Reviews & Responses

Review: Nathan Eshelman, *I Have a Confession: The What and Why of the Westminster Confession of Faith*. Bedrock Series, Grassmarket Press(Pittsburgh, PA: Crown & Covenant, 2022). Paperback. 138 pages. ISBN 9-781943-017553. $10.00. Reviewed by David Douglas Gebbie, Presbyterian Reformed Church, Chesley, Ontario.

This book, written by RPCNA minister, author, and podcaster, Nathan Eshelman, sets out a case for why the church has confessions of faith and why they ought to be used today. While much of his reasoning can be applied to such theological summaries in general, his focus is on the Westminster Confession of Faith.

The approach which the author takes to develop his thoughts is to begin with an illustrative anecdote and segue into the point which he wishes to make. In his first chapter, he expresses the regret that for a number of reasons (for example, excessive biblicism) many churches do not have a clear doctrinal standard. In his second, he discusses the relationship of a manmade confession of faith to the inspired and inerrant Word of God: what is meant by sola scriptura? In his third, he explores the idea of the adumbration of and permission for confessional statements in the New Testament, where one reads of trustworthy sayings, forms of sound words, and the faith once delivered to the saints. His fourth chapter contains a potted history of the Reformation from Luther's 95 Theses to the Solemn League and Covenant. In his last two chapters, the author gives an outline of the Westminster Confession. The book concludes with a list of the works which are cited in the text.

The book is part of the Bedrock Series published by Grassmarket Press which is an imprint of Crown and Covenant Publications. It is available in print and as an eBook. The print version reviewed here is a well produced small paperback with a pleasant font and uncrowded pages.

In the book's subtitle, the author informs the reader that the subjects which he will be addressing are the what and why of the Westminster Confession of faith. In the first three chapters, there is the why; and, in the last three, there is the what. There is, however, an overarching difficulty: a lack of space. The subject matter explored in this book requires more than 139 pages.

At the conclusion of the first chapter, the author puts forward four (perhaps five) uses for a confession of faith. All of this is done in four pages. Given the importance of these points to the why of a confession, it might have been more helpful to have given them a chapter of their own with four pages devoted to each use.

To this reviewer's mind, the heart of this book is in chapters two and three. Here, there is much that is both thought provoking and suggestive of other avenues of exploration. Unfortunately, the material is not as developed as one might wish. Together with the chapter proposed above, the arguments presented in chapters two and three, more fully explained, would make an excellent 138-page book on the why of a confession of faith. This reviewer would very much like to read more of what the author has to say on these subjects.

The fourth chapter, the history chapter, suffers most from the lack of space. How Luther nailing his 95 Theses to the door in 1517 affected England and Scotland is a story which is continually growing, fed by an ebbing and flowing stream of new Ph.D. dissertations or collections of essays. To condense that story into a coherent narrative told in 25 pages is a daunting task, yet a task in which the author succeeds. Nevertheless, to achieve that result sacrifices in precision must be made; and these provoke questions. For example, he speaks of the Westminster Assembly being composed of theologians, pastors, and elders from around England (p. 89). In this context, what is meant by "elders"?

The final chapters of the book give a brief outline of the Westminster Confession of Faith. The outline is divided into seven sections: God and His works, Man and his Fall, Christ and salvation, the Christian life, Christian culture, the church, and the Christian's eschatology. Within these sections, the Confession's teaching is presented and its flow from chapter to chapter noted. Here, as in the rest of the book, there is no space to develop any points made.

In summary, when it comes to answering the question of why the church should have confessions of faith, this book has interesting things to say. When it comes to answering the question of what the Westminster Confession is, it has an approachable background and summary. However, in answering these questions, this book tries to do too much in too few pages. To take up the request of young Twist, "Please, sir, I want some more."

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Review: John Brown of Wamphray, *The Nature of the Church* (Grange Press, 2024). Hardback. 111 pages. ISBN 978–1–950611–08–9. $17.99. Reviewed by Zachary Groff.

Students of Presbyterian church history need to know not one or two, but (at least) five Scottish Presbyterian ministers, one Congregationalist missionary, and one English pastor-author bearing the now-storied name 'John Brown.' The earliest 'John Brown' of note is the Covenanter martyr John Brown of Priesthill (1627–85). The most well-known 'John Brown' is surely the prolific (and largely self-educated) eighteenth-century author and theologian John Brown of Haddington (1722–87). He is not to be confused with either his son John Brown of Whitburn (1754–1834) or his two grandsons: Dr. John Brown of Edinburgh (1784–1858), one of the great Presbyterian Bible scholars of nineteenth-century Scotland; and John Croumbie Brown (1808–95), Congregationalist missionary to South Africa and a significant figure in the field of botany. We could even add Pastor John Brown of Bedford (1830–1922) of the Bunyan Meeting Church (now a museum dedicated to John Bunyan), author of several books on preaching, the Puritans, and John Bunyan; and grandfather of the famous (or infamous) economist John Maynard Keynes (1883–1946).

As impressive as this catalogue of churchmen may be, the author whose work is the subject of this review is *another* man bearing the same name: John Brown of Wamphray (1610–79). This 'John Brown' was born in Kirkcudbright and ordained to the ministry in the parish of Wamphray in Annandale (modern-day Newton Wamphray in South Scotland), where he served ably and diligently until his imprisonment (and banishment) by the Crown in 1662. He lived out the remainder of his days in the Netherlands, serving a Scottish congregation in Rotterdam.

John Brown of Wamphray's published works are many and useful. His interests as a theological writer ranged from the polemical (e.g., *Quakerism the Pathway to Paganism,* 1678) and the doctrinal (e.g., *The Life of Justification opened*, 1695) to the devotional (e.g., *Christ the Way, and the Truth, and the Life,* 1677) and the exegetical (e.g., *An Explanation of the Epistle to the Romans*, 1679/1767). He wrote for popular readers and internationally engaged academics alike. Many of his works were published or republished posthumously. While John Brown of Wamphray's style may not be the easiest to digest, he wrote with precision and conviction such that his writings manifest a sanctified forcefulness of expression. He wrote with both logical order and heartfelt ardor.

Several of Brown's extant works are—like many post-Reformation treatises—as yet untranslated from the Latin in which they were originally written. One such text is the elegantly titled *Libri Duo: in priori, Wolzogium, in libellis duobus de interprete Scripturarum, causam orthodoxam prodidisse demonstratur. In posteriori, Lamberti Velthusii sententia Libertino-Erastiana, in libello vernaculo de idololatria & superstitione, nuper proposita, detegitur & confutatur* (1670), published in Amsterdam while Brown was ministering in exile. In this two-part work (literally—and probably cheekily—titled *Two Books*), Brown wrote this work in response to the rationalistic exegetical method of the Cartesian Professor of Church History at Utrecht Ludovicus Wolzogen (1633–60)[1] as advanced in his *De Scripturarum interprete adversus exercitatorem paradoxum libri duo* (1668) before refuting the Libertinism and Erastianism of Dutch Cartesian theologian and physician Lambert Velthuysen (1623–85) as expressed in a popular tract by Velthuysen on idolatry and superstition. The preface to this duplex polemic largely consists of a treatment of biblical ecclesiology divided into 32 brief chapters.

Though a portion of the preface to Brown's *Libri Duo* was translated by N. E. Barry Hofstetter for *The Confessional Presbyterian* nearly twenty years ago,[2] Grange Press of Taylors, SC has this year published the first full translation of this valuable work. This fresh translation and publication bears the appropriate title *The Nature of the Church*, derived from the Latin title which Brown gave to his original preface, *de Natura Ecclesiæ Visibilis & Invisibilis, ut & Communionis Ecclesiæ, separationem illegitimam jam in Belgio cœptam convellentia, breviter ac summatim proponuntur*. Appreciative readers will note that Grange Press is a work of the Presbytery of the United States of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing).

This handsome hardback volume is beautifully bound and helpfully footnoted with references and explanatory notes (i.e., of technical terms that are best left untranslated in the body of the text). Both scholars and casual readers alike will benefit from this presentation of Brown's trenchant thoughts on the nature of the church. However, the audience with the most to gain by reading this book is likely comprised of pastors and active churchmen. What Brown argues for here is a thoroughly biblical vision and understanding of the church, and this is precisely what will prove most useful to those who labor for a more truly Reformed (and Presbyterian) church in our day.

In the new foreword included with this edition, Matthew Vogan of the Trinitarian Bible Society (TBS) and the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland in Inverness introduces John Brown of Wamphray, his body of work, and this brief treatment of ecclesiology. He divides up the 32 short chapters into three parts: the church's nature (1–10), church membership (11–18), and the marks of the visible church (19–32). Vogan is certainly on solid ground to emphasize that Brown—standing

1. Not to be confused with the famous Socinian rationalist, Johann Ludwig von Wolzogen (1599–1661).

2. John Brown of Wamphray, "*In Translatione*: The Universal Visible Church, From the Preface to Libri Duo," trans. N. E. Barry Hofstetter, *The Confessional Presbyterian Journal* 2 (2006): 208–10.

squarely in the Scottish Presbyterian tradition—rightly distinguishes between the visible and invisible aspects of the church without diminishing either aspect's importance for articulating a full-orbed biblical ecclesiology. The important biblical theme of the visible aspect of the church is woven throughout Brown's work, and Vogan astutely foregrounds that theme in his brief prefatory comments.

Without quibbling too much over artificial divisions of what is a tightly unified work, I propose an alternative five-point (alliterative) structure to the 32 chapters: Attributes of the Church (1–4), Aspects of the Church (5–12), Administration of the Church (13–18), Assessment of the Church (19–27), and Appraisal of the Church (28–32). However readers divide up Brown's remarks, they should be impressed with the thorough treatment Brown has given ecclesiology in such a short space. This little book serves as a potent distillation of Scottish Presbyterian ecclesiology in the vein of Samuel Rutherford (1600–61), George Gillespie (1613–48), and others.

In unpacking the biblical attributes of the church, Brown highlighted the church's unity and universality. The church is an ecumenical body, and Brown expressed himself as a Reformed catholic in the best sense of both terms. Furthermore, the church as-such "is not a genus (properly speaking, or a logical genus), but an integral whole" (27). That is, the church is made up of parts: particular congregations/churches distinguished from one another and situated around the world in different discrete places. Finally, the church is not only an "integral whole," but "also an aggregate whole, the parts of which are united by means of a bond" (29). The church is made up of many members (individuals and congregations) who are united into one body (under Christ the sole head of the church) by a bond of love.

Following these preliminary attributes of the church, Brown introduced the leading distinction of ecclesiology: the visible/invisible church distinction. Properly understood, this is an aspectual distinction. There are not two different churches—one visible and one invisible—but two distinct aspects of the one united and universal church. The visible church includes all those who are called into the church (and thus, called Christians), and the invisible church includes all those who are elect by God (and thus, effectually called by God). Brown describes the distinction, "all the members of the church, to the extent that they profess faith, make the church visible, and those among them that have been gifted with saving faith constitute the invisible church…. The former embraces the latter in itself, and thus the invisible church is a part of the visible church" (30f). Members of the visible church (i.e., those that profess faith, together with their children) are members of the church by merit of their calling (i.e., as "called"), but not by merit of election (i.e., as "elect"). Those within the visible church who are elect are members of the invisible church by merit of their election, which is invisible to human sense, reason, or the faith of others (such election in its particularity having not been revealed in God's Word), though such members are included within the visible church as a part of a whole.

This manner of presenting the distinction between the visible and invisible aspects of the church is helpful in many ways for expressing the biblical emphasis on the visible marks of the church, the ordinances of the church, and membership in the church, as amply demonstrated later in this brief volume. However, there is a complication relating to time, or temporality. Brown slightly paraphrased the opening paragraph of Westminster Confession of Faith chapter 25, *Of the Church* in his own chapter 6, *The Nature of the Invisible Church*: "The catholic church that is invisible consists of the entire number of the elect, however many were, are, or ever will be gathered into one, under Christ, its head. And it is the bride, the body, and the fullness of him who fills all in all, Ephesians 1:10, 22–23; 5:23, 27, 32" (32). The dilemma posed by this construction (in light of understanding the invisible church as part of the visible church in some sense) is that the visible church at any given point in time does not yet include those members of the invisible church who—in the words of the Confession—"shall be gathered into one, under Christ the head thereof." This dilemma—insofar as it actually exists—can be readily dispatched by an appeal to the atemporality of the constructions. That is, the invisible church is part of the visible church, universally understood across both time and space.

Moving on and through the work, Brown defended the propriety of speaking of the "visible church" as a biblical institution and society—a matter of some contention in his day and in our own day—and answered those who reject the "visible church" and the "invisible church" as categories. In chapter 10, Brown answered the Independents of his day—and by extension, Baptist brothers of more recent vintage—on the matter of regenerate church membership. From Scripture, he denied that only regenerate persons are members of the visible church. In fact, the requirements for church membership in heaven are different than the requirements for church membership which obtain on earth. The requirements of membership in the visible church are distinct from the requirements of membership in the invisible church. On earth and in the visible church, all that is required is a relative holiness (i.e., being set apart) that the duly ordained officers of the church can ascertain, not the inhering holiness (i.e., heart renewal, regeneration, and election) required for entrance into heaven. Brown employed a pair of technical terms to describe this distinction of requirements. "A distinction is to be made between members of the church *actu primo* and members of the church *actu secondo*. Or, as others speak, between incomplete and complete members. More things are to be required in the

latter than in the former" (43). In another work, commenting on Romans 11:26f, Brown referred to the former type of (visible) church member as "said here to be saved, as being in a fair way for salvation."[3]

Surely it is biblical to reckon the church in its visible aspect as a mixed multitude of true professors and hypocrites, for Christ described the church (as a manifestation of the kingdom of heaven) as a field in which wheat and tares are together sown (Matt. 13:24–30), as a dragnet filled with both good and bad fish (Matt. 13:47–50), as a flock made up of both sheep and goats (Matt. 25:31–46). Even those who read these parables and scenes of judgment as referring to more than just the visible church, however, must concede that Christ addressed Himself to corrupted congregations as to actual churches in the letters to the seven churches in Revelation, and the Apostle Paul warned the Ephesian elders not only that "savage wolves will come in" from without, but that "from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" (Acts 20:29–30).

In chapter 12, Brown made this very point, that *God Even Acknowledges Those Who Do Not Evidence Grace as His Church* (45–52). He addressed the specific and occasional (if not hypothetical) question of whether a congregation is properly considered a church if it lacks any regenerate men in its membership. Toward the end of answering this quandary, Brown asserted, "but whatever is most probable is not always altogether certain, and what is only most likely to be, it is not impossible to not be; neither is it absolutely necessary that it be, nor does it have regard to the essence of a thing" (51), making reference to the high probability or likelihood that every particular expression of the visible church will have at least one regenerate member. His point was simply that however probable or likely, the presence of at least one regenerate member in a congregation is not what makes a church a church.

By way of application as he proceeded to outline the proper biblical administration of the order of the visible church, he presented the absurdities which follow from the insistence that the visible church must be made up of only those who are regenerate in chapter 15, *Whether the Church Contains Only the Regenerate*. The absurdities explored in this chapter are remarkably relevant to the present-day. In all this, Brown possessed a sense of humor. He posed the question in chapter 14, *Pastors Cannot Infallibly Judge Regeneration*, "Or who, except perhaps some Quaker, is able to say that the pastor or any other is able infallibly to judge and to determine concerning the internal state of all others?" (57).

Having handled the church's attributes, aspects, and administration, Brown then moved on to the church's assessment. In Brown's scheme, the true church bears the marks of Word and Sacrament. Those are the two definitive criteria for assessing the church's essential being (*esse*), any other marks being properly concerned with the church's circumstantial well-being (*bene esse*). Brown elaborated that the proper and diligent administration of church discipline is needful for the well-being and completeness of the church, but not for its essential existence as the church. Drawing on the writings of Samuel Rutherford (with whom Brown had a personal friendship through his mother), Brown argued that it is the right and power—rather than the due exercise—of church discipline that is strictly required for a church to be considered a church (76f). These are admittedly fine distinctions, and they should not be regarded as Brown's attempt to soft-pedal or reject church discipline as a third mark of the church. It is important to note that the "power of discipline" and the right of its use "is indeed an essential property of the church" (76) in the formulations of both Rutherford and Brown.

The remaining chapters of this section treating the assessment of churches and the purity of their communion contain helpful remarks on the relative dangers posed by hypocritical professors and unrepentant sinners in the church. What Brown wrote is pastorally relevant for combatting superstition, alarmism, and unhealthy suspicion in church fellowship. In these chapters, Brown also has made an interesting presentation of two tiers of excommunication—lesser and greater—which relate to our modern practice (at least in some Presbyterian Churches) of "suspension from Sacraments" in contradistinction to "excommunication" proper (e.g., see Chapter 30 of the *Book of Church Order [BCO] of the Presbyterian Church in America*).

Finally, the concluding chapters of *The Nature of the Church* deal not only with how to assess the church's spiritual condition, but also with how active (or potential) members of a particular church might make a judicious appraisal of that church's legitimacy and vitality. In other words, these chapters answer the question of how to appraise a church as worth uniting with or—more to the point—separating from as a member.

Brown defined "lawful separation" as being either "in the church" or "from the church" (88), "particular" or "total" (89). Particular separation "in the church" takes place when a member of the church removes himself from a particular practice or doctrine while remaining in the church. Total separation "from the church" takes place when a member removes himself from a church (i.e., a particular congregation or denominational expression of the church), from many churches (i.e., that share a common feature deemed intolerable by the member), or from the church as a whole (i.e., any and all churches for some reason deemed intolerable by the member and yet held

3. John Brown of Wamphray, *An Exposition of the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans, with Large Practical Observations; Delivered in Several Lectures* (Edinburgh: David Paterson, 1766), p. 464.

in common by all identifiable churches). "Lawful separation" takes place when and only when it is done "from a church corrupted in fundamentals, and in which it is not lawful to communicate in worship without sin, especially if the faithful are compelled with punishments to have fellowship in such worship" (90).

Brown also distinguished between "negative" and "positive" separation (91). The former is illustrated by the man who quietly—and even secretly insofar as such is possible—abstains from participating in some act of worship with the church. Examples of "negative" separation might include abstaining from the singing of certain songs, the recitation of creeds, or the giving of material offerings as part of a worship service. In Brown's presentation, such conscientious abstention is entirely acceptable. The latter kind of separation takes place when a man leaves a church to start a new one in competition with it: what is frequently referred to today as a "church split" or—put euphemistically—a "splant." Brown had no patience for frivolous "positive" separation, declaring that it "is not only heedless but also unlawful, unless the reasons are the weightiest, because it supposes all communion with that church to be altogether unlawful" (91). Whereas it is all too common for disgruntled church-members (or ministers) to justify departure at the slightest provocation, Brown advanced a theory of church membership that takes seriously upholding the church's "purity and peace" (see *BCO* 57–5.5).

After setting forth how to distinguish between "public and private corruption in a church" (92) and "a backsliding and not backsliding church," Brown concluded this section of the church's appraisal by posing an interesting question as the title of his final chapter: *Whether There Are Means of Redress in a Corrupted Church* (95). Perhaps Brown had in mind the condition of the Church of Scotland under King Charles II which resulted in his banishment to the Continent. This was the issue in play for the founding generation of the Presbyterian Church in America in 1973, and the question which Dr. Morton Howison Smith (1923–2017) examined in his epoch-charting book *How Is the Gold Become Dim*. Regarding the cause of the Southern Presbyterian Church's declension in doctrine and discipline, Dr. Smith astutely observed "that the conservatives have not done their duty in this area."[4] That is, the situation which Dr. Smith described was not so much a narrative of the triumph of liberalism in the Southern Presbyterian Church as it was the abdication of responsibility by conservatives in the Church, at least until it was far too late to pursue "means of redress."

In *The Nature of the Church*, John Brown of Wamphray has given aspiring Reformers in all branches of the global church today a reminder that ordained men of sound conviction have an obligation to stand for truth in their particular Churches and congregations. It is not enough for theological conservatives to possess the truth. They must stand for it, defend it, and promote it by the means prescribed by God in His Word, with all humility and Spirit-wrought meekness. When they fail to do so, they relinquish their Churches to those who would destroy them. By the time Dr. Morton Smith wrote *How Is the Gold Become Dim*, there were no longer "means of redress" available to the men who lamented the condition of the Southern Presbyterian Church. Arguably, J. Gresham Machen (1881–1937) faced the same dilemma in the Northern Presbyterian Church a generation earlier, as made all too clear in his expulsion from that corrupted branch of the visible church. For those living in a new century full of familiar (or seemingly unfamiliar) spiritual challenges within the church, it is critically important that men of good faith and sound conviction employ the "means of redress" before they are no longer available: concerted prayer, conscientious churchmanship, Spirit-filled preaching, and faithful confrontation of sin and error wherever they are found.

Review: Kevin Bidwell (ed.), *The Westminster Directory for the Public Worship of God in Modern English: How to Rightly Worship God in Public* (Evangelical Press, 2024). Hardback. 272 pages. ISBN 978-1-783974-31-3. 29.99. Reviewed by Jared Nelson, Pastor of New Life Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Hopewell Township, PA.

The Westminster Assembly of Divines (1643–52) is most famous for producing the *Confession* and *Catechisms* that serve as the doctrinal, or confessional, standards of most Presbyterian communions in the English-speaking world today. Lesser known, though perhaps just as influential, is the other unifying document produced during that time by the Assembly: *The Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. Together with the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and *Catechisms,* the *Directory for Public Worship* (in one form or another) has been included in the constitutions of most Presbyterian communions. However, the *Directory* has been subjected to a greater degree of revision and more varied levels of attention than either the *Confession* or the *Catechisms*. One evidence of its relative obscurity in comparison with the doctrinal standards is the disproportionately large volume of resources dedicated to the *Confession* and *Catechisms* as compared to those available for the *Directory for Public Worship*.

The new volume edited by Rev. Kevin Bidwell of Sheffield Presbyterian Church and under consideration in this review fills a lacuna by providing a newly updated Modern English text of the original *Directory*, as well as a collection of short essays explaining the *Directory for Worship*. *The Directory*

4. Morton H. Smith, *How Is the Gold Become Dim: The Decline of the Presbyterian Church, U.S. as Reflected in Its Assembly Actions*, Third Edition (Greenville, SC: Southern Presbyterian Press, 1973), p. 92.

eschewed over-prescription of exact verbiage for use in Presbyterian worship, but nonetheless sought to hold churchmen to the necessary elements and their proper administration in the church. This book helps to reintroduce the original Presbyterian worship manual to the church today, deploying it in our distracted and novelty-chasing times.

Perhaps the most surprising feature of this volume is how practical and relevant the style is to the reader. This was not an academic tome written to and for scholars, but a practical help that pastors, elders, and congregants would all benefit from reading. The organization is simple, and many essays have an almost catechetical form: asking questions that naturally arise regarding the public reading of Scripture, the preaching of the Word, prayers, and the observance of the sacraments.

Right away, the introduction of the subject of public worship by Terry Johnson of Independent Presbyterian Church in Savannah, Georgia extols the *Directory* as it "sought to strike a balance between form and freedom … a middle way between prescribed liturgy and unguided freedom" (23). What follows in the rest of the book is best described (and received) as wise guidance (what we Presbyterians sometimes call "pious advice") that can help the pastor or elder who find themselves called to lead in public worship.

The chapter on "Of Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures" by Timothy Hoke gives a sterling example of the approach of the book as a whole. Hoke explains the questions behind the *Directory*'s guidance, such as who should read the Scriptures in corporate worship, how God's Word should be read, and how much should be read. Hoke's chapter ends with practical advice on matters as important—but easy to neglect—as posture, pronunciation, and practice.

The other essays are "Of the Assembling of the Congregation, and Their Behaviour in the Public Worship of God (George R Curry), "Of Public Reading of the Holy Scriptures" (Timothy K Hoke), "Of Public Prayer before the Sermon" (Maurice J Roberts), "Of the Preaching of the Word" (Joseph H Fowler), "Of the Preaching of the Word" (Joseph A Pipa Jr), "Of Prayer after the Sermon" (Johannes M Müller).

The volume, however, does not cover all aspects of the *Directory*. Observing occasions of public thanksgiving, solemn fasting, celebrations of marriage, visitation of the sick, burial of the dead and the appendix detailing that there are no such things as holy places and no holy days but the Lord's Day, do not have dedicated treatments. Such treatments would have been welcome additions to the volume's already strong roster of covered subjects. It is a testament to the quality and practicality of the essays which are included that readers set down the book wanting more in terms of practical guidance and expounding on the wisdom of the *Directory*. Perhaps this leaves some room for a second volume?

That the book is—like the original *Directory*—meant to be a practical help is also illustrated by those chosen to contribute chapters. While familiar names such as Terry Johnson and Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. have extensive publication lists and academic credentials, all of the contributors are deeply involved in full-time pastoral ministry and are writing out of the experience of their weekly responsibilities in local Presbyterian churches. The result is a practical rather than an academic/theoretical approach. The contributors also represent a diversity of contexts in the United States (Chad T. Bailey, Roland Barnes, Joseph Fowler, Terry Johnson, and Joseph A. Pipa, Jr.), the United Kingdom (Kevin J. Bidwell, George R. Curry, Warren J. Peel, Maurice Roberts), and international contexts (Timothy K. Hoke, and Johannes M. Muller). Such global diversity reflects the unifying nature of the instructions and wisdom found in the *Directory* that cuts across national and cultural differences.

The volume could be a useful resource for pastoral preparation, theological education, and elder/officer training in Presbyterian communions, as the practical subjects addressed by the book are key to weekly responsibilities.

While in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the *Directory for Worship* may have some controversy attached to it regarding its constitutional authority (or lack thereof), and whether it is or even should be used in the Church, this volume does not wade into those provincial debates. Rather, it highlights and focuses on the *Directory*'s universal and timeless biblical principles relevant to all Christians—but especially to Reformed and Presbyterian ones—in corporate public worship. This book occupies a space that we can only hope receives greater and more appreciative attention in the future, as the *Westminster Confession* and *Catechisms* are not the only products of the Westminster Assembly worthy of study for all people in the church. May the *Directory for Worship* see more attention *and* affection from God fearing Christians, and may this volume's tribe increase!

Review: Harrison Perkins, *Reformed Covenant Theology: A Systematic Introduction* (Bellingham: Lexham Academic, 2024). Hardback. xxvii + 491pp. ISBN 978-1-68359-733-9. Reviewed by J. Brittain Brewer, Reformation Covenant Church.

One of the most refreshing trends in the quest for *ressourcement* has been the retrieval of confessional and historical covenant theology. Led by the likes of Lyle Bierma, Richard Muller, and Andrew Woolsey, among many others,[1] the

1. See, e.g., Lyle D. Bierma, "Federal Theology in the Sixteenth Century: Two Traditions?," *WTJ* 45 (1983): 304–21; Richard A. Muller, "Toward the *Pactum Salutis*: Locating the Origins of a Concept," *MAJT* 18 (2007): 11–65; Andrew A. Woolsey, *Unity and Continuity in Covenantal Thought: A Study in the Reformed Tradition to the Westminster Assembly*, Reformed Historical-Theological Studies (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2012).

riches of covenant theology as it was hammered out in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have come into greater and greater focus. Thankfully, the implicit (and sometimes explicit) "Calvin vs. the Calvinists" assumptions that governed the judgments of many Reformed theologians and biblical scholars of the past century have started to lose their allure as the tradition's exegetical roots and theological sophistication have reemerged. Thanks to good historical work, exegetes and systematic theologians no longer need to worry when they discuss things like the *pactum salutis* (famously dismissed by Karl Barth as "mythology")[2] or the covenant of works (villainized by James B. Torrance as a deadly threat to the free grace of God).[3] The light introduced by a reconsideration of confessional covenant theology has been salutary to remedy many of our theological debacles, and for that reason we have much to be thankful.

Thankfully, the work has not ended with mere historical studies. With the refreshed understanding of covenant theology in biblical and historical studies has come a deeper engagement in systematic theology as well. One of the most recent offerings in this category is Harrison Perkins's new book, *Reformed Covenant Theology*. Although a historian by training, Perkins's work has been concerned with covenant theology,[4] and he is well-positioned, both as a scholar and as an ordained minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), to write a thorough, practical, and unapologetically confessional introduction to the topic. Generally, "thorough" is best left out of descriptions for introductions, since introductions are often surveys inviting more thorough investigation. And while Perkins does not necessarily turn over every stone, there are fewer that he has left alone than not. Ending at 491 pages, this tome is certainly the longest introduction to covenant theology (already a niche topic) that one will find.

While many books on covenant theology have been organized around biblical theology,[5] Perkins intentionally frames his as a "*systematic* introduction." This does not mean that he avoids exegesis or the scope and sequence of redemptive history, but his aim is to show the coherence of covenant theology as it flows out from the Triune life of God (xvii). Thus, his focus is on the categorization of covenantal logic and the interlocking components of its various parts and administrations. For example, when speaking of the covenant with Adam, Perkins is not concerned solely with Genesis 1–3, but draws in a wealth of biblical, historical, and theological data to flesh out a robust understanding of the contours of God's covenant with our first father. The strength of this approach is demonstrated in its immediate payoffs. For example, concerning the covenant with Adam, Perkins presents perhaps the most helpful recent exposition of Adam's relationship to the moral law as it was given at creation (19–46). Perkins pays close attention to the way the Law is "plaited into [Adam's] constitution" (47) which allows for a rich theology of the Law in our communion with God, both in the state of integrity and in the estate of salvation (422, 428–34).

Another refreshing benefit of Perkins's systematic is his use of categories not generally found in covenant theology. Many who approach covenant theology seem hesitant to adopt categories used by systematics, perhaps in fear that it will unmoor the organic unfolding of covenant history. However, Perkins shows well how systematic theology does not detract from but rather adds to the clarity and sophistication of historical Reformed covenant theology. The clearest example of this is Perkins's adoption of the distinction between the Logos *incarnandus*, referring to Christ's pre-incarnate state in his appointment in the covenant of redemption and anticipation in the covenant of grace, and the Logos *incarnatus*, referring to Christ as the Word now made flesh in the new covenant era (esp. 117–23). By linking the many administrations of the covenant of grace to the covenant of redemption by means of this distinction, Perkins bolsters the unity and the diversity of God's covenant economy by providing for it a Christological foundation (see, e.g, 290–298).

Following the general pattern of covenant theology, Perkins addresses first the covenant of works, then the covenant of redemption, and finally the covenant of grace considered as a whole and then successively in its various administrations. For such a long book, Perkins's approach and the simplicity of his style are very inviting even for those generally unfamiliar with the subject matter. Most of the chapters are relatively short, and Perkins is careful to guide the reader through his presentation of covenant theology, constantly referring us back to the purpose of it all—namely, communion with God. He is to be commended for doing such a service to those who know and love covenant theology.

Without taking away from the quality of the book, one may (and in this reviewer's opinion, should) quibble with some of the decisions that Perkins makes along the way. His treatment of the Mosaic covenant, for example, will likely find some pushback from various quarters of the confessional Presbyterian world. The complexity of the Mosaic covenant

2. Karl Barth, *The Doctrine of Reconciliation*, vol. 4, part 1, *Church Dogmatics,* trans. G. W. Bromiley, ed. G. W. Bromiley and Thomas F. Torrance (London: T&T Clark, 1956), p. 65.

3. James B. Torrance, "Covenant or Contract?: A Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland," *SJT* 23 (1970): 51–76.

4. Harrison Perkins, *Catholicity and the Covenant of Works: James Ussher and the Reformed Tradition*, Oxford Studies in Historical Theology (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

5. O. Palmer Robertson, *The Christ of the Covenants* (Phillipsburg: Presbyterian & Reformed, 1985); Richard P. Belcher, *The Fulfillment of the Promises of God: An Explanation of Covenant Theology* (Fearn, Ross-shire: Mentor, 2020).

and the various ways that the Reformed have approached it allow some diversity, even within the same confessional tradition (332). And Perkins handles those disagreements with charity and care. Still, a strong case can be made against the view put forward by Perkins: that the Mosaic covenant was typologically a covenant of works. Others, such as Stephen Myers, have argued persuasively that Paul's strong statements concerning the Mosaic economy are not absolute but must be understood within the flow of covenant history, thus giving a much more positive appraisal of the role and place of the Mosaic covenant.[6] In my opinion, even a brief engagement with a view like Myers's would have benefited Perkins's treatment.

Some also may find the concept of merit in the Adamic covenant as worthy of deeper engagement than what Perkins gives to it in his discussion. Based on the bibliography, Perkins has a book coming out on this very subject, so perhaps we must wait for that more thorough treatment. However, within the Reformed tradition, "merit" is a slippery word that requires constant care. Even the propriety of the term is not uniform. For example, Robert Rollock, whom Perkins cites several times, includes this question in a catechism he wrote in 1596: "Q. 12: Is this condition of works one of merit? A. Not at all. Rather, it is one as of duties which bear witness to [man's] gratitude towards God the creator (Rom. 11:35; Luke 17:10)."[7] Unfortunately, discussions around the propriety of "merit" are often wedded to debates with Federal Vision, which is unnecessary. Rollock, among others, offer counter-examples in the Reformed tradition that do not see merit as the best way of articulating Adam's relationship to his reward in the covenant of works. Should one choose to use the more complex and sophisticated term, merit *ex pacto*, some of the concerns can be assuaged, although such a term still requires a careful definition.[8]

All in all, we should be very grateful for the faithful labors of Harrison Perkins. Books that combine theological rigor, biblical insight, and relevant pastoral application are hard to come by; Perkins's work will be a valuable resource to many who are investigating more thoroughly the beauty of covenant theology. Although there is room for disagreement, this is a book that will prove profitable in a number of contexts—Sunday School, personal study, seminary classes, and more.

6. Stephen G. Myers, *God to Us: Covenant Theology in Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2021), pp. 207–30.

7. Robert Rollock, *Some Questions and Answers About God's Covenant and the Sacrament That is a Seal of God's Covenant*, trans. and ed. Aaron Clay Denlinger (Eugene: Pickwick, 2016).

8. Harrison Perkins, "*Meritum Ex Pacto* In the Reformed Tradition: Covenantal Merit In Theological Polemics," *MAJT* (2020): 57–87.

Review: John Arrowsmith, *Plans for Holy War: How the Spiritual Soldier Fights, Conquers, and Triumphs*. Translated by David C. Noe. Edited and introduced by Chad B. Van Dixhoorn (Reformation Heritage Books, 2024). Hardback. 560 pages. $50.00. ISBN 979-8-88686-088-7. Reviewed by Rev E. T. Kirkland, Minister: Ballyclare & Doagh FCC; Lecturer: Church History & Principles; Residence: Ballyclare. Co. Antrim.

"For the first time in our own language—readers will encounter a Puritan author like few others." That is the estimation by Van Dixhoorn which indicates the importance of this publication. From the very outset of reading this book, one is captivated, instructed, and enthused. David Noe and Chad Van Dixhoorn along with Reformation Heritage Books are to commended for publishing this excellent book by John Arrowsmith, which will surely become the book of this decade.

Outline

After the Acknowledgements and Translator's Preface, there is a biographical survey (69 pages) of Arrowsmith's life by Van Dixhoorn, which demonstrates both his theological acumen and importance to the Church. The Work itself follows in 3 Sections.

A Theological Life

Ordinarily we think in terms of biography, but here Van Dixhoorn gives us that and much more. It is a "warts all" survey of an extraordinary life. His early years are covered, followed by his academic studies (Arrowsmith collected the appropriate degrees required of an early-modern academic: at St. John's College, he proceeded bachelor of arts in 1620, and master of arts in 1623, at which point he began a fellowship at St. Catherine's College) and ordination, of which the latter does require some explanation. As Van Dixhoorn explains, for the first half of the seventeenth century and for some time thereafter, it was required that fellows be clergymen and, thus, if English, ordained in the Church of England. What was Arrowsmith to do? Simple, get an amenable bishop. Arrowsmith sought ordination from George Mountain, the then bishop of London, and the ceremony took place at the bishop's palace. Mountain ordained Arrowsmith first as deacon and then as priest on the same day in February 1624, while Arrowsmith was still twenty-one years old.

In 1633, two years after having left the university for a curacy at St. Nicholas's Church in King's Lynn and for married life (a privilege forbidden to college fellows), Arrowsmith received his bachelor of divinity (19). One foot was still in university life. Nonetheless, from 1631, Arrowsmith was a pastor and then a family man. He had married Elizabeth Ray

early in 1632. As a curate of St. Nicholas, Arrowsmith preached frequently to a large congregation in the bustling town and conducted the full range of duties required of him.

By the early 1640s, Lynn had become for Arrowsmith a place marked by a long litany of sorrows. His little Elizabeth died less than three months after she was born (30). Robert, almost five, was buried April 1, 1641. Robert Ray, Arrowsmith's father-in-law, died in November 1641. Then Elizabeth herself, after almost nine years of marriage and the loss of three of her four children, passed away in January 1642. As Van Dixhoorn puts it, the bereaved father was left alone with Thomas and, no doubt, with sorrows that words cannot express.

The Civil War was a trying time for many, requiring minister to have an understanding of the times. Arrowsmith preached on January 25, 1643, to the House of Commons, his subject being "The Covenant-Avenging Sword Brandished, where he spelled out the necessity of Parliament's war against the king in order to "reconcile" Scotland, "reduce" Ireland, and "reform" England". A yet necessary task

In the midst of civil war came the Westminster Assembly. Arrowsmith entered the master's seat or stall in the college chapel on April 11, 1644, taking a perhaps personally constructed oath of office that referred to God, the Earl of Manchester, Parliament, and the assembly of divines. He promised "faithfully to promote piety and learning" agreeable to the (twice) mentioned Solemn League and Covenant, that all-important 1643 military alliance and religious bond between the English Parliament and their cobelligerents in Scotland." Arrowsmith bound himself to the covenant and to Presbyterianism.

In the course of a busy life there was preaching and writing. Van Dixhoorn devotes necessary space to *Theanthropos, or, God-Man: Being an Exposition upon the First Eighteen Verses of the First Chapter of the Gospel According to John*. The eagle eyed reader will note a fascinating piece of information at footnote 63. All of the footnotes contain relevant and frequently interesting material for future pursuits.

Meanwhile, "Arrowsmith so vigorously defended in the assembly not merely a learned ministry but learned sermons." This is a point of relevance to our own age when theology has been replaced with therapy.

Van Dixhoorn, commenting on Arrowsmith's learning writes, "If Arrowsmith was a preferred preacher among his peers, he was also one of the best Latinists and most respected scholars of the assembly. When Stephen Marshall penned a letter on behalf of the gathering intended for Reformed churches internationally, Arrowsmith was asked to translate it, along with a few extra lines inserted by the senior Scottish commissioner, Alexander Henderson. Later, Arrowsmith again was asked to translate the Solemn League and Covenant into Latin on behalf of Parliament and the assembly. On yet another occasion, he was asked to use his literary skills to join a fellow divine in writing a letter in English to the Church of Scotland.

The assembly's most prolific letter writer and diarist, Robert Baillie, referred to Arrowsmith as a "learned divine, on whom the Assemblie putt the wryting against the Antinomians" and other errors."

After his pastoral ministry, Arrowsmith returned to Cambridge for another fifteen years as a college master, professor, and vice-chancellor of the university.

Weigellianism

The book opens with 3 Speeches against Weigelianism, translated for the first time into English and placed by Noe at the beginning of *Plans for Holy War*. The third speech concludes thus: "May the greatest and most almighty God grant this university such a grip on truth that, in the end, it would be easier to find a wolf in England or a toad in Ireland than a Socinian, an Arminian, or a Weigelian at Cambridge."

What then is the relevance of Wiegellianism? Van Dixhoorn explains that Wiegellianism is really the focus of attack in the Holy War. It is the theological backdrop we might say. It is not irrelevant, as the errors are still with us: radical progressives; enthusiasm; rejection of the establishment principle; the toleration of error combined with a failure to uphold the truth. Arrowsmith takes pains to identify the errors and enemies and then to refute them.

To assist the reader, all the sections in each chapter are numbered.

Book 1 of *Plans for Holy War* has 6 chapters beginning with the Harmony of the Christian religion with Spiritual Warfare. Chapter 2: The foundational text is Genesis 3:15. Arrowsmith states that the purpose is to equip believers for spiritual warfare by laying out a context and a refutation of critics. Next he proceeds to examine the two seeds. On the one side is Satan and his seed; on the other, Eve and her seed. Arrowsmith rejects the notion the woman is Mary. What he does do is to give five reasons why the Devil is called the serpent. Seven sins are listed and explained to show the character of Satan. Most Christian's know them but rarely put them together to give a composite picture. Chapter 3 describes the various types of enmity in summary form. How does the serpent's seed show its enmity? To begin with they hate Christ: comparatively, interpretively and formally. The serpent's seed also hate the Church. There is also the Lord's enmity toward Satan with reference to the crushing of Satan's head. Arrowsmith tackles two questions; namely, how *for* us and how *in* us. In relation to the first, he convincingly shows that the substitution at death of Christ was a trampling on Satan's head. In answer to the second, it was by abolishing death and bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel. It is striking how simple yet profoundly biblical the argument is.

Arrowsmith turns next to comment upon sin: its guilt, reign and remnants. There are two "antidotes" for removing the poison of sin which is remission and renewal.

Arrowsmith then looks at the enemies (part 1, ch. 4). Three texts are examined: 1 John 2:15–16, 1 Timothy 6:9–10, and Philippians 1:23. In addition, Arrowsmith considers how the flesh and the world opposes us. Finally, there is the last enemy.

In chapter 5, we have who the spiritual soldiers are, their duties, and their commander. The duties are set out in military terms: to pursue his object, to obey his commander, to hold his place in the line, to cease from military exercises when not in combat, and finally, to fight valiantly while in combat.

Christ is of course the commander, but with what does he supply his army? In a wonderfully delightful way Arrowsmith discusses the weapons, the pay, daily meals, a good example, and then help. Arrowsmith drives home his message like this: and so my brothers, let us confidently fulfill our duties, under the auspices of such a great commander, no matter how difficult these tasks may be and how opposed to our nature. We must never give up hope since Christ is our leader.

Arrowsmith next considers the armor as set out in Ephesians 6 (part 1, ch. 6). Readers will be surprised with his examination of Satan's weapons. Arrowsmith says that he will use 'effort and elbow grease' to make the meaning clear. Among Satan's weapons is the "causal fallacy," that the gospel is the cause of all our problems. Then there are political deceits: those who want to encroach upon every area of life to gain control. Satan also uses physical locations to attack Christians. A further strategy is the pretence of friendship. In addition, Satan aims to disarm us, as the Philistines did to the Hebrews when their weapons were confiscated. Next, he spreads dissensions and lesser crimes. The sixth tactic is to assault those who are more prominent; and finally, imitating the the habits of enemies. By this Arrowsmith means copying so as to become indistinguishable from the rest.

Book 2 has ten chapters where Arrowsmith gives a detailed study of each piece of armor as given in Ephesians 6, which he had previously given in general terms. First is the belt of truth, i.e., orthodoxy (chapters 1, 2 and 3). Arrowsmith notes at the outset the double admonition to stand fast. After a number of pertinent remarks, he defends the reference to orthodoxy precisely because it is mocked and sneered. Arrowsmith tells us that when he pauses to consider the various types and images of religion (amongst pagans) his "whole heart is caught up in rapturous admiration for the authentic beauty of Christianity each time." Islam, he notes, is deception, which is nothing more than a stitching together from shreds of Paganism, Judaism, and Christianity, while marketing Mohammed to the world as God's choice prophet. Socinianism, the abyss of impiety, which is merely a refined form of Islam. Next is "the papist religion, whose lackeys conduct Antichrist's business under Christ's name," which Arrowsmith calls a mangled mess and mirror of shamelessness. Its jumbled teachings leave no room for the simplicity of the gospel. After that we still need to know how truth is likened to a belt. Arrowsmith digresses to consider what happens when the belt of truth is unfastened. A most remarkable description of contemporary heretics and errors, which leads him to develop the argument further by pointing out the source of all the religious evils which exist. Readers will find this section fascinating. So what does Arrowsmith consider to be the cause?

First, a fascination with ancient philosophy. The modern counterpart to that is the enslavement of OT departments to Ancient Near Eastern studies.

Second, the resurgence of skepticism. A modern example might be liberalism (as Machen explained).

Third, a presumption to prophesy. The rampant hoard of uncalled preachers is as astonishing today as it was in Arrowsmith's day. From 'she' preachers to self appointed preachers, the problem remains the same. Arrowsmith is quick to explain that he does not deny the place of edification; however, he lays down four theses as a means to regularize the irregular and ensure the irregular does not govern the Church.

Fourth, reckless misappropriation of the Holy Spirit. Here we see an old problem still with us: the so-called distinction between the spiritual and the carnal.

Fifth, utter disregard for catechetical instruction, which he likens to "a kind of ballast to the mind," so that we are not carried off by every wind of doctrine.

Sixth, the failure to apply Church discipline. As Arrowsmith puts it, as discipline is to religion what a trunk is to a tree. It is impossible to keep faith when discipline ceases. This is what happened under the papacy.

Seventh, disagreement over the power that belongs to Christian magistrates in Church affairs was poorly resolved. This is not an academic issue. The founding of the then Free Church of Scotland was over this issue. In more recent times it has resurfaced. Arrowsmith begins with Thomas Hobbes, who interestingly is all the rage in modern feminist theory. Arrowsmith's complaint against Hobbes is that effectively it gave a means to circumvent obedience to Christ by privatizing faith.

One last element of the belt of truth (ch. 3) is integrity, which has four characteristics. Essentially God is true in Himself and in His communications to us, so we should value truth because like the belt, it holds everything together. But truth "stumbles in the streets," says Arrowsmith, who closes this chapter with a ringing call to pursue truth as "a Christian," as "an Englishman," and finally as "an Academic."

In the breastplate of "dispositional and actual righteousness" (part 2, ch. 4), the first topic is to determine whether it is imputed or personal righteousness, in the process of which he

rejects the Socinians, Remonstrants, Bellarmine, and Antinomians. In the next topic, he considers the comparison between the breastplate and righteousness. In chapter 5, he examines the relationship between truth and righteousness. Truth as the core of righteousness is taken as a given. More significant for Arrowsmith is the connection between orthodoxy and righteousness. Arrowsmith significantly asserts: "righteousness, and truth are equal as regards their nobility, and from their union issues forth a blessed Road. Following this road, we eventually gain our homeland through vision, the pinnacle of truth, and through delight, the marrow of righteousness. Now truth is the likeness of light; righteousness, that of a heavenly ardor. The ornament of truth is righteousness, and the reward of righteousness is truth. Truth is constructed through righteousness; righteousness is instructed through truth. When righteousness collapses, truth is further jeopardized. When truth is wounded, righteousness is generally damaged."

Arrowsmith then tests the Remonstrants and their dogmas by that Lydian stone he laid down earlier. Arrowsmith tells us why he is doing so: "And I will do this all the more gladly because, among the other paradoxes swarming in that arm's-length volume, this claim really irked me, and provoked my anger." What irked was the embroidered and decorated garment of cheap and worthless fabric of "indefinite election, universal redemption, a will that is free to spiritual good, moral suasion, and the final apostasy of the saints." Thus he begins with Augustine, then Gottschalk, Calvin (a truly amazing man), Perkins (the man who taught the English to worship God). Ames and Rivet follow. Arrowsmith tells us there are two hinges on which all theology turns: God's glory and grace. Calvin of course took a similar position, namely, how God is to be worship and the means of salvation. "Arminians make God's grace dependent on human judgment so they can openly profane His glory, which he demonstrates from their writings'.

The "Greaves of Evangelical Readiness" follow (part 2, ch. 6), by which he refers to the feet shod. This involves two elements: activity and suffering. On *activity* Arrowsmith explains "that men whose feet are equipped with good shoes, usually tread where the barefooted dare not venture." Arrowsmith goes on to tell us that Paul is talking about "shod minds." We serve a God who is "pure act"; consequently, we likewise work with pure action. We worship Christ with utmost accuracy. Foolish jokes are thus unbecoming for ministers and academics. The 'how' of activity is clarified by 1 Corinthians 15:58.

But, why are they called "greaves" of evangelical readiness? Because the gospel is not only something by which we are prepared for action, but also something that makes us ready to *suffer*. This raises the question, what is the gospel? Arrowsmith lists what it is not, and then what it is, namely, the Gospel of the Kingdom or as Paul calls it the gospel of peace. Arrowsmith elaborates on the matter of peace. All this raises the moral question of warfare.

The Shield of Faith is taken up in part 2, chapter 7. Arrowsmith begins with a memorable contrast: "the world, trains men in mere stage-play, but the church in military service." The shield of faith refers to that by which we believe. Regarding faith there are three types, followed by three corollaries and two conditions. Arrowsmith helpfully notes the discussion on assurance. The principal acts of saving faith are "*innitentia* and *certiorati*" meaning "resting upon and gaining certainty." Justifying faith has a three-fold concept. Having considered the nature of justifying faith, he proceeds to the similarity between the shield and faith. Faith provides protection for the whole soul. In relation then to this shield, Arrowsmith considers etymology and history, followed by why the spiritual soldier takes up this shield, concluding this section with a resounding note of encouragement: "for those who rejoice and full assurance, they are like a ship that is well equipped and loaded with foreign merchandise."

But what are Satan's attacks? In part 2, chapter 8, Arrowsmith first gives us a four-fold description of Satan's depravity. He is formally, entirely, definitively, and efficiently wicked. Satan persecutes us through the world and the flesh. How then is faith effective in extinguishing Satan's darts? It does so in two ways: defensively and restoratively. That is, by ensuring the shafts don't penetrate too deeply and by applying the blood of Christ as a medicine when wounded. Arrowsmith with a pastoral concern tackles the most burning shaft that strike us: *diabolical instigations*.

In part 3, chapter 9, the helmet of salvation is defined as the assurance of salvation which is three-fold, what he calls "appetizers." Two questions arise. First, is it absolutely complete in the present condition, and second, is assurance permanent? Arrowsmith then engages "in close combat with Cardinal Robert Bellarmine," and his four assertions; i.e., it is not possible to have certainty; it is not obligated; it is not a valuable exercise, and finally, no-one can know without special revelation. Arrowsmith refutes these trivialities with Scriptural evidence. There are three immediate causes of assurance, followed by the infallibility of final assurance with three supporting theses. First, electing grace is never revoked; second, justifying grace is never lost; and third, sanctifying grace never perishes. Meanwhile, no one should be fooled by the remarks tagged on to the end of Davenant's book entitled *The Death of Christ*, which claims it is the position of the Church of England. Arrowsmith said that when he read that, he felt there was something suspicious about it, but he could not sniff it out. Then came the revelation in 1651, and the scoundrel was revealed ("the thief was predestined"). The remarks were by none other than John Overall.

The Sword of the Spirit as the Word of God follows in order (part 2, ch. 10). Arrowsmith presents a three-fold argument for faith in the divine origin of Scripture. The second conclusion follows the phraseology of the Westminster Confession of Faith: the majesty of the style, the heavenliness of the matter and the efficacy of the doctrine. The third conclusion as per the WCF, is the work of the Holy Spirit in persuading us. Against this is the claim by "enthusiasts" of revelation outside Scripture. Arrowsmith rightly contends that we "must show no tolerance for those who deprecate the sacred books in any way." But why is Scripture called a sword? It is first a weapon of *defense*, as Christ demonstrated against Satan. It also puts to flight heresies, vices, and sorrows. In addition, it is the sword of the Spirit because it is the Word of God. "Now then, men and brothers, let us draw that sword from its sheath, and brandish it in our arguments. But we must especially brandish it above all our assemblies." "The Bible is a paradise in which the two original trees grow: one is the tree of knowledge and the other the tree of life".

Book 3 has four chapters. The first expounds the subject of preparation for victory through holy exhortations. Arrowsmith opens with a short summary of what he has written. In the first part, he established what it means to be a Christian in terms of military duty. The second deals with the battle. The third follows, in which the Christian is equipped for victory and triumph arising from Ephesians 6:18. Arrowsmith proceeds clause by clause, each of which gives rise to related issues as well as anticipating objections. Interestingly, Arrowsmith looks at the phrase "through our Lord Jesus Christ" and what the Old Testament equivalent was. I am unaware of anyone else tackling this issue. Another issue arises relating to imprecatory prayers. While much of what Arrowsmith says is right and helpful, yet his final remark gives rise to some hesitation and doubts, which others have answered more affirmatively. Arrowsmith finished off "this excessively long chapter" with a summary exposition of the Lord's Prayer.

The Author of Spiritual Victory occupies book 3, chapter 2, who is the Lord Jesus Christ, as opposed to pagan and Romanist views. He makes a perceptive analysis as to why he rejects the virgin Mary as having anything to do with our victory. Arrowsmith tackles the matter of illicit sex (a modern preoccupation), which opens the door to other vices; thus *vigilance* is important because if it is missing then all is lost. Faith is likewise essential in order to overcome the "world's trinity" of honor, pleasure and wealth. The prizes of spiritual victory are found in Revelation, such as, the tree of life (Rev 2:7), the manna, the white stone, a new name (Rev 2:17), and the white garment (Rev 3:5). Arrowsmith then refutes John Goodwin's *Redemption Redeemed*. Arrowsmith concludes: "I salute you, soldier of Jesus for your courage. Go on boldly to the final factory, and surely the Lord himself will praise you at the final judgement with higher acclaim." In part 3, chapter 3, Arrowsmith selects a series of victory praises or meditations from Romans 8, which includes a wide ranging selection from various writers. For this reviewer this is probably the weakest section of the entire book.

Finally, book 3, chapter 4, is a modest "sketch" of the heavenly triumph. Heaven is where the triumph takes place. Using Revelation 7:9–12, Arrowsmith reveals that he came across a memorable passage in Johannes Clüver, in the second volume of his *Apocalyptic Dawn,* which gives a summary of the whole countenance of the Church triumphant. The blessed are described in terms of multitude, variety, location, and clothing. Arrowsmith gives particular consideration to the "shouting with a loud voice" (Rev 7:19). The sources of such shouting is three-fold: first, the covenant of grace, second, God's sovereignty, and third, the mediation of Christ. The seven-fold angelic witness is examined. And finally, to draw in the sails, Arrowsmith urges that we study the attributes of God, which we shall eternally celebrate. We ought to learn some skill now in praising our Lord, as we shall continue to exercise that skill throughout eternity.

Arrowsmith brings the entire work to a conclusion by quoting George Buchanan's paraphrase of Psalm 36:8-10.

The range of references to others is literally an A to Z (i.e., Abbot to Zwingli). There are Scripture and Subject indices. In addition, there are a number of excellent touches to finish off the book. First, the Dedication to the 1700 Edition, followed by the Preface to the 1700 edition.

One minor point is that any future edition should contain an outline chart of the arguments, along with a means to highlight the major points, given the significant number of sub-points.

The sheer size of the book should not be an excuse for putting anyone off reading it. The style flows easily and has numerous homely and memorable phrases throughout to retain the readers general attention, while its theology and analysis is a definite reason for a close reading of this excellent work.

Review: Zachary Garris, *Honor Thy Fathers: Recovering the Anti-Feminist Theology of the Reformers* (New Christendom Press, 2024). Hardback. 157 pages. $24.99. ISBN 978-1-964404-02-8. Reviewed by Zachary Groff.

In *Honor Thy Fathers: Recovering the Anti-Feminist Theology of the Reformers*, Presbyterian (PCA) pastor Zachary Garris delivers an historically informed assessment of modern trends in popular Reformed teaching on men, women, and their respective vocations and duties. This brief and punchy volume is something of a sequel to Garris's more exegetically

focused *Masculine Christianity.*[1] As indicated by the subtitle, Garris characterizes the Reformed tradition as anti-feminist in a sense that has been lost due to recent (i.e., twentieth century) developments, but worth recovering.

Garris admits that casting Reformation-era theologians as "anti-feminist" is anachronistic, but he defends the thesis that "the theology of these men stands against modern feminism" (4), with particular reference to their theology of the family. His goal in focusing on this aspect of the theology of the Reformers and their successors is to promote a biblical understanding of the family—and especially of male-rule as it is expressed in home, church, and civil society. He contends that their theology of the family is a necessary consequence of a properly biblical understanding of God's voluntary and condescending grace as expressed "by way of covenant" (WCF 7.1).

The first part of the book is a brisk survey of the Reformers' and Reformed Orthodox theologians' views pertaining to "male rule" in the home, the church, and the commonwealth. Much of the material in this section involves a sustained examination of classic Reformed expositions and applications of the fifth commandment, including those found in creedal/catechetical formulations (e.g., HC 104; WLC 123–133). The fifth commandment is an appropriate point of focus (and departure) for developing a theology of the family and society, together with their various authorities and arrangements. As described by both William Perkins (1558–1602) and William Gouge (1575–1653), the family is the basic social unit from which all other human societies (i.e., church and commonwealth) find their origin (48–50, 55). Though not cited in *Honor Thy Fathers*, colonial American Presbyterian preacher Samuel Davies (1723–61) aptly referred to the family as "a radical society from which all others are derived."[2]

While Garris convincingly argues that there existed a centuries-long Reformed consensus concerning the biblical vision of a patriarchal ideal in home, church, and state, he gives careful attention to the varied and opposed applications of this ideal to the historical contingencies of female monarchs during the mid-sixteenth century (e.g., Mary and Elizabeth Tudor in England). Garris writes, "The Reformed differed over whether women may legitimately serve as civil rulers, but even those who answered in the affirmative still said rulers should not ordinarily be women (Calvin, Bullinger, Voetius)" (66). After laying out the nearly total agreement amongst high-profile Reformers and later Reformed Orthodox theologians regarding "male rule" in different social arrangements, Garris proceeds to more recent developments in what might be called popular theological treatments of the family.

Part two of the book is provocatively titled *Abandoning the Reformed View of Male Rule* and seeks to track the influence of feminism in Reformed and Presbyterian churches and publishing outfits. This section opens with an appreciative reference to Princeton theologian B. B. Warfield (1851–1921) who noted that feminism is a form of individualism. Even the early feminist movement of Warfield's day set aside the family or household as the basic unit of human society, choosing instead to frame all relations in church and state as terminating on the individual. Garris argues that as radical individualism dominated Western culture, "it should come as no surprise that the Western church has been heavily influenced by feminist thought in its view of the home, the church, and the commonwealth" (71). Said influence is most clearly seen in the rejection of both the traditional (i.e., Reformed catechetical) language of superior/inferior to describe the married estate and the practice of male rule in the family.

It is at this point in the book that Garris shifts from historical theology to theological criticism, or polemics. He first rejects egalitarianism as "false teaching because it openly teaches people to disobey Jesus' commands for holy living" (73), bemoaning its expression in "ostensibly 'Reformed' churches today that ordain women as pastors and elders" (71). He then proceeds to describe several books "that attack traditional Christian views of male rule," noting that their popularity with readers (not to mention their publication in the first place) is "a testament to the decline of the Western church" (74). This and other sweeping evaluative statements launch *Honor Thy Fathers* from the realm of cool analysis to that of heated rhetoric unlikely to appeal to readers who do not already agree with Garris's premises, aims, and convictions. But for those who agree that the "anti-feminist theology of the Reformers" should be recovered, he is compelling. To put it bluntly, he's not wrong. As Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. notes insightfully in the Foreword, "what theologians taught in the past does not decide the issues, but it is to our detriment—even danger—if we neglect their insights and fail to examine our exegetical approaches by their interpretations" (x).

Garris reserves his most detailed critiques for what he calls "Complementarian Deviations" from the consensus position of the Reformers of yesteryear. He recognizes the now-common parlance of broad and narrow complementarianism, writing, "while broad complementarians affirm something close to the classical Reformed position, narrow complementarians barely resemble our Reformed forefathers" (84f). Specifically, narrow complementarians restrict male headship to the category of servant leadership, downplay the wife's duty to submit to her husband (Eph. 5:22), and introduce ecclesiastical innovations that separate certain leadership tasks in the church from the ordained offices in which they have

1. Zachary Garris, *Masculine Christianity, Second Edition* (Reformation Zion Publishing, 2021).

2. Samuel Davies, "Sermon XXIX: The Necessity and Excellence of Family Religion," in The Sermons of Samuel Davies in Three Volumes (Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1854), 2:82.

traditionally been performed. On this last point in particular, Garris finds "three significant problems" with the 2017 *Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church to the Forty-Fifth General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America*:

1. The promotion of narrow complementarianism "which accords with the views of Tim and Kathy Keller but conflicts with Scripture (including 1 Timothy 2:12) and the traditional practices of many PCA churches;"
2. Deviation "from the views and practices of earlier Reformed theologians and the Westminster divines, who held that 1 Corinthians 14:34–45 prohibits women from speaking publicly in worship;" and,
3. An erroneous appeal "to Westminster Larger Catechism 156 to allow women (and non-ordained men) to read Scripture in public worship" (105).

Garris devotes a considerable portion of his study to unpacking exactly why and how these three aspects of the *Report* are defective. He is especially concerned to counter the influential published views of Timothy and Kathy Keller. In doing so, he makes several interesting—if unwitting—observations relevant to understanding historical developments in popular Reformed conceptions of the theology of the family.

One of the most significant observations that Garris makes in his evaluation of "Tim Keller's Narrow Complementarianism" is that "Keller never addressed the vocation of motherhood" in his 2014 book *Every Good Endeavor: Connecting Your Work to God's Work* (86). Even aside from the polemic behind Garris's reading of Keller, this observation is important. As recently as the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even most feminist authors regarded maternal domesticity as the primary and uniquely virtuous vocation of women. The revolutionary element of first wave feminism[3] was not the rejection of woman's maternal qualities, but the application of it to public social life to correct abuses of male rule in society. Michelle Lee-Barnewall writes, "this era saw a blurring of the private versus public distinction precisely because women's domesticity meant that they had a duty to bring their domestic values to influence the corrupt larger society."[4] In other words, an egalitarian appropriation of the domestic vocation of women as motherly figures undergirded first wave feminism's social action beyond the four walls of the home.

Though first wave feminists sought to expand the field of distinctively female and maternal activity to include political and social activism, the underlying view of women and their vocation to safeguard domestic virtues and order is not fundamentally different than the classic Reformed position that Herman Bavinck (1854–1921), for example, articulated in his 1908 work, *The Christian Family.* Garris quotes Bavinck's brief treatment of the biblical view of the woman's domestic and maternal vocation, "Her nature is designed for that, her orientation lies in that direction, there she best fulfills her calling and best reaches her destiny" (82). If Keller in 2014 is at all comparable to Bavinck in 1908 in terms of contemporary influence, the shift from understanding motherhood as womankind's vocation to omitting motherhood entirely (or almost entirely) in a discussion of vocation represents a remarkable change in popular treatments of Reformed theology. Though Garris does not explicitly comment on this historical development, it certainly gives credence to his thesis that modern Reformed evangelicals (and their churches) have largely abandoned their forebears' theology of the family.

Sympathetic readers of *Honor Thy Fathers* will likely not bat an eye at how Garris inveighs against egalitarians, Christian publishing houses, the female authors he cites (with the possible exception of Nancy Pearcey), the innovative recommendations of the PCA's *Report of the Ad Interim Committee on Women Serving in the Ministry of the Church*, or even the Kellers. However, his critique of Kevin DeYoung late in the book may cause some readers to squirm in their seats. Garris recognizes that DeYoung is "a PCA pastor who holds to a broader complementarianism" than that represented by Keller and others (106). However, DeYoung's allowance (if not prescription) "for women to lead prayer in public worship" (106, 111) starkly contrasts with the Reformers' biblical understanding of worship leadership as the duty and vocation of ordained men. It is not altogether clear from Garris's presentation of DeYoung's position that the latter is keen to invite women to lead a congregation in prayer rather than simply to offer a prayer in public during a worship service (see pages 106 and 111). Garris notes that DeYoung is opposed to women leading the pastoral prayer that is sometimes called "the long prayer" in Reformed worship services, and he cites DeYoung as merely calling for allowance of women to present certain things before the congregation in worship services. For example, DeYoung has written the following:

—"Churches that do not allow women to speak in church under any circumstances are contradicting the instructions of Scripture" (qtd. 106).

—"I believe most complementarian pastors could do a better job finding biblically allowable ways to use women in church gatherings to pray, to relate a story of God's grace, or to share an encouraging word" (qtd. 111).

—"As a pastor, I've happily included women in the worship

3. First wave feminism is generally regarded as the Western social and political movement for women's political rights (e.g., suffrage, divorce, child custody) beginning in the 1830s and extending through the 1920s. For a helpful treatment, see Garris, *Masculine Christianity,* pp. 4–15.

4. Michelle Lee-Barnewall, *Neither Complementarian nor Egalitarian: A Kingdom Corrective to the Evangelical Gender Debate* (Baker Academic, 2016), p. 20.

service to share a testimony, give an announcement, or offer a prayer" (qtd. 111n63).

Though Garris is strictly accurate in his identification of DeYoung's stated practice on this point as beyond "the consistent theology and practice of the Reformed churches from the Reformation to 19th-century American Presbyterianism," it is a stretch to say that "DeYoung and other Presbyterians are encouraging fellow pastors to join in renouncing the tradition" (116). Garris overstates this, as DeYoung does not encourage a renunciation of the tradition, but a modification. So-called narrow complementarians may indeed "generally ignore the positions of these earlier theologians and rarely interact with their works" except to lambaste them as antiquated and old-fashioned (117). But DeYoung and other broad complementarians aligned with him are far from maligning the biblical tradition and practice that Garris is calling the church to recover.

Furthermore, Garris is sometimes unclear in his broad statements of castigation against nameless (or ill-defined) "pastors and theologians today" (117). It is very likely the case that certain "Christian leaders ignore the position of the Reformers and the Reformed orthodox on male rule," that "few pastors have recommended William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties* to their flock," and that "few pastors preach the full application of the Fifth Commandment on male headship in the home as the Westminster Larger Catechism and its exponents set forth" (119). But who exactly is Garris criticizing? Is he calling to task all Christian pastors and leaders, or just those who present themselves as Reformed? Does being Reformed necessitate a total enmeshment in and adoption of the theology of the family we find in the tradition as Garris has presented it? How does Garris know these conditions of ignorance and neglect to be true and widespread? Garris is too strong in his statement that "Western Christians are doing everything but conserve the beliefs and practices of their Reformed forefathers regarding male rule" (121). He would have been better off redirecting the heat of his rhetoric to calls to action rather than pejorative critiques of anonymous churchmen seemingly asleep at the wheel.

That being said, those who are uncertain of how to call the church off "the path of feminism" and back "to the faith of our Reformed forefathers, including their view of male rule in the home, the church, and the commonwealth" (121) would do well to read this book and study its arguments and supporting evidence. There is not a more helpful treatment of the subject in as many pages or less. Together with Garris's earlier work, this volume should galvanize men and women who want to recover a Reformed theology of the family alongside already mature Reformed convictions regarding saving grace, divine sovereignty, and the Spirit-filled life.

Review: David W. Pao, *1–2 Timothy, Titus* (Leiden: Brill, 2024). Cloth. 831 pages. $299. ISBN 978-90-04-68153-8. Reviewed by Lane Keister, Th.M., pastor of Momence OPC in Momence, IL.

This commentary is the inaugural volume in the Brill Exegetical Commentary series, which now has two volumes (the other being a volume on Colossians and Philemon by Jonathan M. Watt, which is less than half the size, at 231 pages, but half the cost, a mere $150). Brill is well known for publishing volumes they expect only a library to purchase, which means that if they are going to be able to do so, the price per volume has to be outlandishly high. I do not fault Brill for doing this, however difficult it might be to procure such volumes as an individual. For their purposes, the only way these volumes are publishable is at very high prices. However, the only way a normal pastor would be able to have such volumes is by getting a review copy (which is how I have this volume), or living near a library system that can get hold of it. What is far more outrageous to me than the price is the binding. For a book for which they are charging $299, it would seem that the book ought to be bound with roughly the same armor value as an M1 Abrams tank. However, it is a glued binding, which means that it must be treated with special care.

David Pao's work is similar in many ways to another recent massive commentary on the Pastoral Epistles, by Stanley Porter. Both commentaries are huge (Porter weighs in at 969 pages, and has a sewn binding, though far less expensive than Pao!), both are exceedingly detailed grammatical commentaries on the Greek text, both hold to Pauline authorship of all three Pastoral Epistles, and both take an egalitarian stance on 1 Timothy 2. These similarities are perhaps not excessively surprising, given that Porter is on the editorial board of the series!

Pao introduces all three epistles simultaneously, rather than having a separate introduction for each epistle. Attention is paid to text-critical history, canonicity, and authorship (here Pao offers a stout defense of Pauline authorship, thankfully not being one of those scholars who believes that ancient authors can only write in a certain way: he references "the flexibility of ancient authors," 11. He thinks variations in style and terms is better explained by other factors than different authorship,11. Pao is also rightly cautious about computer methods of determining stylistic consistency, noting, as many more commentators ought to do, that our sample size is way too small to be making any such determinations, 16), theological themes (among which are faith, God as Savior, Christ in his manifestations, the Holy Spirit in his power, godliness and good works, eschatology, and Paul's relationship to his protege), the historical setting, genre, purpose, false teachers, and an outline. Although his egalitarian leanings are already visible in the introduction (22), the ground covered is still

quite competently done, especially with regard to Pauline authorship.

Each section has its own bibliography, which is quite extensive. There is no one place where the entire bibliography is written, which is a possible downside. On the plus side, readers can decide with much more precision which influences are most important on Pao at any given section. There is a general bibliography on pp. 64–66, and a grammatical bibliography on pp. 67–68, but these are both fairly brief.

The analysis of each pericope is divided into five parts. This is a tad confusing, as a non-overlapping numerical system is also used to specify which verse is currently under consideration. Once the reader gets used to the sections, however, the information does become a bit clearer. The five sections are translation, text-critical analysis (this is much more extensive than most commentaries provide), grammatical analysis (this section usually takes up the most room), historical analysis, and theological analysis. Unfortunately, the historical analysis section is a bit of a misnomer. It is dedicated to the history of interpretation. However, only very early or very recent sources are typically cited. These sections rarely dive into any Medieval, Reformation era, or Nineteenth century works. To be fair, the blurb on the back of the commentary does mention "interacting with recent developments in biblical studies and the auxiliary disciplines." But if that is the case, a more accurate description of the historical analysis section would be something like "early reception and the modern status of the question." "Historical analysis" would seem a more accurate moniker to describe an interaction with all epochs of biblical interpretation.

The exegetical and grammatical analysis is usually first rate, and a careful perusal of these sections will usually net some preachable points. For example, commenting on the first verse of 1 Timothy, Pao notes that the genitive modifer "of Christ Jesus" "points to the basis of this authority" (70), and that the further prepositional clause "provides further definition to Paul's authority" (71). And in the theological section of the same pericope, he notes a parallel linkage between Jesus extending the Father's work, and Timothy extending Paul's (76).

Pao is rather quick to notice what he calls an "imbalance in the power relationship" between Paul and Timothy (79). I will leave to the reader the decision as to whether this observation reveals a literary sensitivity that is legitimate, or whether this tends towards post-colonial methodology.

The treatment of 1 Timothy 2:8–15 is one with which few readers of this journal will agree, owing more to feminism's influence than to what Paul actually said. Is it not telling that very few references to the early church fathers are present in the historical section? The modern interpretations that seek to make Paul say the opposite of what he said, or undermine his authority are of recent origin, and owe their existence to a worldview not in existence in Paul's time. Some authors claim that there were Roman women who were close to modern-day feminists, but this evidence is slim at best.

Pao's treatment of the verb αὐθεντεῖν (a hapax legomenon in the NT) has a number of problems. His objection to a binary "positive vs. negative" relationship is spurious. He claims that "Meaning does not reside primarily in a single word, but in a discourse unit (i.e., paragraph) that provides a framework for the study of individual words" (167). On the contrary, meaning resides in every level of the text, word level included. Even the use of the qualifying word "primarily" does not make his statement true. The various levels of the text mutually influence each other. The use of διδάσκειν for positive teaching is confirmed by the presence of the term "false teaching" elsewhere in the Pastoral Epistles (such as ἑτεροδιδασκαλεῖν in 1 Timothy 1:3). Pao's approach is that the words for false teaching color the meaning of "teaching" here in 1 Timothy 2 (184). Why would this be? Both instances of "false teaching" are quite a bit removed from the context of 1 Timothy 2:12. Furthermore, why would Paul have to warn against *women* teaching false doctrines? Ironically, Pao's position implies that women were more prone to teach false doctrine than men were. Why would Paul need to warn against false teaching and tyrannical authority from women, but not from men? If the teaching and the authority are both positive things in themselves (which Pao has failed to disprove), then the construction favors taking them both in a similar fashion, which is then negated in the case of women.[1] His conclusion as to the meaning of αὐθεντεῖν in Greek texts flies in the face of the conclusions of the main articles dealing with its meaning, with the exception of Wilshire, to which Baldwin and Wolters have given satisfactory answers.[2] "To dominate" is not the consensus meaning of the term in Greek literature (again, see the articles on the verb referenced in my article). Pao argues that a more specific meaning should be kept in mind (184), but he neglects to mention the possibility that the specificity Paul has in mind is simply the case of women.

1. For a more detailed treatment of these issues, see Lane Keister, "Should Women Teach or Have Authority Over Men in the Church? An Exegesis of 1 Timothy 2:8–15," in *The Confessional Presbyterian* 4 (2008): 142–150, 310.

2. H. Scott Baldwin, "A Difficult Word: αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy:12," in *Women in the Church: A Fresh Analysis of 1 Timothy 2:9-15*, 1st edition, edited by Andreas Köstenberger, Thomas Schreiner, and H. Scott Baldwin (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1995), pp. 65–80. H. Scott Baldwin, "An Important Word: αὐθεντέω in 1 Timothy:12," in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, 2nd edition, edited by Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), pp. 39–51. Al Wolters, "The Meaning of Αὐθεντέω," in *Women in the Church: An Analysis and Application of 1 Timothy 2:9–15*, 3rd edition, edited by Andreas Köstenberger and Thomas Schreiner (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2016), pp. 65–115.

He simply assumes the standard reading of Genesis 1–3 in feminist circles without any seeming acknowledgment that such a reading is highly controversial (and rejected throughout most of church history). There is not a satisfactory answer to Köstenberger's argument, either (namely, that the "either-or" construction favors seeing the two infinitives in a similar light, and therefore, if "teach" has a positive connotation, then so must "exercising authority." Unfortunately, he ignores the parallel evidence in Titus 1 (421–32), in terms of the biblical requirements for elder. There is no evidence or loophole in Titus 1 for elders to be women.

A more positive treatment of the slave-master issue in 1 Timothy 6 has some interest, since Pao notes that it is the slave who is called the benefactor in verse 2. This is subversive of the entire slavery mindset, even if Paul comes short of promoting the outright abolishing of slavery (353). Many have acknowledged, rightly, that the trajectory of Scripture's teaching heads in that direction, especially with the evidence of Philemon.

His treatment of the famous passage about Scripture in 2 Timothy 3:16–17 will bring joy to those who believe in plenary verbal inspiration. He correctly rejects the attributive reading ("every God-breathed Scripture"), which limits inspiration to only some texts. Bringing out the historical background makes this rejection an easy one: "[A]n attributive reading ('every God-breathed Scripture') would leave open the possibility that some scriptural passages are not God-breathed, exactly a position that Paul seeks to combat in this context" (658–9). He had previously noted that Paul "is likely responding to the selective use of Scripture by the false teachers" (547, quoting Meier). His understanding of "all" as distributive does not limit inspiration to only a few texts: "Paul is making an emphatic all-encompassing statement concerning the entirety of Scripture in view of the nature of its individual components" (657).

Pao is cautious about the "liar's paradox" interpretation of Titus 1:12–13. Pao thinks there might be something to it, but doesn't really want to commit. How can a Cretan be correct when he says that Cretans are always liars, evil beasts, lazy gluttons? Paul says this is true, although he is more narrowly applying the statement to the false teachers Titus is to oppose.

On Titus 2:1, I do not think I agree with his take, which is that Paul "identifies the root problem of the false teachers as as one of inconsistency between teaching and behavior" (456). The problem could very well include this rift, but it seems that a larger problem is also in view, namely, that the false teachers' ideas do not mesh with the sound pattern of teaching that Paul gave Titus.

And on Titus 2:5, there is no discussion of the implications of the phrases "working at home" and "submissive to their own husbands" have for modern-day feminism. Just because the phrases are limited to a household setting (458, which can hardly be denied) doesn't mean that real submission and real "working at home" is not what Paul wants for the younger women. It is what he wants for them.

On Titus 3:6, he understands "the washing of regeneration" to refer primarily to the new birth, not to baptism (494). On p. 500, he notes that baptismal imagery may be invoked, but "Paul is primarily referring to the washing of the Holy Spirit." In this context, it is helpful to remember what Johannes Vos said in his commentary on the Westminster Larger Catechism, noting the genitival construction as saying that regeneration is the controlling noun, and that therefore Paul is calling regeneration a washing. Regeneration washes us clean. He did not say "the regeneration of washing," as if a baptismal washing brings regeneration.[3]

My final thoughts are that this work will certainly be an important one going forward, and if pastors can get hold of it somehow, they will benefit, as long as they also read other works less influenced by feminism, which are able to answer feminism's reinterpretation of the Pastoral Epistles.

Review: Pierrick Hildebrand, *The Zurich Origins of Reformed Covenant Theology* (Oxford University Press, 2024). Hardcover. 440 pages. $90. ISBN 978-01-97-60757-2. Reviewed by Thomas Haviland-Pabst. Montreat College, Asheville, NC.

With this monograph, Pierrick Hildebrand, an Associate Researcher at the Swiss Reformation Studies Institute at the University of Zurich and a minister in the Reformed Church of Bern, has provided the reader and scholarly community with an exploration of the historical origins of Reform covenant theology, namely, the author contends that what lies behind Reformed covenant theology as it is known today is its earlier formulation in Zurich with Huldrych Zwingli followed by Heinrich Bullinger.

The author discuses in the introduction his aim to correct some errors in the historical-theological literature. To begin with, although it is recognized that Zwingli and Bullinger "laid the cornerstone of Reformed covenant theology" (p.2), the author seeks to correct the trend in scholarship which see formulations of Zacharias Ursinus and Caspar Olevian as discontinuous with the earlier statements in Zurich by demonstrating (1) the affirmation of a prelapsarian covenant by the Heidelberg theologians were influenced by Zurich and (2) the use of "historical-legal" and "organic-mystical" (p. 2) (which correspond to justification and sanctification, respectively) categories by Bullinger in his elucidation of covenant

3. See Johannes G. Vos, *The Westminster Larger Catechism: A Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2002), p. 473.

theology and the subsequent employment of these categories by the Heidelberg theologians.

Moreover, he seeks to push against two theses found in the literature on Reformed covenant theological origins. First, he argues against the notion that Bullinger was the originator of Reformed covenant theology by demonstrating that Zwingli's turn to and writing on covenant theology clearly predate Bullinger's writings on the same. Second, his aim is to refute the claim that Olevian was more a student of Melanchthon than of Zurich and, in a similar connection, he argues against the thesis that the Heidelberg theologians were more dependent on Calvin's formulations than on Zurich, while allowing for the possibility (though it is not his main contention) that the Heidelberg theologians may have received "Zwingli's thought … via John Calvin" (p. 6).

This book is divided into three parts. The first part (chapters 1-2) gives attention to Zwingli. The second part (chapters 3–5) explores Bullinger's thought, and the third part focuses on the reception of Zwingli and Bullinger's conception of covenant theology by John Calvin (chapter 6) and the aforementioned Heidelberg theologians (chapter 7). Hildebrand offers an epilogue to conclude the book and an appendix providing texts from "whole or partial transcriptions of eight manuscripts by Bullinger" that the author views as relevant for his work in this monograph.

With the first chapter, Zwingli's thought from 1519 through mid-1525 is explored. This period is described by Hildebrand as one where Zwingli emphasized discontinuity between the Old and New testaments. For Zwingli, the new testament was an eternal one and as such stands above the old covenant, with the eternality of the new covenant grounded in "the divine nature of Christ" (p. 28). Moreover, despite the fact that Zwingli, in line with Luther, saw OT saints as saved by the gospel in an "anticipatory way" (p. 30), he also shared with Luther a discontinuous relationship between the old and new covenants.

The second chapter explores Zwingli's turn to a covenantal understanding in mid-1525. Here, he brings to our attention Zwingli's work *Subsidium* which (1) demonstrates a turn "from an analogical to a univocal view of the relationship between the Abrahamic covenant and Christ's new testament" (p. 59) and (2) the earliest cause of said "covenantal turn" is concerned with "the eucharistic controversy" (p. 59) rather than the baptism controversy precipitated by the Anabaptists, thus, anchoring this turn to his earlier anti-Catholic writings, effectively establishing the date of said turn. The author goes on to survey in detail a variety of Zwingli's writings from 1525-1531 and concludes that he "made use of covenantal theology" throughout these writings.

Upon turning to second section, Hildebrand demonstrates that Bullinger adopted Zwingli's insight into covenant theology and built on it by making "covenant an overarching *locus*" (p. 111), placing emphasis not only on the historical-legal aspect of covenant with Zwingli but also "the communal, ecclesial, and spiritual" (p. 111) implications of covenant for God's people. It is also in this section that the author demonstrates Bullinger's understanding of the covenant as "both uniliteral and bilateral," or, put another way, "monopleurically established but dipleurically administered" (p. 112).

In chapter three, the author discusses the influence shared between Zwingli and Bullinger, evidenced by Bullinger's first textual mention of covenant in his October 1525 writing *Vom einigen Gott*, which follows after Zwingli's covenantal turn earlier in that same year. In the fourth chapter, the author discusses the central focus that covenant became for Bullinger's thought in the years 1534–1551 as he moved toward identifying it "with union with Christ" (p. 202). It is during this period, Hildebrand contends, that we see Bullinger's emphasis on the 'organic-mystical' aspect of covenant come to fore, something which previous scholarship has overlooked. This same 'organic-mystical' trend is continued in the final period of Bullinger's thought (1551–1575), which is discussed in chapter five.

With the author's exploration of Calvin's reception of Zwingli and Bullinger on covenant in chapter six, he concludes that "Calvin never departed from nor developed Bullinger's insights; instead, Calvin integrated them into his theology. Differences in emphasis are apparent, but they are more quantitative than qualitative in nature" (p. 275). Turning then to the reception of Zurich by the Heidelberg theologians, he makes the case that their affirmation of a prelapsarian covenant and their emphasis on "the organic-mystical aspect of the covenant" (p. 290) demonstrates that they were not merely influenced by Zurich in a generic manner but in specifics that indicate clear, direct influence.

Hildebrand has done an exceptional job with this monograph. By its close and persuasive reading of the extant literature on Zwingli and Bullinger as well as his trenchant knowledge of secondary literature germane to his thesis, he has not only contributed to scholarship by corrected some of the errors that have been perpetuated but also by demonstrating the value of Zwingli and Bullinger in the development of Reformed covenant theology and their value as theologians to be explored in their own rights.

This is especially important as so much work has been done on Calvin and his theology while much of scholarship has failed to give attention to the theologians who influenced the famed Genevan Reformer. Evidence of this is the fact that this is the first serious monograph to focus on Bullinger's covenantal thought since Baker's 1980 monograph, *Heinrich Bullinger and the Covenant* (Ohio University Press). Additionally, this work continues to further scholarship which

argues for basic continuity and agreement between earlier Reformational thought and later post-Reformational developments. This work by Hildebrand ought to be consulted by any serious student of Reformed covenant theology, its development, or the thought of Zwingli and Bullinger, as well as by anyone who needs a good example of how to do good historical-theological work.

Review: Alan Strange, *Empowered Witness: Politics, Culture, and the Spiritual Mission of the Church* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2025). Paperback. xvii + 149 pages. $17.99. ISBN 978-1-4335-8427-5. Reviewed by Nathan Strom.

The word "craftsmanship" is vanishing. It resurrects images from a pre-technological era when each local community had its smith, carpenter, or furniture maker. These artisans developed intuition, judgment, and muscle memory. They inherited a body of knowledge well beyond what each could discover in a single lifetime. Watching a master craftsman work is a privilege. His tools—ceasing to be objects in his hand—become an extension of his consciousness. They transpose his intentions into reality.

Churchmen, especially today, rarely grow competent using an anvil, a hand plane, or a webbing stretcher. Ideas are their tools—suited to affect human hearts and, therefore, the world and institutions around them. Alan Strange's book, *Empowered Witness*, invites us into the workshop of a master churchman, Charles Hodge. The book focuses on how Hodge engaged the theological crisis afflicting the Presbyterian church, indeed the entire American church. We call this crisis the Civil War. Any student of Christian polity and ecclesiology can learn from Hodge's intuitions and insights. Strange is a competent narrator for Hodge's role in ecclesiological struggle of his age.

The book is a popularized version of Strange's dissertation, *The Doctrine of the Spirituality of the Church in the Ecclesiology of Charles Hodge* (P&R Publishing, 2017). Readers specializing in nineteenth-century American Protestantism or Presbyterianism would benefit more from the longer work. *Empowered Witness* is a local mercantile; the dissertation a tweed-jacket boutique.

A relevant example is the opening chapter after the introduction. The chapter reflects on "the *nexus* between Christian spirituality and the spirituality of the church" (16). This section (16–18) reads like an attempt to orient the neophyte to a relatively parochial conversation. This isn't a criticism per se. It is merely to say, "Reader, take notice." In short, the church is defined as those in whom the Holy Spirit has operated and is operating, thus defining the word *spiritual* in Pauline terms. The connection between personal spirituality and the church's spirituality is a shared focus on the Holy Spirit's work and benefits,"a spiritual power (the church's) exercised in a spiritual manner within a spiritual realm" (18).

Strange is best when commenting on political and ecclesiastical events, past and present. On matters present, the introduction triangulates his position in the wilderness of contemporary political theology. Strange displays a terrain map of where he will guide the reader. Readers in the know can locate Strange by following the footnotes, where he discusses figures as diverse as Karl Marx, Richard Mouw, Andrew Whitehead, James Renwick Wilson, Sean Michael Lucas, Jemar Tisby, and David VanDrunen.

Strange is clear. He is not justifying or establishing a theology of the *spirituality of the church* through biblical exegesis. He depends on others for that, particularly Bryan Estelle, Jonathon Beeke, Kevin DeYoung and Greg Gilbert, and David Innes (19). In fact, Strange intentionally avoids pronouncing the Christ and culture, church and state relationships. In his own words, "this present volume" is "more a survey of American Presbyterian History" (19). The strength of his resolve may be open to question.

Strange concludes his introduction with an overture to all good faith actors when he says "This book presses for a mere spirituality that encourages the church as church to mind its spiritual business and not to seek to proclaim anything but 'Thus says the Lord' and what may be rightly implied from Scripture" (14). Strange is speaking about the institutional church, explicitly leaving the door open for individual Christians (i.e., the organic church) to apply the faith in every aspect of life (4).

This leaves political history past to be mentioned, particularly the issue of race, slavery, and the politics surrounding the Civil War. Here too, students of these theological and historical questions will be greatly aided by Strange's careful scholarship. Even in a popular volume, the good professor has carefully footnoted important sources for further study (e.g., the notes on pg. 31). Some scholars may wish to nuance Strange's representation of James Henley Thornwell and Stuart Robinson as belonging to "the radical spirituality of the church wing" (22). Strange uses Thornwell and Robinson as foils for Hodge's more "moderate view" that is "supple and practical." (22) In the end, Strange's description is pedagogically helpful for those new to these debates.

Strange is careful to point out the Scottish origins of the spirituality of the church doctrine (henceforth SOCD, 31). Since then, however, the doctrine has been linked to the American slavery question. Strange describes well the doubling-down on slavery that preceded the 1860s. His primary source from Hodge is the 1836 "review of *Slavery*, by William E Channing" in the *Biblical Repertory & Theological Review.* Hodge's argument, combined with Strange's exposition, illustrates the moral morass and corresponding theological

precision necessary to lead through this crisis. Contemporary thinkers would do well to consider this complexity, even if they remain convinced that 19th century Presbyterians often lacked moral courage on these points. The reality "on the ground" was more complicated than a simple *for* or *against,* as these things almost always are.

Strange is a model to follow on this point. In the end, Strange is both appreciative and critical of Hodge. For example, Strange helpfully frames the issues around the discipline case against George Bourne and the 1818 General Assembly's pronouncement on slavery. This allows him to contrast Hodge with the more aggressive denunciation of slavery in the Scottish Covenanters, especially Alexander McLeod's 1802 sermon, later published as *Negro Slavery Unjustifiable: A Discourse.* Strange plainly, and rightly, concludes,

> Hodge and other Old School Presbyterians had such arguments [McLeod's] at their disposal. That they failed or refused to make recourse to such biblical-theological reasoning but simply repeated the tired nostrum 'The Bible does not condemn slavery, and neither can we' testifies not to the spirituality of the church but to the cultural captivity of the church. Hodge's position, as we will see, developed beyond the 1845 General Assembly, showing itself as more nuanced and supple as the years passed, yet still falling short of what was needed: the kind of candor that McLeod evinced in denouncing American slavery as an evil not to be tolerated but to be eliminated. (49)

This may, oddly enough, be one of the most important contributions of the book. Strange highlights an important stream of Reformed theology that grounded its abolitionism in the Bible, rather than a slow drift away from biblical toward modern sensibilities. Mark Noll may be right in asserting that the Civil War and slavery uncovered the inadequacy of commonsense interpretation of the Bible. However, Strange, perhaps unintentionally, demonstrates the real tragedy of that fact—it didn't have to.

In his third chapter, Strange focuses on the 1861 General Assembly at which the Presbyterian Church would enter the political fray. Strange illustrates the differences between Hodge and James Henry Thornwell on the SOCD, by highlighting Hodge's January 1861 article, "The State of the Country," and his article, "The Church and Country," in April of the same year. Here, Hodge's, perhaps overly, subtle ways are put on display. He defends the move insisting that, quoting Strange, "he made no undue intrusion into matters that were more purely civil or political because he was neither preaching from the pulpit nor urging the church as an institution to adopt his view" (57).

Hodge did, however, object to the two resolutions passed by the Assembly in May of 1861, a month after the start of the civil war. Strange properly contextualizes these resolutions as a northern majority's political actions in the name of the whole church (59). The resolutions enjoined prayer for the nation and declared the whole church's obligation to perpetuate the integrity of the US, to uphold the federal government, and to profess its unabated loyalty to the Constitution. Hodge objected on principled grounds that the church should not obligate political loyalty to any earthly power when that was precisely the political question of the day.

Careful readers will not miss the illustrations of presbyterian ecclesiology at work. Hodge demonstrates a highly nuanced understanding of the levers of leadership in the Presbyterian church—preaching, book review and essay writing, Assembly debates, overtures, protests, etc. Himself a student of church orders, Strange narrates these tumultuous years through that lens. A helpful perspective indeed. One nugget is this: "… and with it [the fracturing of the federal Union] much of what had kept raw politics out of the Old School General Assemblies—namely, the consideration that words ought ever to be moderated so as to maintain the bond of union and sustain the mutual affection that all parties bear toward one another [fractured]" (71).

In the fourth chapter, matters turn to the Civil War years and its impact on Hodge's views. Strange shows his diligence as a historian. Most of the historical sources used in this chapter are archival materials—correspondence between Charles Hodge and others, most often Hodge's brother, Hugh. Strange summarizes that Hodge "navigated these waters … seeking to avoid the Scylla of refusing to address civil issues when necessary (as he perceived Thornwell and Robinson doing …) and the Charybdis of the politicization of the church" (69).

In illustrating this, Strange uses Hodge's report in the *Biblical Repertory & Princeton Review* on the 1862 General Assembly, where a border state presbyterian named Robert J. Breckinridge presented a paper to bring a matter to the floor. Hodge believed the move unwise, but not unacceptable. The church had already been divided, so all members now resided in lands loyal to the remaining United States.

Similarly, Hodge reported on the 1865 Assembly. In context, the assembly took place a few short weeks after the Lincoln assassination. Northern fervor burned red hot toward the South as the Assembly came to debate the grounds of admitting the Southern Presbyterian church back into union with the North. Hodge believed the '65 Assembly overplayed its hand. Strange encapsulates the issues: "… the assembly sought by a mere declaration to amend the constitution of the church and to lay down to lower judicatories of the church the procedure that they must follow in admitting members to her, whether session, presbytery, or synod" (81).

In the fifth chapter, several familiar threads coalesce in Strange's narrative. The intertwining of political considerations (North-South) and doctrinal considerations (Old School-New School) is a familiar weave in histories of American Presbyterianism. Recent work by Charles Scott Sealy has raised concerns over nuance in understanding the subscription question in American Presbyterianism (see Sealy's dissertation from 2010). Strange follows the familiar pattern, demonstrating the church was willing to overlook theological differences more than it could overlook political disagreements. "The Presbyterian church chose a politicized course from which, in its mainline expression, it has never recovered" (89). One can begin to see the shadow of Machen's struggle beginning to form already (81).

This chapter also gives an account of why the spirituality of the church came to be identified with the Southern Presbyterians, those advocating ecclesiastical silence in the face of slavery. Once again, the main tragedy of the narrative is how unnecessary such an association was and is. Much of it coming, as many historical realities do, by way of providential accidents in the action-reaction, push-pull of ecclesiastical politics.

In his final chapter, Strange addresses today's politics in light of the SOCD. As a popular level book, readers may be tempted to skip to this "cash-value" portion of the book. They would be foolish to do so. As already mentioned, the book's value lies in the illustration of using the SOCD in the life of the church, not in prescriptive universal principles found exclusively in *Empowered Witness*. After a general orientation (rehearsing much of what has already been said), the chapter consists of four parts: a reprising of Hodge, a short reflection on Scripture and Slavery, the American legacy of SOCD, and Christian engagement in the world.

On Hodge, the conclusion is startling and worth quoting at length.

> Hodge, Thornwell, and all the rest, New or Old School, looked for the blessings that had come to the American nation to come to the world through America; thus, the American nation had to spread and be preserved at all costs for the good of the propagation of the Christian faith everywhere. They were in effect identifying the United States with the church as the means of worldwide blessing…. some might argue that since politics is inescapable and cannot in any case be easily distinguished from matters spiritual … one might not even try to distinguish them, and we would best be done with all this talk about the spirituality of the church. But the politicization of everything, including the church, and a denial of the spirituality of the church … together render the church just one more voice among the many pushing a political agenda. (120)

Strange's candor is refreshing and pastorally helpful. As the product of deep scholarly reflection, *Empowered Witness* serves as both treasury and caution. It is a treasury of applied wisdom, showing how a master churchman conducted himself in crisis. It is caution because even such a master was firmly fixed in his own time, shaped by assumptions everyone took for granted. Why should we think ourselves immune?

In a too-brief vignette, Strange includes a scanty page and a half on how Paul's letter to Onesimus demonstrates the gospel's corrosive effects on the institution of slavery. Once again, the footnotes are key for thoughtful engagement with this argument. Following this, Strange shows the decline in the SOCD in subsequent American history. He does so to illustrate that the SOCD is not a static, unchanging doctrine. Like any doctrine, it has more-or-less pure forms. We ought to look to the best versions of it, something that only application bears out (Luke 7:35).

The book concludes with a final clarification: the SOCD does not mean Christians disengage from bodily, this-life concerns. Christ really is relevant for all of life, and so, the SOCD is not a cleaver we might use to lop off any problem we prefer to avoid. The SOCD is rather like a hand plane, requiring us to engage with the raw reality of human life by shaping it to conform to Christ's image through the Holy Spirit.

It will hardly surprise the reader that this reviewer heartily commends *Empowered Witness* as worthy of careful reading and reflection. Strange is at his best when working with the documents of the nineteenth century. His use of primary sources is balanced and carefully researched. He aims to be fair to his subjects, including real-life personal considerations, when drawing historical conclusions about motive and intent. In a short 127-pages, Professor Strange offers careful, church-aimed analysis of momentous issues that faced the church in the past. In doing so, he equips pastors and church-leaders to more thoughtfully engage our ecclesiological and, yes, spiritual task. Hodge, as Strange tells it, failed to make his principled intentions into an institutional, and therefore, objective reality. But where one master churchman failed, many others may succeed.

Review: Frank J. Smith, *God's Man from Brooklyn: The Story of a Twentieth-Century Minister* (Cumming, GA: Presbyterian Scholars Press, 2024). Hardcover. 263 pages. $39.99. ISBN 978-09-67-69913-4. eviewed by Rev. Drew M. Poplin, Associate Pastor at First Reformed Presbyterian Church of Durham (RPCNA), Durham, NC.

In *God's Man from Brooklyn: The Story of a Twentieth-Century Minister*, Rev. Dr. Frank J. Smith presents the biography of his father, pastor, and fellow-laborer, Rev. Frank E. Smith

(1914–1993). Frank E. Smith, to draw upon the author of the book's beloved pastime, was himself like a train: a man who marked both an important crossroads of history, the formation of the Presbyterian Church in America; and persisted diligently on the course set before him, that track which was laid in regeneration and justification, continued in sanctification, and arrived home in glorification. *God's Man from Brooklyn* is a story of a faithful Christian, a good father, and a godly minister.

Overview of the Book

The book is divided into two primary sections: The Life of Rev. Frank E. Smith (pp. 1–50), which examines his upbringing, conversion, character, and family; and his Ministry (pp. 51–200), chronicling the subject's experiences and development in the pastorate. Following the body of the book is an Epilogue (pp. 201–213) briefly narrating Smith's illness, death, funeral, and legacy; Appendices (pp. 214–254) on the ministry of Affirmation PCA and sample materials (e.g., Inductive Bible Study Outlines and Sermon Notes) from Smith's ministry; and various acknowledgements and a topical index (pp. 255–263).

Frank Edward Smith was born on December 16, 1914, in Brooklyn, New York. Though baptized in the mainline Lutheran, much of his early life is characterized by the "internal restlessness" (p. 16) symbolic of his family heritage, which "included a killing, scandal, intrigue … change of name, divorce" (p. 12). Indeed, by his mid-twenties, Smith had run away from home, joined the Navy, went AWOL, was discharged from the Navy, had a near-death experience, and hitch-hiked from California to Florida. Nevertheless, the Lord protected Smith, for "the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). Upon arriving in Miami, Smith began attending Shenandoah Presbyterian Church, a conservative congregation in the Southern Church; and it was there in 1939 that the Lord brought Smith to saving faith in Jesus Christ. Around that time, he also met Melanie Bitz, who would later be converted and the two married in 1942, shortly after which Smith served his country in the Army during the Second World War. Together, the Smiths would have four children: Melanie Kay, Virginia Sue, Deborah Joy, and Frank Joseph; and their years together were distinguished by family piety, self-sacrifice, love, and laughter.

In 1952, Smith was brought under care as a candidate for the ministry by the St. John's Presbytery of the PCUS and attended Columbia Seminary. Though having only a high school equivalency diploma, Smith acquitted himself well in his studies, diligently labored as a student-preacher, and was ordained in 1955. Smith's early years in the pastorate were marked with the struggles of being a faithful minister in the midst of an apostatizing church. He served in the PCUS at Ebenezer Presbyterian in Hogansville, Georgia (1955–1957); Knox Presbyterian in Cantonment, Florida (1957–1958); First Presbyterian in Jackson, Alabama (1959–1961); Azalea Park Presbyterian in Orlando, Florida (1961–1965); simultaneously at the Hope Mills Presbyterian and Campbellton Presbyterian congregations in the Fayetteville, North Carolina, area (1966–1970 and 1966–1969, respectively); and then Keystone Chapel (1970–1971) and Midway Chapel (1971–1976) in Johnson City, Tennessee. It was while at Midway Chapel, later Midway Presbyterian Church, that Smith would become a constituting member of Westminster Presbytery and serve as one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church in America in 1973. Throughout his tenure in the PCUS, Smith combatted the encroaching tides of theological liberalism within the Southern Church, such as the rejection of basic orthodoxy and biblical inerrancy found throughout denominational Sunday School material. During these tumultuous years, Smith demonstrated himself to be a man of principle, unwavering in his Christian convictions; as well as a man of compassion, as seen in encouraging and facilitating the racial integration of Azalea Park Presbyterian Church (p. 99).

Three years after Smith's entrance into the PCA, Smith took a call to be a church planter in Westchester County, New York in 1977, and there he would remain until his death. By God's grace and through Smith's perseverance, Affirmation PCA was particularized in 1981. Frank E. Smith was joined by his son, Frank J. Smith, in 1980, the younger serving as Assistant Pastor to the elder, and the ministry of the Pastors Smith was remarkably and creatively evangelistic, as well as doctrinally robust in faith, worship, and life.

Smith was faithful and active until his dying days. Suffering from cancer, he preached at the General Assembly in 1992; and when Affirmation PCA was able to purchase its own building in 1993, Smith led the congregation in prayer of thanksgiving and public covenanting before the Lord. Two weeks later, Frank Edward Smith entered into glory on July 24, 1993.

Review of the Book

When reviewing a book, one oft-overlooked and under-appreciated aspect is the book itself. *God's Man from Brooklyn* is a hardback book perfect for display on the coffee table—not too thick to be cumbersome, nor too thin to be awkward for its size and cover. The paper is of a quality weight, and the firsthand pictures throughout the book engage the reader in the history of Smith's life. This is complimented further by the author's style. Smith the younger writes in a story-telling manner, filled with naturally interwoven webs of familial, local, cultural, and ecclesiastical backstory—his prose teeming with an interest and care that shows not only a breadth of knowledge, but a depth of understanding to see how many aspects of life are interconnected and interdependent upon one another.

From the outset, the author pursued "the avoidance of hagiography," presenting rather an accurate depiction of one who "was far from perfect; but, he was genuine" ("Introduction"). There is a charity Christians should show toward one another and a greater honor which sons are to bestow upon their fathers—even in biography—while maintaining a sober-minded assessment; and this was accomplished in *God's Man from Brooklyn*, as seen, for example, in the honest critique of Smith's final sermon at Midway Presbyterian Church (p. 133).

Never overly technical, and always brimming with heart-warming affection, readers may sometimes be tempted to dismiss the tapestry of sub-narratives as rabbit holes deleterious to the subject of the book, only to find that these enjoyable anecdotes were carefully placed to illustrate the life and times of the man, the church, and the culture. In other words, the array of information presented is not series of disconnected tangents, but the setting of the ring by which one can behold the diamond of the display of God's providence in the life of His faithful servant. Frank J. Smith does well throughout to keep the story moving, attending proportionately to matters that were prominent in the life of his father. And while the book is comprised of stories that were doubtless handed down from the subject to the author, as well as drawing from the author's own experiences, Smith is far from relying solely on those accounts. On the contrary, and despite the author's statement that he has "deliberately kept the footnotes to a minimum" (p. 255), there are 188 footnotes, most of which are primary source materials (e.g., Session minutes, Presbytery records, firsthand written historical accounts) and showcase the author's meticulous research.

Reflections from the Book

One result of effective biography is that it leads to reflection and subsequent application. This is certainly true of *God's Man from Brooklyn.*

First, the life and ministry of Frank E. Smith shows how important it is that man must begin how he is to end. From the beginning, Smith had an unshakeable confidence in the Word. His wife recounts before they were married that even in the early days of his life in Christ, "he learned to quote Scripture rather than point a finger at me" (p. 22). Another mark of Smith's ministry from start to finish was his evangelical and experiential preaching, calling sinners to come to Christ and saints to examine themselves before the Lord in light of His Word (pp. 120–122, 232–249).

Second, the ministry of Smith demonstrates the sad reality that the same controversies which precipitated the formation of conservative, continuing churches are still being fought within those new ecclesiastical bodies and their sister churches throughout the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC). Many issues continue to arise concerning the need for warning against incoming liberalism (e.g., female ordination, pp. 99, 168), confessional and constitutional fidelity (pp. 127, 169), the reforming and purity of worship (pp. 73–74, 164, 168–169), and the need for independent ecclesiastical networks and journalism when denominational institutions become party to the doctrinal decline of the church (pp. 127, 170).

Third, the biography of Frank E. Smith shows what a lasting legacy truly looks like. In Psalm 90, the Prayer of Moses, the Church entreats Jehovah: "Establish thou the work of our hands upon us" (Psa. 90:17). What was the work of Israel's hands in those wilderness years to be established by God? It was not the grandeur of buildings or earthly inheritance, but their children. What work has Frank E. Smith left behind, established by the Lord? It is not the glory of vanity as seen through the eyes of this world, but rather four children who cherished their father and are walking with the Lord, and many sons and daughters of the faith begotten throughout his ministry. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

Conclusion

God's Man from Brooklyn: The Story of a Twentieth-Century Minister is an admirable biography for all readers as the story of God's faithfulness in the life of one of His faithful servants, Frank Edward Smith. In this biography, Frank J. Smith has provided accessible prose, a gripping story, and insightful history—all held together with the virtue and honorable love of a son for his father. Indeed, one cannot help but consider the devotion and dedication required for the production of this book and think: would that all sons had fathers such as Frank E. Smith, and all fathers had sons such as Frank J. Smith.

Review: Archibald Hall, *Gospel Worship: Being an Attempt to Exhibit a Scriptural View of the Nature, Obligations, Manner, and Ordinances of the Worship of God in the New Testament* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2024). Hardcover. 720 pages. $50. ISBN 979-88-86-86156-3. Reviewed by David Graves, organizing pastor, Living Stone Presbyterian Church, Wichita Falls, TX (OPC).

Books on worship are commonplace, and many of them prove forgettable after an initial read. Archibald Hall's *Gospel Worship,* which first appeared in 1770, stands the test of time. Hall began his ministry in the Associate Synod, pastoring in London. Later he pastored a Secession Church, likewise in London. Unlike many books on worship which restrict themselves to a few subjects of public worship, particularly Preaching and the Sacraments, Hall's book encompasses a practical guide to twenty-two matters encompassing public

worship, family worship, and personal piety. So, when he entitled his book *Gospel Worship*, he demonstrated his aim to encompass all aspects of piety.

He begins his work with an "Introductory Discourse" in which he argues for Reformed Worship in accord with the regulative principle of worship as set forth in the Westminster Assembly's *Directory for Public Worship* and *Directory for Family Worship*. Since he pastored in England as a Nonconformist, he spends a fourth of the "Introductory Discourse" arguing against liturgical forms as "unreasonable impositions." Given the encyclopedic nature of this work, the best way to summarize this work is through short summaries of the various chapters.

Chapter one gives practical instructions for reading the Word in private, family, and public worship. Chapter two defends and extols the preaching of the Gospel, and then gives directions to those who would preach. Chapter three gives exhortations, warnings, and directions for hearing the Word preached.

In Chapter four, Hall makes a concise and compelling argument for non-instrumental, exclusive psalmody. This argument is out of accord with much contemporary practice in the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches, but Hall was writing as the rejection of these two elements of Reformed worship had begun to develop, beginning with the work of Isaac Watts, with whom Hall takes time to interact. In addition, he argues against those who at his time were arguing against audible singing in general.

Chapter five addresses prayer as a part of worship. Hall commences this chapter with the nature of prayer. Then, after he deals with the nature of prayer, he argues for the obligation to pray both from the light of nature, from which he argues that it is an obligation for every human, and then from Scripture. Next, he details how this universal duty is specifically binding on Christians since only those prayers by the Spirit are accepted in Christ. He then deals with various objections to prayer, whether stemming from rationalist deductions, weakness, fear, or because the person lacks a special moving of the Spirit. Then in the final two sections, he answers several questions and details several rules for praying. Chapter six on the Public Blessing of the Congregation is an extended exegesis of the Aaronic Blessing of Numbers 6, in which Hall gives the Scriptural warrant for dismissing public worship with a blessing by the minister.

Chapters seven to nine give both a definition of and directions regarding the Sacraments in General, and Baptism and the Lord's Supper in particular. Chapters ten to twelve give descriptions of and directions for the observance of the Lord's Day, as well as the nature and duty of times of thanksgiving and religious fasts, respectively.

Though ministerial visitation is generally omitted from most contemporary worship manuals, Hall demonstrates the dependence of his outline on the Directory for Public Worship (though Hall does omit marriage from this work).

Hall in chapter thirteen gives detailed directions for visitation of the flock. After speaking of general principles and duties of such visitation, he gives particular directions on matters ranging from tempers, stations, relations, ages, employment, and financial conditions. Chapter fourteen then examines the obligation and duty of the elders to visit the sick.

Chapter fifteen speaks to the duty of catechizing. He breaks this down into the nature, manner, matter, and obligation to catechize. Then in the final two sections he discusses questions with regard to catechizing, and directions about it.

Chapter sixteen speaks of what he calls "Social Religious Meetings." Again, the breadth of Hall's aim as dealing with piety in general and not public worship in particular is evident by this chapter. He distinguishes these "social religious meetings" as either the communion of saints at large or the fellowship in congregations in particular. He commended cultivated, select societies. "They are regular societies of Christians, who have voluntarily agreed to assemble together, at stated times and places of meeting, for obtaining, and communicating, the useful purposes of holy friendship with one another." This broader aim is lacking in many works that narrowly examine either public worship or private worship generally available.

Chapter seventeen addresses matters related to family religion. He examines both the obligations of the duty and the causes of neglect of family worship that are often given. He concludes the chapter with practical directions addressing both heads of households and members of the family. Chapter eighteen then speaks to personal religion with arguments for this duty and aids for it.

The next three chapters address elements of worship that are generally omitted in books about worship, namely, giving to the poor, swearing by the Name of God, and vowing to the Lord. The final chapter addresses a matter to this writer's knowledge missing from any modern work on worship, the casting of lots. This chapter goes beyond the practice itself, to address the personal use of it in games of chance as well.

Hall adds four appendices concerning matters connected to worship that he argues have questionable validity: love-feasts, the holy kiss, washing the disciples' feet, and abstaining from blood. I will use the matter of the love-feasts as an example of his method. He starts with the historical argument used by many in favor of the love-feast as a separate meal either before or after the Lord's Supper. He quotes Tertullian, noting his is the most favorable argument for the love-feast, but then notes that the love-feasts were abolished between 348–400 because of abuses that were inherent in them. He then turns

to the Scriptures used to justify this practice. He argues that the Scriptures martialed to justify the practice (1 Cor. 11:20–22; 2 Peter 2:13; and Jude 12) of the love-feast in the apostolic era were all in fact addressing errors in the Lord's Supper itself. He thus concludes that there is no Scriptural justification for the practice, and that in the history of the Post-Apostolic era the love-feast descended into scandalous behavior, and that in its place charity on the part of the wealthier members of the congregation would be more profitable.

This catalog of chapters demonstrates the comprehensive nature of Hall's work as he seeks to cultivate piety in general as opposed to aiming at public worship, family worship, or private worship specifically. It is a book that should be commended for study by both Christians generally and officers of Christ's Church in particular. Its encyclopedic nature, in both layout and scope, makes it a resource that will be referred to again and again, especially as Hall covers many topics generally neglected in books about worship. Hall addressed all these matters with a sympathetic clarity that would benefit any reader, and the editing provided by Logan West makes Hall's work even more accessible.▪

Review: Jonathan L. Master, *Reformed Theology, Blessings of the Faith* (Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing, 2023). Hardcover. 112 pages. $15.99. ISBN 978-1-629954-09-7. Reviewed by Zachary Groff.

As the fourth installment (of six) in Presbyterian & Reformed Publishing's "Blessings of the Faith" series edited by Jason Helopoulos, Jonathan Master's *Reformed Theology* presents "a fairly mainstream, middle-of-the road definition" of the Reformed theological tradition (95). Master writes with verve and clarity, and his phrasing is memorable at more than a few points. This book is an excellent take-home gift for Reformed church visitors, those who are new to (or considering) Reformed theology, or as a base text for a new members class in a Reformed church.

In the Introduction, Master lays out the two big claims of the book: theology matters, and Reformed theology is a blessing. What follows are four brief chapters treating the substance of Reformed theology and the blessings of Reformed theology. Matching the other five volumes in the series, this book includes two appendices with questions and answers and recommended further reading.

So, what is Reformed theology? Master writes in the Introduction, "Reformed theology, centered on Jesus Christ and rooted in the Scriptures, seeks to explain the whole Bible by showing God's work of salvation from beginning to end. It gives an honest assessment of humanity and good news about the nature of salvation. More than that, it shows how the Bible instructs us personally, teaching us how we should worship God and serve him in our everyday lives at home, at work, and in the church" (15).

In unpacking that statement in the first chapter (What Is Reformed Theology?), Master briefly touches on the historical and popular definitions of Reformed theology before presenting "better ways to define the term" (20). Whereas the historical definition has limited usefulness for understanding Reformed theology as-such and the popular definition is woefully truncated in what it covers, the "better" definition is fuller in scope and comprehension, including the theology of the Reformation's Five Solas, the biblical framework of covenant theology, and the biblically motivated impulse to creedal and confessional statements. These major themes are what Master develops in the first three chapters.

In presenting the Five Solas of the Reformation (Sola Scriptural, Sola Fide, Sola Gratia, Solus Christus, and Soli Deo Gloria), Master rightly addresses the Reformers' historical concern with authority (Scripture over clerics). As he does so, he deftly shows the relevance this concern has for worship and for modern life. Today's Reformed churches champion the authority of Scripture over not only the pope and his magisterium, but also over cultural elites and private feelings. Master writes, "Whatever the competing authority—the pope, the cultural elite, or a private feeling—the Reformed doctrine of *sola Scriptura* asserts that the Bible alone must have the final word" (23). Furthermore, he presents *sola Fid*e as doctrinal material "out of which the Reformation was made" (25), and he champions the centrality of grace, Christ, and God in Reformed theology.

The doctrinal distinctives of covenant theology figure heavily in this book, and appropriately so. As Master writes, "covenants provide the biblical framework by which we understand God's work in Christ and his dealings with his people throughout history" (29). Because Reformed theology is concerned with being biblical, and the Bible is structured around successive covenants between God and man, covenant theology is part of the warp and woof of Reformed theology. The importance of creeds and confessions for Reformed theology is likewise highlighted, both in the body of the book (30, 77–82) and in the Question and Answers in the back of the book (98). It is a strong but true claim that Master makes, "to be Reformed is to be confessional; to be part of a Reformed church is to be in a place in which one of these historic confessions is professed, taught, and followed" (30). Not only is the confessional characteristic of the Reformed tradition a trait, but it is an asset in that the Reformed confessions "offer transparency to those within the church and to those outside it" (78). In our age of subjectivism, relativism, and confusion, such transparency and stability is indeed a great blessing.

In emphasizing the authority of Scripture in the second chapter, Master shares a foundational concern of the

Reformers and their theological successors. He grounds the authority of Scripture in its self-attesting character, and especially in the record of Christ's earthly ministry and teaching. He writes, "to be Christian—to truly trust in Jesus Christ and to follow him—we must hold to the traditional Christian teaching about the Bible. Scripture must be our final authority—our final court of appeal—precisely because we serve Christ" (36). Interestingly, Master does not mention the importance of the inner testimony of the Spirit to the authority and veracity of Scripture, either at this point or in the Question and Answer regarding the Reformed emphasis on the ministry of the Holy Spirit (89f). This is the only weakness I noted in the book, and it is a rather minor one at that. Perhaps my noting it reveals my Reformed 'prickliness' (90f).

One of the special strengths of this little treatment of Reformed theology is Master's emphasis on evangelism and missions as a distinctive interest of Reformed churches. By his presentation, Master makes it clear that we cannot rightly understand the doctrine of God's electing grace without recognizing the important implications this doctrine has for motivating the church's evangelistic and missionary enterprises (46f, 93–95).

In chapter four, Master gives five broad categories for understanding the blessings of Reformed theology. The first blessing is the security of Scripture, which involves doctrinal clarity, authoritative teaching, and the maintenance of proper doctrinal balance (or appropriate emphasis on various doctrines). The second blessing is the comfort of God's sovereignty in man's salvation, in all aspects of our personal life, and in all the world's affairs. Master devotes more space to his discussion of this blessing than any other, and he gives special attention to the place of suffering and God's sovereignty in the Christian life. Master's careful development of this blessing demonstrates his pastoral concern for readers as he rightly handles the truths of Reformed theology for the good of God's people. Thirdly, he highlights the wonder of God's electing grace which inspires rejoicing praise and assures us of a secure promise of ultimate glorification. The fourth blessing is the clarity of the covenant which shows us Christian salvation's unique benefits in Christ as well as the continuity of the covenant community (from the past, into the future, and with both home and church). The fifth blessing was mentioned above as the transparency in (and of) our confession (and Confessions) of faith. Master points out that one great strength of the Reformed Confessions is how they uphold the authority of Scripture for the faith and practice of both Christians and the church.

In presenting Reformed theology as a blessing to Bible-believing, Christ-loving, Evangelical Christians, Jonathan Master turns the tables on all-too-common tropes about the alleged weaknesses of the Reformed tradition. He effectively shows in this little book that "any areas that at first glance may appear to be liabilities are actually assets" (81). Readers will come away from this book with a new or renewed appreciation for the history and theological emphases of Reformed theology. This volume is a fine representative of what is shaping up to be a great series of pointed introductions to the basics—and blessings—of the Christian Faith as understood and proclaimed by Reformed and Presbyterian Churches around the world.▪