

## REVIEWS & RESPONSES

**Review:** Lane G. Tipton, *The Trinitarian Theology of Cornelius Van Til* (Philadelphia, PA: Reformed Forum, 2022). 181 pages. ISBN 978-0-9987487-7-1 (hardcover), 978-0-9987487-8-8 (ePub), 978-0-9987487-9-5 (Kindle).\$34.99. Reviewed by Daniel J. Ragusa, pastor of Messiah's Reformed Fellowship (URCNA) in New York City.

Lane G. Tipton completed his dissertation at Westminster Theological Seminary in 2004 under Richard B. Gaffin Jr. on the trinitarian theology of Cornelius Van Til. Over the past nearly two decades, Tipton has continued to refine and advance his understanding of Van Til's thought. The mature fruit of his labor is now published in this tightly argued volume. In it he expounds Van Til's distinctly Reformed integration of the doctrines of the Trinity, the image of God, and covenantal condescension and its implications for a transcendental method of reasoning by presupposition that militates against all forms of correlativism and mutualism in the God-world relation, whether found in Aquinas, Barth, or post-conservative evangelicals who introduce change into God. His basic concern over the course of six chapters is that the Creator-creature distinction be maintained at every point in the Creator-creature relation for the sake of true religion.

Following chapter one, in which a basic orientation to Van Til's trinitarian theology is sketched, Tipton locates the core of Van Til's thought in the "deeper Protestant conception"—a term coined by Van Til's teacher, Geerhardus Vos, in his *Reformed Dogmatics*. It holds that Adam as the image of God was created in natural religious fellowship with God, being disposed for communion with him. God then condescended to Adam by an act of special providence in the covenant of works as the means by which this natural religious fellowship could reach eschatological consummation, "so that the absolute and condescended triune God himself could have become Adam's blessedness and reward" (55). This conception is antithetical to what Tipton calls the "deeper Catholic conception," which reports that man was created inherently weak and in need of a *donum superadditum* to raise his nature supernaturally to God. Both Vos and Van Til perceived that this destroys true religion insofar as it makes man's relation to God merely external. In the subsequent chapters Tipton will return again and again to this idea to show how Van Til's trinitarian formulation of the God-world relation is fundamentally

driven by the "deeper Protestant conception," allaying recent attempts to import enmity into the Vos-Van Til relationship.

In chapters three and four Tipton puts to rest any charge that Van Til was a maverick theologian who wandered from the tried-and-true paths of classical Reformed theology via idealistic philosophy or any other instantiation of modernism. Rather, Van Til was self-consciously a constructive theologian who integrated the historic and confessional Reformed theologies of Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam. Tipton demonstrates this by simply tracing the sources from which Van Til directly quotes, most notably A. A. Hodge's commentary on the Westminster Confession of Faith and Herman Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*.

This proves especially helpful in resolving Van Til's apparently problematic statement that God is *one person*. Tipton observes that Van Til immediately qualifies this by saying God is *absolute personality*—the exact phrase already used by Bavinck and implicitly held by Hodge in terms of his affirmation of God's unified consciousness. Tipton further illumines the polemical context that led Van Til to this formulation. It was intended to parry the rationalism of both the theistic personalists, who denied personality to God's diversity of persons, and Gordon Clark, who denied personality to God's unity of essence by conceiving of it as "mute substance." "Van Til's aim," writes Tipton, "is to express the basic point that the essence of God is not an 'unconscious force' (Bavinck's expression)" (83). The phrasing may be contested, but there is nothing being said by Van Til that did not already belong to Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam. Tipton adds, "If we sought to refine or clarify Van Til's terminology, perhaps 'the absolute tripersonal God,' 'the absolute triune personality,' or Bavinck's more terse 'absolute personality' would express Van Til's doctrinal conception of the tripersonal unity of the Godhead without risking unnecessary misunderstanding" (85).

In chapter five, Tipton traces the direct sources of Van Til's doctrines of *autotheos* and *perichoresis* from Calvin and Charles Hodge, respectively. These two doctrines help to define for Van Til the interior life of the Trinity, which, in turn, provides the archetype for God's new relation to his image bearers in creation and covenant. This new relation, as an ectypal expression, introduces no change into the unchangeable Godhead but banishes every trace of mutualism and correlativism that would compromise true religion. Tipton

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explains, “Trinitarian persons are *absolute* in themselves as each *is* the uncommunicated essence of God; yet they are also *relative*, given the relations of origin and personal coinherence. Autothean persons in *perichoresis* are absolute, yet related; immutable, yet active. ... Trinitarian persons relate authentically to the contingent creature without participating in the contingency that characterizes the creature” (126, 127). Van Til integrates these doctrines to deepen still the “deeper Protestant conception” of Vos.

Chapter six is the capstone of Tipton’s study. It unfolds Van Til’s representational principle which is at the heart of Van Til’s trinitarian theology and apologetics. It “is Van Til’s constructive appropriation of Reformed Trinitarianism and federalism in polemical engagement with all forms of philosophical correlativism and theological mutualism” (129). While the representational principle is only explicitly found in *A Survey of Christian Epistemology*, Tipton argues that conceptually it is found throughout Van Til’s corpus wherever he speaks of the trinitarian persons as “mutually exhaustive” of one another. The correlate of *mutual exhaustion* is *mutual representation*. On the basis of *autotheos*, the persons exhaust the divine nature and so represent it entirely. On the basis of *perichoresis*, the persons exhaust one another and so represent one another entirely. “The image endowment in the work of creation replicates at the creaturely level the exhaustively personal dimension of Trinitarian *perichoresis*, and the special act of covenantal condescension replicates the exhaustively representational dimension of Trinitarian *perichoresis*” (137). Just as there is no residue of impersonality in the intra-trinitarian relations, so the God-world relation is wholly personal and its environment exhaustively revelational.

This has significance for the *sensus divinitatis*, the *pactum salutis*, and a transcendental method of reasoning by presupposition. First, it anchors Calvin’s notion of the *sensus divinitatis* because it entails that “there is no aspect of human existence or knowledge that is immune from the absolute claims and inescapable revelation of the triune personal God” (142). This maintains the “deeper Protestant conception” over against the “deeper Modernist conception” of Barth (who denied natural knowledge of God) and the “deeper Catholic conception” of Aquinas (who denied concreated knowledge of God). Second, it entails that the trinitarian relations of personal operation *ad extra* are covenantal. This is the theological rest point for the covenant idea, which is something also found in Vos. Third, it undergirds a transcendental apologetic. Adam *began* with the knowledge of God that was gifted to him as the image of God in creation (general revelation). He also represented mankind as its federal head in covenant (special revelation). God’s general and special revelation organically combined to form “one grand covenantal revelation of himself to man” (147). But this “one grand covenantal revelation” is now suppressed

and rejected by sinners, so that “unbelief rests in empty and deceptive presuppositions (Col. 2:8)... Unbelief reasons as though there is no absolute God who is absolutely revealed in nature and in Scripture (Gen. 3:1–6)” (147). By denying the absolute God of Scripture, unbelief inevitably engages in univocal reasoning, which “is rooted in some species of mutualism and leads to self-contradiction from a representational [theistic] as well as a nonrepresentational [non-theistic] point of view” (151). This explains Van Til’s totalizing criticisms of the various expressions of correlativism and mutualism found in Plato, Absolute Idealism, and Barthianism. Plato embraces the really contradictory by making eternity and time correlative, Absolute Idealism by making the Absolute and historical particulars correlative in time, and Barthianism by making God and man correlative in the Christ-event. The *really* contradictory is distinguished by Van Til from the *apparently* contradictory. “There is an apparent contradiction, a point of ineffable mystery, in our confession that the condescended triune God remains immutably absolute in his relation to creation. Such a relation is incomprehensible to the creature” (155).

This seminal study of Van Til’s trinitarian theology should be received as the definitive introduction to Van Til. Tipton has dug deep to the religious bedrock of Van Til’s theology and apologetic: the absolute and immutable triune God of Scripture. The charges of Van Til’s novelty must now take seriously the careful source analysis contained in this book. And the easiness with which Aquinas and Barth are being retrieved in the name of catholic orthodoxy today must now take seriously the caution Van Til raised.

Tipton concludes his work, writing, “Further Van Til scholarship ought to pursue these profound yet relatively unexplored vistas” (162–62). This study has forged the right path forward for further exploration.

**Review:** Bryan D. Estelle, *The Primary Mission of the Church: Engaging or Transforming the Culture* (Reformed Exegetical and Doctrinal Studies; Fearn: Mentor, 2022). Paperback. 442 pp. ISBN 978-1527107762. \$19.99. Reviewed by Harrison Perkins, pastor at Oakland Hills Community Church, Farmington Hills, MI (OPC), online faculty in church history at Westminster Theological Seminary, and visiting lecturer in systematic theology at Edinburgh Theological Seminary.

Recent years have confronted the church with renewed need to consider our role in culture as western societies in general have seen significant upheaval concerning the status quo of social justice problems. Strident advocates for these issues have called every person and institution without exception, including the church, to take an explicit stand and lend its

overt support to their favored causes. The employed rhetoric has typically suggested that the gospel itself and the church's faithfulness are at stake in the church's involvement in the public debates about social justice, or even pandemic safety, concerns—notably in this case whether coming from conservative or progressive voices who have imposed polar opposite injunctions upon Christ's people if they are to be truly gospel people in faithful churches.

Thankfully, Bryan Estelle has provided a grounded and even keeled exploration of what the church's responsibility is, particularly in relation to the civil sphere. He argues that the church's primary task is to focus on the gospel and on shepherding Christ's people in holiness rather than addressing cultural issues and working to change society into a more "Christianized" version of itself. Although arguing for *the spirituality of the church*, the doctrine teaching that the church's tasks are determined exclusively by God's Word to focus on religious rather than civic issues, Estelle's position nonetheless balances this spiritual task with moral concerns.

In that respect, one of this book's great strengths is its careful nuance. Some works nuance a position to death, so that ultimately nothing is argued. Estelle's nuance, however, effectively holds together the church's primarily spiritual task along with an understanding that cultural issues do (at least at times) involve moral issues pertinent to Christians. The church, therefore, does have the responsibility to preach about God's moral law respecting where believers must stand regarding ethical matters, but at the same time must avoid pronouncing on how Christians should vote on particular bills and adopting a posture of advocating for particular political causes or parties. Indeed, the church must not be the mouthpiece for political factions but the embassy of God's kingdom for promoting the salvation of sinners and holding them together in church unity.

The book contains four parts. After the introduction, which helpfully frames the doctrine of the spirituality of the church against the backdrop of the social gospel's historical role in American theology, part one then looks at the biblical foundations of the spirituality of the church. The section on Genesis foundations, exploring how the accounts of the Garden of Eden and God's covenants with Noah inform the issue, draw well upon the previous work of Meredith Kline and David VanDrunen. The chapters on Joseph and Daniel as believers participating in secular courts, however, are highly original—in the best sense—in presenting the nature of Christian involvement in culture not as the church *qua* church but as individuals engaging particular vocations. Part two provides counter-examples for the spirituality of the church, looking at neo-Calvinism, liberation theology, theonomy/reconstruction, and the social justice movement. Estelle is not afraid to wade into controversial waters, staking out territory even

concerning modern race issues. Given its rising popularity with a surge of scholars investigating Herman Bavinck, the chapter on neo-Calvinism will likely meet the most criticism. Part three looks at theological, confessional, and historical arguments for what the church's spirituality positively is. Part four then closes with some examination about the doctrine of Christ's headship over the church and how that should inform our understanding of the limits of the church's power, namely in preventing us from adopting any mission or cause not prescribed in our constitution, the holy Scripture.

This volume's argumentation and investigation is sweeping, ranging from biblical exegesis to historical consideration to modern cultural analysis. Estelle nevertheless succeeds in his ambitious project by providing a thought-provoking tour of the multifaceted issues that must be considered in framing our understanding of the church's spirituality and her mission in the world until Christ returns. This book is a refreshing contrast to the overly niche works arguing for the same position but on the basis of very tightly held cultural preferences, rather opening up the opportunity for the church to perform her mission successfully within any society even if unable to transform it toward particular cultural norms.

This same strength likely could have intensified with a more direct taxonomy of the modern representatives of the contrasting views. Presbyterian and Reformed denominations are presently debating exactly these issues, even making arguments about how they ought to affect examination of ministerial candidates. Estelle does intermittently include overt addresses to his interlocutors on the dividing issues of two kingdoms and the church's spirituality, helping us to connect the dots to our present situation. A clear and direct statement of the contrasting parties early on in the book may have helped readers see that the historical investigations of nineteenth-century debates in American Presbyterianism are not so much obscure instances of intra-denominational conflict but examples of how we have been here before and others have considered how to work out our theological and confessional principles. All the same, Estelle's work is a nearly comprehensive guide to navigating the background and biblical footing for the church's primary mission to bring the gospel into the world for the salvation of lost sinners.

**Review:** Ryan Kelly, *Calls to Worship, Invocations, and Benedictions* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022). Hardcover. 288 pp. ISBN 978-1629959115. \$19.99. Reviewed by Dr. T. David Gordon, Grove City, PA.

The second professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, Samuel Miller, taught an entire seminary course on Public Prayer, and his students over the years compared notes, and

presented to him a manuscript of the course lectures, which was published in 1849 as *Thoughts on Public Prayer*, in which he raised (and answered) an important question about the Christian ministry:

“And which is the more serious and solemn employment, our speaking to God, and imploring his favour, or God speaking to us, and communicating his will, either in the language of instruction, of threatening, or of promise? It is not wise, however, to exalt either of these exercises at the expense of the other. Both are required in the New Testament Church; and both have a value beyond our power to estimate.” (p. 14).

Miller rejected the two extremes of an entire prescribed liturgy on the one hand, and thoughtless prayer on the other; he promoted *extempore* prayer as he and others (e.g. James Waddel Alexander) promoted *extempore* preaching. In *extempore* prayer and *extempore* preaching, the substance of both was carefully and thoughtfully considered, though the precise words were not always rotely determined beforehand.

Those of us who embrace Miller’s high sense of the responsibility of leading in public prayer have always been delighted to find assistance from many sources: Whoever took notes on Calvin’s lectures on the minor prophets recorded also his prayers at the beginning of each session, and many of us have found such to be very helpful. Many years later (1712), Matthew Henry had published his *Method for Prayer* (re-released and edited by Dr. Ligon Duncan in 1994). In 1946, the PCUSA published *The Book of Common Worship*, which contained many prayers that its churches could employ at their discretion in public worship. Some years later (1975), Arthur Bennet edited *The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers and Devotions*, which has been widely employed for both private and public worship. In 1996, Terry L. Johnson edited and published the very helpful *Leading in Worship: A Sourcebook for Presbyterian Students and Ministers Drawing Upon the Biblical and Historic Forms of the Reformed Tradition*. This year, Prof. Ryan Kelly (West Chester University of Pennsylvania) has provided another excellent liturgical resource in his *Calls to Worship, Invocations, and Benedictions*.

Kelly’s book includes very judicious discussion of the history of the matter in his prefatory “Historical Function, Development, and Defenses,” before presenting thoughtful examples of the three categories listed in the title of the book, followed by helpful indices of all three. In each of the major sections, Kelly has organized the collection of liturgical material in accordance with the commonly employed Christian calendar (his subtitle to each major section is “By Seasons and Festivals”), though he adds lengthy and helpful selections for

“Ordinary Time,” which could be used with or without regard for that calendar. Even those (such as myself) who do not observe the Christian calendar will find Dr. Kelly’s scriptural passages to be helpful on any occasion.

With very few exceptions, Kelly’s selections are just that, selections from the Holy Scriptures, with references in the margins; and the few exceptions are mild paraphrases, adjusted to the circumstances of public worship. Those who have reservations about “prayers of human composition” will therefore have no reservations about the scriptural passages in Kelly’s collection.

I recommend that users of Kelly’s fine collection expose themselves to it frequently in private study or devotion; this will enable them to notice the wisdom of the selections, and enable them to be employed thoughtfully and pertinently. Further, such frequent exposure would almost certainly have the effect of furnishing the mind with many rich and lovely expressions of biblical devotional thought. Had this volume been available to me in the nine years of my pastorate, I would have cherished its wisdom and would have employed it frequently. We owe a debt of thanks to Dr. Kelly and to P&R for making this volume available to us.

**Review: Zachary M. Garris (editor), *Dabney on Fire: A Theology of Parenting, Education, Feminism, and Government* (Columbia, SC: Self-published, 2019). Paperback. 132 pages. ISBN 978-1796450590. Reviewed by Ryan Biese, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Fort Oglethorpe, GA.**

Robert Lewis Dabney was celebrated by his peers as perhaps the greatest theologian in the world. With the exception of James Henley Thornwell, Dabney excelled all other men in the South as a scholar, philosopher, theologian, and teacher.

Despite his prolific writing and his genius for both dissecting theological issues and anticipating the consequences of movements and ideologies, Dabney has been overlooked in recent generations in favor of other theologians of his day such as Charles Hodge, B.B. Warfield and even G.T. Shedd.

This is likely due to many factors, but none more significant than Dabney’s horrible comments on slavery and Africans generally. In this area, Dabney not only succumbed to the prevailing sinful views of his day, but in his own writing Dabney uttered reprehensible comments, which are a subject for another treatment. Nonetheless, it is disturbing how Dabney—who so thoroughly examined seemingly every other sphere of life and theological position—failed to detect the influence of the wider culture upon him in this area of anthropology. Because of this sin and failure, the wider Church has largely neglected the wisdom Dabney has to offer us.

Dabney—if he is remembered—is likely remembered for

the aforementioned views on slavery and Africans as well as his connection with the Confederate States of America. However, Dabney not only opposed, but despised the idea of secession and even went so far as to refer to South Carolina as an “impudent vixen” and secessionists as “great pests.”<sup>1</sup> None of this excuses Dabney, but it does help us to see Dabney was more complicated than the all-too-common caricature of him.

Zachary Garris, in his brief anthology, *Dabney on Fire*, has assembled four of Dabney’s later essays, provides the basis of an introduction to an overlooked and misunderstood American theologian. Garris draws us in with his introductory essay in which he notes that despite the mere 120 years since Dabney’s death, the society in which we live is vastly different from the one Dabney inhabited. Up until Dabney’s generation, societies changed relatively slowly; all that changed in the Nineteenth Century with the triumph of industrialism.

In his lifetime, Dabney observed what he called “progressivism,” “fiscal capitalism,” and “radicalism,” and he warned about the consequences of such ideologies. The essays Garris selected help us to marvel at how accurately—in many cases—Dabney predicted the very dysfunctions currently plaguing American society and threatening the purity of the church in American.

Most Christians of his own day ignored his warnings on these subjects, but they are nonetheless fruitful for our study. When doctors study a disease, they do not begin their study only at “autopsy stage,” but prefer to study the progression of the disease in hopes of better treating it. Likewise, Christians in our day may benefit from studying Dabney on these and other subjects to consider how the diseases of Marxist Materialism, Feminism, Crony Capitalism, and others have developed over the last several generations. The reader will no doubt quickly discern the accuracy of Dabney’s predictions and see his continued relevance. Dabney understood the essence of ideologies and was able to discern the logical consequences to come more than a century later.

Garris has done the church a great service in providing these four essays in a more accessible format and recommending other resources to study Dabney further.

### The Family as a Means of Grace

In an age in which the gross confusion regarding parenting has heavily influenced the church, Dabney offers a helpful corrective. In what is certainly the best chapter in the volume, Dabney’s sermon “Parental Responsibilities,” sets forth a vision for parenting resting on two presuppositions: the family is a means of grace and the Christian nurture of children is a divine calling second in importance only to one’s own pursuit of Christ.

We often overlook the blessings of God in the parent-child

relationship because it is so familiar. Yet God has called parents to be a chief means by which “the field of Divine love and benevolence is widened as time flows on.” Dabney envisioned God working through parents on such a scale that the number of the redeemed would “unspeakably surpass in number the heavenly hosts” (21).

Dabney points out both in the Old and New Covenants piety in the home and the faithfulness of parents to nurture their children is necessary “to prevent the Divine Messiah from becoming a woe instead of a blessing to men” (19). As such, the “chief duty” of parents is to bring their offspring to the Saviour so they may know His blessings (24).

Parents are not merely teachers in how they “train up a child in the way he should go,” but are to be God-like in their affection for their children so that children may begin to comprehend God’s “infinite benevolence and pity” (30). So highly did Dabney esteem parental love that he said, “without it society would doubtless degenerate into anarchy and men into savages.” Here is one of many areas in which Dabney has proven prescient; the latchkey kids reared in daycare and cartoons are now coming of age and we are witnessing a breakdown of all respect for authority and institutions across the American Republic.

The influence of parents is not only effective for civil good, but the chief purpose and potency of parental influence is for the health of the child’s soul. Dabney pleads with parents to make faithful use of this potency, warning that it cuts both ways: “every way the parent has the advantage over the pastor; so that the latter has small prospect of reversing the parents work when it has been for evil” (32).

Dabney reflects on his own experience as a pastor that a child reared by his parents worshiping pagan gods has more hope than a child reared in a merely nominally Christian home. This is an urgent warning for our own time in which—tragically in so many cases—parents have abdicated all their spiritual duties toward their children to the so-called “Youth Pastor,” Youth Group, and Sunday school.

Dabney described the family as “the most efficient of all means of grace more . . . than all the other ordinances of the church” (38). We now witness the results in the churches—and thus in society—through the intervening generations of the neglect of parental duty and of the family as a means of grace.

### Parents as Educators of Their Children

It should surprise no one that Garris includes Dabney’s “Secularized Education” essay in his anthology. Garris has written a number of works promoting Christian education and provided numerous resources on this subject.

1. Robert Lewis Dabney, “To His Mother on Dec. 28, 1860,” in *Life and Letters of Robert Lewis Dabney*, ed. Thomas Cary Johnson (1903; repr., Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1977), p. 215.

While the absence of government schools funded by compulsory taxation is almost unthinkable to many in the present day, Dabney wrote before the ubiquity of government schools. In his essay, Dabney lays out several reasons why the state and the Church are ill-suited to have charge over the education of young people and he warns of the results of a government-run school system.

It may be surprising to some that Dabney argued the church is ill-suited to the education of children. Dabney's position flows from his belief regarding the mission of the Church: "It is the Church's duty to instruct parents how God would have them rear their children, and enforce the duty by spiritual sanctions; but there its official power ends" (40). Dabney saw a distinction between a church school and Christian education.

Dabney vigorously opposed government-run schools, warning they would undermine the free state and permit the civil authority to "shape a people to suit itself" (65). In our own lifetimes, we have witnessed Dabney's predictions come to pass as the government schools produce more and more graduates who increasingly look to the government to provide for them what families and individuals once earned or provided for themselves. This has profoundly reshaped the character of the Republic.

In answer to the question of his day of what religion or sect the state schools would promote, Dabney skillfully shows government schools can properly promote none and must be secular. However, a wholly secular education system had never been tried and he predicted it was doomed to fail because education is both a spiritual and a moral task, neither of which is a secular organization competent to do (48). For Dabney, education must be Christian and those best suited to the task are Christian parents.

Dabney explained the danger of a government-run school system in that it must necessarily become secular because of the nature of the American Republic, and a secular school system will not be neutral, but will "become an anti-evangelical agency and resist the work of the spiritual commonwealth." Dabney recognized Christians have no right to expect the American State to promote Christian truth, but Christian people ought to demand the state *not* oppose Christianity (56).

Dabney highlighted the impossibility for Government schools to merely educate the intellect and leave the inculcation of morality to other sources. Dabney argues intellect and morality cannot be separated "without mischief" (52).

The history of the Early Twentieth Century has vindicated Dabney's warning regarding morality untethered from technology and science: the tactics of the First World War (poison gas, rolling artillery barrages, submarine warfare, machine guns, etc.) represented only the beginning of what

men would inflict on one another without ethical constraints on science. The nihilistic tendencies of the Second World War only exacerbated the problem of secular education that venerated science and learning without the restraint of true spirituality or moral virtue.

Fundamentally, the state is ill-suited to the task of education. This is the role of the parents. Dabney argues the state is the "organ for securing secular justice," but when the state takes up a function "for which it was not designed" (e.g., the education of youths) it will itself be ruined and the task it undertook done poorly (66). Here again Dabney has proven at least partially correct: the failure of government schools to properly educate their charges has been well-documented by the media and government alike. One hopes Dabney is only partially correct and that the failure of the government school system will not also lead to the collapse of the American Republic.

#### A Warning and Lament Concerning Feminism

Dabney's writing is usually very enjoyable to read not only for its clarity and logic, but also because of the whimsical barbs he has seamlessly woven into his work, and his "Women's Rights Women" is no exception. Throughout the essay he not only highlights the danger, but also he humorously exposes the absurdity of the Women's Rights movement. For example, "[Women's Rights] means that a woman has a natural right to do all the particular things that a man does (if she can), to sit on juries and shave her beard, to serve in the army and ride astraddle, to preach sermons and sing bass" (73).

Dabney recognized the fundamental, natural difference between men and women, one that was being ignored—or denied—by the advocates of Women's Rights: "the State has committed the crowning outrage and inconsistency of not letting her be man because God has made her a woman" (73).

In these humorous invectives, Dabney anticipates the demands of other groups clamoring for so-called "equal rights" in the current century. It is inherent in radicalism to ignore distinctions of nature in the process of establishing a new order. In his own day it was women—overlooking their natural difference from men—who demanded to be treated exactly like men. In our own day, it is sodomite couples demanding the same rights as couples of opposite sexes or transvestites demanding to be regarded as if they were by nature what they pretend to be.

As Dabney further elaborates in his essay "Civic Ethics," the "privilege" of the franchise is not a "natural right," but something bestowed on a "limited class having qualification to use it for the good of the whole." Participation in the governing of the commonwealth—in Dabney's view—is not a burden for which all men are endowed with the divine gifts to bear (75). For that reason, Dabney argues, the right of the franchise should not be extended to any women.

Dabney's lament about the conservatives of his own day sounds familiar to a common complaint today: "American conservatism is merely the shadow that follows Radicalism as it moves forward toward perdition" (76). For Dabney, conservatives ought not be those who are simply "behind the times," but rather advocate an authentically distinct vision.

Dabney warns of the consequences of the success of the Women's Rights Women. First, he warns of the impending corruption of women by politics because they are not suited for political excitements (81). He predicts disastrous consequences for marriage and the family as women are viewed as indistinguishable from men and children are thus deprived of the foundational lessons of family life (83–84). Dabney also foretells bitter consequences for women as a result of "Women's Rights" in the removal of the protections in Christian societies for women as the weaker vessel:

Casting away that dependence and femininity which are her true strength, the "strong-minded women" persist in thrusting herself into competition with man as his equal. But for contest she is not his equal; the male is the stronger animal.... They insist upon taking precisely a man's chances; well, they will meet precisely the fate of a weak man among strong ones (85).

In recent years with the #MeToo movement especially, we have witnessed the accuracy of Dabney's unheeded warnings. The so-called liberation of women has yielded harrowing unintended consequences for women.

Dabney does not only make criticisms and issue warnings, but offers a way forward. He calls his countrymen to reject the "new meanings" of American political axioms regarding equality and liberty and to return to an understanding that reflects the existence of superiors and inferiors in society. Dabney urges rejection of the foundation of government being "the consent of the governed" (71) and instead founded upon "the ordinance of God" (75). These are matters he will develop further in his essay "Civic Ethics."

Written shortly after the end of the Federal Occupation of Virginia, Dabney less successfully veils his bitterness toward the North in this essay than in some of his other writings. Dabney saw the Women's Rights movement as connected logically with Abolitionism and the subsequent granting of suffrage to Freedmen (70). It is at this point that Dabney's normally indefatigable logic fails him, being overly influenced by the sentiments of his peers.

Dabney's treatise on Women's Rights makes valid points and anticipates serious troubles, but his thinly veiled disdain for the North and his comments regarding abolition severely weaken and distract from his argument in this essay.

### The Christian and Society

The final essay Garris includes is one of Dabney's latest works, his "Civic Ethics" from 1897. Dabney begins seeking to answer the question "What is the moral ground of my obligation to obey the magistrate," especially in a republic when the elected magistrate or civil bureaucrat may possess no inherent superiority to me (90).

Dabney shows the inadequacy of the "social contract theory" to explain why Christians should obey the magistrate. Dabney points out the basis of the social contract theory is fallacious and fictional: there was no society that moved from savagery to civilized society (98). More importantly, he argues man is not the seat of his own authority and so he is in no position to contract away his liberty (97).

Dabney next refutes the "Divine Right of Kings" as the basis of a Christian's obedience to civil authorities. He points out the polity of the Hebrew Commonwealth was a "federal republic of eleven cantons," and when a king was chosen, initially it was not an hereditary monarchy, but "an elective one." Likewise, Dabney argues the Scripture does not enjoin Christians to obey the king, but governing authorities (95). By this he shows a monarchy is not *the* "biblical" form of government.

Instead, Dabney argues for a "theistic" ground for Christian obedience in that it is "the will and ordinance of God our creator." Man was created social, argues Dabney, so there must be some agent to restrain the savagery of man's selfishness. Thus, God ordained the civil magistrate for that purpose and since God has instituted his authority, he must be obeyed (91–92).

Dabney asserted man's liberties are safest under a theistic theory of government; a government resting on "God's absolute authority over man" will least tend toward tyranny since it alone regards "the eternal standard and pattern of pure equity and benevolence," the Scripture (101).

Dabney recognizes there is no such commonwealth established on this basis, so he deals briefly with a Christian's duty when the civil magistrate commands what is immoral. Dabney takes the usual course: "he must refuse to obey, and then submit, without violent resistance, to whatever penalty the state inflicts for his disobedience, resorting only to oral remonstrance against it" (109).

Dabney delves into the fraught topic of when tyranny may be resisted violently or otherwise. Dabney does not rule out all possibility of lawful rebellion, but limits lawful rebellion to when the outrage is not a "private wrong," but the "expression of the common breast outraged by general oppressions" (111). Such a principle for just rebellion seems subjective to the point of meaninglessness.

Dabney is dreadfully subjective on the lawfulness of rebellion and almost Lutheran in his view of obedience in which he argues obedience is required except in cases of sin; in this he is even more rigid than Calvin. Calvin recognized tyrannical

governments are “full of disorder” and even goes so far as to describe such as “not an ordained government” and so acknowledges the Christian’s freedom to disregard tyrannical powers.<sup>2</sup>

Dabney would have done well to follow what Charles Hodge had written in his 1835 *Commentary on Romans*. Hodge argued:

The obedience, which the scriptures command us to render to our rulers is not unlimited ... [but] to obey them as magistrates in the exercise of their *rightful* authority.... No command to do anything morally wrong can be binding; *nor can any which transcends the rightful authority of the power whence it emanates....* They are ordained and invested with authority to be a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that do well. They are ministers of God for this end and are appointed for “this very thing.” *On this ground our obligation to obedience rests, and the obligation ceases when this design is systematically, constantly and notoriously disregarded.*<sup>3</sup>

The view of government Dabney articulates, and which is rather common in our day, seems to rest on whoever has the power makes the rules and whoever has the power is to be obeyed unless he commands what is immoral. But that is eerily close to a “king of the hill” or “might makes right” model of government. Hodge adopts a more nuanced approach; the purpose for which government is ordained is to punish evil and reward good; when the government goes beyond those two aims, obedience is not a matter of Christian obligation, contrary to what Dabney seems to argue.

While it is hardly likely Dabney could have anticipated the level of intrusive and highly specific regulations magistrates have decreed and imposed in the current century, the intrusiveness of modern magistrates forces us to reconsider the Christian’s duty to the magistrate. The ‘civic ethics’ of Hodge based on Romans 13:4–5 is far superior to that of Dabney and is one deserving of greater study as Western Christians must learn how to live in a society that is not only openly hostile to God and His people, but also presumes to regulate nearly every aspect of human existence.

Dabney’s essay is not without redeeming merit, however. He rightly warns of the consequences of universal suffrage, namely if the landless masses are granted equal suffrage with property owners, it will inevitably erode the rights of private property (122). Here Dabney has again been vindicated as

2. John Calvin, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), p. 479.

3. Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Grigg & Elliott, 1835), pp. 532–533.

we are witnessing wealth transfers and redistribution on an unprecedented scale as politicians attempt to preserve their power by making grander and grander promises in hopes of winning younger and more indebted constituents.

### Conclusion

The weight and significance of Dabney’s life and theology are difficult to overestimate. Dabney understood both his times and philosophy so extensively that he could predict the outcomes and consequences of events and ideologies to come generations later, despite only viewing them in their most nascent expressions.

However, Dabney’s ability to rightly understand the truth in such a wide range of topics only makes his views on race and slavery all the more shocking and reprehensible.

In *Dabney on Fire*, Garris skillfully pilots between the Scylla of Dabney veneration and the Charybdis of condemning Dabney wholesale. In his introductory essay, Garris acknowledges the stain on his legacy as a result of Dabney uncritically absorbing the pseudoscientific views of his contemporaries on that issue and yet he urges us to reflect upon and heed Dabney’s proper warnings regarding the materialism, radicalism, and progressivism of the age.

In these skillfully selected essays, Garris shows us that studying Dabney confirms for us there is no halcyon age of Christian society and culture. Garris deserves the last word:

Ultimately Dabney does not call his readers back to an earlier period in history, but back to the Bible. For it is God’s word that people have abandoned, and it is only there that we can find a better way of ordering society (16).

**Review: William E. Thompson, *In Stonewall’s Long Shadow: James Power Smith, Aide de Camp* (Chapel Hill, NC: Zebra Books Publications, 2020). Hardcover. 371 pp. ISBN 978-1733586634. \$19.99. Reviewed by Jonathan Peters, on staff at Reformation Bible Church & Harford Christian School.**

At the urging of the military historian Douglas Southall Freeman, W. G. Bean authored the first modern biography of a member of Stonewall Jackson’s staff. Bean’s book, *Stonewall’s Man* (1959), detailed the brief but exceptional life of Sandie Pendleton. In the succeeding years, additional authors followed suit by publishing biographies on the other staff members, including *Jackson and the Preachers* (John W. Schildt, 1982), *Hunter Holmes McGuire: Doctor in Gray* (John W. Schildt, 1986), *Jedidiah Hotchkiss: Rebel Mapmaker and Virginia Businessman* (Peter W. Roper, 1992), *Mapping for Stonewall: The Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss* (William J. Miller,

1993), *Stonewall Jackson's Surgeon, Hunter Holmes McGuire: A Biography* (Maurice Shaw, 1993), *Robert Lewis Dabney: A Southern Presbyterian Life* (Sean Michael Lucas, 2005), and "Stonewall" Jackson's Chaplain: *Beverly Tucker Lacy* (H. Rondel Rumburg, 2012). Then in 2020, William E. Thompson added to this list with his *In Stonewall's Long Shadow: James Power Smith, Aide de Camp*.

Thompson, pastor emeritus of College Church, Hampden-Sydney, was no stranger to Civil War publishing when he issued this book, having previously authored *Bad Friday: April 7, 1865: The Day the Yankees Came to Prince Edward Court House and Hampden-Sydney, Virginia* (2011) and *First in War: The Hampden-Sydney Boys* (2013). He also authored a history of College Church in 2013, titled *Her Walls Before Thee Stand: The 235-Year History of the Presbyterian Congregation at Hampden-Sydney, Virginia*. In his most recent publication, *In Stonewall's Long Shadow*, Thompson devoted his energies to another resident of Hampden-Sydney, James Power Smith.

Smith was born in New Athens, Ohio on July 4, 1837, but soon moved with his family to Frederick, Maryland as his father took up a pastorate there for a Presbyterian congregation. Thompson notes: "The bulk of James P. Smith's growing-up years was spent during his father's subsequent pastorates in Maryland and Pennsylvania. This family's sequential residences were all located in, or near, the Valley of Virginia, or its extended Maryland/Pennsylvania area known as the Cumberland Valley" (17). Smith studied for three years at Jefferson College in Pennsylvania, and then traveled to Hampden-Sydney, Virginia to study theology at Union Theological Seminary, taking classes from Samuel B. Wilson, Robert L. Dabney, Benjamin M. Smith, William J. Hoge, and Thomas E. Peck. He completed his studies just as the Civil War erupted, enlisted in the Rockbridge Artillery, and participated in First Manassas, the Valley Campaign, the Seven Days' Battles, Cedar Mountain, and Second Manassas.

According to Dabney, Stonewall Jackson (the great Southern Presbyterian general) "noted [Smith's] devotion and intelligence, with his wonted sagacity, selected him from the ranks, and promoted him to be his aide-de-camp, – a favor which ... was requited by young Smith with fidelity which deserved to link his name in enduring bonds with the memory of his patron" (116). Such fidelity was manifested the night of May 2, 1863 when Jackson was accidentally wounded by his own men at the Battle of Chancellorsville. Smith was not present when Jackson was shot, but arrived within a few minutes to help carry Jackson off the battlefield on a stretcher. Union artillery soon opened up with such intensity that the stretcher bearers had to stop and seek cover. The young adjutant threw his body beside Jackson and held him to the ground to shield the general from any incoming rounds. The litter bearers

eventually hoisted Jackson back up and carried him off the field so that he could receive medical attention. Smith stayed with the general throughout the night, and held a lantern over his body as Dr. Hunter McGuire amputated Stonewall's mangled left arm. Smith then journeyed with Jackson to Guinea Station, and allowed his body to be used as a cushion for the general as the ambulance bounced along the road. When the ambulance arrived at Guinea Station, stretcher bearers moved Jackson into the Chandler family's plantation office in their back yard. Smith remained with McGuire and other members of the staff, faithfully attending Jackson's temporal and spiritual needs even until the end. On May 10 at 3:15 p.m., Smith heard Jackson whisper his famous last words: "Let us cross over the river, and rest under the shade of the trees." Smith accompanied Jackson's body to Richmond for funeral services, and later to Lexington for burial. He then escorted Jackson's widow back to North Carolina before returning to the Army of Northern Virginia for the Battle of Gettysburg. Throughout the rest of the war, Smith served on the staffs of Richard Ewell, Cullen Battle, Gabriel Wharton, and John Echols, and likely assisted Dabney with his biography of Jackson.<sup>1</sup>

After the war, Smith became the Stated Clerk of the Presbyterian Synod of Virginia (1870–1920), and took up a pastorate in the Roanoke Valley and later in Fredericksburg, where he courted and married Agnes Lacy,<sup>2</sup> the niece of Beverly Tucker Lacy (Presbyterian minister and former chaplain of the 2nd Corps under Stonewall Jackson). In 1891, Smith transitioned to being a Virginia Synodical Evangelist based out of Charlottesville, and the following year, he and his family moved to Richmond,<sup>3</sup> where he spent the rest of his life memorializing Confederate soldiers, editing religious and historical papers,<sup>4</sup> and ministering at the Confederate Soldiers Home and the Virginia State Penitentiary. It is notable that Smith served as a pallbearer for R. L. Dabney in January of 1898. Of further note is that the multiple Pulitzer Prize winning historian of the South, Douglas Southall Freeman (1886–1953) served as a pallbearer for Smith when he died on August 6, 1923. Smith was at the time of his death the last surviving member of Stonewall Jackson's staff.

1. *Life and Campaigns of Lieut.-Gen. Thomas J. Jackson* (1866; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Sprinkle Publications, 1983).

2. They were actually married at Chatham Manor (her father's estate) across the Rappahannock River, with Rev. Moses Drury Hoge conducting the ceremony. Hoge also "preached at Smith's installation service at the Fredericksburg Church" and later "dedicated the Smiths' new home in Richmond." Smith, in turn, "offered one of the public prayers at Hoge's funeral" in 1899 (pp. 266, 345).

3. Union Seminary also relocated to Richmond in 1898. Smith became friends and neighbors of the faculty and staff, including Thomas Cary Johnson, Givens Brown Strickler, and Walter W. Moore.

4. He was on the editorial staff of the *Southern Historical Society Papers* starting in 1910, and became the sole editor from 1914 to 1920.

Thompson's biography focuses chiefly on Smith's military contributions for and memorialization of Confederate soldiers. Thompson "appreciate[s] the factual story of James Power Smith's life and his many excellent written contributions, while also understanding how much he was influenced by his friendships, his experiences, his wartime stories ... and his post-war captivity to [the Lost Cause] that almost all of 'Smith's kind' never criticized" (241). Rev. Thompson also finds Smith's memorialization of Civil War events in the Fredericksburg area to be of "incalculable historical value" (326). Because of Smith's labors, tourists and historians alike can visit monuments marking where Jackson was wounded, where he died, and where his amputated arm was buried.

For this biography, Thompson makes ample use of Smith's postwar writings, but also consults his almost-forgotten wartime letters now archived in the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Battlefield Park headquarters at Chatham. Thompson's transcription of these letters, as well as his inclusion of a rare 1863 photograph of Smith in uniform, adds significant information on this neglected lieutenant. One such story which Thompson unearthed was Smith's relationship with little Jane Corbin. Most Jacksonians are familiar with the general's friendship with Jane,<sup>5</sup> but few may realize Smith's strong attachment as well. In a letter to his sister, Elizabeth Brown, dated March 17, 1863, Smith wrote:

I have no heart for writing to-night. We are all very sad over the death [of] Mrs. Corbin's little girl Jane.... She was a pet of mine and loved me dearly [so] that I went up and stayed in the house [Moss Neck] all night in hope that I might render some little assistance. We are [sic, were] to move this morning and as the Gen. mounted his horse, I ran in to say Good-bye. Mrs. C. said Janey was much better and wanted to see me very much—had asked for me frequently. I went to the chamber and the little child called me by name and put up her lips for a kiss. She said she was sorry I was going away [and] that I must come back soon to see her and play with her. I came away very sorry to leave my little pet so sick—but not dreaming that her life was in danger. Yet the little darling died in an hour.... I

5. For a dramatization of this relationship, see the second half of *Gods and Generals* (2003). Stephen Spacek ably portrays the character of Smith throughout the film. The scriptwriters, however, took some liberties with the historical record and placed Smith on Jackson's staff earlier in the war.

6. Morton H. Smith, *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1962), p. 322. Smith was speaking of those professors at Union that succeeded Dabney, but the phrase could apply just as well to any of Dabney's students.

7. *William Sterling Lacy: Memorial, Addresses, Sermons* (Richmond, VA: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1900), pp. 5–12.

cannot tell you how much I am distressed at this loss. The child really had a strong affection—as you have seen children exhibit such affection. During the whole of her delirium yesterday afternoon she talked of me. (155)

While Thompson's biography concentrates on the Civil War and its commemoration, he does discuss some of Smith's theology and ministerial labors. Reformed Christians would likely wish that more space was devoted to these areas, recognizing, though, as Morton H. Smith said: "None of the men following Dabney wrote as extensively in the field of theology as he did."<sup>6</sup> In *William Sterling Lacy: Memorial, Addresses, Sermons*, J. P. Smith wrote a tribute of his friend, detailing Lacy's exemplary testimony as a classmate at Union, his courage as a fellow soldier in the Rockbridge Artillery, his pastoral service in Virginia and North Carolina, and his ministerial labors as a director and trustee of Union Seminary and as a member of the General Assembly's Committee on the Preparation of a Hymnbook. This eulogy not only informs the reader about Lacy's life but also reveals Smith's ideals for a minister:

Willie Lacy, as so many loved to call him, was from childhood a child of grace, his faith abiding steadfast, his eye single, and his whole nature gladly consecrated. He was a devout man and full of the Holy Ghost, pure, gentle, affectionate, unworldly; simple in his habits and refined in his tastes; loving good men and women, loving music and hymns, loving humor and play, loving books, and most of all, loving Christ and his church ... He preached sermons that were most carefully prepared, with scholarly exposition of the word, and faithful and earnest application. In pastoral service he excelled, knowing how to speak a word in season, and to comfort others with the comfort wherewith he was himself comforted in God. He had a facile and graceful pen, contributing papers of popular attractiveness and of influence to the church journals.<sup>7</sup>

The final sentence could also describe much of Smith's own testimony. Heeding Lacy's example, Smith authored a devotional book, *Brightside Idyls: Every Week of the Year* (1904), which offers light spiritual reflections on an assortment of topics, ranging from nature, history, technology, and art. While Thompson notes that Smith chaired his denomination's Executive Committee of Publication and Sabbath Schools, he does not indicate that Smith also wrote a graceful preface for one of its publications. In *The Family Altar* (1915), Smith details the importance of families setting aside a few minutes each day for household worship:

It honors God, the giver of all our good, the source of all our happiness. It makes the home a sanctuary for God's dwelling. It binds the household together in a more hallowed love. It pleads the grace of Covenant promise. It instructs and unites all hearts in the truth and grace of Christ. It builds a wall of defense against the error and evil of the world around us. It bears witness for God, our Saviour, to the stranger within our gates. It devotes the day to the highest service and sweetens all the hours. It plants in every heart sacred memories to be profitable and happy in all the following years. It brings down from Heaven that blessing of God which maketh rich, and He addeth no sorrow with it.

The rest of the book “contains Scripture readings, hymn selections and suggested prayers for each day of the week, over a period of four weeks, as well as special occasional prayers from men such as Edward Reynolds of the Westminster Assembly, Henry Van Dyke, Jr., James Isaac Vance, Russell Cecil, Richard Clark Reed, William Marcellus McPheeters, and James Russell Miller.”<sup>8</sup>

Smith's facile and graceful manner can also be seen in some of the Sunday School lessons he prepared earlier in life (which the reviewer recently found). In one lesson on John 8:31–47, Smith teaches his young audience three simple points about “The True Children of God”: 1) they are “free from bondage [to] ignorance and fear and sin,” 2) they love Jesus Christ, and 3) they hear and obey God's voice. In another lesson on John 13:1–17, Smith admonishes the children to follow the example of Christ in washing the disciples' feet: “Instead of envy and strife, each one seeking to be greatest, you should be seeking to serve one another, even in the lowliest service.”<sup>9</sup>

Smith likewise preached a number of plain-spoken sermons during his life, which had an air of popular attractiveness. The reviewer discovered an article in *The Central Presbyterian* newspaper on the “Sunday School Mass Meeting,” which said:

The Rev. J. P. Smith, of Fredericksburg, by invitation, was present, and delivered the address. His subject was “The Beautiful Names of Jesus.” He dwelt chiefly on the title of “Good Shepherd.” The address was well received by all, and especially by the children, who are generally good judges of “Children's Sermons.” The hearts of all were stirred, and, we doubt not, cheered by what they saw and heard.<sup>10</sup>

Almost twenty-seven years later, Smith preached another well received sermon. On June 24, 1906, Smith delivered a thematic baccalaureate address on I Corinthians 16:13, urging the graduating cadets to find their “true manhood” in the

Gospel of Jesus Christ. The sermon was so popular that Smith had it printed in Lynchburg.<sup>11</sup>

But Smith's greatest denominational contribution of popular attractiveness and influence may have been in the issues of *The Central Presbyterian*, which he edited from 1892–1908.<sup>12</sup> Many Southern Presbyterians adopted the doctrine of the “spirituality of the church,” and would have appreciated receiving Smith's newspaper, for it, according to E. T. Thompson's PCUS perspective:

avoid[ed] taking any direct editorial positions on some of the burgeoning societal pressures that were beginning to affect many Virginian communities and church congregations, e.g., the changing roles of women, child labor reforms, inadequate urban housing, [and] the sale and consumption of alcohol.... Instead, the pages of Smith's *Central Presbyterian* editions primarily

8. *The Family Altar* (Richmond, VA: Executive Committee of Publication Presbyterian Church in the United States, 1915), pp. 2–3. “The Family Altar,” Log College Press Blog (March 12, 2020): <https://www.logcollegepress.com/blog/2020/3/11/the-family-altar>.

9. James P. Smith, “The True Children of God,” *The Central Presbyterian*, August 26, 1891. J. P. Smith, “Washing the Disciples' Feet,” *The Central Presbyterian*, October 7, 1891.

10. The article mentions that a thousand children were in attendance. “Sunday School Mass Meeting,” *The Central Presbyterian*, October 10, 1879. For another description of Smith's preaching, see “The Alexander Chapel,” *The Central Presbyterian*, August 11, 1880.

11. This reviewer would like to thank Ryan Douthat (Director of Public and Electronic Services at Union Presbyterian Seminary Library) for providing him with a copy of this sermon. It is the only known sermon that Smith ever published. J. P. Smith, *Quit You Like Men: Sermon Preached at the Virginia Military Institute Jun 24th 1906* (Lynchburg, VA: J. P. Bell Co., Inc., 1906), pp. 8–9. In his dissertation, Russell St. John criticizes Smith for the thematic nature of this discourse. St. John does not recognize that this was a baccalaureate address, which may have necessitated a different approach from what was used in the pulpit on the Lord's Day. Considering Smith's remarks elsewhere on expository preaching, the baccalaureate address may not have been a typical sermon for Smith. Russell St. John, “Empty Admiration: Robert Lewis Dabney's Expository Homiletic,” (PhD diss., Middlesex University, 2018), pp. 239–240.

12. *The Central Presbyterian* was formerly edited by Thomas V. Moore and Moses Drury Hoge (1856–1860), Smith's brother-in-law, William Brown (1860–1879), James C. Southall (1879–1890), and William T. Richardson (1879–1895). Smith shared editing responsibilities with Richardson starting in 1892, and became the sole editor in 1895 after Richardson's passing. In 1909, the newspaper merged with the *Southern Presbyterian* and the *South-Western Presbyterian* to form the *Presbyterian of the South*, edited by Thornton Samuel Wilson. Smith, along with Thomas E. Converse (*Southern Presbyterian*) and George Summey (*South-Western Presbyterian*), stayed on to assist Wilson. “*The Central Presbyterian* (Richmond, Va.) 1856–1908,” Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/item/sn89053987/>. Henry Alexander White, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* (New York: The Neale Publishing Company, 1911), pp. 429–430.

represented an extensive newsletter of revivals and baptisms, the founding of new churches, accounts of news from church-related colleges and seminaries, and ... occasional reports about the Presbyterian outreach in foreign countries. (316–317)<sup>13</sup>

Readers of the biography under review may have some quibbles with the format. There are no footnotes or endnotes, making citations hard to track down; but there is anecdotal material offered in brackets and each chapter does conclude with a section of sources consulted and quoted. This reviewer noticed at least two mistakes in the narrative: a misquotation of Ernest Trice Thompson (Presbyterian historian) on page 317 and a factual error on page 348 concerning Smith as the alleged author of an article on Confederate army chaplains.<sup>14</sup> Some readers may also lament the absence of discussion on Smith's views of the Anglican Lambeth Conference of 1920, which called for "a reunion of divided Christendom." The biography notes that Smith protested against an organic union with the Northern Presbyterian Church (317), but does not mention that Smith opposed the Lambeth union as well, because it is, as Smith said, "an experiment that has been thoroughly tried out through the centuries and

has been a failure and a disappointment, at an unmeasured cost, a denial of all liberty, deadly to all rights of conscience, [and] destructi[ve] to the truth which is 'able to make us wise unto salvation.'"<sup>15</sup>

These objections aside, *In Stonewall's Long Shadow* is an insightful biography of one who 'Rode with Stonewall.' Both military historians and Reformed Christians will be enriched by reading this book, and it may induce them to explore Smith's writings in greater detail.<sup>16</sup> If so, they will likely find that Smith, in many cases, had "a facile and graceful pen, contributing papers of popular attractiveness and of influence to the church" and history.

**Review: Francis S. Sampson, *A Critical Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews*. Edited from the manuscript notes of the author by Robert L. Dabney (New York: Robert Carter & Brothers, Broadway, [1856]); available online and in reprints. xv, 475 pp. Reviewed by Benjamin Shaw.**

This volume appeared in 1856. The author, Francis Sampson, had died two years earlier at the age of forty. Dabney, who himself was only thirty-six, was impressed with this particular work and, knowing that the author had been at work in preparing the book for publication, undertook to finish the work in honor of Sampson. The "Editor's Preface" gives a detailed explanation of his work. Dabney's intent was to produce the work that Sampson had planned and made it his operating principle not to obtrude his own ideas into the commentary. As far as this reviewer knows, the work has never been reprinted and is currently available online at archive.org and Google Books and in facsimile reprints through print on demand services such as Lulu.com. The text is also available via Logos Bible Software.

Following Dabney's preface is an introductory essay by Sampson on the proper qualifications for a critical interpreter of Scripture. He discusses six qualifications. The first is that the interpreter must be thoroughly convinced that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Second, the interpreter must be enlightened and regenerated by the Holy Spirit. The idea of these first two qualifications is that if the situation is otherwise, the interpreter will not be properly sympathetic to the God's Word. Third, the interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the original languages. Fourth, the interpreter must have an extensive acquaintance with collateral knowledge, such as other languages related to the biblical languages, the history of the biblical period, and other such knowledge. Fifth, the interpreter must have a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures as a whole. A single book, or a single passage, must be interpreted in the larger context of the entire Bible. Sixth, he must possess correct principles of interpretation tempered

13. Smith did take an editorial position in favor of the "limitation of suffrage ... for the Negroes of the South." He paternalistically thought that this would result in their "protection and improvement." "Suffrage Limitation," *The Central Presbyterian*, September 10, 1902, quoted in Ernest Trice Thompson, *Presbyterians in the South, Volume Three: 1890–1972* (Richmond, VA: John Knox Press, 1973), p. 253. See also "The Negro in Africa and in America," *The Central Presbyterian*, May 2, 1906 for additional evidence of Smith's ethnic prejudice.

14. It should be Walter W. Moore, "The Seminary and the War," *The Union Seminary Review* 30, no. 1 (October 1918): 1–6. Again, thanks are due to Ryan Douthat for tracking down this article, as well as the one below on Lambeth.

15. J. P. Smith, "The Lambeth Appeal," *The Union Seminary Review* 32, no. 1 (October 1920): 37–43.

16. For a listing of many of Smith's works, readers can visit Log College Press online: <https://www.logcollegepress.com/james-power-smith-18371924>. The list includes "Stonewall Jackson's Last Battle" (1884, 1888), *The Religious Character of Stonewall Jackson* (1897), *Brightside Idyls: Every Week of the Year* (1904), *Stonewall Jackson and Chancellorsville* (1904), *General Lee at Gettysburg* (1905), Introduction to Hunter McGuire and George L. Christian's *The Confederate Cause and Conduct in the War Between the States* (1907), *The Family Altar* (1915), "Prayer at the Unveiling of the Virginia Monument at Gettysburg" (1917), and "With Stonewall Jackson in the Army of Northern Virginia" (1920). Readers can also find Smith's memorial to William Sterling Lacy on <https://www.logcollegepress.com/william-sterling-lacy-18421899>. The Virginia Chronicle's online archive also provides several copies of *The Central Presbyterian* containing articles and editorials by Smith: <https://viriniachronicle.com>. For further reading on Smith, see John W. Schildt, *Jackson and the Preachers* (1982; repr., Parsons, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1992), 183–201.

by the skill and judgment to properly apply them. This is the standard that Sampson set for himself.

Moving on from these qualifications, Sampson deals with six preliminary questions. Today we would call this section the introduction. Sampson's conclusions are as follows. The letter was written to Jewish Christians, probably inhabitants of Palestine. Second, based largely on the external testimony of the early church, he concludes that the letter was written by Paul. Third, that it was written in Greek, as there is not evidence of the existence of a Hebrew or Aramaic form of the epistle. Fourth, that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as 9:9 and 13:10 seem to imply that the temple was still standing. Fifth and sixth, it was written to warn the readers of the dangers of backsliding and to confirm them in their faith.

At this point, Sampson moves into the commentary proper. He begins the commentary on each section with an "Analysis," which is a synopsis of what is covered in the section. These sections generally, but not always, follow the chapter divisions in our version. A reader interested in a quick summary of Sampson's conclusions could read the Analysis sections and receive that summary.

After the analysis, he moves to a detailed verse-by-verse commentary. In this commentary he demonstrates that he meets the qualifications for the interpreter that he had lined out in his "Introductory Essay." He is familiar with, and makes extensive use of, the standard works available at the time. These include Greek grammars and commentaries in English and German. He also quotes frequently from Calvin's commentary in Latin. He illustrates points of grammar and interpretation from throughout the Scriptures, citing New Testament passages in Greek and Old Testament passages in Hebrew.

In illustrating some of his insights, I want to focus on three passages. The first is Hebrews 2:3, a common difficulty for those who hold that Paul wrote the epistle. "It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard." This seems to imply that the author himself received his knowledge of the gospel from the earlier disciples. That is the most common way to read the passage. But Sampson makes the point that same sort of language is used in Ephesians 4:14, "so that we may no longer be children." Paul certainly does not include himself among those children. He makes the further point that the author uses the first person plural throughout the passage. Read with these observations in mind, the reader recognizes that "the apostle is not necessarily included among his hearers" (82).

A second passage is Hebrews 4:10. Sampson's discussion here illustrates two things. First, that in his day, there was a Christian consensus that there is a Christian Sabbath, and that this verse refers to the final state. Commonly today,

evangelicals hold that there is no Christian Sabbath, and that the reference here is to resting in Christ from trying to be saved by works. Second, Sampson's discussion gives the reader a good example of Sampson's clear brevity. "The 'works' from which the glorified believer rests, are those labours [*sic*] and sufferings which make up the toils of his militant state; including, doubtless, the great labour [*sic*] of self-denial, or mortification of self and self-righteousness" (155).

The third passage is the notorious opening section of chapter 6. The reader of this review is referred to the work itself for the perceptiveness and clarity of Sampson's discussion. Suffice it to say that his treatment of the passage is a marvel of insight from which the reader will profit much.

The website [bestcommentaries.com](https://bestcommentaries.com) has more than two dozen commentaries on Hebrews rated at five stars. Many are written by the best-known names among modern evangelical New Testament scholars. I would suggest that the pastor who is preparing to preach on Hebrews will be richly rewarded by substituting Sampson for one of those. But he should be prepared to make diligent use of his Greek and Hebrew, for he will need them. There are many commentaries that rightly have disappeared into the dust of the ages. This is not one of them.

**Review:** O. Palmer Robertson, *Christ of the Consummation: A New Testament Biblical Theology, Volume 1: The Testimony of the Four Gospels* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2022). Paperback. 400 pp. ISBN 978-1629956305. \$27.99. Reviewed by Ben C. Dunson, the Editor-in-Chief of *American Reformer* (<https://americanreformer.org/>) and visiting Professor of New Testament at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Greenville, SC).

O. Palmer Robertson needs little introduction to Reformed pastors and engaged laypeople. His classic treatment of the biblical basis of covenant theology in *The Christ of the Covenants* has been the standard contemporary, widely-read reference on the subject in the decades since it was published (1980). He then continued in that same vein with *The Christ of the Prophets* and *The Christ of Wisdom*, as well as *The Flow of the Psalms* (the pedant in me wishes this had been titled *The Christ of the Psalms*, but the book was focused on the canonical ordering of the Psalms, so the title is understandable). Now, as a fitting capstone to these books, Robertson has begun a projected three-volume series entitled *Christ of the Consummation*, in which he will lay out a comprehensive biblical theology of the New Testament. The first volume (the subject of this review) is on the Gospels. The subsequent volumes will be on Acts and Paul's letters, and then on Hebrews-Revelation. Although an Old Testament scholar, Robertson has often crossed disciplinary boundaries during his publishing career,

writing on topics as diverse as sex, dispensationalism, soteriology, and the significance of the lands of the Bible.

There are many biblical theologies on offer today. What makes Robertson's distinctive? In one sense it is unsurprisingly *not* unique: it is biblical theology in the tradition of Geerhardus Vos, as Robertson's previous works have been. Other Reformed scholars, such as G.K. Beale, have also written New Testament biblical theologies from a similar standpoint. Robertson does, however, propose to make two unique contributions to the field of New Testament biblical theology. First, he argues that he will fill out Vos' own very limited treatment of the New Testament in his *Biblical Theology*. Second, to do so, Robertson sets out to apply Vos' "epochal" approach to New Testament revelation.

What does this mean? Whereas most biblical theologies are structured according to key themes traced across the whole Bible or focus on specific themes in each individual book of the Bible, Robertson seeks to explain the Gospels as conveying a movement, or process, of greater clarity in revelation across the movements of Christ's life and across the Gospels. He will trace, as Vos put it in *Biblical Theology*, "the process of the self-revelation of God deposited in the Bible." That is to say: Robertson argues that one can gain greater understanding by looking specifically at what is learned from the revelation attendant to Christ's birth, his ministry, his death, his resurrection, his ascension, and so on (to name some of the major "epochs" of revelation). Robertson calls these "phases of intensifying revelation" to indicate the new insights gained by tracing the movement from lesser to greater revelational clarity in the life of Christ. As he puts it in his conclusion: "In these new phases of redemptive history, the heart of the revelation does not change, but it broadens and deepens in the realities of the truth" (p. 321).

A good example of what Robertson intends is seen in his treatment of the uniqueness of John's Gospel. Robertson argues that since John was written probably 20–30 years after the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) we should expect to find "maturing elements" in it (p. 254). Among those "maturing elements" are the deep spiritual insights seen in the extensive dialogues between Jesus and various interlocutors (not found in the other gospels), Jesus' ministry understood as a series of revelatory "signs," and an explicit focus on the creation and sustenance of faith. That said, Robertson admits that "[e]ven if the later dating of John is not accepted, the deeper perspectives on the person and work of Jesus are nonetheless evident throughout" (p. 256).

After defending his biblical-theological approach in chapter 1, the material of the book is split up into two main sections (although there is no formal division into two sections). Chapters 2–6 focus on the key "phases of redemptive history" seen in Christ's life. Then Chapter 7 provides an overview of

what all four Gospels have in common, before providing a detailed treatment of the key distinctives of each Gospel on its own terms.

The material in chapters 2–6 spans the entire incarnate ministry of Christ. First, there is a chapter on "preliminary revelations" (ch. 2), which includes the announcements of Christ's birth, the preparatory ministry of John the Baptist, Christ's baptism, and his confrontation with Satan. Second, there is a chapter on Jesus' own teaching about himself (ch. 3), including his teaching on how his coming fulfills the Old Testament, the titles he used for himself and accepted from other people (son of man, son of God, messiah, etc.). Third, there is a chapter on Jesus' ministry (ch. 4), focused on his teaching and miracles. Fourth is a chapter on how Jesus brought in the kingdom of God through his life, death, resurrection, and ascension (ch. 5). Included in this is a discussion of Christ's extensive teaching on the coming and nature of the kingdom. And finally, there is a chapter that delves in greater detail into Christ's death, burial, resurrection, and ascension (ch. 6).

Chapter 7 is devoted to the unique witness of each of the Gospels. However, it begins with a section on the "united witness" of the four Gospels. Included in this section is an overview of how each Gospel gives the same basic narrative picture of Christ's life, despite significant differences of emphasis (especially in John's Gospel vs. the Synoptics [Matthew, Mark, Luke]). The rest of this section analyzes key statements found nearly verbatim in the Synoptics. Both of these sections reveal that—despite different emphases—all four Gospel authors were telling the same, truthful (thus absolutely trustworthy) story about Jesus Christ. The rest of the chapter looks at the unique elements in each of the four Gospels. God gave the church four portraits of Christ, and therefore, attending to what is unique in each is vital. After chapter 7 a very short conclusion wraps up the book, returning to the key contribution Robertson set out to make: tracing the significance of the process of divine revelation as we see it in the four Gospels.

There is much to appreciate in this clear and faithful exposition of the Gospels. First, despite there being numerous biblical theologies available today, few are written from an unabashedly Reformed standpoint. Robertson does not delve much into systematic theology, but Reformed theology clearly undergirds what he writes. In this sense I could see this being a useful book for Reformed seminary professors to use in their classes, especially if they are concerned about the baggage that sometimes comes along with otherwise helpful treatments of New Testament biblical theology from non-Reformed authors (views on the place of God's moral law, for example).

I also appreciated the forthright pastoral focus of the book. Robertson does not shy away from direct application of the truths of biblical theology to the life of the church and the

individual believer. Robertson rightly grounds these exhortations in the direct teaching of the New Testament, which he unpacks in detail: whether it be Luke writing so that his readers would have certainty regarding the significance of Christ's incarnate mission (Luke 1:1–4), or John writing so that his readers might believe and in doing so find eternal life (1 John 5:13), or Paul writing to Timothy on how the church must conduct itself in the world (1 Tim. 3:14–15), Robertson shows how every single writing in the New Testament explicitly calls for a response of faith and obedience. It is only right that he would do so in his book as well; this is the very purpose for which the New Testament was written.

Additionally, there is solid and enlightening discussion of nearly every aspect of the Gospels in Robertson's book. There is little, in fact, that he does not address, and insightfully so. The only surprising lacuna to me was that he did not spend as much time on the parables and Sermon on the Mount as I would have expected (pp. 77–81, and then occasional references elsewhere [e.g., pp. 210–12, 238–40]).

There are really only two issues I think worth critiquing, the first one being much more minor. First, in terms of structure, I think the book could have benefitted from a clear division into two formal sections: 1. Phases of redemptive history in the life of Christ (chapters 2–6, totaling 135 pages) and 2. The contribution of each Gospel (chapter 7, totaling 161 pages). Chapter 7 itself would probably have benefitted from being split into five separate chapters, one for the overview of common elements in all Gospels and one for the distinctive contribution of each Gospel. This is not a point about the substance of Robertson's argument, but I think a division like this would probably make things easier for the reader, and help them mentally calculate the significance of each section prior to beginning the book.

Second, despite having learned much from Robertson's scholarship and from Geerhardus Vos' approach to biblical theology, I struggled somewhat to see what is gained by attempting to explain Christ's redemptive mission according to specific "phases" of revelation. While it could perhaps be said—in light of the totality of the four Gospels—that we can see that this revelation did originally come in phases of sorts (birth, ministry, death, resurrection, ascension, etc.), it would no longer appear possible to treat them as phases once we have the totality of revelation given in four discrete narrative accounts. That is to say: we cannot experience revelation in "phases" as the original apostles (for example) might have since our only access to this revelation is the final narrative account of each Gospel, each of which treats Christ's life as a whole. In other words, we can't get "behind" the Gospels to see something more basic than the actual form of the Gospels as it currently exists. I don't believe this leads Robertson to make any claims that are false, but it does give me pause regarding

what additional insight can be gained from an approach attempting to see *more* than a simple narrational reading of the Gospels would provide.

Robertson, in his introduction, argues that a key contribution of his redemptive-historical perspective is that it "recaptures the vitality and excitement associated with the inbreaking of God's climactic actions and words in the redemption of his people" (p. 8). By this I believe he means that we can, in a way, almost image ourselves in the story of Christ as it unfolds and see how stupendous, even shocking and transformative, it would have been for Christ's original disciples and interlocutors. There may be something to this, but I'm not certain a straightforward narrational reading misses this. In fact, this vitality and excitement is always present in good stories, which (without denying their divine inspiration and supernatural power) the Gospels certainly are. The attempt to capture the "process of revelation" also ends up requiring a fair amount of repetition between chapters 2–6 and chapter 7. The latter chapter (on unique witness of each Gospel) inevitably has to cover the same material as chapters 2–6 (individual "epochs" of revelation regarding Christ). This was inescapable given the focus of the book (which Robertson recognizes).

As I mentioned above, one of the main benefits that Robertson posits for his approach is that it allows us to see "maturing elements" when comparing later Gospel writings (or later revelations) to earlier ones. In particular he has John's Gospel in mind, which is likely 20–30 years later than the Synoptics. But the dating of all of the Gospels will inevitably remain somewhat speculative and tentative, since we have little objective data to base conclusions on. It might not be wise to base conclusions on such tentative information. Robertson argues that his specific conclusions are not dependent on setting specific dates for writings or individual revelations (within the life of Christ). However, if that is the case, then I'm not sure why it is necessary to seek significance in the *process* of revelation, rather than the end product of revelation (each Gospel as a whole).

These questions aside, Robertson's book is a very helpful overview of the Gospels and all they contain. The book is full of careful and faithful exposition and explanation. The book would work well in a seminary or college classroom setting. Although I've spent significant space posing a question about the "process of revelation" approach, this should not be taken to represent hesitation on my part in recommending the book. I simply think the question worth asking, and have therefore tried to articulate it with sufficient space and care as to be helpful. In the end, if a reader ignored everything I wrote on this point, they would still come away with a very helpful introduction to the teaching and theology of the four Gospels, and to a profound and

pastoral meditation on the person and work of Christ. This is primarily what Robertson set out to accomplish, and in this book he certainly achieves his goal.

**Review:** Tadataka Maruyama, *Calvin's Ecclesiology: A Study in the History of Doctrine*; Foreword by Richard Muller (Eerdmans, 2022). Hardback. 480 pp. ISBN 978-0-8028-8185-4. \$65.00. Reviewed by Thomas Haviland-Pabst.

With this monograph on the ecclesiology of John Calvin, Tadataka Maruyama has provided the reader with an expanded and revised version of his earlier Japanese monograph entitled *Calvin's Reformation Ecclesiology* (Tokyo: Kyobunkwan, 2015). Aside for this 2015 work, he is the author of *The Ecclesiology of Theodore Beza: The Reform of the True Church* (Geneva: Droz, 1978).

Maruyama, in giving an attentive historical eye to Calvin's ecclesiology, notes two challenges that face the historian faces. The first challenge "concerns his textual materials and those of others relevant to the topic" (p. 1). The second challenge "concerns the intrinsic development of his ecclesiology in" (p. 1) its historical context, i.e., considering the complexities that attend the man himself and the period in which he lived.

Regarding the first challenge, the author pushes against a method which deduces a "comprehensive and harmonized concept of the church" (p. 2) from Calvin's perspective as if the material available consists of one, unified corpus. Moreover, he rightfully asserts that Calvin's "final *Institutes* of 1559" (p. 2) cannot be seen to encapsulate the entirety of Calvin's ecclesiology. Given the diversity and complexity of Calvin's corpus, Maruyama's method is to "address ... Calvin's main materials, both in Latin and French" (p. 1) that are of relevance to the focus of the book and, as such, the material explored, both from Calvin and non-Calvin sources, will be necessarily selective.

Regarding the second challenge, Maruyama proposes a "three-stage development" (p. 2) of Calvin's ecclesiology. In chapters 1–2, the first stage is discussed, which Maruyama labels "Catholic Ecclesiology" (p. 2). The focus on this first stage is the largest section of the book, amounting to about half its length (pp. 9–224). Chapter 3 discusses the Strasbourg period in Calvin's life (1538–41), which the author argues was pivotal for preparing Calvin to become the Reformer we know him as today and, as such, it served to transition him to the second and third stages of his ecclesiological development. Chapter 4, then, covers these last two stages ('Reformed Ecclesiology' and 'Reformational Ecclesiology') in detail.

The first chapter is divided into three major sections. The first section discusses Calvin's academic formation. Here,

Maruyama covers, in order, the early French Reformation, Calvin's time in Paris at university, his studies in law, Calvin's move to humanistic studies at the Collège Royal which gave birth to his first writing—a commentary on Seneca's *De clementia*. The second section starts with Calvin's 'sudden conversion' to "radical evangelicalism" (p. 32) and ends with his exile in Basel. Section 3 discusses Calvin's writing of the first *Institutes* (1536) and the formation of his 'Catholic' ecclesiology.

At this juncture, a few things are worth noting. First, Maruyama takes the position that Calvin's work on Seneca is best understood "as a work of [Calvin's] moderate evangelical humanist period" (p. 24), in contrast with those who would argue that it is merely a humanistic work (Wendel) or "a book of the age" (Oberman), though it is these things as well. Therefore, it hinted at his later development as a Reformer. Second, he argues that Calvin's 'sudden conversion' was not "from humanist to reformer" (*pace* McGrath) but from moderate to radical evangelicalism, with the former denoting continually reforming efforts within the Roman Catholic church and the latter denoting reforming efforts with a clear break from the Roman Catholic church (pp. 31, 33). Third, Maruyama suggests that the first *Institutes* was written within the framework of the 'divided body of Christ,' given the conflicts with Roman Catholicism, Lutherans and Reformed, and the Radical Reformation (p. 50). As such, starting with Calvin's discussion of the sacraments in the 1536 *Institutes* "provides a key to understanding" Calvin's ecclesiology at this juncture (p. 52). Thus, the author discerns two key concepts that undergird Calvin's 'Catholic ecclesiology': (1) "the suprahistorical reality of the church based upon God's election" (p. 65) and (2) "the church gathered" historically (p. 66). By describing Calvin's ecclesiology in this period as 'Catholic,' while noting his move toward 'radical evangelicalism' (following Luther), Maruyama is noting Calvin's concern to restore the back to "the biblical and catholic faith" (p. 113).

Connected to this is the fascinating discussion of Calvin's view of "relationship between ... Christ's kingdom and his two kingdoms theory" (p. 74). Here, we see Calvin take issue with the two extremes of Catholicism and Münster Anabaptism, with the latter reducing the kingdom to "their church institution" and the latter placing the focus on "an earthly realization of Christ's kingdom in the world" (p. 75). However, with this, and perhaps most intriguingly, Calvin also departs from "Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer" (p. 75) since Luther and Bucer are closer to the Roman Catholic extreme and Zwingli to the Anabaptist. In contrast, Maruyama describes Calvin's view as a "distinction but not separation" (p. 75). That is to say, for Calvin, Christ's kingdom is the top point of a triangle, with church and state serving as the two bottom points; thus, Christ's kingdom is expressed in the church and in the state, respectively, and the church and state are held in tension.

Given this schema, the author writes that “Calvin’s teaching is too comprehensive to be simply represented by the earthly two kingdoms theory” (p. 75).

The second chapter, which covers the early period of the Genevan Reformation and the practice of a ‘Catholic’ ecclesiology, is divided into three sections. Section 1 discusses the moderate evangelicalism of Lefèvre and Farel’s understanding of evangelicalism. Section 2 gives attention to three documents that were foundational for the early reforming efforts of Geneva: (1) ecclesiastical ordinances (*Articles*); (2) a confession of faith (*Confession*); and (3) a catechism (*In-struction*) (pp. 148–9). Section 3 elaborates on Calvin’s efforts toward reform in Geneva by discussing the ‘Caroli Affair,’ which dealt with “Calvin’s apology for the Catholic faith,” and the *Two Epistles*, which dealt with “the reform of worship and ecclesiastical order” (p. 197).

Noteworthy here is Maruyama’s contention that Lefèvre, Farel and Calvin’s first *Institutes* reflect “three distinctive types of reform,” respectively, “in the early French Reformation” (p. 119). While Farel was a ‘radical’ evangelical, in line with Luther, Zwingli and Calvin, he departed from them by maintaining a congregationalism that was closer to his teacher, Lefèvre. Moreover, in discussing the ‘Caroli Affair,’ i.e., Caroli’s accusation that Farel and consequently Calvin were guilty of the errors of “Arianism or Sabellianism” (p. 182), brings to fore Calvin’s biblicism and thus his refusal to subscribe to “the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds” (p. 187), preferring to prove his orthodoxy with the Bible alone. This, in turn, avoided opening the door to the claim of “the council’s infallibility” (p. 187) by the Roman Catholic church. Calvin’s biblicism is then coupled with what Maruyama calls his “practical activism” (p. 222). The latter is seen in his *Two Epistles*, which present a choice to the moderate reforming efforts of Lefèvre and his followers: either “the pope’s kingdom” or “Christ’s kingdom” (p. 224).

The third chapter, which serves as a hinge between Calvin’s earliest, ‘Catholic’ approach of ecclesiology and his next two approaches to ecclesiology (to be discussed in the last chapter), there are three sections. The first section discusses Bucer’s Strasbourg. The second section discusses the relationship between Bucer and Calvin and the third section explores Calvin’s second *Institutes* (1539) and his *Romans Commentary*.

With Maruyama’s discussion of Bucer, he notes that his “unique contribution” was to “introduce Evangelical confirmation to Reformed theology” (p. 244), which is distinct from the Anabaptist approach to church discipline centered on the baptism of believers rather than infants.

Furthermore, the author brings significant clarity to the ‘Bucer influence theory,’ which posits that Bucer exerted a significant influence on Calvin, seen especially in the latter’s ecclesiology. He argues that the handwritten document of

Bucer revealed in 1974 (published in 1988) titled *Theological Advice* offers clear criticisms of Calvin’s aforementioned *Two Epistles* at points, which suggests significant differences between these two men such as Bucer’s rejection of Calvin’s view that the Catholic ceremonies were idolatrous, affirming instead that they are still of positive value. Judiciously, Maruyama makes clear that the original advocates of the ‘Bucer influence theory’ did not have access to *Theological Advice* and thus they didn’t have the full picture. Calvin and Bucer also depart on the question of the essence of the church, with Calvin arguing for two marks (preaching the word and sacraments) and Bucer adding a third mark, namely, church discipline.

The fourth and final chapter gives attention to the second and third stages of Calvin’s ecclesiological development. Section 1 gives attention to Calvin as a Reformer of Geneva and Europe. Section 2 describes Calvin’s “Reformed ecclesiology” (p. 379). Section 3 discusses the final stage of Calvin’s ecclesiology, what the author labels “Reformation ecclesiology” (p. 401). By labeling Calvin’s ecclesiology as “Reformed,” the author describing it as “Calvin’s Reformed ecclesiology,” which is distinct from while in consultation with “other Evangelical Reformers” (p. 379). As an aside, Maruyama notably sees ‘Reformed’ as historically more accurate as a designation of the approaches of Zwingli, Bucer and Calvin than the labels “Zwinglianism, Bucerianism, and Calvinism ... often used among researchers” (p. 379), especially given the distance of the ‘Reformed’ from both Roman Catholicism and Lutheranism.

Discussing the mature ecclesiological views of Calvin, the author argues that this last phase of his life can be divided roughly in two halves: (1) pre-1555 and (2) post-1555. By 1555, Calvin’s goal for reform in Geneva is realized and “definitely settled” (p. 330); after 1555, Calvin’s efforts turned toward France and Europe. Along the way, much like his earlier discussion relating Calvin to Farel and Bucer, Maruyama considers whether Calvin is Luther’s heir. Interestingly, the author takes the position that, while narrowly speaking Calvin would reject such a notion, it is fair to say that “Calvin’s Reformation was his conscious effort to visibly present” Luther’s emphasis on grace “to the mid-sixteenth-century European world” (p. 378).

Moreover, Maruyama returns to the question of church discipline in his discussion of Calvin’s ‘Reformed’ ecclesiology, arguing that, for Calvin in his third *Institutes* (1543), church discipline was a “secondary ministry” whereas “ministry of the word and the sacraments” was primary (p. 388). Thus, church discipline existed in a “dialectical relation” to the two marks, i.e., “clearly distinguished but never separated” (p. 389).

Turning his attention to the third and final stage of Calvin’s ecclesiology, Maruyama clarifies that ‘Reformational

ecclesiology' is "a historical concept" rather than "a theological" one (p. 401). Calvin's intention here is to place his concept of "the Evangelical church and its reform" in "the framework of God's salvation history" (p. 401) as it was taking place in his own day. Calvin's early 'Catholic ecclesiology' serves as "the founding stratum of his ecclesiology" (p. 401), as it situated "Protestant Evangelicalism" as "the central manifestation of the Catholic church" (p. 402), with Calvin's 'Reformed ecclesiology' displaying his view of "church's form as quite distinct from" those forms of the church advocated by Luther, Zwingli, and Bucer (p. 402).

Now, with this last stage of his ecclesiological development, Calvin's musings take a decidedly eschatological and prophetic turn since, for him, salvation history was coming to bear upon Europe and, as such, Maruyama writes that "the Reformation church was viewed as ... the living/visible image of Christ's kingdom" while at the same time it was "a [suffering] remnant" in resistance to ungodly powers (p. 444).

There are a number of strengths that attend this significant exploration of Calvin's ecclesiology. First, the author is deeply conversant with both primary sources and secondary sources. Second, the author's arguments are trenchantly explored and judicious. Third, Maruyama moves the conversation forward at various points. Most notably, by comparing Calvin with Farel, Bucer and Luther, he distinguishes Calvin as a theologian in his own right and thus brings to the fore Calvin's unique contributions to the Reformation era. Fourth, because of the depth of argumentation Maruyama provides, this is essential reading not only for those interested in the narrow question of Calvin's ecclesiology, but also for Calvin and Reformation studies more broadly. Indeed, this is truly a remarkable achievement that ought to garner much praise. This monograph will undoubtedly be lauded as the gold standard treatment of Calvin's ecclesiology for years to come. Given these strengths, this book comes highly recommended.

**Review: Robert Haldane, *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022). Paperback. 80 pages. ISBN 978-1-60178-906-8. \$10.00. Reviewed by Zachary Groff.**

1. R.L. Dabney, *Discussions, Volume 1: Theological and Evangelical* (Richmond: Presbyterian Committee of Publication, 1890), p. 496.

2. Alexander Haldane, *The Lives of Robert Haldane of Airthrey, and of His Brother, James Alexander Haldane* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1853), pp. 413–93.

3. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1545.

4. Robert Haldane, *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day* (1842; repr., Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), p. xiv; subsequent citations of this book appear in parentheses.

Writing on the matter of the Christian Sabbath and its widespread desecration in the mid-to-late nineteenth century, Southern Presbyterian theologian Robert Lewis Dabney (1820–1898) opined, "the wisest friends of truth and good have taken the alarm."<sup>1</sup> One such "friend" who championed the joys and recovery of the Lord's Day as the Christian Sabbath was Scottish nobleman, theologian, and evangelist Robert Haldane (1764–1842).

Though the various details of Haldane's life and accomplishments in service to Christ are fascinating at many points, the most celebrated story of his ministry relates to the three years he sojourned in continental Europe, including one particularly significant year in Geneva, Switzerland.<sup>2</sup> It was during his time in Geneva that Haldane left a lasting impression on the spiritual culture and theological development of the rising generation of Reformed ministers in his day. Haldane became God's appointed instrument for the advancement of true Christian religion during a low point in Geneva's spiritual history.

Being preoccupied with the things and interests of the Lord and sincere devotion to God, Haldane emphasized Bible study, personal evangelism, preaching, and fervent prayer in his lifetime of ministry. As evidenced by Reformation Heritage Books' newly republished edition of Haldane's *Sanctification of the Sabbath: The Permanent Obligation to Observe the Sabbath or Lord's Day*, he likewise emphasized the enduring importance and value of the Lord's Day. He was not alone in this concern. The subject of the Christian Sabbath and its obligations (or lack thereof) garnered notable attention in Haldane's day.

Confessionally committed Reformed and Presbyterian authors on both sides of the Atlantic in the nineteenth century published reams of material defending the propriety of Christian observance of the Lord's Day. They did so in the context of the Industrial Revolution which was gaining steam (both literally and figuratively) in Great Britain, the European continent, and the United States. Dramatic changes in the manufacture and movement of goods led to what many pastors and theologians regarded as the widespread desecration of the Christian Sabbath. Dabney's lament is representative of the concerns of many likeminded Christians in his day: "Especially is the law of rest trodden upon by those great carrying corporations which seem to feel themselves already too great for the law."<sup>3</sup> In fact, Jon English Lee observes in the preface to the new Reformation Heritage Books edition of *Sanctification of the Sabbath* that Haldane extracted his treatise on the Lord's Day out of his more well-known commentary on the *Epistle to the Romans* for independent publication as a booklet "during a controversy surrounding the Scottish railways being run on Sunday."<sup>4</sup>

As highlighted by the twelfth issue of *The Confessional*

*Presbyterian* published in 2016, there is yet keen interest in the Lord's Day among confessional Presbyterian churchmen and scholars. Though many Christians—including many Presbyterian pastors seeking to minister in good faith—have adopted less strict views on the Lord's Day than what is articulated in the Westminster Standards (see WCF 21.7–8, WLC 115–121, WSC 57–62), several Reformed authors have made able defenses in recent years for the enduring character of God's moral law. Such defenses include several books, articles, and media productions that emphasize the enduring applicability and relevance of the Fourth Commandment (as numbered by Reformed and Evangelical believers).

While historical and theological defenses of the gracious and permanent nature of God's moral directives for the Lord's Day are of great use to the Christian, it is the Bible alone that gives the final word on what ought to be the true Christian appraisal of the Lord's Day. It was Robert Haldane's conviction that the Word of God speaks clearly and authoritatively on the matter of Christian Sabbath observance, and thus he wrote, "But no argument, however cogent, unless immediately derived from the Scriptures of truth is sufficient to establish the obligation to sanctify the seventh day which must always be rested on the authority of God. It is, therefore, of great moment that the divine character of the sabbatical institution should be distinctly understood" (p. 1). In making his defense of the Christian obligation to set aside the proverbial seventh—or sabbath—day, Haldane has left behind a profoundly biblical and insightful treatise for posterity.

Haldane divided his exegetical excursus into nine brief chapters, bookended by an Introduction and a Conclusion. The little volume makes for delightful reading on a Lord's Day afternoon, as it is both eminently readable and saturated with Scripture. Haldane's great aim was to engage with Scripture to answer the question of whether "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" (Heb. 4:9).<sup>5</sup> Though the nineteenth century diction and syntax may prove difficult for some readers, this volume is notably accessible for its time and well worth reading.

Chapters 1, 2, and 8 contain Haldane's observations on the applicability of the Sabbath for the Old Testament patriarchs prior to the life and ministry of Moses, for the Old Covenant (Jewish) nation of Israel, and for the New Covenant (Christian) church. In chapters 3 through 6, Haldane developed an argument for the permanence of the Fourth Commandment as part and parcel of the Ten Commandments as a whole. His argument begins with the promulgation and preservation of the Ten Commandments, and then applies the biblical principles derived from his exegetical treatment to establish the permanence and universality of the Fourth Commandment.

In chapter 7, Haldane handled three common objections—one of which was supposedly derived from Romans 14, the

exegetical trigger for this work as an excursus in Haldane's commentary—to the teaching that there is such a thing as a Christian Sabbath: a) "that the preface to the Ten Commandments shows that they were incumbent only on the Jews" (p. 33); b) "that its sanctions prove that it was a Jewish institution" (p. 34); and c) "that the Lord Jesus Christ has relaxed or modified its requirements" (p. 36). Though Haldane's response to the third objection is the most extensive, each of his answers is helpful for readers who bring sincere questions arising from superficial readings of the understandably difficult texts of Romans 14:5, 6; Galatians 4:10, 11; and Colossians 2:16, 17.

With terse and incisive exegetical observations, Haldane presented a convincing case for Christ's and His apostles' interest in the perpetuity of the moral law of God, including—but not limited to—the requirement to observe the Sabbath. For example, Haldane insightfully observed,

In foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem, and referring to the flight not of Jews but of His disciples, at a time when everything peculiar to the Jewish dispensation would be abrogated, He directs them to pray that it might not be in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day (Matt. 24:20), which, from the nature of the season and their sense of the obligation of the fourth commandment, would impede their flight (pp. 38f.).

The good and necessary inference of Christ's teaching at this point of the Olivet Discourse is that He fully expected His disciples to be observing one day in seven as "the Sabbath day" for rest and worship as the gathered flock of God. Though neither the strongest nor most prominent of Haldane's arguments, this exegetical observation drawn from Matthew 24:20 is but one example of the biblical reasoning and insight that pervade Haldane's treatise from beginning to end.

In concluding this chapter on handling objections, Haldane expressed a question appealing to the heart of every believer. "And what Christian is there who does not thank God that He has appointed for him the Sabbath day as a day of rest? And who does not feel the benefit of it when he is enabled to sanctify it as he ought?" (p. 44). Indeed, appreciation for the Sabbath as a gift from God to man, and the appointment of Lord's Day observance as a means of grace for communion with God through Christ the Lord of the Sabbath, must suffice any discussion of the subject. Otherwise, it is all too easy to turn this inestimably valuable gift of God's grace into a legal instrument of will-worship.

In his extended systematic theological treatment of the Sabbath, Dabney expressed this idea well. Citing Isaiah 58:13,

5. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture references are taken from the New American Standard Bible (NASB1995).

Isaiah 56:2, Mark 2:27, and Exodus 20:11 in rapid succession, Dabney summed up the case, “the Bible speaks of the sabbath not as a ritual burden, laid on the neck of the church because it was in its minority, but as a privilege and a blessing.”<sup>6</sup> And further,

To appoint the means of grace for his people, this was God’s part. As long as any ordinance was commanded by him, our part was to make use of it, humbly and faithfully, as a means of grace, in order to strengthen the faith and repentance which brings us to the Saviour. But the moment any man undertook to build up his self-righteousness on will-worship he was under a soul-destroying error, which must not be tolerated one moment.<sup>7</sup>

But the Lord Jesus Christ said it best in Mark 2:27 when He authoritatively declared, “The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”

Returning to Haldane’s little book, the last chapter is the author’s lengthiest and most original portion of the whole. Haldane entitled chapter 9 “The Change from the Last to the First Day of the Week Has Not Invalidated the Obligation of the Sabbath.” As suggested by the title, Haldane presented God’s appointment of the first day of the week as the day of worship to support his primary argument in favor of the permanent obligation to observe a weekly Sabbath as a day of rest from worldly employments and recreations. Whereas the first eight chapters of the book establish that the obligation of sabbath observance is not unique to the Law of Moses (i.e., the ceremonial and judicial law of Israel expressed in the Torah), this final chapter shows that the change from the last day of the week to the first day of the week does nothing to abrogate that obligation’s enduring relevance to the New Covenant church.

Haldane’s argument begins with a recognition of Christ’s authority expressed in Mark 2:28, that “the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath,” and launches into an enthralling survey of Old Testament antecedents and shadows anticipating the coming change inaugurated by the Messiah. The first reference is to God’s work of creation in Genesis 1, which is superseded by His glorious work of redemption, as expressed in Isaiah 65:17, 18, “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things will not be remembered or come to mind. But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; for behold, I create Jerusalem for rejoicing and her people for gladness.” Indeed, God commanded the Old Covenant people of God in Deuteronomy 5:15 to observe the Sabbath

in remembrance of their redemption from slavery in Egypt, even as the obligation to observe a day of rest is grounded in creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11). Connecting the divine works of creation and redemption, Haldane contended,

That God purposed to appoint the day of His resting from the work of this new creation as the Sabbath which He was afterward to bless and hallow in remembrance of it, in place of that day which He had formerly consecrated to the memory of His resting from the first creation, appears from His commanding the Israelites to observe the Sabbath in remembrance of their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. That deliverance was an eminent type of the redemption of His people by Christ from the bondage of Satan. But if the Israelites were commanded, in commemoration of this shadow, to sanctify one day in the week, which is the reason given for their doing so in the recapitulation of the fourth commandment (Deut. 5:15) instead of that formerly given to them at its first announcement respecting the creation (Gen. 2:2; Ex. 20:11), this was an intimation that the great and glorious work of which that deliverance was a shadow was afterward to be the object of weekly commemoration (pp. 52f.).

From this starting point, Haldane proceeded then to Psalm 118:19–24, where especially verses 22 and 23 are applied by Christ to Himself in the Gospels (Matt. 21:42; Mark 12:10, 11; Luke 20:17), and subsequently cited or alluded to by the apostles in reference to Christ in the remainder of the New Testament (Acts 4:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Peter 2:4–8). The Lord was the stone which the builders rejected in Psalm 118:22, but His bodily resurrection from the grave in glory on the first day of the week is a cause for great rejoicing to His people as He powerfully completed the work of redemption on their behalf. Thus, just as the angels sang together and shouted for joy at the dawn of creation (Job 38:7) on the first day of the creation week, so now the day of Christ’s resurrection on the first day of the week is the church’s weekly occasion for rejoicing “at the finishing of the new creation” (p. 54). Christ rested from the work of redemption on the first day of the week, and this is properly now—as anticipated by the Old Testament texts cited above—to be recognized as the Christian Sabbath, even until the end of the world.

The next theme which Haldane traced out has to do with the eighth day motif in the Old Testament. His treatment addresses the eighth day as “the first of a new series” (p. 55) anticipating the finished work of Christ. Haldane explicitly mentioned the ordinances surrounding circumcision (Gen. 17:12) on the eighth day after birth and the ceremonial uncleanness of the mother (Lev. 12:2, 3) during that time of

6. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1,524.

7. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1,526–27.

waiting. “Circumcision, then, being such a seal to Abraham, from whom Christ was to spring, was to be impressed on himself and his posterity and to be performed on the eighth day, the day on which that righteousness was, by the resurrection of the Messiah, to be ‘brought in’” (p. 56). The other “typical and shadowy institutions” (p. 56) which Haldane drew forth as anticipations of the move of the Sabbath from the seventh day to the first/eighth day of the week include the offering up of animal sacrifices to the Lord (Exod. 22:30; Lev. 22:27), the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Lev. 9:1), the cleansing of lepers (Lev. 14:10) and physical defilements (Lev. 15:14, 29), and the atonement of Nazirites who had become defiled (Num. 6:10). All these eighth-day ordinances of the ceremonial law considered together point forward to Christ and his work which was finished on the corresponding first day of the week. The first/eighth day was the day of the week on which “Jesus was received as the firstborn from the dead; His sacrifice was accepted, and on which, as the Great High Priest, He was “consecrated forevermore” and when He made atonement for His people, by which they are cleansed from sin” (p. 57).

Other eighth-day examples from across the Hebrew Scriptures join those cited above. Haldane cited the sanctification of the Temple—“that illustrious type of the body of the Redeemer” (p. 57)—in the time of Solomon (2 Chron. 7:8, 9) and Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:17, 20) as bearing witness to the importance of the eighth day and its anticipation of the resurrection of Christ’s body. Ezekiel’s vision of God’s temple-city in Ezekiel 43:26 and 27 emphasizes the eighth day as the day of worship in “the Redeemer’s kingdom and church” (p. 58) as prefigured here. The Feast of Booths/Tabernacles point forward to the fifteenth day, or eighth day of the second week, when the celebration was concluded (Lev. 23:34–36, 39; Num. 29:35, 36; Neh. 8:18). Finally, the bringing in of the firstfruits of the harvest was to take place on the eighth day (Lev. 23:11, 12), “a distinguished type of the resurrection of Him who was ‘the first fruits of them that slept,’ who arose from the dead on the morrow after the Sabbath—that is, the eighth day, or the first day of the week” (p. 60).

Building on his survey of the eighth day motif in the Old Testament, Haldane then remarked on the significance and typology of the fiftieth day. The Israelites’ presentation of two wave loaves took place on the fiftieth day after presenting the ingathering of the firstfruits mentioned above (Lev. 23:15–17, 21), and the Jubilee took place in the fiftieth year (Lev. 25:8, 10), corresponding not to the end of a series of sevens, but the first/eighth in a series. Haldane concluded his survey of the eighth/fifteenth/fiftieth day motif in the Old Testament with a poignant question. “Can it be imagined that the eighth, the fifteenth, and the fiftieth day, all of the same import, were thus distinguished without a special purpose, and that in the

wisdom of God they were not expressly specified for some very important end?” (p. 61). The answer, according to Haldane, is clear.

This purpose is fully developed in the New Testament, where He who is the Lord of the Sabbath—without in the smallest degree impairing, relaxing, or changing the obligation to observe a seventh day’s rest—appropriated to Himself the eighth day, the first instead of the last day of the week, and by recording His name upon it, calling it the Lord’s Day, has blessed and sanctified it for the use of His people. (p. 62)

The remainder of the chapter is concerned with demonstrating the enduring obligation of the Sabbath on the first/eighth day of the week from approved examples and other references in the New Testament.

The evidence which Haldane presented from the New Testament is organized under four categories. The first is that Christ Himself conferred honors upon the first day of the week in His post-resurrection appearances to His disciples (e.g., John 20:19, 26). The propriety of rendering the literal Greek phrase “the first of the sabbaths” (τῆ μιᾷ τῶν σαββάτων) in the accounts of these appearances as “the first day of the week” is corroborated by comparison to several other passages in which the phrase is clearly referring to the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1; Mk. 16:2, 9; Luke 24:1; John 20:1; Acts 20:7; and 1 Cor. 16:2).

The second category of New Testament evidence for the move of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week is the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples gathered together in the upper room on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1–4). Haldane commented, “Here we have the explanation of the mystery in the Old Testament of the fiftieth day, connected, as we have seen, with remarkable events and ordinances” (p. 64). Not only did the disciples gather for worship on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:15; 2:1), which would have been the first day of the week, but the subsequent mass conversion and baptism of “about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41) confirmed Christ as “the first fruits of the Christian church” (p. 65) on this day of worship.

The third category of New Testament evidence is the practice of the apostles and the primitive church (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 4:17; 7:17; and 16:1, 2). The fourth and final category is tied to that extraordinary revelation of the risen Christ to John the Revelator in exile on the Isle of Patmos, as recorded in Revelation 1:10. John’s report there is that “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day.” As this appellation for the day is given without any gloss or explanation, it is to be safely assumed that the churches addressed in the following verse would know exactly which day it was to which John referred. This day, peculiarly

belonging to the Lord who is yet sovereign over all time, is distinguished from the rest as “the day of His triumph over all the powers of darkness” (p. 67). Just as the Lord’s Supper is to be observed by all faithful Christians, so too is the Lord’s Day in its entirety is to be held in honor and sanctified in service to—and delight in—the Triune God. In the remainder of this final chapter, Haldane pressed his readers with the continuing obligation to observe the first day of the week as the Lord’s Day, which is the Christian Sabbath.

In the reviewer’s studied—but humble—opinion, Haldane’s work represents the finest and most useful book-length biblical treatment of the Christian Sabbath under one hundred pages. The final chapter on the move of the day of sabbath observance from the last day of the week to the first day of the week is especially captivating and compelling from a biblical theological perspective. Of course, the writing style is a bit dated and takes some getting used to for readers who are not accustomed to reading nineteenth century prose. Nonetheless, Haldane’s writing is much simpler and easier to read than some of his more learned and scholarly contemporaries. He was writing for the people, and he should be read by the people.

Returning to Dabney’s somewhat shorter and more systematic theological work on the same topic, there is one general and good caution worth remembering in any discussion of Christian Sabbatarianism. Considering the state of Christian sabbath-keeping in his day, Dabney wisely remarked at the outset of his study, “In actual life there is, among good people, a great uncertainty, with a corresponding confusion of usages, from great laxity up to the sacred strictness of our pious forefathers.”<sup>8</sup> As those of us who are confessionally Presbyterian and Reformed believers seek to observe and promote the Lord’s Day as the Christian Sabbath—and all which that entails—we ought to do so with grace, compassion, patience, peace, and gentleness. While condemning the willful desecration of the Sabbath and lamenting its neglect in the church and wider society is wholly appropriate, we must register our disapprobation and make our positive biblical arguments with love and compassion for those who do not yet find delight in Christ and/or in His appointed day of rest and worship. It will not always be the case that full-orbed understanding of our biblical and confessional position will yield subscription to the same among our various discussion partners in the broader church and secular culture. But let us present the case from Scripture with hopes that some might find rest and delight in Jesus Christ the Son of Man and the Promised Messiah, the Lord of the Sabbath.

8. Dabney, *Discussions*, 1.496.

**Review:** Crawford Gribben, *Survival and Resistance in Evangelical America: Christian Reconstruction in the Pacific Northwest* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021). Hardback. 224 pages. ISBN 978-0-19937-022-0. \$32.95. Epub. 978-0-19937-024-5. Reviewed by Dr. Daniel Ritchie, Northern Ireland.

The accepted wisdom is that the Christian Reconstructionist movement largely died out following the death of its major thought leaders, Greg L. Bahnsen and Rousas J. Rushdoony. Crawford Gribben’s book on Christian Reconstructionism in the Pacific Northwest of the United States challenges this assumption. Professor Gribben examines the influence of Reconstructionism in the Pacific Northwest in relation to migration, eschatology, government, education, and media. He argues that the migration of conservatives to states such as Idaho and its proponents’ use of the tools of American mass culture has led to the revival of Reconstructionism, albeit in a modified form. He goes so far as to argue that “its ideas have a greater cultural purchase than ever before” (ix) and that “Christian Reconstruction may never have been as important as it is today.” (1)

To those of us who followed the intellectual arguments concerning theonomy and Reconstructionism within the Reformed community, this claim may appear outrageous. Contemporary Reconstructionism has no one of the intellectual rigour of a Bahnsen or a Rushdoony. And while Gary DeMar and the recently deceased Gary North continued to have considerable literary output, the movement as a whole has not produced anything like the substantial amount of material that it did in the 1970s and 1980s. Before we dismiss the author’s thesis, however, he reminds us that the new generation of Reconstructionists has produced a far-reaching media culture, having connections to famous publishing houses such as HarperCollins, Penguin, Random House, and Simon & Schuster. This observation is a significant one, as such established publishing houses have a much wider reach than the early theonomic publishers. Indeed, they dwarf even the mainstream Reformed publishers, such as Presbyterian and Reformed, who published some of Rushdoony and Bahnsen’s early literature. As a result of such publishing success, Reconstructionists are now able to spread their message more easily both to the wider evangelical community and the culture in general. Perhaps even more significantly, they have appeared in Amazon Prime and Netflix shows. Some people in the confessional Reformed community may wish to dismiss Reconstructionism as an irrelevance, but a movement that still maintains this level of influence may not be safely ignored.

While these developments do point to a wider cultural impact, some of the author’s conclusions are overblown. For instance, as evidence of Reconstructionism’s influence, he cites

candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in 2016 endorsing a ten per cent flat tax and calling for women who have had abortions to receive punishment. Of course, Reconstructionist ideas may have furthered such opinions, but they are hardly the sole or dominant influence in spreading these notions. As the author observes about Reconstructionism's economic outlook, it was, in many respects, largely indebted to twentieth-century Libertarianism. To most observers, Reconstructionism's ideological commitment to Libertarianism does not sit well with its professed commitment to the social application of God's law. Professor Gribben is partially correct, moreover, in stating that "theonomic ideals were shared by many of the early modern theologians and key confessional texts that had provided the Reformed tradition with its intellectual foundations in seventeenth-century England." (71) There is no disputing that many early Reformed divines held views concerning the common equity of the Mosaic judicial laws that are much closer to modern theonomy than to the opinions of most contemporary Reformed theologians. Still, there are important differences between most Reconstructionist theonomists and the framers of the Westminster Standards concerning natural law, the three-fold division of the law, the two kingdoms, natural theology as opposed to Van Tillian presuppositionalism, the establishment principle, the civil application of the first table of the law, and the role of the state in society.

Professor Gribben also expresses surprise that despite the Supreme Court moving in a more conservative direction, with the prospect of it striking down *Roe v. Wade* (a hope realised after the publication of this book), "born-again Protestants continue to think of themselves as a vulnerable and beleaguered remnant." (3) At this juncture, it is worth noting that most of the fieldwork for this monograph was completed before the 2016 presidential election, which renders some of its findings out of date. Given the aggressively Left-wing nature of the Biden Administration, social media censorship of political dissidents, and the effects of lockdown policies in Democrat-controlled states and cities, evangelicals have legitimate grounds for concern, despite also attaining some significant victories. These negative factors challenge the author's assertion that evangelicals "are embracing marginality at precisely the moment when their cultural power may be at its height." (4) Even in the case of the conservative-leaning Supreme Court, evangelical Protestants are conspicuous by their absence.

The strong points of the book include taking seriously the concerns of white evangelicals regarding their demographic replacement (a fear supported by statistics) while being careful to distinguish between those fleeing liberal states such as California with legitimate concerns about mass immigration and those ideologically committed to segregationism.

Nevertheless, the author does recognise that some of the segregationists were influenced by the early works of Rushdoony. Conversely, he argues that "they may have overlooked the fact that Rushdoony presided over a mixed-race family—he was, after all, an ethnic Armenian with an Anglo-American wife and an adopted Native American son—as well as his occasional condemnations of racist prejudice." (33) This reviewer, however, does believe that it is fair to conclude that Rushdoony shared some Kiniist views in his earlier years, which he later modified. Furthermore, it is possible to be broadly supportive of ethnonationalism without being a Kiniist. Another strong point is the background information relating to Douglas Wilson's congregation in Moscow, Idaho. Such is the extent of Wilson's influence that Professor Gribben concludes, "Moscow may now be America's most postmillennial town" (53), though he qualifies this statement by observing that "the Christ Church community has made very little impact on local politics" (54). The author's discussion concerning the divergence between the likes of Wilson from Rushdoony and Gary North on the issue of classical education is also significant. Reliance on a classical model does not chime well with Reconstructionism's negative attitude to natural law, yet classical education has been one of the means through which Christian Reconstruction has taken place in Moscow.

While Professor Gribben's knowledge of the wider history of the Reconstructionist movement is impressive, one did wonder why he chose not to write a book on that broader topic, as opposed to a monograph on a narrower subject. Some of the discussion concerning the history of Reconstructionism was overly detailed and perhaps out of place in this volume to the point that it distracted the reader from Reconstructionism as it presently operates in the Pacific Northwest. The chapter on the media was the least problematic in this respect, perhaps because it begins with tracing the history and influence of Wilson's *Credenda Agenda* magazine, which is more directly relevant to how contemporary Reconstructionists in the Pacific Northwest became media savvy in comparison to the earlier Reconstructionists. This reviewer does, moreover, have some concerns about the book's evidential basis. For instance, the author admits that he "occasionally created composite characters for interviewees who preferred to remain anonymous". (x) Such sources are effectively worthless from a scholarly point of view, as we cannot objectively verify their claims. He also appears to cite Greg Bahnsen's comment, "The desperation to keep the Christian public from contact with hearing or considering the theonomic point of view makes one think we are dealing with pornography, rather than stodgy, age-old Puritan theology", as being directed against Vern Poythress (73), when it was aimed at the bookstores of Reformed seminaries that had banned the sale of *Theonomy in Christian Ethics*.

Some readers will be disappointed that Professor Gribben has not addressed controversies surrounding Douglas Wilson's Moscow congregation and the Federal Vision movement, plagiarism, and alleged pastoral malpractice. These subjects, however, fell outside the parameters of the author's work, which is descriptive and analytical rather than polemical. This review is based on an e-book version of the monograph, which

the reviewer read on VitalSource Bookshelf. While there are advantages to reading a book in this format, including the ability to highlight important sections and quickly find references, these advantages are not significant enough to warrant the replacement of hard copies with e-books, especially for academic writing. ■

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