Ash, Christopher. *The Psalms: A Christ-Centered Commentary*. 4 vols. Wheaton: Crossway, 2024. 2,346pp. + 311pp. (back matter).

At $150, Christopher Ash's four-volume commentary on the Psalms is hardly an impulse buy; at 2,657 pages, it is hardly a source of quick answers. The poor or rushed reader might wish for Derek Kidner again. But this new set is entirely worthy of the cost both in dollars and in time because it offers more than mere comments—it offers an entire method of reading the Psalms.

After serving as a church planter in Little Shelford, UK, Ash is now resident author at Tyndale House. His other books include a commentary on Job (2014), *Zeal Without Burnout* (2016), and a number of practical counseling books. But the Psalms have been a recurring theme in his writing, including a work on Psalm 119 for teachers and readers (2011), *Psalms for You* (2020), *Teaching Psalms* (2021), and a Psalms Bible study (2025). The present commentary (2024) may be rightly viewed as his climactic work thus far.

The organization is clear enough. Volume 1 (427 pages) is prolegomena, setting out Ash's vision for the Psalms; each of the subsequent three volumes cover fifty psalms (750 pages each). The central thesis of volume 1 and therefore the entire set is that "the Psalms are essential to the life of the Christian church and that Christ is central to the Psalms" (1:xiii). Ash argues that Ephesians 5:18–20 mandates and guides our regular use of the Psalms (vol. 1, Introduction), and he shows how the Psalms cry out for fulfillment (ch. 1). Chapter 2 is arguably the most important chapter for Ash's Christocentric reading by tracing "how the New Testament understands the Psalms in their relationship to Jesus Christ" (57). Part 2 examines the Psalms in light of worship (ch. 4), prophecy (ch. 5), prayer and praise (ch. 6), Christology (ch. 7), and the righteous (ch. 8), and it includes a focus on the penitential (ch. 9) and imprecatory (ch. 10) psalms. The final section of volume 1 traces how the Psalms have been interpreted historically (chs. 11–12) from the Patristic Era (ch. 13) through Medieval (ch. 14), Renaissance and Reformation eras (ch. 15) to the present (ch. 16). There is also a helpful argument for singing the Psalms (Conclusion) and a vigorous case that "the superscriptions are faithful to the original authorship and historical origins of a psalm and are thus significant for interpretation" (300, Appendix 1).

Ash's program for reading the Psalms in light of Christ is persuasive but at times exorbitant. The history of interpretation brings both argumentative heft and a raft of problems. The weight of data from the NT's use of the OT is inescapable, and even readers who are familiar with the Psalms will discover many new and rich connections from this survey. Ash maintains that "it is absolutely *always* the case when a text of Israel's Scripture is quoted in the New Testament that the writers, guided by the Holy Spirit, open up to us the true, the full and the original meaning of the text" (47). And yet he also believes that the pattern of intertextuality leads us to look for a "messianic maximum" (51, quoting Dale Brueggemann). This seems like an invitation to excess.

All of these patterns can be seen in the commentary of volumes 2–4. Each psalm begins with several opening quotes from historical commentators. "Orientation" places the psalm in the context of history, the canon, and its arrangement within the collection of the Psalms, emphasizing links through quotations, allusions, or echoes. This is followed by "The Text," discussing structure, the

superscription, and each stanza. These comments are not overwhelmingly technical. Most exegesis that depends on Hebrew is restricted to the footnotes, and the bulk of the comments are accessible to English readers. Nor are the comments highly engaged with literary analysis as in Goldingay (2006–2008). Ash is clearly aware of the underlying linguistic details but chooses to focus on canonical links, tracing the conceptual flow and theology. The writing throughout is concise, clear, and enjoyable to read, making it useful for scholars, preachers, or devotional readers. "Reflection and Response" offers five to ten unstructured devotional or practical applications. This section includes highlights from historical commentators and never failed to yield multiple insights that enriched my preaching and challenged my life.

One of the greatest strengths of these commentaries is that the Psalms are not isolated to the OT context or offered as a literary masterpiece without practical application. This is because Ash does not view Christocentric links as a later step to be extended after we have already finished our exegesis in the original context. His readings are canonical from the very beginning. And yet, in nearly every psalm, I also found myself troubled that his approach extended too far. Should we read the waters of Psalm 22:2 as "an image of cleaning and of the Spirit of God" and the food as "an image of the word of God" given to us throughout all seasons of life (2:269)? Is Psalm 125 speaking "God's promises to a mixed church, in which wheat and weeds grow together" (4:381)? Is "the primary reference of [Psalm 126] to the church" (4:399)? Reading the Psalms Christocentrically is a badly needed corrective, but Ash's comments too often lose the first horizon. Ash is also inclined towards chiasm, but the recognition of such structure is not always persuasive, such as in Psalm 122 (4:353).

This commentary quickly became my favorite resource on the Psalms, particularly when paired with Craigie (WBC, 2004) for technical details and Goldingay (2006–2008) for literary analysis. Ash completes the exegetical process, offering exactly the canonical, theological, and Christocentric context that these works badly lacked. Besides the ways that volume 1 challenged my entire approach to the Psalms, I most often benefitted in the commentary from the "Orientation" sections and "Reflection and Response." I rarely completed a psalm without encountering comments that overread the canonical links, nor did I complete a psalm without being profoundly enriched and helped. I would caution readers from relying on Ash alone for their interpretive approach, while also maintaining that these are the single most helpful volumes in my library on the Psalms.

Crossway has formatted the books beautifully, making them a delight to read. Considering the quality of the binding, a slipcase might have been a nice improvement. But at $38 per beautiful hardback volume, this set is already an excellent value. Every student of the Psalms will be richly rewarded by carefully and attentively consulting this excellent work.

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Beale, G. K., et al., eds. *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 890pp. + 28pp. (front matter) + 74pp. (back matter).

Evangelical scholarship on biblical intertextuality reached a high watermark with the 2007 publication of the *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (*CNTUOT*).[1] Its companion *Dictionary of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (*DNTUOT*) should be considered equally significant to the discipline. Arranged alphabetically, the dictionary's 160 articles fall into five categories: (1) surveys of biblical books, (2) biblical-theological topics, (3) Jewish exegetical traditions, (4) inner-biblical exegesis, and (5) systematic theology. These categories cover a vast array of specific subjects, summarizing the latest research and theories in an ever-expanding field that encompasses multiple subdisciplines.

First, the surveys of Bible books assume the detailed diachronic analyses in *CNTUOT* and provide synchronic summaries of how each book uses earlier Scripture. Yet these analyses helpfully include what *CNTUOT* omits: how each *OT* book uses the OT. Thus, for example, the article on the Book of Ezekiel (J. Daniel Hays) discusses not only how the NT authors utilize Ezekiel but also how Ezekiel himself employs themes from the Torah, the Former and Latter Prophets, and the Psalms. In particular, he draws on the exodus, the presence of Yahweh and the Temple/Tabernacle, and shepherd imagery and the New Covenant, among several other OT concepts and images (242–45).

Second, the biblical-theological articles do thematic analysis over the entirety of the canon. For instance, Dana M. Harris traces the Day of the Lord throughout each Bible section in which it occurs, from the preexilic prophets through Revelation (161–65). Harris also follows the theme of "priest" along the storyline of Scripture, showing how Christ brings together the various strands of this concept (625–30). Themes that do not lend themselves to a storyline approach are organized under synthetic headings. David G. Peterson's article on worship provides an illustration (870–75). After discussing key OT terms, he explores OT perspectives such as "saved to serve" and "apostasy and division." The NT terms lead to perspectives such as "Jesus replaces the Temple" and "Jesus provides direct access to the heavenly sanctuary."

Third, the pieces on Jewish exegetical traditions cover a variety of sources relevant to the Bible's use of the Bible. *DNTUOT* includes multiple articles on each of the following: the Apocrypha; the Dead Sea Scrolls; the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrashim; the writings of Philo; the Pseudepigrapha; the Septuagint; and the Targums. These articles focus especially on Jewish interpretive methods and how they are similar to and different from the methods of the NT writers. Such discussion naturally enters controversial areas. For example, in "Septuagint, NT Use of," Karen H. Jobes posits that as a new divine speech-act the NT may authoritatively use the LXX in ways that differ from the intent of the Hebrew text of the OT (765–66).

Fourth, the articles on inner-biblical exegesis are diverse, covering everything from letter couriers to literacy in the Greco-Roman world to orality to the history of interpretation to typology. But if anything, some of these studies are among the most useful in the dictionary because of their treatment

[1] G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic/Nottingham: Apollos, 2007).

of methodology. Beale writes an entire article on "Method" for studying the NT use of the OT. Updating his earlier book on the subject (520–25),[2] he lays out a solid nine-step process.

Fifth, the inclusion of articles on systematic theology is a bit unexpected in a volume of this nature, as is the classification of an article on biblical theology under the heading of systematic theology (x). Yet these studies are valuable in showing how biblical intertextuality intersects with and contributes to broader theological concerns. Stephen J. Wellum shows how the Councils of Nicaea and Chalcedon are consistent with the Bible's own presentation of Jesus Christ ("Christology," 91–92). And in a different vein, those bewildered by the contemporary approach known as Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) may be helped by Kevin J. Vanhoozer's article on the subject (837–44).

The breadth and depth of *DNTUOT* are truly impressive. The work includes contributions from nearly one hundred scholars with expertise in intertextuality. One could quibble at the theological bent represented. I counted on one hand the authors I recognized as dispensational. The preference for Reformed/covenantal authors has, of course, been standard fare in evangelical publishing for years. But it might have been more even-handed to allow a dispensationalist to represent his own position rather than having an opponent describe and then counter dispensational views (Oren Martin, "Literal Fulfillment," 474–80). On that point, consistently literal interpreters can expect to object to the drift of some entries such as Brandon D. Crowe's endorsement of prosopological exegesis (641–48). Regardless of disagreements, however, *DNTUOT* remains unparalleled as a one-stop shop for all things intertextual.

As such, the work holds value for the preacher as well as the scholar. Some time ago I completed a sermon series on Exodus. Looking at Nicholas G. Piotrowski's article (235–41), I can see that I would have benefited from the retrospective connections he shows between Exodus and Genesis as well as the many connections with later OT books such as Isaiah and NT books such as John and 1 Peter. The commentary literature brings out such connections, but seeing them all in one place gives a richer perspective—even when one might not come to all the same theological conclusions from these connections. Thus, in my current preaching on 1 Corinthians I'm motivated to make use of Brian S. Rosner's article on the epistle (127–33). Though this letter does not contain nearly as many OT quotations as other Pauline writings, OT history and theology permeate its teaching. Rosner traces the intertextual themes of Temple worship (Malachi), divine wisdom (Isaiah), the grace of God (Deuteronomy), and the authority of Jesus Christ (Psalms). From these he argues that Paul is not merely responding to problems at Corinth. Instead, the apostle has given the Church a master class in how OT revelation shapes our understanding of our identity, message, and purpose.

For material like this, I commend *DNTUOT* to the reader, and I thank Beale and his coeditors for their prodigious work in pulling it together. I expect that their dictionary will deservedly become a staple in theological libraries.

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[2] See G. K. Beale, *Handbook on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012).

Bird, Michael F., and Scott Harrower, eds. *Unlimited Atonement: Amyraldism and Reformed Theology*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2023. 240pp.

Many theologians today hold to the idea of unlimited atonement while also holding to the other key points of traditional Reformed soteriology. Motivated by a lack of teaching resources supporting unlimited atonement from a Reformed perspective, Michael Bird and Scott Harrower edited this work on unlimited atonement. Fourteen scholars and pastors participated in this endeavor to explain Amyraldism[1] and unlimited atonement, survey its historical development, and describe its role in the Reformed tradition. The majority of the contributors appear to represent the Anglican tradition, though some represent Baptist, Wesleyan, and Episcopalian traditions. Harrower states that the purpose of the book is to promote "a more decidedly theological account of the atonement" that will aid our interpretation of the death of Christ on the cross (16).

Because each chapter has a different author, some key themes recur throughout the book, including summaries of Amyraldism. Some scholars have equated Amyraldism with four-point Calvinism. Unlimited atonement among Reformed theologians, however, preceded Amyraut and has historically been held by theologians who have been unaware of Amyraut or his teaching. The chapters by Crisp, Bird, Woznicki, and Fisher (chs. 1, 2, 3, and 7) most clearly delineate the Amyraldian distinctives. What is (typically) distinctive about four-point Calvinism is a belief in unlimited atonement, as opposed to limited (or definite) atonement. Amyraldism is one of several versions of four-point Calvinism. All views of unlimited atonement overlap to some degree, but they argue for the concept in specific ways.

One primary distinctive of Amyraldism is its ordering of decrees. Amyraut rejected the supralapsarian and infralapsarian order of decrees (Bird, 43) and proposed a different account of divine decrees: (1) to create humans; (2) to permit the fall; (3) to ordain Christ to make satisfaction for all; (4) to elect certain persons to salvation through faith (Woznicki, 63–64). The key here is that "satisfaction" in the third decree "on its own does not lead to salvation; satisfaction only leads to salvation on the fulfillment of the condition of faith" (67). For Amyraut, God is motivated in salvation primarily to display his goodness to all men, rather than primarily to display his glory (Bird, 46–47). By sending Christ to die for the sin of all, he is seeking to "overwhelm the whole world with his mercy" (47). Subsequently, then, to ensure that some will in fact be saved, God elects some to salvation by giving them the gift of faith (48–49). It should be noted that in chapter 11 Allen refers to this ordering of decrees as "allegedly" characterizing Amyraldism, which suggests that Allen has doubts about the role of these decrees in Amyraldism (205).

Another Amyraldian distinctive is Amyraut's idea of God's two covenants to undergird his hypothetical universalism. Bird discusses this concept in chapter 2. The first covenant is "an absolute and unconditional covenant whereby God saves the elect out of sheer grace." The second is "a hypothetical covenant whereby God saves anyone upon the condition of faith" (Bird, 44). The first covenant reflects God's "electing will" and the second refers to his "saving will." There is an "objective

[1] The subtitle of the book refers to "Amyraldism," but some authors in the book refer to "Amyraldianism." This review will use "Amyraldism."

grace for all" that is necessary for anyone to come to Christ, but the "subjective grace of salvation" is based on the condition of faith. These two covenants correspond to two wills in God, a universal will to save all, and a particular will to save only the elect (Bird, 44). In chapter 7, Fisher also discusses Amyraut's argument relating to covenant theology, but Fisher presents it as a "threefold covenant." The first two covenants are covenants with Adam and with Israel, each requiring obedience. The third covenant is a covenant of grace requiring faith. This covenant is divided into particular and universal aspects (Fisher, 150). The third covenant presented by Fisher aligns with and includes the two covenants delineated by Bird.

Each chapter provides its own unique discussion relating to the topic of unlimited atonement. In chapter 1, Oliver Crisp presents Anglican hypothetical universalism. The term *hypothetical universalism* is used to indicate that "Christ's saving work is in principle sufficient to save all of humanity" (28). Crisp believes Amyraut's ordering of decrees is "questionable" (32). Crisp's Anglican hypothetical universalism argues that the atonement "is *ordained to be really* sufficient for all humankind" and "not merely notionally sufficient" (33). This atoning work requires faith in order to be effectual. Crisp then discusses the "most significant conceptual objection" to unlimited atonement: the double payment objection. Crisp responds that because unbelievers do not have faith, they die without receiving the benefits of Christ's work, but they do not "pay" for their sins. They merely receive the consequences of their sin.

In chapter 2, Michael Bird discusses Amyraut's presentation of bi-covenantal universalism, explaining Amyraut's concept of two covenants and his unique ordering of decrees. Amyraut sought to return to an "authentic Calvinism" in contrast to the "ultra-orthodox" version of Beza and Turretin. For Amyraut, the compassion of God extends to all mankind because all people are equally depraved, and they are all equally represented by the Redeemer who took on their humanity. Whereas God chooses to give the gift of faith to some, he "predestines everyone to saveableness" (50). Overall, Amyraut's goal is to emphasize God's mercy and grace to humanity. Though the title of this chapter focuses on "Amyraut as exegete," the chapter includes almost nothing that qualifies as "exegesis" of Scripture. Also, it is somewhat difficult to see how God out of his goodness predestines all to "saveableness" while God's universal goodness determines to give the gift of faith only to certain individuals.

In chapter 3, Christopher Woznicki addresses one of the key objections to Amyraldism, which is the apparent incompatibility of an unlimited atonement with penal substitution. In regard to the objection that unlimited atonement and penal substitution are incompatible because together they would lead to universal salvation, Woznicki treats this as a *reductio ad absurdum* argument. Woznicki then addresses the double payment objection to Amyraldism. For the Amyraldian, "satisfaction on its own does not lead to salvation. Satisfaction only leads to salvation on the fulfillment of the condition of faith" (67). Woznicki argues that "satisfaction" rather than "atonement" is the more precise word to refer to the work of Christ on the cross. Furthermore, if even the elect are under God's wrath prior to exercising faith in Christ (cf. Eph. 2:1–3), then they are under condemnation and subject to judgment until they believe. But according to the double payment objection, this would be unjust, since their sins were already punished in Christ. Therefore, the satisfaction of Christ's death is applied

only upon the exercise of saving faith. This chapter seems to be the most important chapter of the book because of its helpful discussion of unlimited atonement in relation to penal substitution.

In chapter 4, R. T. Mullins examines the problem of how in unlimited atonement God does not get what he desires. After much discussion about the attributes of God's greatness, his rationality, the general and meticulous nature of his decrees, and the relation of human freedom to divine decrees, Mullins questions how to account for God's unfulfilled desires for all to be saved (1 Tim 2:4; 2 Pet 3:9). Mullins suggests that God's purpose for creating the universe is "that creatures can enjoy everlasting friendship with God" (85). He concludes that if one accepts his view of the universalist desire, "it would be incredibly difficult to affirm a theory of salvation that does not offer unlimited atonement" (88). The weakness of the argument is in Mullins's assumption that all would agree that "everlasting friendship with God" is God's primary purpose for creating the universe. Unfortunately, as engaging and interesting as his argumentation is up to this point, the conclusion is unsatisfying.

In chapter 5, Jonathan Curtis Rutledge seeks to "provide a framework from which one can more easily evaluate or discern the appeal of a doctrine of unlimited atonement" based on the nature of the concept of forgiveness (90). Rutledge suggests that if forgiveness is unilateral and not dependent on the cooperation of the wrongdoer to respond with repentance, then it could be argued that God forgives every sinner (if the atonement is unlimited). Unilateral forgiveness does not necessarily entail "that all human persons will eventually reside in the new creation" (99). This depends on the gift of faith. Rutledge then compares forgiveness to the atonement. The act of atonement is finished and complete in the death and resurrection of Christ, in spite of the stubbornness and sinfulness of man. For the limited atonement view, atonement for sins will certainly entail one's presence in the new creation. The unlimited atonement view holds to "a difference between *efficient atonement* and *merely sufficient atonement*" (102). Rutledge's argument is rational and interesting, but not likely convincing enough to sway proponents of limited atonement.

In chapter 6, Joshua R. Farris and S. Mark Hamilton examine the arguments of Peter Lombard, Edward Polhill, and William Ames to understand various concepts of the mechanism of the atonement, particularly in relation to the double-payment objection. Farris and Hamilton "argue that penal substitution is parasitic upon claims of unlimited atonement and as such will either admit of universal salvation or interminably suffer under the burden of a double payment" (109). Peter Lombard is the first theologian to assert that Christ's satisfaction is "sufficient for all humanity but efficient only for the elect" (110). Edward Polhill (1622–1694), an Anglican jurist, argues that Christ pays two separate debts in his death, one to the moral law, and an eternal debt to God (117). Christ suffered physical death in the place of sinners, but he could not have suffered eternal punishment in place of sinners. In relation to the double-payment problem, Polhill simply argues that God determined that Christ's death would absorb the penalty for all humanity while only being effective for those who exercise faith. William Ames (1576–1633) upholds the idea that Christ was in fact punished for our sin. However, "he is not describing a punishment that is absorbed (i.e., a debt of punishment) by Christ that brings the redemption of humankind" (126). Rather, he paid the price of redemption for us, which is the punishment of the curse that falls on all humans—he suffers bodily death. Christ's achievement is one of merit whereby he cancels (not absorbs) the eternal punishment

due to us. Christ's death satisfies God, resulting in God providing benefits to humanity. In the end, Ames avoids the double-payment objection because Christ pays the full debt of honor owed to God for human sin. "The infinite merit of the sacrifice of his infinite self offsets the infinite demerit of human sin" (129). It does seem that Ames successfully avoids the double-payment objection. The concern is the rejection—or perhaps, the redefinition of the concept of penal substitution.

In chapter 7, Jeff Fisher briefly surveys Amyraut's life and theology. Amyraut wrote a treatise in 1634 defending the Reformed doctrine of predestination, in which he highlighted God's universal grace to all humanity. Amyraut continued to assert that his views on predestination and universal grace were consistent with both Calvin's views and with Scripture. Though some (like Turretin) accused him of being Arminian, Amyraut's position was consistent with the Canons of Dort, which left the teaching on the extent of the atonement ambiguous enough for Amyraut's view. The Westminster Assembly was called during Amyraut's lifetime, and a number of members of the assembly upheld the views of Amyraldism or hypothetical universalism. Fisher points out that Amyraldism represents just one narrow version of hypothetical universalism. Fisher acknowledges that few theologians have actually held to hypothetical universalism while holding the same distinctives as Amyraut.

In chapter 8, Rory Shiner examines D. B. Knox's presentation of hypothetical universalism. Knox taught at Moore College in Sydney, Australia, from 1959–1985 and is "the father of modern Sydney Anglicanism" (154). Knox wanted preachers to be able to present Christ's sacrifice as available to all their hearers without qualification, and he believed limited atonement would push adherents away from Reformed theology. Shiner elaborates on Knox's influence among Australian Anglicanism during his lifetime and through the present day.

In chapter 9, Joshua McNall interacts with four different authors who present different variations of unlimited atonement in the twenty-first century: Andrew Louth (Orthodox), Matthew Levering (Roman Catholic), Fred Sanders (Wesleyan), and Tom Greggs (Christian Universalism). McNall seeks to demonstrate that though these agree on the extent of the atonement, this "unity does not imply a uniformity" (170). McNall concludes the chapter with three cautions from these authors: (1) Resist the urge to favor the particular or the universal. Both are in the Scriptures. (2) Rather than just recognizing the tension, also seek to address the tension. (3) Be open to ways in which the atonement provides at least some benefit for all humans. McNall points out that unlimited atonement "is, in one form or another, the consensus viewpoint of the Christian tradition" (181). This does not make unlimited atonement correct, "but it does matter."

In chapter 10, James Arcadi discusses the Anglican tendency to pursue a "middle way" between various theological topics, citing the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion as an example of this tendency in sixteenth-century Anglicanism. Anglican views on universal atonement developed prior to and independent from Amyraut's influence. Arcadi then argues that because of the sacrifice of Christ for all, humans have a dispositional property to be saved when influenced by the appropriate stimulus. The gift of faith is that necessary stimulus. Arcadi shows how this idea is similar to Crisp's view (see chapter 1), though Arcadi's presentation avoids the potential problem of accounting for the salvation of those who are mentally or cognitively unable to exercise saving faith. Arcadi concludes that infant

baptism perhaps provides this impetus of saving faith to an infant or to those who are cognitively challenged.

In chapter 11, David Allen demonstrates that the Baptist tradition has included various forms of Calvinism for most of its history. He demonstrates that rather than representing a "softening" of limited atonement, unlimited atonement was a trajectory long recognized as an orthodox view among the Reformed since the beginning of the Reformation. A limited-atonement view was not articulated prior to Beza in 1586. Allen then focuses on the influence of English hypothetical universalism on Baptist thought. All Calvinists agree that the "effectual purpose" of Christ's death is to save the elect alone, and this results in an "eventual limited effectual application" (209). Allen believes unlimited atonement is consistent with Reformed theology, and he classifies both Calvin and Amyraut in this category. Allen then discusses Andrew Fuller's hypothetical universalism. Fuller was the most influential particular Baptist in the early nineteenth century and argued that a genuine offer of the gospel to all requires an unlimited atonement. Fuller strongly influenced the founding of the SBC.

In chapter 12, Michael Jensen works to explain how the particular and universal aspects of the atonement ought to provide a resource for thinking clearly about the church's relationship with the world. Jensen argues that both Augustine and Bavinck's account of the Cross's impact for the common good are inadequate, and he examines three key NT passages that relate the Cross to the common good: 1 Corinthians 1:1–2:5; Colossians 1:15–23; and 1 Peter 2:11–3:22. Jensen concludes with three primary observations. (1) The atonement "establishes a community of people eager to seek the common good" (230). (2) The atonement unites people from varying nations together into one common people. (3) The Cross provides the foundation for people to stand against the sin and evil brought about by the world and to demonstrate mercy and grace to the world.

In the book's concluding chapter, the only female contributor, Amy Peeler (an Episcopal Rector), provides a sermon on John 13. She emphasizes the fact that Jesus had chosen the twelve, and John comments on Jesus' love for the twelve, though Judas would eventually betray him. This demonstrates the universal and particular love of Christ.

Bird and Harrower have compiled a mostly helpful collection of essays clarifying distinctives of Amyraldism and hypothetical universalism. A careful reading of the book reveals that though each author holds to unlimited atonement, it is probable that most of the authors of the book would not hold to Amyraldism in a proper sense. While all the chapters are generally helpful, some are especially valuable in understanding key arguments of hypothetical universalism. This volume is particularly useful for clarifying the distinctives of Amyraldism in comparison to other views of unlimited atonement (particularly chapters 1–3). Additionally, Woznicki's argument in chapter 3 provides helpful groundwork for understanding the coherence of penal substitution with unlimited atonement. Chapters 1 and 3 satisfactorily deal with the double-payment objection.

Some portions of the book leave more to be desired. (1) The use of Scripture throughout the book is quite sparse, which is surprising since it is presenting a view that can be supported by many Scripture passages. Also, there is no Scripture index or subject index. The authors seem to approach the topic with the assumption that the readers are aware of key texts supporting universal atonement, and their focus is to argue for the logical and theological coherence of the unlimited-atonement view. (2) A

challenge with many edited compilations with multiple authors is the repetition of certain concepts, creating overlap among the chapters. Most authors are giving a summary of their view of Amyraut's contributions, and some topics are covered multiple times. (3) It was disappointing that the authors do not interact meaningfully at all with John Hammett's "multiple intentions" view, which was put forward in 2015, several years prior to the publication of this book.

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Kennedy, Simon P. *Against Worldview: Reimagining Christian Formation as Growth in Wisdom.* Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2024. 126pp. + 12pp. (front matter) + 8pp. (back matter).

In 1985 Al Wolters published *Creation Regained,* a little book on worldview that has proven to be seminal for many over the ensuing years.[1] In around one hundred pages Wolters outlines basic concepts that help Christians analyze, evaluate, and act in the world. Forty years later, in about the same number of pages, Simon Kennedy, an Australian scholar of history, religion, politics, and theology, wrote *Against Worldview*. He is especially concerned about the pervasive use of the concept of worldview in education. Kennedy levels the following charges: the worldview concept is vague, difficult to put into practice, too dogmatic, too deductive, reductionistic, and overly focused on apologetics.

To demonstrate the critique of vagueness, Kennedy surveys a series of worldview definitions. This survey, however, reveals the kind of misunderstanding that bedevils Kennedy's book. Al Wolters's understanding of worldview, to take one of the thinkers cited by Kennedy, cannot be reduced to a single sentence and then pronounced vague. Kennedy could come to this conclusion only by neglecting the totality of Wolters's book. Kennedy never engages with Wolters apart from citing and dismissing his definition of worldview. There is no interaction with basic worldview concepts (such as structure and direction), with the thinkers who influenced Wolters (such as Dooyeweerd), or with Wolters's heirs (such as Bartholomew, Goheen, and Koyzis). The failure to engage major worldview thinkers with specificity is a major weakness of this volume.

In arguing that the worldview concept is difficult to put into practice, Kennedy observes that at his college he needed to have a learning outcome tied to worldview for each of his courses. He protests: "How do you frame a Christian worldview learning outcome for a course on, for example, Greek and Roman poetry? Or what about a course on the history of World War II?" (9). There are academic disciplines in which worldview shaping is difficult, but the questions Kennedy poses are not difficult. Are there no ethical, moral, or theological issues raised in a history course on World War II? Does Hesiod's *Works and Days* provide no opportunity to discuss the origin of suffering or the meaning of work? Does Lucretius's *De rerum natura* offer no opportunity to contrast naturalism with biblical supernaturalism? To ask these questions is to answer them.

Kennedy repeatedly criticizes worldview thinking as "dogmatic" and "deductive" whereas, in his view, education should be primarily inductive. This is a curious critique. How would this critique land if the term *worldview* were substituted with the term *theology*? To be sure, since worldview concerns itself with general revelation as well as special revelation, there are certainly areas of worldview thinking that should be taught more provisionally. But as stated, Kennedy's critique applies only to the misuse of the worldview in education; it does not apply to proper use.

Finally, Kennedy repeatedly calls worldview a "combat concept." He maintains that worldview is too apologetically oriented to be useful in education. Kennedy seems to be trading in a false dichotomy. Worldview can be used to highlight the differences between a Christian worldview and non-Christian

[1] For the most recent edition, see Albert M. Wolters, *Creation Regained: Biblical Basics for a Reformational Worldview,* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005).

worldviews, but this does not mean that this is its only function. This alleged problem is pronounced in Kennedy's analysis due to his own selection of worldview thinkers. He chose to highlight people who use worldview as a "combat concept" while ignoring those who use it more constructively. This selectivity especially mars the chapter that purports to provide a history of Christian worldview. A focus on different figures in the latter part of the chapter would complicate his thesis.

Herman Bavinck is one worldview thinker that Kennedy appreciates. Kennedy draws appreciatively on Bavinck's defense of realism. However, he dissents from Bavinck's worldview approach, citing three objections. "First, the assertion that knowledge of the world depends on a unifying overarching religious belief does not help us make sense of the educational project." Second, "Christians and non-Christians do not have a different epistemological status when it comes to the sciences and scholarship. Nor is a Christian closer to the truth than a non-Christian in the study of any subject, other than theology and ethics." Third, "There can be a Christian worldview without elements of that view becoming necessary for true access to knowledge" (56). These three negations reveal that Kennedy is not simply opposed to the politicization of worldview or the reduction of worldview to apologetics. He is opposed to the idea of Christian worldview because he is opposed to the idea that Christianity is comprehensive in its claims across the academic disciplines and that it stands in an antithetical relationship to competing non-Christian claims across those disciplines.

When Kennedy outlines his alternative to worldview, he proposes that *wisdom* can replace *worldview*. He gets some important things right. For instance, he concludes, "The world is made with wisdom as a part of its structure, meaning that human action needs to be concurrent with the structure of reality in order to be wise" (80). Nonetheless, there are two fundamental flaws in Kennedy's approach. First, wisdom already plays a significant role in the thought of major worldview thinkers. For instance, Al Wolters's *Creation Regained* devotes a significant portion the chapter on creation to unpacking the Bible's teaching about wisdom and to identifying its significance for a biblical worldview. Craig Bartholomew is a noted scholar of both OT wisdom literature and worldview. His writings often relate the two. But Kennedy failed to recognize the significance that wisdom has for the worldview concept, and he does not interact with any of this literature. Second, Kennedy distinguishes between "practical wisdom" and "spiritual wisdom." He acknowledges that both are united in Christ, but he claims that in "life under the sun" they are often separate (85). Education outside religious instruction is focused on practical wisdom. This distinction, so fundamental to Kennedy's rejection of the worldview concept, is foreign to Scripture. Kennedy cites many verses in Proverbs as examples of practical wisdom, but Proverbs 1:7 signals that this practical wisdom cannot be separated from the fear of the Lord.

Kennedy then relates his *wisdom not worldview* approach to education. He argues that teachers should be free to teach their disciplines according to the best recognized standards of those disciplines without asking how those disciplines can be taught from a Christian worldview. On the one hand, Kennedy says that he is not arguing for the secularization of Christian education (103). On the other hand, he denies that "the Bible speaks to everything that we may teach about in the classroom" (105). He claims, "Aside from the teaching of the Bible and doctrine, the Scriptures offer limited resources for the Christian teacher. Because of this fact, we need to use the Bible with great care. It is not

something we should force into space where it doesn't fit" (105). Kennedy provides an example of the Bible's alleged irrelevance to parts of life: "I distinctly remember the day when someone pointed out to me that the Bible does not mention this thing called a 'Nintendo 64'" (105). This comment reveals a superficial understanding of how the Bible relates to life. The Bible also doesn't mention genetic engineering or artificial intelligence, but this does not mean that the Bible has nothing to say about these technologies. It seems that Kennedy is reacting to superficial, proof-texting approaches to faith and learning without really understanding deeper worldview approaches to education. In other words, his rejection of worldview does not seem to be fully informed.

This failure to understand basic worldview concepts also displays itself in Kennedy's misunderstanding of the role of Creation, Fall, and Redemption in worldview analysis. Kennedy says that teaching civics, biology, Greek mythology, and history can be ruined by forcing them to conform to a "theological narrative framework" such as Creation, Fall, Redemption, Consummation (104). This statement reveals a misunderstanding of how the Creation, Fall, Redemption categories serve as an analytical tool. Kennedy wants to replace worldview with wisdom, but a fundamental aspect of wisdom is asking how given artifacts, sociofacts, and mentifacts conform to or deviate from the creation order (Creation and Fall). The wise person also needs to discern how best to conform to creational norms in a fallen world (Redemption). Far from imposing an alien "theological narrative framework" onto various academic disciplines, this kind of analysis is inescapable for faithful Christian engagement of the academic world.

Simon Kennedy is correct that the term *worldview* has proliferated in discussions of Christian education. There is certainly much that flies under the banner of worldview that deserves critique, and some of Kennedy's critiques legitimately apply to some who claim the worldview label. Nonetheless, Kennedy's critique falls short on three grounds. First, he has not substantively engaged the thought of the best worldview thinkers. Second, his protest against the intrusion of worldview into the academic subjects and his assertion of the Bible's irrelevance to much of academic life reveals a superficial approach to the application of the Bible to life as well as lack of awareness regarding the theological issues raised in the teaching of the various academic disciplines. Third, Kennedy's rejection of the antithesis between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of the world is an overreaction to the apologetic emphasis of some worldview thinkers.

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Doriani, Daniel M., ed. *The Death of the Deadly Sins: Embracing the Virtues That Transform Lives*. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2025. 162pp. + 15pp. (front matter) + 22pp. (back matter).

In *The Death of the Deadly Sins*, nine contributors address the seven capital sins—price, greed, anger, envy, sloth, gluttony, and lust—and the virtues with which the Holy Spirit replaces them. The book does not propose to break new ground theologically, but it brings a balanced, formal discussion of the necessity of virtue to bear on an audience that might otherwise treat such a discussion as a shibboleth of legalism. The basic premise of the contributors is that the gospel transforms. It always has. It always will. Therefore, pursuing virtue as directed by the Holy Spirit through the Scriptures is not legalism. It is the expected growth of every child of God into the image of God.

In the introductory chapter, Daniel Doriani defines virtue as "the *reliable* disposition to *desire* what is good, to *discern* what is good, and to *practice* it faithfully, even when that is difficult" (5). By this definition, Doriani distinguishes virtue (the settled disposition) from the single act (a good deed). This leads to a clear articulation of the fact that individual failures and sins do not negate a believer's progress in sanctification. Doriani rejects "virtue skeptics" among both the philosophers and influencers of the modern age (2)—exposing in modern culture what I call *aretephobia* (a fear of or disgust with virtue).

In chapter 2, Doriani addresses both the reasons and paths to virtue. He surveys secular recommendations (be virtuous in order to gain pleasure, be virtuous to avoid guilt and shame, be virtuous to exhibit your superiority or good sense) and exposes them as inadequate. Secular reasons for virtue neither please God nor have staying power. Doriani discusses several ethical theories (golden mean, categorical imperative) as representative secular determinants of what is virtuous and finds them similarly lacking. The chapter concludes with an appeal to use the divinely ordained means of grace and disciplines of grace to cultivate virtue.

Robbie Griggs surveys virtue and vice through church history. He shows how biblical virtues do not match their secular Greek and Roman counterparts (28). Then he addresses the rise of the concept of deadly (capital) sins as those that lead to many other sins (30). Several early church theologians identified the ultimate virtue as love (38).

In chapter 4 Dustin Messer calls for replacing pride with humility. Vice, and especially the vice of pride, is "the natural state of mankind" (47). Fallen humanity exhibits autonomy from God (47). Apart from the reality of Christ's life, death, and resurrection, the world is about power and self-exaltation (49). Humility comes only through Scripture and its transformative work in the gospel. Finally, Messer rejects a crucial flawed understanding of humility (that humility is self-contempt) that is often mistaken as the virtue (52).

Philip Ryken moves the reader "from greed to generosity" in chapter 5. He shows how greed is a "disordered affection," or one that warps the use of gifts God has given by turning the gifts—not the Giver—into the object of affection (58). Ryken nuances greed by showing how it appears in both the miser and the prodigal. One is so greedy that he will not let go. The other is so greedy that he lets go too quickly to grab for something even more attractive (59). In the middle of his chapter, he drops several gems: "Anger is one of the most accurate indexes to our idolatries" (61), and "Generosity grows most rapidly in the good soil of gratitude" (68). In the second half of the chapter, Ryken shows how

generosity—specifically, giving cheerfully, consistently, increasingly, and sacrificially—transforms a person's affections and replaces vice with virtue.

In chapter 6, "From Anger to Graciousness," Michael Kruger observes that anger is the one deadly sin that is not always sinful (77). However, the righteous use of anger is rare and nearly foreign to fallen humans. Instead, we are far too often angry for the wrong reasons and in the wrong ways (78). Rather than positing secular mechanisms for stress relief or detachment, Kruger points to the grace found in Scripture as the solution (82). We must recognize the grace of God toward us. Then we must reflect God's grace onto others.

Melissa Kruger addresses one of the most pernicious of the deadly sins in chapter 7, "From Envy to Contentment." The chapter equates envy and covetousness (91) and does not develop the malice that seems to be inherent in *invidia*. The latter part of the chapter shows one of the primary solutions in contentment.

In chapter 8 Trent Casto covers the transformation from sloth to diligence. He faces several challenges in this chapter. First, the modern use of *sloth* is nearly equivalent to laziness, but this understanding does not pair well with the traditional deadly sin. Second, because the vice lists changed from person to person (Evagrius to John Cassian to Gregory), sloth came to include both *acedia* (torpor) and *tristitia* (melancholy) in a single word. Casto's subsection on "the evidence of sloth" helpfully demonstrates that sloth is not merely laziness but is found in hopelessness, fear, and even restlessness. He summarizes these as "avoiding the demands of love" (117). The solution, then, is to return to the demands of love with vigilant perseverance and fervent diligence.

Doriani contributes another chapter, "From Gluttony to Thanksgiving," in which he observes, "The connection between gluttony and a global lack of direction and self-control is so common in Scripture that theologians call gluttony a gateway vice, one that easily leads to additional sins" (121). Doriani lists "five virtues that displace gluttony: service, thanksgiving, stewardship, restraint, and beauty" (128). As presently grouped, the list is puzzling since it undermines the chapter title somewhat by blending thanksgiving into a smattering of virtues, disciplines, and practices that all correlate inversely to gluttony. The chapter concludes with practical counsel on defeating inordinate desire for self-indulgence.

Christine Gordon takes up "From Lust to Love" in chapter 10. Gordon treats lust broadly in terms of any kind of inordinate desire including a desire for power, pain avoidance, and sexual sins. This accords more with John Cassian's *luxuria* than with Evagrius's *porneia*—illustrating just how hard it is to nail down what the "deadly sins" really are. In either case, whether one takes a broad or narrow definition of this vice, the solution remains the same—biblical love.

A final chapter by Jen Michel urges believers to pursue an organic growth of virtue in their lives through small, repeated, biblically informed decisions. She cautions against modern pseudo-values and false virtues that crowd out the true.

While several contributors make brief reference to the connections among the deadly sins, they do not develop this point in detail.[1] Given the mutually reinforcing nature of the capital sins and their impact on other "lesser" sins, this development could be stronger. Additionally, the references to "disciplines of abstinence" in chapter 2—involving solitude, silence, fasting, frugality, chastity, and sacrifice—feel less theologically precise than the rest of the book and seem to favor (given the shoutout to Foster and Willard) the Renovaré movement, which is known for ecumenism, asceticism, and traditionalism. Finally, Ryken seems to affirm Aristotelian virtue with the statement, "The virtue of liberality walks the fine line between miserliness and 'spendthriftiness'" (66). Defining virtue negatively as a midpoint between two vices inverts the moral order by treating vice (and the necessity of knowing it) as antecedent to virtue. While such an appeal might demonstrate ways in which a virtue may be corrupted, it must be heavily cautioned against as an actual mechanism for determining what is virtuous. Christian definitions of the moral order stem directly from what God has revealed in his Word, not from speculative philosophy that defines virtue primarily in antithesis to vice.

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[1] Significantly, the authors overlook Brian R. Hand, *Web of Iniquity: The Entangling of Sins* (Greenville, S.C.: BJU Press, 2016), which treats the capital sins in greater theological detail and would have been highly germane to their study.

Bingham, Matthew. *A Heart Aflame for God: A Reformed Approach to Spiritual Formation*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2025. 332pp. + 13pp. (front matter) + 20pp. (back matter).

A Heart Aflame for God: A Reformed Approach to Spiritual Formation by Matthew Bingham is a comprehensive treatment of spiritual formation drawn from the heritage left to the church by the Reformers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Bingham's goal is to motivate within the current confessional evangelical Christian community a retrieval of "divinely appointed means that God has clearly given in Scripture and that the Reformed tradition has consistently commended as unambiguously biblical and therefore consistently edifying" (40). Bingham's work is also a warning shot to the church that much of what is written about spiritual formation from various evangelicals offers, at best, a muddled view of means and terminologies cobbled together from quasi-religious or even secular methodologies. At worst, this piecing together of various sources is not only confusing when attempting to understand spiritual formation but, as Bingham points out, it is dangerously heretical. To right the ship, Bingham focuses on the Reformers' understanding and practice of the means of grace as a guide to help the confessional evangelical church advance toward Christlikeness.

Matthew Bingham is vice president of academic affairs and associate professor of church history at Phoenix Seminary in Scottsdale, Arizona. He authored the book *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* and served as a pastor in the United States and Ireland. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and his research and writing focus primarily on the history and theology of post-Reformation England. Bingham's background and experience give him a well-earned voice to address the spiritual practices of the Reformers.

Just as surveyors measure and map areas of land, Bingham begins his work by measuring and mapping the landscape of spiritual-formation practices among the Reformers and that of the Roman Catholic Church to lay out a distinct boundary line that separates the two. The Reformers, having navigated the land from within Roman Catholicism, recognized that certain practices, particularly in late medieval Catholicism, were at odds with Scripture and ultimately stemmed from a theology that taught self-righteousness. As Bingham argues, the Reformers, alarmed by these practices and their intended destination, chose spiritual-formation practices defined by Scripture that would lead to conformity to Christ as the outcome. As he demonstrates, the Roman Catholics of today have continued in the tradition of their medieval counterparts and continue to posit that spiritual formation is a means of salvation. These two distinct destination points clearly defined the borderline between the land of the Reformers and that of the Roman Catholic Church.

Bingham warns that much modern scholarship on the topic of spiritual formation borrows from Roman Catholic practices and beliefs that the Reformers deliberately rejected. Central to these beliefs is the Catholic doctrine that merges justification and sanctification as means of salvation. The Reformers viewed this linkage as diminishing the believer's active role in sanctification—the process of becoming more like Christ—and further fueled a form of self-righteousness. In Catholicism, sanctification is viewed as a mystical, grace-infused process mediated through sacraments, minimizing personal transformation. The Reformers, by contrast, emphasized that justification leads to an active, heart-driven pursuit of Christlikeness (Prov 4:23), not mere ritual observance. Bingham cautions that

the mystical elements adopted by some evangelicals echo Catholic and Orthodox traditions, promoting self-righteousness over genuine spiritual growth.

Bingham defends the Reformers' view on spiritual formation, centered on three core disciplines: the Word, meditation, and prayer—what he calls the "Reformed Triangle." Reformed spirituality emphasizes the sufficiency of Scripture for soul care, rejecting church traditions and extrabiblical practices that do not foster spiritual growth (81). This focus on Scripture is seen as a response to criticisms from some in the evangelical church who view it as spiritually shallow compared to the more liturgical Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox traditions. As Bingham notes, while seeking greater spiritual depth, some evangelicals have erroneously turned to Catholic rituals, such as "mass . . . confession . . . penances . . . relics . . . and pilgrimages" (81). In contrast, the Reformers upheld *sola Scriptura,* arguing that spiritual fulfillment is found in God's Word alone, not in human-made rites and rituals. Bingham writes, "For the psalmist, spiritual plentitude and fulness is found in God's word, and one need not look beyond it for an imagined spiritual 'more'" (80).

In addition to the transformative work of the Word, Bingham highlights the invaluable means of meditation and prayer. Biblical meditation, as practiced by the Reformers, is rooted in "directing one's attention toward God and his promises as revealed in Scripture with the aim of stirring up God-honoring affections" (131). Bingham is primarily focused on the nature of meditation as Word-focused, as opposed to Eastern mystics who seek to clear the mind to achieve a state of zero-consciousness, thereby becoming one with the divine. The Reformers understood that the mind must be fully engaged on the Word in meditation if one hopes to reflect Christ in his life. As the Reformers would argue, it is the practice of meditation that "unlocks" happiness for the believer (133). This happiness produced by meditation is rooted in what it evokes: "praises, thanksgivings, lamentations, and supplications" (132). Meditation, as the Reformers saw it, was not a suggestion, but a biblical duty (Pss 1; 119:48) (133). John Ball (1585–1640) suggested that "the most holy" men "abounded in meditation" (134). Their understanding of the seriousness of meditation as a practice is best summed up in Ball's *Treatise of Divine Meditation*. Bingham explains, "Without meditation 'a Christian life cannot stand'" (135). This is due in part to the fact that "thinking about divine truth" has an aim, as the Reformers maintained, of "kindling" or "stirring up" godly affections (136–37). As Bingham suggests earlier in his book, one objection among believers today toward Reformed Christianity is that it is doctrinally heady, dry, and wooden. Here Bingham points out that this was not the case among the Reformers. The Reformers' attention to Scripture was rooted in the belief that "ideas about God are transformed into love of God" (160).

Meditation fuels love, and prayer is the expression of that love. As the personal God leaps from the pages of Scripture to the heart of the believer through meditation, one is moved to speak to God in a straightforward natural way (171). Simply, the Reformers believed that "prayer is real communication with a God who is actually there and really does listen" (165). Medieval Catholicism's practice of prayer was rooted in the belief that the *words* being uttered produced power (177). Opposed to this, the Reformers saw God's power, through meditation on his Word, as producing affections in the heart and mind that provoked "an earnest talk with God" (171) that was "thoughtful, heartfelt, and rightly tethered to Scripture" (175).

In the third section of his work, Bingham builds on the Reformed triangle and widens his scope to address the practices of self-examination, the natural world, and Christian relationships. Bingham unpacks and explores these essential practices of the Reformers, clearly showing a line of practice that extends to the Puritans and early evangelicals. Bingham gives weight to the outside influences that can infect these three practices, robbing them of the grace found in spiritual formation. He notes that self-examination may lead to an overt preoccupation with the self (220). This preoccupation leads to selfishness rather than personal holiness, as intended. Additionally, reflecting on nature as a means toward understanding God and man can morph into a preoccupation with the environment where "managing nature is a 'form of worship' and environmentalism is 'a kind of religion'" (227). Whereas nature is a means to point to God, the current thrust in culture is toward a view of "the natural world as sacred." Elevating nature to the divine does not point man to God but ultimately replaces the Creator with creation. Lastly, Bingham notes that the Reformers emphasized the importance of forming strong Christian relationships: relationships both within the home and in the church. The stress, of course, is placed on relationships rooted in a common bond of fellowship with Christ—where fellowship meets the believer's need of affirmation in Christ, encouragement, and the meeting of practical needs bounded within a covenant of love. Bingham is pointing out that the Reformers viewed biblical fellowship as distinct and of a richer value than relationships formed around temporal interests or activities. In other words, to the Reformers, forming a stronger bond with others rooted in something or someone outside of Christ would be sin (269).

In the final section, Bingham addresses two criticisms of the Reformed-Protestant view of spiritual formation: first, it neglects the body's role (280), and second, it is disconnected from the experiences of ordinary Christians (311). He responds to the first by acknowledging that some view Reformed spirituality as overly cerebral, neglecting the senses and leading to shallow spiritual formation (282). Bingham wrestles with this critique, noting that the tradition is often accused of turning faith into a disembodied, intellectual exercise. To address this, he examines the Reformers' view of biblical anthropology, arguing that their approach avoids unhelpful practices such as man-made liturgies that create an atmosphere of spirituality but fail to truly shape the heart. He further points to the spiritual practices of the Reformers, such as communion, baptism, worship, application in preaching, and the role of sanctuaries to house the worship of the church body, as evidence that the body's participation in spiritual formation was not dismissed but integrated within their view of spiritual formation. The second criticism—that Reformed piety is out of touch with the common believer—is, according to Bingham, unfounded. Bingham quotes John Flavel: "To keep the heart from sinking in such a day as this, to enable it to maintain its own sincerity, is a matter of great difficulty" (311). Bingham argues that the Reformers did not dismiss melancholy or spiritual lethargy but instead spoke of how the human condition is at times weak in piety, emphasizing the great difficulty of keeping one's heart close to the Word (311–12).

From a Protestant perspective, Bingham's book is a bold, winsome, and scholarly work that clearly defines the differences between the Roman Catholic and Reformed/Protestant traditions of spiritual formation. As such, his work lays out a clear boundary line that, as he argues, is being blurred within the current evangelical church. At times Bingham is not shy about naming those in modern

evangelicalism who advocate for an admixture of mystical and Word-centric practices. Thus, this book could negatively arouse the sensitivities of those who feel their own personal walk with God has been shaped by these authors. As one humbly approaches Bingham's work, however, he will see that his warnings are meticulously defended and worthy of consideration. Overall, Bingham's book is a masterpiece. It is both a tool to help one better understand spiritual formation and a means to gain greater insight into the body of theology that undergirds the heart of the Reformers. Bingham is both unassuming and unpretentious, carefully guiding the reader to his salient conclusion that what the Reformers believed, practiced, and handed down to the evangelical church over the centuries is eroding into mysticism. Without intentional effort and practice, Bingham argues, the disciplines of grace may continue to fade away. Overall, his book is a must-read for anyone serious about his own personal piety and the impact that piety has on the church of Christ, as well as for those interested in safeguarding spiritual practices for future generations.

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Lawson, Kenneth. *George Whitefield's Ministry in New England, 1740–1770.* Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2024. 487pp. + 29pp. (back matter).

Christians have long appreciated and studied the career of evangelist George Whitefield (1714–70). There are numerous valuable works about him, such as Arnold Dallimore's classic two-volume devotional biography (1970, 1980) as well as his one-volume abridgement (1990). More recently, Thomas Kidd has written a compact and sympathetic biography, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (2016). Now Kenneth Lawson has added to the literature, with a focus particularly on Whitefield's ministry in New England.

The author has had a long-time interest in Whitefield, and in fact he expanded this work from his master's thesis. The result is an extremely thorough account. Lawson explores Whitefield's visits to New England year by year, month by month, day by day, and town by town as much as he can from the surviving evidence. For each location Whitefield visited, Lawson combs through all available sources for details. Indeed, the book shows a wide acquaintance with literature old and new on Whitefield. The author uses primary sources (such as Whitefield's journals and letters and the accounts of other eyewitnesses), modern sources (to a degree), and local histories from New England with dates ranging from Whitefield's time to the present.

A valuable aspect of the work is the attention to the people Whitefield encountered. Regarding each location Whitefield visited, the author notes the people, friend and foe, whom the evangelist encountered, and he provides a biographical sketch of each. The author even gives due place to Whitefield's critics, quoting their arguments against Whitefield. The book is also profusely illustrated, with historic pictures and modern photographs, most of which were taken by the author.

The book seeks to be exhaustive, which can be both daunting and beneficial. The account is so full that most readers will want to read it in segments over several sittings, but the design of the book makes sampling in this way a good option. The chapters are relatively short and self-contained. Likewise, the extensive use of block quotations can slow the reading, but they also expose the reader to primary accounts from Whitefield and others that are not readily available for modern readers.

The author says his book is "essentially, a travelogue" as it journeys the roads with Whitefield. I recall how before I visited the British Museum I received a copy of Peter Masters's *Heritage of Evidence in the British Museum,* which took me room by room through the museum and described the exhibits that related to biblical history. In the same way, this book could serve as a guide to someone visiting New England to see what Whitefield did in each location and perhaps even highlighting places that one may still visit.

The book unsurprisingly displays an evangelical sympathy with Whitefield that makes for good devotional reading. However, there is also a valuable original historical contribution. Lawson provides descriptions of previously little-studied aspects of Whitefield's career such as Whitefield's tour of Rhode Island in 1745. The work also conveys the challenges of Whitefield's labors, his indefatigable travels even through foul weather and illness, and the human opposition he faced.

Lawson's book describes Whitefield's preaching, both the manner and its effects. Lawson conveys the evangelistic burden Whitefield felt as the evangelist sought, like Paul, to become "all things to all

men, that I might by all means save some" (1 Cor 9:22). Students of Whitefield in particular and of revival and evangelism in general will profit from this book.

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McGever, Sean. *Ownership: The Evangelical Legacy of Slavery in Edwards, Wesley, and Whitefield.* Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2024. 196pp. + 35pp. (back matter).

I have mixed feelings about this book. It is an excellent guide to the views of Jonathan Edwards, John Wesley, and George Whitefield about slavery. Furthermore, it provides excellent background on slavery and Christian attitudes toward that institution in the transatlantic world of the eighteenth century, and it is accurate about the general failure of Christianity's approach to slavery in history.

Yet there remains a sort of distortion, perhaps not so much from the author's intent but from a selective focus. Edwards and Whitefield had no problems with slavery, and Whitefield unfortunately actively supported the institution as a means of enriching Georgia and funding his own ministry there. Wesley opposed slavery later in life, but the author faults him for not doing so earlier. Slavery, admittedly an important issue, is the be-all and end-all of this presentation. The book's tone is far from harsh; so, I commend it as an informative study. The chief failure, which results from its design, is to look at the whole ministry of these men in relation to one distinct failing. McGever, for example, relates the encounters of these men with slaves and faults them for not reckoning (or at least not commenting on) their enslaved condition. Yet each man preeminently saw all the people they met as sinners in need of salvation more than any other aspect of their condition. One could note, for example, the correspondence between Whitefield and Benjamin Franklin in which the evangelist turned the conversation to the gospel wherever he could, regardless of what topic they discussed. There is a danger of skewed perspective. Many Christians who have admired the heroism of Martin Luther in defending the gospel have been appalled to learn of Luther's negative comments about Jews later in life. Yet we should not judge Luther on the whole in respect to one of his great failings any more than David ceased to be a man after God's own heart because of his great sin with Bathsheba.

There is also a point of usage that is open to question, the use of "enslaved" as a verb and "enslaver" to describe slave owners. This usage is not unique to this book but in line with contemporary literature. Technically, Whitefield and Edwards were not "enslavers," those who placed people in slavery, but "slave masters" or "slave owners," neither of which is a commendable label.

However, there are numerous virtues to this book. McGever offers an excellent summary of English/Christian views of slavery at that time (49–61): (1) slavery is ordained by God; (2) slavery is the result of sin; (3) slave acquisition has limits (through war or purchase); (4) slaves must obey, and masters must be temperate; (5) slaves deserve spiritual freedom; and (6) slave conversion does not emancipate the slave. Such a summary provides readers with the context for understanding the events of that era. Likewise, although the author rightly faults Whitefield for supporting the introduction of slavery into Georgia, he also demonstrates that Georgia's initial prohibition of slavery was not on humanitarian grounds (68–69). Also commendable and helpful is the concise section on the background and development of Quaker anti-slavery sentiment (124–33), perhaps the first example of systematic Christian opposition to slavery.

Also of value is the discussion of the legacy of these men. McGever notes how, unfortunately, American Methodists backed away from Wesley's condemnation of slavery and learned to accommodate the institution. On the other hand, McGever points out how the second generation of

Edwardsean theologians (known as the New Divinity school or Hopkinsians)—including Edwards's own son—became committed abolitionists. In fact, as McGever notes, this shift emerged from Edwards's own theological principles, notably his description of virtue as "disinterested benevolence toward Being in general." Students who have puzzled over this definition will appreciate the author's explanation of the concept as "the key ethical mandate to glorify God by seeking the ultimate good of another person without consideration about how it benefits or does not benefit yourself" (154). One needs only to add seeking the ultimate good of God to see how Edwards's principle reflects Christ's teaching of the Great Commandment (Matt 22:36–40). This concept led some Edwardsean theologians to condemn slavery where their predecessors had tolerated it.

Whatever criticisms I have mentioned, I must stress that McGever has a point. Considering some surprisingly mild comments by a few contemporary evangelicals about slavery that the author cites (6–7), Christian attitudes toward slavery are far from a being simply a historical curiosity. White Christians unfortunately tend to see slavery as an issue dead and buried, not realizing its long-term impact on American history even to the present. Although few modern Christians would use the views of Whitefield and Edwards to defend slavery, the fact is that their attitudes on occasion have historically served as a precedent to those favoring slavery.[1] McGever's book highlights how Christ's command to love one's neighbor is always to guide Christians regardless of the era in which they live.

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[1] On the legacy of pro-slavery attitudes, one might point out the comment of a southern writer in the Civil War era who noted with satisfaction how George Whitefield was a slaveowner. See Kenneth P. Minkema and Harry S. Stout, "The Edwardsean Tradition and the Antislavery Debate, 1740–1865," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (2005): 73.

Cooper, Tim. *When Christians Disagree: Lessons from the Fractured Relationship of John Owen and Richard Baxter*. Wheaton: Crossway, 2024. 127pp. + 10pp. (front matter) + 40pp. (back matter).

Richard Baxter and John Owen had a great deal in common. Born within a year of each other, both were reared in devout Puritan homes, both were formidable intellects, both were prolific authors, and "both men were nothing if not faithful to the very end" (26). They were, in the understated words of the title of Cooper's first chapter, "two good men" who "came to dislike each other so intensely" that "they brought out the worst in each other" (6). This is, of course, not a recent phenomenon created by social media and the ability to publish one's opinions and criticisms instantaneously (though that doesn't help).[1] And Cooper's point in recounting the nature of this relationship "is not so much that Christians disagree but how they go about their disagreements" (6). Owen and Baxter are role models in this respect; unfortunately, they are not good ones. They do not "come out of this book looking like saints" (7). Cooper is not out to rubbish them; his genuine esteem for both men is evident throughout the book. At the same time, it is not helpful to have an entirely sanitized, unrealistic view of past saints. Their triumphs can inspire us; their failures ought to caution us to remember that they, like us, "are sinners and saints all at the same time" (7).

Cooper introduces the reader to the subjects' backgrounds (chapter 1) and experiences (chapter 2). Both men entered adulthood during the English Civil War but experienced it from very different vantage points. Baxter was an army chaplain in the Midlands where most of the fighting occurred, preaching in earshot of cannon fire and ministering amid much of the death and gore of war. Owen, meanwhile, lived a safe and relatively well-connected life near London, far from nearly all of the fighting. As Cooper tersely observes, "Geography matters."

> Both Baxter and Owen supported Parliament's cause in the civil war; they were on the same side. Yet their perspectives on the war provide a study in contrasts. . . . Where Baxter perceived the civil war as a disaster for the gospel in England, Owen saw it as a triumph. Their perspectives could hardly have been more different. . . . Owen felt England to be on the brink of a glorious reformation; Baxter felt that the Reformation had been jettisoned. . . . Both looked for the hand of God in contemporary events, yet they interpreted that hand in starkly different ways. . . . Owen saw the war as a blessing from God, while Baxter viewed it as God's judgment on a sinful people. Same war, same side, but different worlds. (35, 33, 36, 37)

Cooper funnels each chapter toward a concluding series of probing, self-reflective questions to help readers personalize and process the lessons of each chapter. It is a common enough feature in books these days; but given the subject matter, it is one of the most valuable aspects of the book.

Theology may have been the topic of the conflict between Owen and Baxter, but it was "as much as anything else, a personality clash" (chapter 3, "Personality"). If we think their differences were purely theological, "we will miss the subtle but powerful impact of their experience and their personality"

[1] For a biblical-theological exploration of this same topic, see Layton Talbert, "Managing Our Differences: Biblical Norms for Navigating Our Inevitable Disagreements," *JBTW* 4, no. 2 (Spring 2024): 48–69.

(41). Personal information about Owen is hard to come by, but "one thing is clear: he possessed an ability to advance his career" and "to network, and he was not without ambition" (43). A "political player" with a "relentless determination to get his way," Owen "could be touchy when it came to slights on his authority, and he was not a man to be contradicted" (46, 47).

> Admittedly, it is difficult to square this impression of Owen with his reputation as a towering theologian. We expect such figures to be above the foibles of mere human temperament, but they never are. This is a most unflattering picture. . . . This is not the whole of the man. But it does explain something. If this is Owen's personality, what other type of personality would be likely to rub him the wrong way? Who would he find particularly grating and abrasive? The answer is someone who did not demonstrate proper deference, who lacked Owen's deft political facility, who blurted out the truth as he saw it with little regard for the feelings of others, who had his own implacable views. . . . Someone, in other words, a lot like Richard Baxter. (48)

As a boy, Baxter reportedly had no qualms about rebuking other children for their profane language. "We are told that it pleased his elders, but it could hardly have delighted his playmates" (49). Cooper explores other aspects of Baxter's life experience that certainly had an impact on his personality. As an only child, Baxter was accustomed to having "his own way, with no near rival to contradict him" and thus "lacked the opportunity a larger family presented to develop skills in negotiation or empathy" (49); Owen, on the other hand, was the second of at least six children. Baxter never went to university with its benefits of networking and community, and instead "came to his views, in the main, by reading" (50); Owen spent several years at Oxford. Baxter married late at age forty-seven; Owen married at twenty-six. Baxter never had children; Owen had eleven.

> All of this helps explain the enduring irony of Baxter's life: he genuinely desired nothing more than to cultivate peace and unity, but his style and temperament regularly caused offense and generated conflict. Both friend and foe alike observed his tendency to come across as magisterial, haughty, arrogant, impervious to correction, blind to his own weakness, incapable of self-doubt, and personally disdainful of others. (50–51)

That's not to say he was entirely unaware of such tendencies, as his correspondence bears out (51–52). But it is one thing to be aware of our weaknesses and sins, and another thing to conquer them. "When these two personalities finally came into direct contact, the result was never going to be pretty. . . . Owen was easily exasperated; Baxter was simply exasperating" (53). The upshot for us? "Vocal disagreements that seem on the surface to be merely theological may be much more substantially the product of clashing personalities. Recognizing that factor is surely an essential requirement in resolving the conflict" (54)—or at least managing it with grace and Christlikeness.

Chapter 4 moves finally into the theological issues that sparked their relational conflagration. "Theology does truly matter. But, as we have seen, so does biography. It is impossible to separate how we think from what we have experienced" (57). Their different emphases can be explained "in large part because each was driven by a different set of concerns" (58). Despite those differences, Cooper

spells out "just how much they had in common" and the fact that "we can see both men as Calvinists" who "shared an enormous amount of common ground" but "stood back-to-back, looking in opposite directions and subject to opposite fears" that "made it extremely difficult for each man to see in the other the many points they held in common" (69).[2]

If Cooper's depiction is accurate (and he quotes amply from both men), the tone of Baxter's initial critiques of Owen were "relatively measured" even if somewhat off-pitch (76). Owen, nonetheless, "was deeply offended, and the language he used throughout his short reply made that very clear" (77). Baxter refrained from responding for five years and, when he did, his answers to Owen were "both brief and respectful" (79) but still expressed concern over the potential impact of some of Owen's views. Owen's reply was devastating: "a remarkably personal, bitter, and scathing rebuke" (81). Baxter, in return, only escalated matters, doubling down on his criticisms and making them, if anything, more pointed and insistent. "He complained that he had been personally attacked, 'voluminously slandered,' and roundly criticized as 'hypocritically proud.' Instead of understanding, he had received from Owen 'ingenious malice'" (81). All of this was conducted not in personal letters but public print. The heightened stakes of a reading audience "made any sort of reconciliation that much harder. Pride and ego came into play, rather than humility, kindness, and generosity. The damage had been done. By 1650 the written word had estranged two men who had not yet even met" (83).

The plot only thickened when the two men finally did meet (chapter 6, "Collision"). In 1654 Parliament called "a subcommittee of around a dozen minister-theologians to prepare a list of the fundamentals for the approval of Parliament and the Lord Protector, Oliver Cromwell" (95). Owen, a Congregationalist and leading theologian with Parliamentary connections, was an obvious choice. Archbishop James Ussher from Ireland was nominated but declined. His replacement was Richard Baxter, who had a penchant for insisting on the exclusive use of expressly scriptural language in the formation of any confession. Seeing his opinions would not prevail, he decided that the only remaining strategy was "to hinder them from doing harm and thrusting in their own opinions or crude conceits, among our fundamentals" (98). "The whole affair achieved nothing but to confirm Baxter and Owen in their worst views of each other and to permanently darken their relationship" (99–100). Cooper notes, "The great irony is that the project in which Baxter and Owen were involved in 1654 was designed to achieve unity and mend division, but the outcome was the opposite, at least for them" (100).

The final nail in the coffin of their relationship sealed it so tight that the breach was to extend even beyond the grave. But my space is running out, so I must leave that for readers to explore on their own (see chapter 7, "Memory"). Cooper concludes with the observation that "even the most conscientious Christians disagree. It is their very conscientiousness that can trigger their disagreement. They take truth seriously. It matters. It matters enough to take a stand, even against a fellow believer" (119–20). But when that becomes necessary, for it is inevitable, what can we learn from Owen and Baxter so as

[2] Cooper goes into adequate detail about the theological issues on which they divided. I decided to avoid addressing those issues in this review; the larger scope and purpose of the book points to the observation that in the broad scheme of things, the specific points of disagreement are comparatively irrelevant. Our theological differences with one another are constantly shifting, and the goal is not so much to decide which side to take as to learn to manage our differences well.

not to repeat their errors? Cooper develops five suggestions (120–25). (1) Look for a mediator. (2) Never lose sight of common ground. (3) Take seriously the Scriptures "that summon us to unity and concord." (4) Cultivate humility. (5) Consider the invisible factors behind our disagreements. These are followed by a series of searching questions to ask ourselves in order to manage our disagreements more scripturally (125–26).

To be honest, I had a hard time putting down my highlighter. The brief chapters are packed with intriguing historical background, astonishing statements from both Owen and Baxter, and Cooper's own insightful observations along the way.

> We tend to think of ourselves as autonomous individuals firmly in control of our own decision-making, finding our way in the world through the choices we make, both large and small. While this is true to a significant extent, it is not an entirely safe assumption. It overlooks the ways in which we have been profoundly shaped by forces that lie outside our control. We do not choose the family into which we are born, our DNA, our prenatal environment, the quality of nurture we receive in our early years, or the shaping forces in our social, political, and cultural context as we grow into maturity. All that life experience molds how we see the world and how we perceive both ourselves and others. When two people come into conflict, they bring with them a contrasting set of perspectives informed by their respective pasts. Their personal history is very much alive. It operates in ways that they themselves may not recognize, let alone the person with whom they have clashed. Thus, two people can be set up for conflict and misunderstanding before they even meet. (29)

In his Introduction, Cooper invites his readers "to apply the lessons of this story" to how we manage the modern issues that often divide us, confessing, "I have no easy answers" (6). To be sure, there are simple answers; but that is not at all the same thing. Cooper's lists of reflective questions at the end of each chapter, along with the book's manageable brevity, make this an excellent venue for group discussion.

Cooper forewarns his readers on the front end: "Spoiler Alert: there is no happy ending" (4). Ah, but there is. Baxter and Owen have been enjoying it for 300 years, where the spirits of just men are made perfect and the saints enjoy eternal rest.

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Morgan, Christopher W., and Thomas R. Schreiner. *Salvation*. Theology for the People of God Series. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2024. 453pp. + 14pp. (front matter) + 55pp. (back matter).

This volume is part of a growing series (Theology for the People of God) that pairs a biblical scholar and a theologian to address major doctrines. Volumes available to date also include *The Holy Spirit* (see my review in *JBTW* 3, no. 1), *A Handbook of Theology*, *Humanity*, *Special Revelation and Scripture*, and *The Work of Christ*. Though not without its occasional quirks,[1] *Salvation* makes a valuable and often insightful contribution to the field of soteriology.

Following an introduction that frames soteriology in the larger metanarrative context of Creation, Fall, Redemption, and Restoration, Morgan and Schreiner develop their topic straightforwardly with a simple succession of chapters on ten major soteriological doctrines: union with Christ, election, calling, regeneration, conversion, justification, adoption, sanctification, preservation and perseverance, eternal life and glorification. The goal of the series to integrate biblical and systematic theology is reflected in the division of each of these chapters into two (sometimes three) sections. The book's consistent organization makes it easy to follow. "Exegetical Foundations" explores the biblical-theological data for the doctrine under consideration. "Systematic Formulations" then organizes the salient features of that data into overarching systematic theological conclusions. Select doctrines (election, justification, sanctification) also include an intervening section on "Historical Reconnaissance," which examines and weighs major divergent views from a historical theological standpoint. These ten specific doctrinal foci are followed by three final overarching chapters that coordinate all the soteriological doctrines considered under three wide-angle rubrics.

Interestingly, the authors begin with the soteriological doctrine of union with Christ, "the means by which God grants all the other blessings of salvation to believers" (17). Though it is a NT doctrine, the OT sets the stage for the concept: humanity's identity with Adam, the Jews' identity with Abraham, Israel's identity with Moses, the connection between the Son of Man and the holy ones of the Most High (Dan 7). Despite Paul's distinctive emphasis on this truth in the NT, "it isn't clear that the theme is the center of Paul's thought or the most important truth for understanding his theology" (24). The authors identify John and Paul as the NT's two primary proponents of this doctrine, though in the eight pages of NT corroboration that follow, they discuss only one passage of John's (17:20–26) and five passages from Paul.

The chapter on election (chapter 2) includes a historical overview that contains these two statements on the atonement: "Universal atonement means that Jesus died to make the salvation of everyone possible. . . . Limited or definite or particular atonement means that, although universal benefits flow from the cross, Jesus dies to save the elect, not each and every person" (70). Intentional or not, it's worth noting that these two positions as stated actually do not conflict or contradict each other logically or theologically. It should also be pointed out that the unqualified inclusion of "limited

[1] The authors occasionally go out of their way to showcase international and lesser-known writers—which is a good thing, except that these citations often highlight unremarkable observations. Examples include notations from the *ESV Global Study Bible* (6, 259, 413), *Africa Bible Commentary* (87, 126, 219, 312), PhD dissertations (7), and a reference to an "unpublished master's thesis" (130).

atonement" (with all of its modern implications) as one of the canons of Dort (70) is an all-too-common mischaracterization of that point, since the original position on the atonement as stated at Dort accommodates a universal provision for the sins of all.[2] Things get even more interesting, however, in the "Systematic Formulations" segment. Surprisingly, the authors cite Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Timothy 1:9 (among many others) as teaching *not* individual election, but the *corporate* election of the church (77). Surprise turns to perplexity, however, when they explain that corporate election is only historical, not eternal or definitive: "God chooses via historical election the visible New Testament church as a corporate people, but not every individual in the church experiences salvation" (79). Though that initially sounds confusing, it might only mean that people can find their way into a local church who were not actually part of God's corporate election of the true church. Poorly worded, perhaps, but so far so good—until the next page: "Historical election puts one in the community of faith but does not guarantee that one has been eternally elected for salvation" (80). Combining those statements, Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Timothy 1:9 do not teach an individual, eternal, definitive election, but a historical and corporate election that does not necessarily signify personal salvation. The muddle is further compounded when Ephesians 1:4 and 2 Timothy 1:9 are also later cited to teach pretemporal, eternal, individual election (83). The arguments for individual vs. corporate election from exegetical details are also inconsistent. Acts "speaks of election only twice, once of corporate election (18:9–10) and once of individual election (13:48)" (78)—but the reason for the difference is unclear. One might think 18:9–10 is corporate because "people" is plural; yet they argue on the same page that Romans 9:18 refers to individual election because the pronouns ("on whom" and "whom") are singular, but that John 5:21 also refers to individual election because the pronoun ("whom") is *plural*. Despite much helpful data and discussion regarding election, the chapter bogs down under the weight of some inscrutable inconsistencies.

The authors correctly ground regeneration (chapter 4) in OT passages such as Deuteronomy 10 and 30, Jeremiah 4 and 32, and Ezekiel 36 and 37. (Other passages that would have bolstered their position include Jeremiah 24:7 and Ezekiel 11:19; 18:31). Unsurprisingly, they insist that "*logically* regeneration precedes faith, even though *temporally* faith and regeneration occur at the same instant" (116). Later in the chapter, the authors juxtapose three possible views: "Is faith the cause of regeneration (the Arminian view), or is regeneration the cause of faith (the Calvinist view)? Or are they simply distinct pictures of salvation that are complementary and do not necessarily fit into a certain order of salvation?"—i.e., an *ordo salutis* (124–25). Curiously, they argue for *both* the second view, which assumes an *ordo salutis,* and the third view, which rejects an *ordo salutis* (125). This apparent inconsistency surfaces later in the book as well (see below).

The discussion of justification (chapter 6) is one of the longest, being one of the more complex and historically debated doctrines—not only between Protestantism and Romanism but, more recently, within Protestantism itself. Against the New Perspective, the authors argue at length exegetically and theologically for "righteousness" as conformity to a norm rather than covenant

[2] See Lee Gatiss, "The Synod of Dort and Definite Atonement," in *From Heaven He Came and Sought Her: Definite Atonement in Historical, Biblical, Theological, and Pastoral Perspective,* ed. David Gibson and Jonathan Gibson (Wheaton: Crossway, 2013), 162–63. Cf. Raymond A. Blacketer, "Blaming Beza," in the same volume, 141.

faithfulness, for God's righteousness as including judging righteousness rather than exclusively saving righteousness, and for salvific righteousness as forensic (declaring sinners righteous) rather than transformative (making sinners righteous). To be sure, salvation is transformative; the issue, however, is whether the biblical words "justification" or "righteousness" *mean* to "be transformed, made righteous." Morgan and Schreiner correctly say no. The forensic/declarative view of justification raises its own problem, however. How can a righteous God declare sinners righteous without compromising his conformity to his own standard of righteousness (175)? The solution lies in the combined concepts of propitiation and imputation (176–78; 194–201). The authors round out their exegetical defense of justification with a lengthy defense of the harmony between Paul and James (178–83).

Adoption (chapter 7) has been traditionally explained in terms of ancient cultural practice (whether Roman or Jewish) and widely defined as the legal placement of a believer as God's son and heir. The authors bypass that cultural discussion and take a holistic approach, utilizing the term *adoption* in a broad theological sense ("invited to be members of God's family," 210) and corroborating the doctrine with a generic range of passages, including those that depict God as the believer's Father, believers as God's children, and Jesus as their brother, as well as regeneration passages such as John 1:12 (210; cf. 114, 121) and all five NT *huiothesia* passages. In the authors' view, adoption is a distinct but alternative parallel soteriological image to regeneration: "Scripture also describes people becoming God's children in another way: regeneration" (214). Regeneration is necessary because people are spiritually dead; adoption is necessary because people are spiritually enslaved. Thus, they define adoption this way: "God frees slaves to sin and welcomes them into his own family as sons and daughters" (214). At the same time, our adoption "is an already-but-not-yet reality. Believers are now adopted, but the fullness of their adoption will be consummated . . . when believers are granted new bodies at the resurrection" (213). This is an overall improvement over cultural theories, but a more exegetically exhaustive and theologically thorough explanation is that adoption refers to God's act of reversing our alienation and restoring our ontological sonship (as originally created in God's image) via a two-event process: regeneration (impartation of eternal spiritual life) and resurrection (impartation of eternal physical life).[3]

Morgan and Schreiner rightly differentiate between three categories of sanctification: *definitive* (aka "positional"; believers are declared holy at salvation), *progressive* (the process of becoming more like Christ throughout life), and *final* (aka "eschatological"; our complete transformation to Christlikeness in glorification). After exploring the exegetical evidence for each of these kinds of sanctification, the authors furnish a historical survey (237–49) of five major evangelical views of sanctification within the context of Christian living—Lutheran, Wesleyan, Keswick, Pentecostal, and Reformed—followed by an evaluation of each view (249–52). The Lutheran position tends toward a static view that essentially denies progressive sanctification. The next three of these views share a common flaw, a "two-stage" soteriology that involves "justification followed by a second blessing, whether entire sanctification (Wesleyanism), a deeper life encounter (Keswick), or Holy Spirit baptism

[3] See Andrew Minnick's three-part series, "Bringing Many Sons to Glory: The Theological Intersection of Sonship and Resurrection in Redemption and Christology," *JBTW* 1, no 2; 2, no. 1; 2, no. 2.

(Pentecostalism)" (251)—all of which the authors argue are not consistent with biblical teaching. Instead, they defend a Reformed view of sanctification but one with an interesting twist. Citing both Anthony Hoekema and John Frame, the authors advocate a Reformed view that "rejects the traditional Reformed understanding of the *ordo salutis*" and instead views all the "aspects of the application of salvation" as "unified under the heading of 'union with Christ'" (251). This explains the topic and placement of the first chapter ("Union with Christ") but seems inconsistent with their earlier defense of at least a partial *ordo salutis* in arguing for the logical priority of regeneration to faith (116, 124–25). Later the authors clarify, "We agree with both [John] Murray and [Anthony] Hoekema that the various doctrines that constitute the application of salvation should be distinguished, and so we have devoted separate chapters to them. However, we side with Hoekema concerning the priority of union with Christ and the inadvisability of formulating a strict logical order for the doctrines" (345). Again, the only exception appears to be the logical priority of regeneration to faith.

Their treatment of glorification (chapter 10) includes a distinctive emphasis that is as exegetically obvious as it is routinely overlooked—the concept of *present, progressive glorification*. "We must not allow Paul's overwhelming emphasis on future glory to obscure" the fact that "2 Cor 3:18 teaches that 'already' the Spirit works in believers so that they increase progressively in glory until the return of Christ" (336–37). Like sanctification—and linked to it—our glorification is past (John 17:22), present (2 Cor 3:18), and future (Rom 5:2).

In chapter 11 ("Salvation and Theological Themes"), the authors (re)view the ten soteriological doctrines covered in the book through a variety of theological lenses (e.g., Trinity, divine sovereignty and human responsibility, kingdom of God, covenant). Together with chapters 12 ("Salvation and the Christian Life") and 13 ("Salvation and the Glory of God"), this triad admirably concludes the book with a theological, a practical, and a doxological emphasis.

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