also symbolized for them the love and sacrifice of the heavenly life. Marriage served the social purpose of procreation and protection from sin. But it also served the divine purpose of sanctification and edification by grace. None of these sentiments was altogether original with Calvin. But, using the doctrine of covenant, Calvin was able to cast these traditional teachings into a new ensemble, with new theological emphases and new legal applications (490).

A book like this is very helpful in providing historical context for the various doctrinal and ethical positions promulgated by the early Reformers. More than that, this type of scholarship enriches by weaving a social and cultural tapestry. In perusing this volume, one is reminded of Carlos M. N. Eire's masterful presentation of Reformation iconoclasm.³

This work by Witte and Kingdon also demonstrates diversity and growth—diversity between various Reformers, and

the development of thought by individuals, such as Calvin. Perhaps we could say that while we in the Reformed world tend to look at ethics in terms of fixed categories, much like a systematic theological approach, these scholars enable us to see the chronological development, which is more akin to historical theology.

This volume can act as a corrective—possibly a rebuke—to several perspectives.

First, it demonstrates the hypocrisy of liberals in mainline denominations with a Calvinistic heritage, who, presumably with a straight face, claim to be Reformed in their thinking on sexual matters, while also advocating for all kinds of bizarre sexual practices. Do these churchmen and churchwomen really think that Calvin would have eventually evolved so as to embrace homosexuality and pre-marital sex? Honestly? Well, whatever they really think, there is no question but that Calvin's Geneva was intent on maintaining standards of biblical holiness.

Secondly, it shows that those promoting the two-kingdom perspective cannot claim to be the heirs of Calvin. Some of the 2K school have even gone as far as to say that the issue of same-sex marriage is no big deal, and that Christians interested in seeking the best for everyone, including homosexuals, should allow them to marry each other as a way of peace and societal stability.

Thirdly, this book serves to caution against a sycophantic sentimentality about the “good ol’ days” of the Reformation. The Reformers, like churchmen today, could differ on numerous matters, including the application of ethical matters. Furthermore, not only was there growth in individuals’ understandings—there could also be inconsistencies in their positions.

Fourthly, it shows that the modern patriarchal movement cannot claim Calvin as its progenitor. That is not to say that Calvin was an egalitarian who did not believe in distinction of roles between men and women. But at the same time, in contrast to a certain mindset being foisted on the consciences of Christians, Calvin understood that parents, while playing a significant role with respect to courtship and marriage, should not impose their wills in matters of the heart.

The Ordinance made clear that parental consent was a supplement to, not a substitute for, the consent of the couples themselves. Parents could not, on pain of imprisonment, coerce their children into unwanted engagements or marriages, or withhold their consent of payment of dowry until the child chose a favorite partner. They could not force youngsters into marriage before they were mature enough to consent to and participate safely in the institution. Minor children, “always preserving modesty and respect,” could refuse to follow their parents’ insistence on an un-

wanted partner or a premature engagement. Other children, confronting a negligent or excessively strict father, could have him compelled to give a dowry in support of their marriage (42f).

Marital matters were not simply a familial issue; they entailed an interplay among the three great spheres of family, church, and state. And further, the patriarch had to give a rationale for refusing to bless an engagement, and could be forced through action of the civil magistrate to give his blessing if he could not present a valid objection.

Fifthly, this book serves to correct a simplistic approach to the subject. If there is one thing that is demonstrated by this 500-page volume, it is that these matters involved great complexity, and dealing with them required pastoral sensitivity in the implementation of nuanced positions. Reading this material, including the Consistory minutes, can help us to think through sexual issues. (Why did the Reformers insist that an engage couple must follow through with marriage? Should we have the same attitude today? Should we have the same set of impediments to marriage, and, if not, why not? On what grounds may a wife leave her husband? These issues are among those with which the church continues to wrestle.)

We would add that avoiding a simplistic mindset is relevant not only with regard to the conclusions, but also the premises. We all know that the Reformation was committed to *sola scriptura*—and that is certainly the case. However, mouthing that mantra does not mean that Calvin and Beza and others did not employ natural law. Indeed, what we see in terms of the application of the various principles is the employment of Scripture as foundational, but also tradition and prudence.

Sixthly, this work can help the church to have a balanced view of sex. For example, the church can be led to view sex not through the lens of Victorian prudishness, nor in an overly romanticized manner (think typical Christian novels). Rather, contemplating how Calvin's Geneva handled the issue of sex can enable the church to be *real* with regard to such matters. The Consistory records display flesh-and-blood reality; reading these records can assist pastors and theologians not to be cold and callous, but warm and pastoral, in their own counseling efforts and ecclesiastical court proceedings. Just as Mike Mason's *The Mystery of Marriage* brought a refreshing change from the typical how-to books on love and marriage,⁴ so, too, this present volume can help pastors and elders to see how a principled approach can be implemented in a sensitive way. At the same time, this book can also serve as a corrective to some in the world of Neo-Calvinism who do not understand that modesty and respectability should characterize sexual matters.

4. For the most recent edition, see Mike Mason, *The Mystery of Marriage 20th Anniversary Edition: Meditations on the Miracle* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 2005).

Seventhly, speaking of modesty and respectability, this book can be helpful to churchmen who are refusing to practice church discipline, including with respect to—perhaps especially with respect to—sexual matters. One continues to hear horror stories of how churches that cater to Millennials are not enforcing God's law when it comes to things like cohabitation and fornication. This book, however, serves as a prod—a reminder that church discipline is a mark of the church.⁵

Eighthly, contra those who think that the church is a private society that should keep secrets, including disciplinary proceedings and outcomes, this book illustrates the public nature of the church. In general, the Reformers regarded the church as working cooperatively with the civil sphere in the implementation of godliness. In order for that system to work, there had to be of necessity the involvement of the community, whereby good behavior would be encouraged publicly, and bad behavior discouraged publicly. In Calvin's Geneva, inappropriate behavior entailed shaming: in church court (admonition, rebuke, suspension from communion, and even excommunication); with regard to the state (as in serving time in jail or paying a fine or being compelled actually to marry a betrothed); and in the community (which not only would be aware of the ecclesiastical and civil sanctions, but would also witness that the bride would not be allowed to wear a customary wreath of flowers at the wedding and being required to wear a veil at the ceremony, as punishment for premarital fornication). Even when church discipline is carried out today, there is a tendency to treat such confidentially, because of the embarrassment, especially with regard to sexual impropriety. In the Reformation city, the attitude was the opposite, and it was so precisely because discipline is supposed to be embarrassing.

This present volume was to be part of a series, but the second and third volumes never appeared. However, there

5. According to Jeffrey R. Watt, discipline was essential to the Reformed Church. In a collection of essays which honored Robert M. Kingdon, Watt wrote that "the Consistory felt duty-bound to nurture healthy rapports among family members, at times laying the blame on one party but seeking above all reconciliation." In his opinion, the Consistory "was actually a much more intrusive institution than the Roman Inquisition and had the ability to effect greater change on contemporary society." He concluded that "the Consistory of Geneva was more akin to the Catholic confessor than the inquisitor," since "the Consistory often resembled more a form of mandatory counselling service than a tribunal per se" (S.K. Barker, ed., *Revisiting Geneva: Robert Kingdon and the Coming of the French Wars of Religion* [St. Andrews, U.K.: Center for French History and Culture of the University of St. Andrews, 2012], 77, 83). See this present author's review of this festschrift in the *Swiss American Historical Society Review* 49:2 (June 2013): 55–57.

6. Thomas A. Lambert and Isabella M. Watt, eds., *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin: Volume 1, 1542–1544* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. and The H. H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies, 2000), xix, xxi.

is another book which might be considered a companion volume, *Registers of the Consistory of Geneva in the Time of Calvin: Volume 1, 1542–1544*, with Robert M. Kingdon being the General Editor. This ecclesiastical record, consisting of 436 printed pages, deals with investigations of multitudinous sinners: "drunkards, blasphemers, usurers, wastrels, beggars, dancers, singers of 'improper songs,' healers, magicians, gamblers, and other 'evil livers.'" The introduction states: "As we read the whole of these registers, an entire canvas of popular culture unrolls before our eyes." This editorial observation reminds us that sex is not everything. But at the same time, we mustn't forget that we are sexual creatures and that sex is important—as seen by the fact sixty percent of the Consistory cases dealt with such matters, and by the acknowledgement that "the Consistory occupied itself with disputed promises of marriage" and "watched over the private life of couples."⁶

So, while sex is not everything—a good reminder in our over-sexualized and genderized society today—it nevertheless occupied a significant role in the Protestant Reformation. Luther's reforms included the transformation of the family, and the marriage of former priests and monks and nuns, who had vowed to remain celibate. Luther himself would experience the joys of marriage when he wed Katherine von Bora, who had been a nun. Henry VIII's desire for an annulment led to the break of the Church of England with Rome, and paved the way for the English Reformation. And as Witte and Kingdon observed, Calvin himself, during his time in Geneva, came to hold

a far more exalted spiritual view of marriage than he had espoused when he had first arrived in Geneva in 1536. He described marriage in sweeping terms as "a sacred bond," "a holy fellowship," "a divine partnership," "a loving association," "a heavenly calling," "the fountainhead of life," "the holiest kind of company in all the world," "the principal and most sacred ... of all the offices pertaining to human society." Conjugal love is "holy" when "husband and wife are joined in one body and soul." "God reigns in a little household, even one in dire poverty, when the husband and the wife dedicate themselves to their duties to each other. Here there is a holiness greater and nearer the kingdom of God than there is even in a cloister." Calvin had come a long way from the glum description of marriage in his 1536 *Institutes*: "a good ordinance, just like farming, building, cobbling, and barbering" (488).

And so, in this quincentenary year of the Protestant Reformation, may we celebrate the reform of courtship and marriage and sex in Calvin's city.

God's Ambassadors: The Westminster Assembly and the Reformation of the English Pulpit, 1643-1653, Studies in the Westminster Assembly Series, by Chad Van Dixhoorn (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017). ISBN 978-1-60178-534-3. Hb, 215 pp. Appendices. General index. Reviewed by Jeffrey C. Waddington.

Arguably the world's foremost authority on the Westminster Assembly, Chad Van Dixhoorn, OPC minister and associate professor of church history and historical theology at Reformed Theological Seminary/Washington D. C., has offered a historically sensitive and theologically rich study of the reformation of the preaching ministry attempted by the assembly which sat from 1643–1653 at Westminster Abby in London amidst a Civil War between the monarchy and Parliament.

God's Ambassadors is divided into three major sections. Part I: Blind Guides and Scandalous Ministers. Part II: A Reforming Assembly. Part III: In Theory.

The first part is comprised of three chapters which deal with the historical context in which the assembly was called, specifically the low estate into which the ministerial office had fallen in the Anglican communion as an inheritance of medieval Roman Catholicism. The church as an institution held preaching in low esteem and the inflated sense of the significance of the sacraments (apart from any explanatory role for Scripture).

Part two of *God's Ambassadors* devotes four chapters to the work of the assembly as it sought to correct the inherited deficiencies of the theology and practice of the ministerial vocation within the Church of England at the time. As a matter of fact, it fell to the assembly to examine both ministers seeking new calls and candidates seeking ordination. The author opens a clear window onto the processes of examination at Westminster during the ten years that the assembly sat. The divines were concerned with both theory and practice. The assembly debated within itself about the nature of the pastor's office and it produced the directory for ordination and the subdirectory on preaching in the directory of public worship. These were herculean efforts to bring consensus out of a mix of views on the exact role and function of the minister especially as it relates to preaching.

The third part of *God's Ambassadors* covers in seven chapters the Westminster Assembly theory of the ministerial vocation and principles of preaching. The assembly divines settled on standards for men seeking to serve in or continue in the ministry that involved godliness, education/training, and ordination. There would not be any self-appointed gospel ministers in the realm. While the ministry would involve more than preaching (counseling, visitation, and governing the church), preaching would be its central endeavor. God had said in His Word that He would bless the ordinary

means of the exposition of the Word. The Westminster divines understood the relation of Word and Sacrament along the lines suggested by St. Augustine that the preached Word was the audible Word and the observation of baptism and the Lord's Supper were visible Words. These belonged together as stressed so clearly in the Reformation. Van Dixhoorn devotes two chapters to Christ-centered sermons and exegesis and one chapter to the relationship of study and sermon style and how the divines understood the role of the Holy Spirit at work in such preaching.

This is an eye-opening examination of the attempt by the Westminster Assembly to correct the views and practices of the Church of England (and the church in Scotland and Ireland as well) concerning the role and function of the minister as preacher. Perhaps the most intriguing and surprising facet of this study was the low estimation of preaching in the church of the time. The emphasis fell on liturgy and sacrament rather than on the Word governing both sacrament and liturgy. Interestingly, when a man was ordained a minister he was not automatically licensed to preach. That was an additional step. Thankfully the assembly was committed to the centrality of preaching in the life of the church and ministry.

An Epilogue concludes the volume, and this is followed by three appendices drawn from the assembly's directories for public worship and church government dealing with the role of the minister, the structure of the ordination process, and nature of preaching. These texts are drawn from Van Dixhoorn's *The Minutes and Papers of the Westminster Assembly, 1643–1652* (Oxford: OUP, 2012), volume 5, "Assembly Papers, Supplementary Material, and Indices." This volume of the minutes contains a large number of all but the longer documents produced by the assembly (e.g., confession of faith, catechisms, Grand Debate). The text in appendix 1 is a section covering "the duties of a minister" drawn from document 19 in the minutes, "First draft of a directory for church government c. 25 March 1644." Appendix 2 contains the full text of document 20, "Doctrinal part of ordination and draft directory for ordination submitted to both houses of parliament 19 April 1644." The third appendix contains "The Subdirectory on Preaching," extracted from document 36, "Sub-directories for the directory for public worship submitted to both houses of parliament: assembling the congregation, public reading of scripture, public prayer before the sermon, preaching, prayer after the sermon, baptism, and the Lord's supper 12 November 1644." All three texts omit notices concerning revisions or corrections made in the original manuscripts given in the fifth volume of the *Minutes and Papers*. Van Dixhoorn's *God's Ambassadors* closes with an extensive bibliography and a short index covering persons and subjects.

I heartily recommend *God's Ambassadors* to ministers, elders, and any concerned layperson.

The Presbyterian Philosopher: the authorized biography of Gordon H. Clark by Douglas J Douma. Foreword by Lois Zeller and Betsy Clark George (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2016). xxv, 292 pages; illustrations, 23 cm. ISBN: 978-1-5326-0726-4 (hardback) and 978-1-5326-0726-0 (paperback). Reviewed by Wayne Sparkman.

The Presbyterian Philosopher: The authorized biography of Gordon H. Clark fills a long absent but needed treatment not merely in biography of a central figure of 20th century conservative Presbyterianism, but much more, in a careful handling of the controversies and issues with which Dr. Clark was connected. Those matters had far-ranging effects that rippled down for decades. To say that Doug Douma has done us all a great service with the publication of his first book, is something of an understatement.¹

I approach this review not so much as a theologian or even an historian, much less as a philosopher, but rather as an archivist and as one of those who assisted Mr. Douma in assembling the many sources needed for his book. My life's work is the gathering and preservation of important materials that I then strive to make available to researchers and others who may need that information. And so particularly in reading a biography or any sort of history, I am sensitive to whether the author has done the homework requisite to the work at hand. Have they gone beyond the mere digesting of secondary sources? Have they grappled with the subject's primary sources or are they simply redrafting what others have said about it?

Clearly with *The Presbyterian Philosopher* Mr. Douma has done his homework. The book abounds with footnotes (yes, footnotes! A great courtesy so long ignored by many publishers) in reference to one archival collection or another where Douma discovered the information that becomes the text of his narrative. In this narrative he displays an ability to sift and gather from various documents the whole of what actually happened at a given point in the story. Original letters, published and unpublished writings, interviews, emails, phone calls and other sources all factor in to provide what comes together as a most enjoyable and informative read. Douma has

1. The reader should also be aware that The Trinity Foundation has just released *Clark and His Correspondents: Selected Letters of Gordon H. Clark*, compiled by Douglas J. Douma and edited by Thomas W. Juodaitis. This volume is intended as a companion to the biography, and contains a selection of one hundred forty-eight letters exchanged between Dr. Clark and various correspondents, presented in chronological arrangement, covering the years 1921–1985. ISBN 978-1-8917-7737-0 (paperback). 263 pages; 25.5 cm.

2. The Manuscript collections of Edmund Prosper Clowney and of William Young, both of which are housed at the Montgomery Library at Westminster Theological Seminary, were not available to Mr. Douma during the time of his research.

ranged far and wide and turned over many stones in putting this book together.² What makes it remarkable is that much of the work on this book was done while Mr. Douma was a student at the Sangre De Cristo Seminary in Colorado, simultaneously working to earn his Master of Divinity degree. Upon graduation, he took a summer's victory lap through Europe, spent time at LAbri where he met and won the heart of Priscilla, his future bride, and then returned Stateside to complete the book while also working to establish a new ministry along the Appalachian Trail.

It may be helpful to approach *The Presbyterian Philosopher* as having three major sections. Section I includes chapters 1–4 and covers the ancestry, upbringing and training of the man—cumulatively who Gordon Clark is and what he stands for when he comes to the table of conflict. Section II (chapters 5–9) then takes up the ordination controversy—first, in good order, the origins of presuppositionalism and then the origins of the controversy itself, followed by the heart of the conflict, with the arguments from both sides of the controversy, and the resulting aftermath. And here as part of the controversy's aftermath, it seems appropriate to include in this second section the chapter on Clark's years at Butler University, for those years can arguably be viewed as Clark's strategic retreat. Finally, the last four chapters of the book comprising my proposed Section III discuss the fruits of Clark's life-work and the manner in which he prevailed over the ill-effects of the controversy.

In brief review then, the individual chapters of *The Presbyterian Philosopher* are:

1. The Presbyterian Heritage of Gordon Clark

Much as with any other biography, Douma begins his book at the beginning and provides us with an overview of Gordon Clark's strong Presbyterian lineage, devoting several pages in treatment of Gordon's grandfather, James Clark, who was himself a pastor in the United Presbyterian Church of North America (UPCNA). One of seven sons born to James and Gordon's father, David Scott Clark (1859–1939) was educated at the Princeton Theological Seminary and at the Free Church College in Edinburgh. Ordained in 1889, he affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Though this was nearly twenty years after the 1869 reunion of the Old School and New School factions, David's convictions were decidedly Old School. While not a prolific author, he did publish three books as well as some fifteen articles, all of which are helpfully listed in the footnotes on page 6.

As Douma emphasizes, "Gordon's respect and admiration for his father was deep, and the ultimate inspiration he gleaned from his father as role model cannot be overestimated." Gordon's mother also came from a long line of Presbyterians, and a brief paragraph recounts that history. Together the Clark's raised Gordon in a thoroughly Presbyterian home.

Carl F.H. Henry wrote in preface to *The Philosophy of Gordon H. Clark*, that “While there were few extended father-son conversations on theology, the elder Clark did teach his son the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* and Clark ‘more or less’ listened to his father’s sermons in church. But he made himself fully at home among the 1500 books in his father’s library” (page 14 of *Philosophy*, not page 49 as in Douma, page 7, n29). In that library, as much as anywhere, some of Gordon’s deepest traits were formed, reading Calvin, Warfield and A. A. Hodge, among others.

2. Gordon Clark’s Intellectual Influences

In this short chapter, Douma turns to Clark’s college years, with focus on his readings in philosophy. We have to look back to the prior chapter for discussion of four college professors under whom Clark studied, and of these, William Romaine Newbold was the greatest influence, both personally and academically. But as to Clark’s studies at the University of Pennsylvania, it was his readings in Plotinus and Augustine which proved to be of chief interest and value.

3. Gordon Clark and the Formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Douma moves next to Clark’s role in the formation of the Presbyterian Church of America/Orthodox Presbyterian Church, beginning with brief discussion of the Doctrinal Deliverance of 1923 and the reactionary Auburn Affirmation (1924). The Doctrinal Deliverance, with its emphasis on five fundamentals of the faith, had first been adopted by the PCUSA’s General Assembly in 1910 and was reaffirmed in 1916, then again in 1923. Modernists within the denomination responded late in 1924 with the Auburn Affirmation, and while vocal conservative opposition to the Affirmation did not manifest literally for many years, events were none the less building towards the eventual division which gave birth to what we now know as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Gordon Clark’s notable role was in nominating J. Gresham Machen to serve as moderator of the first General Assembly in 1936.

4. Gordon Clark at Wheaton College

The next chapter covers Clark’s early years as a professor, teaching philosophy at Wheaton College, instilling students in the Reformed faith and directing ministerial candidates on to Westminster Theological Seminary. In some respects these chapters continue the formative theme of the first two chapters, examining additional influences that came together to make the man who later comes into the conflict that is the central focus of the book. They also work together to underscore an unspoken question as to why Clark was not more widely welcomed into the OPC when he sought ordination.

In that same year that saw the formation of the OPC, Gordon Clark was hired to serve as a professor of philosophy at Wheaton College. His term there was brief, just seven years, hastened no doubt by the dismissal of J. Oliver Buswell, Jr.

from the presidency of the college. Buswell had been defrocked by the PCUSA and while some question remains, in all likelihood this was the primary reason behind his dismissal. And as Buswell had both hired and protected Clark from his detractors within the school, Buswell’s departure meant Clark’s time there was short as well. Clark’s rigorous Calvinism ran counter to the broad evangelicalism the school espoused, and he was let go in 1943. It was that dismissal that sent Clark back to Philadelphia with the intent to enter the ministry, which in turn led to the ordination controversy that is the focus of Douma’s book.

5. The origins of presuppositionalism

Our best evidence is that Allan A. MacRae coined the term *presuppositionism* and that Buswell then rephrased it to the more pronounceable *presuppositionalism*.³ Buswell employed the word in a series of back and forth articles that he hosted in *The Bible Today*, which was the house organ for the National Bible Institute. Interestingly, that series appeared in 1948–49, fast on the heels of an earlier six article interchange in *The Bible Today* between Clark and Buswell.⁴

Douma traces the development of Clark’s own brand of presuppositionalism, beginning with his rejection of empiricism and the classical arguments for God. Building on this foundation, the *weltanschauung* or worldview approach of both James Orr and Abraham Kuyper came into play in Clark’s developing system. As Douma summarizes, “Clark believed that [both] the classical and evidentialist approaches were based on false, non-Christian philosophies [and that] these approaches mostly assumed the validity of sense perception and the epistemology of empiricism, both of which Clark denied.” Consequently, Clark “came to believe that all knowledge possible to man is limited to the propositions of the Bible and that which can be logically deduced from the Bible.” Thus Clark came to hold a view that some have termed *classical presuppositionalism*, as over against the presuppositionalism of Cornelius Van Til. Or, as Douma explains, Cornelius Van Til did not have the apologetic realm to himself, for Gordon Clark was also a presuppositionalist, albeit with distinct differences.

Chapters 6–8, the Ordination Controversy, its Origin, Arguments and Results

Chapters 6 through 8 form the central focus of *The Presbyterian Philosopher* and might be read separate from the rest of the book, as a study in doctrinal and denominational controversy. They are well written and understandable, even for one unfamiliar with these discussions. To begin, Douma provides

3. *The Bible Today* 41.8 (May 1948): 235. These eight articles are online. (<https://continuing.wordpress.com/2011/07/01/buswell-reviews-carnells-apologetics/> [accessed August 24, 2015]).

4. See “Buswell Reviews Clark (1947),” *The Continuing Story* (<https://continuing.wordpress.com/2011/07/23/buswell-reviews-clark-1947/> [accessed August 24, 2017]).

a succinct summary of the charge lodged against Clark, as well as something of the reasoning behind it:

The Complaint, an attempt to block Clark's ordination in the OPC, was lodged both in opposition to Clark's theological views and in reaction to the Program for Action, [which] sought to have Clark ordained, but it also encouraged the OPC to cooperate with other churches via an affiliation with the American Council of Christian Churches, to produce an official statement affirming the benefit of alcohol abstinence, and to establish church control over Westminster Theological Seminary and *The Presbyterian Guardian*. The WTS-led faction opposed each of these policies and the occasion of Clark's ordination was their first opportunity to thwart its objectives. Rather than waiting for motions on these political topics to arise at the general assembly, they decided to make their stand on Clark's ordination. The theological issues addressed, however, were so complex that many of the OPC pastors, not to mention lay people, struggled to follow the arguments.

That confusion, and not just among the laity, persists to this day—which is but one reason why Douma's book fills a long-standing need. On the one hand, it was easy to see that Clark's resolution for alcohol abstinence and his motion for closer affiliation with other fundamentalists amounted to a capitulation to the key demands of those who left in 1938 to form the Bible Presbyterian Church. Moreover, the American Council of Christian Churches was an ecumenical effort managed and overseen by Carl McIntire, the key leader of the 1938 schism. But Cornelius Van Til's stated concerns about Clark's philosophy are another matter entirely, bordering on the arcane, at least so far as the laity were concerned.

The theological issues are taken up in chapter 7. These issues were four in number: (1) The incomprehensibility of God; (2) The relationship of the faculties of the soul (this was the least discussed point in the debate); (3) Divine sovereignty and human responsibility; and (4) The free offer of the Gospel. In all, the overriding issue was a charge of rationalism.

In the end, Clark's ordination was sustained, despite the best efforts of Van Til, or perhaps rather, the best efforts of Ned Stonehouse and other supporters of Van Til. Chapter 8 discusses the ramifications of the ordination controversy, which can arguably be said to have set the tone for the OPC for a generation or more. This was seen initially in subsequent denominational opposition to some of Clark's supporters, men like Floyd Hamilton and Alan Tichenor, which in turn did not set well with Richard Gray and Franklin Dyrness, the latter men taking their churches out of the OPC to form the Covenant Presbyterian Association. The ripple effect extended out for many years.

9. The Butler University years (1945–1973)

Earlier I termed Clark's years teaching at Butler University as a time of strategic retreat. I think that is defensible particularly when we note that this was the period in which his own philosophy or system of thinking coalesced. During these years he gained a largely non-combative setting which in turn enabled a most productive period of writing. Though Butler was a secular school, Clark continued to be a strong influence in the lives of notable students who would themselves go on to be leaders in the Reformed community, men such as David Clyde Jones and D. Clair Davis. Another Butler alumnus who studied under Clark was Ed Harris, a Richmond, Indiana native who went on to devote decades of his life in service to the Church as a ruling elder, as a trustee for Covenant Theological Seminary and as a member of the subcommittee providing oversight for the PCA Historical Center. It was Harris's recollection of Clark which provided the one laugh-out-loud moment of the book:

"Whenever we had exams, he would leave the room to go play chess with the religion professor [Dr. Andry]," and "I remember very well the last final exam I took from him. The blue book exams were three hours long and he only asked one question with three words: 'summarize the course.'"

10. Four theological contributions of Gordon H. Clark

Potentially the most controversial chapter of the book, Chapter 10 is arguably the most important chapter of the book, for here the author sets out his arguments for Gordon Clark as the Presbyterian Philosopher. Douma begins with a quote from Clark which seems a good summary of the chapter's focus: "The construction I am aiming at is the deduction of the Westminster Confession from Scripture, and this I take it is a step toward axiomatization, or systematization." Douma's goal in this chapter, as he states, is "to explain Gordon Clark's significant doctrinal contributions. As he sees it, these are (1) an axiomatized epistemological system, (2) teleological supralapsarianism, (3) a solution to the problem of evil, and (4) arguments for a return to traditional logic."

The first of these contributions, an **axiomatized epistemological system**, is the basis or foundation of Clark's entire system. Here the reader will need to work to give Clark a fair hearing. Clark's epistemology is built from two "elements" and the first of these is the truth of Scripture. Here Clark espouses what is known as foundationalism, the idea that knowledge must be based upon a secure foundation if it is to claim certainty. Every philosophy has a starting point, and to determine the best starting point, Clark employs a two-fold test, seeking that which has both the best ability to explain the nature of things and the best internal consistency. The truths of Scripture fulfill this test, in Clark's consideration, and so his system came to be called *Scripturalism*. "Where *Sola Scriptura* affirmed that the Bible is the sole source of all

Christian doctrine, Clark went further and claimed that the Bible is the sole source of all human knowledge.” The raw sense of that statement is an affront to modern Americans, for the logical conclusion of Clark’s system is that knowledge comes deductively from the Bible and not inductively through the senses. Douma recognizes that Clark’s system was not widely accepted, even in Reformed circles, for “People are not quick to discount their own sensory perception and ideas, tossing them all aside for reliance on the Bible. Yet this is Clark’s approach; the Bible has a monopoly on the truth. There are no competitors. We as Christians cannot serve two masters—the teachings of the Bible and the supposed truths gained from experience.” Current cultural debate over human sexuality serves as one illustration of this tension.

Teleological supralapsarianism is the second of Clark’s contributions in Douma’s list. Lapsarianism is the study of the order of God’s salvific decrees. Infralapsarianism is the more widely held view, which temporally places the decree of the fall ahead of the decrees of election and reprobation. The supralapsarian approach places the decree of election first and then works logically down to the decree of the fall. With his own adjustments, Clark held to the supralapsarian position. Douma explains that Sam Storms coined the phrase “teleological supralapsarianism” in describing Clark’s view, since “‘teleological’ comes from the idea that all God’s decrees are ultimately arranged to accomplish His ends or results (from the Greek *teleos*).”

So Douma concludes this section with the point that Clark’s teleological views accords well with his understanding of history as an outworking of God’s plan, for, to quote Clark, “God has not only controlled history so far, but He will bring it to its end and culmination.” Moreover, quoting from Clark’s unpublished systematic theology, Supralapsarianism, for all its insistence on a certain logical order among the divine decrees, is essentially, or so it seems to us, the unobjectionable view that God controls the universe purposefully. God acts with a purpose. He has an end in view and sees the end from the beginning. Every verse in Scripture that in one way or another refers to God’s manifold wisdom, every statement indicating that a prior event is for the purpose of causing a subsequent event, every mention of an eternal, all-embracing plan contributes to a teleological and therefore supralapsarian view of God’s control of history. In this light, Ephesians 3:10 clearly does not stand alone.

Clark’s third contribution according to Douma is a **solution to the problem of evil**. Striving to explain the Christian faith as both systematic and non-paradoxical, Clark first proposed his solution to the problem in the chapter “God and Evil” in his 1961 work, *Religion, Reason and Revelation*. Clark rejects the idea of free will, but accepts the idea of “free agency”—the idea that “man’s will is free of outside forces in the world, but not free from God.” Clark argued first that God is the cause

of all things and as such is the cause, but not the author, of evil. “Clark found support for this doctrine in the *Westminster Confession of Faith* which states that God ordains whatsoever comes to pass and foreordained even the means by which everything is accomplished. Yet while God is the ultimate *cause* of sin, He is not the *author* of sin. The author is the immediate cause, whereas God is only the ultimate cause of sin.”

Why then does God even allow the existence of evil? Douma summarizes Clark’s view by saying that “God created the good and evil for His own glory, to bestow love on the good and wrath on the evil. This doctrine likely came from Paul’s letter to the Romans where Paul wrote, ‘What if God, desiring to show His wrath and to make known His power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of His glory for vessels of mercy, which He has prepared beforehand for glory? (Romans 9:22–23).’”

Douma concludes his list of Clark’s contribution with the **Arguments for a Return to Traditional Logic**. Apart from traditional, or Aristotelian, logic, there is no possibility of coherent thought or intelligible discourse, so Clark argued. Readers not trained in logic may have difficulty following this section. For one, as Douma explains, “To understand Clark’s position, one must first understand some of the history of logic and in particular the terms *subalternation* and *existential import*. For the bulk of this section, the sparring partner is Bertrand Russell, a well known proponent of modern logic and a denier of both subalternation and existential import. Testing the system of modern logic, Clark concludes that “Modern logic has failed to put Aristotelian logic into symbolic form. Its language cannot say as much as ordinary language can.” Thus, as Douma notes, “not only is modern logic inferior to traditional logic, but it also fails to accurately represent actual language.” Here it occurs to me to ask if the contemporary urge to redefine language, while certainly an effort to exert power and control, may be related to Clark’s observation. Modernism cannot accurately describe reality, and so it thrashes about in constant redefinition. It suffices to note Clark’s conclusion as given by Douma, that “There is only one valid logic known, and that is Aristotle’s traditional logic.

11. Clark’s boys

I had opportunity to meet up with Doug Douma at the PCA’s 45th General Assembly (2017). Among his comments in retrospect of his book, he was quick to note that this chapter is by no means exhaustive, and that much more could be written about Clark’s boys. The focus of the chapter is on those Wheaton students who studied under and were mentored by Gordon Clark. Among those mentioned are E.J. Carnell, Paul Jewett, Carl F.H. Henry, Harold Lindsell and Edmund P. Clowney. The fact that some of these men came to have a lowered view of Scripture, specifically Carnell and Jewett during

their time at Fuller, is a troubling aspect of the story. To be a bit simplistic, there were those of Clark's boys who went on to Westminster, and those who went on to Harvard. The former fared well; the latter, not so much. A second group was Clark's boys at Butler University, as mentioned above. The third group of Clark's boys would be those at Covenant College in the ten years that Clark taught there. The Rev. Greg Reynolds, an OPC pastor, would be one, though we should note that he is also a convinced Van Tillian. Undoubtedly there were many others at Covenant, but the book does not explore this third group.

12. Persons, the trinity, and the incarnation

The reader will simply have to read these chapters for his or herself. In treating of Dr. Clark's writings on both the Trinity and the Incarnation, Douma does a good job of setting out the issues and Clark's positions, but these are deep waters. Clark was charged by some with advancing a form of Nestorianism, and central to the dilemma is an accurate conclusion as to how Clark defines *Person*. Still, any fair examination of all this will require more than the space this brief review can permit, and perhaps it is best to say this chapter is a good starting point for those wanting to explore the whole subject at length.

13. Gordon Clark's later years

Retiring from Butler University, Clark was approached to teach at Covenant College and spent his final professorial years there (1974–1984). Here Clark took up the study of art under Professor Ed Kellogg. Clark truly enjoyed his time at Covenant, with the opportunity to teach in a Christian setting and with students who cared about the Reformed faith. While Douma spent an earlier chapter on “Clark's boys,” a study more relevant to our own immediate circles examining Clark's influence on students at Covenant College is not given. Perhaps the author or someone else might take that up some day?

It was during these final years of his life that there were efforts at reconciliation with Cornelius Van Til, and on several occasions the two men were able to meet in an amiable way. Clark's wife having passed away in 1977, his final years were spent in Colorado, moving in 1984 to the property of the Sangre de Cristo Seminary, the school begun by Clark's son-in-law, Dwight Zeller. Gordon Haddon Clark died a year later, on April 9, 1985.

14. Appendices

Appendixes A and B provide some helpful timelines and other chronological orientation for Dr. Clark's life and for the ordination controversy. Appendix C provides the text of Clark's analysis of the complaint lodged against him, an analysis which is deliciously characteristic of the man's logic. Here, as another reviewer noted, “Clark's critical analysis of Van Til's

factual presentation of the Scholastics, Descartes and Leibniz etc. reminds us to examine original sources and not take a person (Van Til or anyone) merely at his word.”⁵ An extensive bibliography (pp. 267–278), along with name, subject and Scripture indexes conclude the book.

15. Errors, shortcomings

In closing, I noted only a few historical errors in the book. On page 5, Douma states that the Old School/New School reunion took place in 1865, when it was instead 1869. But this might have been a typographical error rather than an historical one on his part. Another error of that sort occurs in the prefatory list of abbreviations, where Westminster Theological Seminary is parenthetically cited as having begun in 1919, when it was actually founded in 1929. Nor was *The Presbyterian Journal* the “official publication of the PCA.” And for the precisionists, in the first mention in chapter 4 of J. Oliver Buswell, Jr., the author dropped the important distinction of “Junior” from his name. Buswell's papers are at the PCA Historical Center, so I'm more aware of his full and proper name. Once a man's father has died, he may then drop the “junior” from his own name, but J. Oliver Buswell, Jr. never did that and he kept that title until his dying day. I have to think it was his way of honoring his father. Lastly, I'm inclined to think that I will find myself in strenuous disagreement with the author in the matter of the Free Offer of the Gospel and the precedent Marrow controversy, though admittedly I've only begun to study the matter in earnest.

Probably the only real shortcoming of the book, for this reviewer at least, appears in the footnotes. While I'm very happy to have them and to not have to suffer the indignity of endnotes, a number of references or citations were incomplete or otherwise lacking. Some of this is understandable when you take into account that much of the book was written while the author was in seminary, and that it was completed at the same time that he was both newly married and working to establish a new ministry. In short, there was something of a rush to get this on to the publisher when one more review, perhaps by a different set of eyes, might have caught some of these problems. On page 19, note 19, Douma left a working flag—a series of question marks—in place without returning to note that the reference by John Robbins appears on page vii of *Lord God of Truth*. Then on page 79, note 14, where to his credit Douma correctly chose to cite from the edition of the OPC Standards that would have been in effect at the time of Dr. Clark's ordination (the first edition, 1941), yet, he doesn't tell us in that footnote which edition he is using. Footnotes that reference articles from *The Presbyterian Guardian* consistently lack the magazine's name and volume number; only the article title and its page number are provided (see for example,

5. Mr. Ryan Dozier, in his review of the book, as posted on Facebook, 27 June 2017. <https://www.facebook.com/ryan.dozier.946/posts/1021213755946896> (accessed August 29, 2017).

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Thomas Boston. Edited by Samuel M'Millan. 12 vols. London: William Tegg & Co., 1853. Reprint, Wheaton, IL: Richard Owen Roberts, 1980. Especially see volume 1, commentary on Shorter Catechism Question 34, "What is adoption?"

James Buchanan. *The Doctrine of Justification*. Reprint. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2016.

Robert S. Candlish. *The Fatherhood of God: Being the First Course of the Cunningham Lectures Delivered before the New College, Edinburgh, in March 1864*. Edinburgh: Black, 1869.

Thomas J. Crawford. *The Fatherhood of God Considered in Its General and Its Special Aspects and Particularly in Relation to the Atonement with a Review of Recent Speculations on the Subject*. Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1867.

Sinclair B. Ferguson. *Children of the Living God*. Colorado Springs: Nav-Press, 1987.

David B. Garner. *Sons in the Son*. Phillipsburg NJ: P&R, 2016.

John L. Girardeau. *Discussions of Theological Questions*. Edited by George A. Blackburn. Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee, 1905.

John Kennedy. *Man's Relations to God*. Edinburgh: J. Macclaren, 1869; James Begg Society, 1998.

John Murray. *The Collected Writings of John Murray*. 4 vols. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976–82.

John Murray. *Redemption Accomplished and Applied*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955.

J. I. Packer. *Knowing God*. 20th anniversary ed. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1993.

Robert A. Peterson. *Adopted by God: From Wayward Sinners to Cherish Children*. Phillipsburg NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001.

Tim J. R. Trumper. "Adoption: The Forgotten Doctrine of Westminster Soteriology." In *Reformed Theology in Contemporary Perspective*, Lynn Quigley, ed. Edinburgh: Rutherford House, 2006, 87–123.

Robert Alexander Webb. *The Reformed Doctrine of Adoption*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1947.

C. N. Willborn. "Adoption: An Historical Perspective with Evangelical Implications," in *Sanctification: Growing in Grace*. Andrew J. Wortman and Joseph A. Pipa, eds. Greenville, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 2001. ■

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32n31; 33n35; 55n67; 55n69 and similar; see also 56n70, "Rian, Wheaton College Today," 115). These faults are thankfully few and by some considerations not worth mentioning. If a second printing is called for, I'm sure these matters will be cleaned up.⁶

6. Having made that criticism, let me here offer to prepare an improved set of footnotes for the book, which I will make available to interested readers upon their request. Contact the reviewer at the PCA Historical Center.

Separately, one commenter on a discussion forum faulted Douma's biography for its relative brevity, but I think it is an entirely appropriate length, and all the more so now with the addition of *Selected Letters*. I could wish that the book had more coverage about Dr. Clark's wife Ruth, for she must have been a most remarkable woman. "Life Outside of Work" only merits four pages in the biography, nearly as much space as is later spent in discussion of Clark's artistic endeavors, with his training in art courses taken under Dr. Ed Kellogg and his attempts at painting landscapes. But as the author stated in private conversation, he did try to discover more about Ruth Clark and there simply wasn't much else that could be found. Somehow, in a way I can't quite explain, that seems quite appropriate for the woman who was the wife and life-companion of Dr. Gordon Haddon Clark.

The author indicated to me in a private message that he had available to him as he was writing this book a scanned copy of Fred H. Klooster's 142 page Th.D. dissertation at Vrije Universiteit Te Amsterdam, a long-standing treatment of the Clark/Van Til debate, published under the title of *The Incomprehensibility of God in the Orthodox Presbyterian Conflict* (Franeker: T. Wever, 1951). However I could find no reference to this work in the bibliography or in any of the three chapters treating the controversy. I will assume that discussing Klooster's views would have been astray from the subject proper of the book, but those wanting to dig deeper into the Clark/Van Til controversy will want to be aware of Klooster's contributions. Where Herman Hoeksema wrote contemporaneously in support of Clark, Klooster's treatise in favor of Van Til came a few years later.

One last little item about this book may be mentioned. Just after the title page of *The Presbyterian Philosopher* is a dedication page that reads, "To Henry." The author informed me that Henry was his Bernese Mountain dog which he brought with him to seminary. Henry died just before he found a publisher for his book. The author also noted that the book's index ends with an entry for Zephi, which was Gordon Clark's dog (see p. 180). Thus the book begins and ends with a dog. Douma noted that Betsy Clark George, one of Clark's daughters, was appreciative of this subtle tribute to Dr. Clark's love of dogs.

All in all, Doug Douma's *The Presbyterian Philosopher* is one of the most readable and informative books I've come across in quite a while. Get a copy, read it, and keep it on a near shelf for reference. ■

Psallo. Continued from Page 196.

Rev. Clarkson then proceeds to several uses or applications. The first is "Reproof for those that undervalue public worship," handled in several sub-points. The second runs thus: