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REVIEWS

All Things New: Revelation as Canonical Capstone. By Brian J. Tabb. (New Studies in Biblical Theology 48). Downers Grove: IVP, 2019. ISBN: 9781783599158. 270pp. £14.99.

Reading, writing, or preaching the book of Revelation need not be like Alice falling down the rabbit hole into wonderland. Granted, there are complex passages and multiple OT allusions which can make it challenging. However, as Brian Tabb shows in this addition to the NSBT series, tracing key biblical theological themes makes it possible to form a coherent interpretation of the Apocalypse which benefits both the academy and the church.

So why another book on Revelation? One reason is that much of the existing material is either set on predicting the future or has decided to confine the book to its historical context, but Tabb provides an alternative position. He adopts an eclectic position, suggesting that Revelation 'is a book – indeed, the *final* book – of Christian Scripture meant to decode our reality, capture our imagination and master our lives with the word of God and the testimony of Jesus' (p. 2). The central thesis of his work is an expansion of Bauckham's argument concerning Revelation as the climax of prophecy. Tabb wants to take this a step further recognising that the canonical position of the book means that it is not only the climax of prophecy, but the capstone of Christian Scripture. Revelation is not a detached piece of literature but the 'fulfilment or goal of previous prophecy' (p. 19), the 'grand conclusion in the already-not-yet reign of Christ' (p. 24). Allowing the location of the book to frame and shape our interpretation of its message is something which I fully agree with and I am grateful for Tabb's work in highlighting this important hermeneutical principle.

Making a claim is one thing, however substantiating it is another. Across the four sections which make up the body of this work Tabb does provide a convincing case for viewing Revelation as the canonical capstone. Some may like to have seen detailed engagement with the Apocalypse's chequered history in the canon, however, I do not think that this detracts from the book. Each section traces a theme across the OT which finds its climactic fulfilment in Revelation. The themes are as follows; the triune God (chapters 2-4), worship and witness (chapters 5-6), judgement, salvation, and restoration (chapters 7-9) and the word of God (chapter 10). Two chapters help to illustrate how Tabb fleshes out his thesis. In chapter 6 he discusses the place of the nations in the Apocalypse and the battle for universal worship. The OT is replete with passages concerning the place

of the nations and the opportunity for them to draw near to God. In light of Christ and the climactic role of Revelation, the choice which has always been discussed and issued in Scripture is given unmistakeable clarity. As the capstone of the canon, Revelation places a binary decision before all the peoples of the world; will you worship the Lord or the beast? This is not only helpful as it shows the connections between the Apocalypse and passages from Ezekiel and Zechariah, but it reminds the reader of the pressing need for all nations to have uncompromised gospel witnesses who are worshipping the Lord, inviting those they live beside to join them from among all peoples in giving glory to God.

In Chapter 8, Tabb draws upon the theme of the urban world across scripture, demonstrating how the Apocalypse utilizes OT depictions of the city such as Babel (Gen 11:1-9) and Tyre (Ezek 27:1-28:19) to make sense of the prominent influence of Rome in the everyday lives of the believers in the first century. As a side to his main thesis, Tabb helpfully argues that 'Babylon is not simply a cipher for Rome but is a rich biblical-theological symbol for the world's idolatrous, seductive political economy' (p. 164). Standing at the climax of Scripture John presents believers with a radical Christocentric alternative. They are to focus on the coming new Jerusalem, the faithful bride (21:1-22:5) as opposed to the great whore, Babylon (17:1-18:24). In an increasingly urbanized world, where compromise with Babylon is only a click away, it is important to remember 'the bride's enduring beauty and the harlot's borrowed bling' (p. 183).

At a more mundane level *'All Things New'* provides a number of helpful tables laying out passages from the OT alongside their counterparts in Revelation which some will find very helpful. The bibliography is also a good resource as it identifies not only the main contributors to studies in Revelation, such as Beale and Bauckham, but more recent articles and texts as well.

In recognising the canonical position of Revelation, and by handling it as a book within the wider context of the canon of Scripture, Brian Tabb offers the reader a very helpful guide to making sense of the climax of the canon. I find Tabb's argument and assessment convincing and would recommend this volume to any student, pastor or lecturer who is preparing to teach on the book of Revelation.

Martin Paterson, OMF International, Glasgow

Hebrews. By John W. Kleinig. (Concordia Commentary), Saint Louis, MO: Concordia Publishing House, 2017. ISBN: 978-0-7586-1603-6. lix + 815pp. £38.84.

The Concordia Commentary series offers high quality exegetical commentaries from confessional Lutheran scholars. There have been several additions to the series in recent years and these volumes have been welcomed as significant contributions to the scholarly literature on the biblical documents. John Kleinig, an ordained pastor in the Lutheran Church of Australia and an emeritus professor of the Australian Lutheran College, has the distinction of having written two commentaries in this series: one on *Hebrews* and the other on *Leviticus*. It seems entirely appropriate that Kleinig should have devoted so much of his scholarly energy to these two documents since they are so closely connected in biblical theology.

The physical commentary is well produced and is easy to read. It is a large book, both in terms of its physical dimensions and in terms of its page count. The length of the book is probably due to some extent to the comfortable size of the font and the generous margins. Reading and working with this book is a pleasant experience.

One of the distinctive features of this series is the inclusion of numerous excurses interspersed throughout the exegetical comments. These address topics such as ‘Divine Speech Acts in *Hebrews*’, There are also many charts and tables. Another distinctive feature of this series is the use of 15 ‘icons’, images placed occasionally in the wide margins to draw attention to key theological and/or pastoral texts relating to topics such as ‘Temple/Tabernacle’ or ‘Incarnation’.

While the commentary is generally readable, it is evidently a detailed analysis of the biblical texts in their original languages. Greek and Hebrew script is used liberally throughout the commentary, and particularly in the ‘Textual Notes’ sections. Readers who have limited or no ability to read the ancient scripts will generally find that Greek and Hebrew are translated, although there are numerous references to the grammatical features of the text that some readers may have to skip over. In any case, readers with limited knowledge of Greek and Hebrew will be able to make good use of the commentary. Students and preachers who wish help in developing their language skills will find much assistance in Kleinig’s notes.

Kleinig’s exegesis demonstrates familiarity with important literature in *Hebrews* scholarship. The footnotes engage with both classic and recent scholarship in various scholarly languages, yet the emphasis of the exegetical comment is on the message of the canonical text.

There were a few places in the commentary where distinctively Lutheran theological and liturgical perspectives came through, notably in references to the sacraments. These do not detract from the value of the commentary, but rather provide stimulating opportunities for readers who belong to other theological traditions to reflect on their own understanding. Not surprisingly, Luther (along with Lutheran confessional statements) is cited frequently, which many will consider to be a commendable feature!

Following the exegetical 'Analysis' sections, Kleinig provides comment on 'Reception and Application'. This provides a valuable emphasis on the importance of the passage in question for Christian worship and discipleship, frequently with a distinctively Lutheran flavour.

All in all, this is an excellent resource for preachers, teachers and students. The Concordia Commentary volumes tend to be rather expensive compared to volumes in other comparable series which may, unfortunately, limit their appeal, but those who choose to engage thoroughly with this commentary (and others in the series) will find a reliable guide to help them reflect exegetically and theologically on the biblical text.

Alistair I. Wilson, Edinburgh Theological Seminary, Edinburgh

The Messianic Theology of the New Testament. By Joshua W. Jipp. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7717-8. xi + 484pp. Hb. £38.00

Joshua Jipp is associate professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book grew out of a doctoral seminar on 'Messianism and New Testament Christology' (p. 2). Jipp had already published a monograph entitled, *Christ is King* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015), which addresses messianism and kingship in Paul's Christology. This book develops the earlier work by discussing messianism in the New Testament as a whole. Jipp's work is a valuable addition to a body of literature that presents the characterisation of Jesus as king as a (though not necessarily *the*) significant emphasis in the literature of the New Testament.

After an introduction (pp. 1-17), which provides the reader with initial orientation to the key issues and recent discussion, the book has two main sections. The first, and longer, part (pp. 21-309), entitled 'The Messianic Testimony of the New Testament' is composed of nine exegetical chapters dealing with: the four canonical gospels (the chapter on Luke discusses Luke-Acts); the letters of Paul (three chapters); one chapter that deals mainly with Hebrews and 1 Peter, plus a short note on James; and one chapter on the Apocalypse. The second part (pp. 313-404) addresses five issues, building on the findings of the exegetical studies. Jipp has chapters

on 'Scripture', 'Christology', 'Soteriology', 'Sanctification and Ecclesiology', and 'Politics, Power, and Eschatology'.

The essays in Part One are clear and competent studies of the respective texts. Jipp combines both careful analysis of the features of the biblical text and critical engagement with relevant scholarship. In each chapter, Jipp highlights particular aspects of messianism that the biblical author in question emphasizes. For example, Matthew, according to Jipp, draws attention to Jesus as 'the Son of David who saves his people from their sins' (chapter 1) while Mark emphasizes 'the powerful, humiliated Son of God and the kingdom of God' (chapter 2). Jipp acknowledges that some of the material on Paul is drawn from his earlier work. Those who have already read that book may expect a measure of repetition. Throughout the book, Jipp builds on the argument of Matthew Novenson that *Christ* is an 'honorific' (an ancient convention whereby a description of honour is attached to a person's name, such as 'Alexander the Great'). Indeed, throughout his work, Jipp's engagement with important scholarship is a particular strength. Students and pastors will find that careful attention to Jipp's footnotes will provide a valuable orientation to recent scholarly discussions.

The material in Part Two attempts a synthetic approach to the biblical texts. The strength of these chapters is that, along with a more thematic approach to the biblical data, they go beyond exegesis and, in some cases, beyond 'biblical theology' as commonly understood, to engage in a constructive manner with post apostolic interpretation (for example, Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, pp. 322-26) and with questions raised by systematic theology and contemporary society (for example, politics and power, chapter 13). It is good to see work that seeks more integration between theological disciplines than has sometimes been the case. A weakness of this approach is that there is, of necessity, a fair measure of overlap between the discussions in Part One and those in Part Two. There are frequent instances of the phrase, 'we have seen'. This need not be a significant drawback, however. Rather, it can be regarded as reinforcement of the findings identified and also a clear signal of the necessary connection between exegesis and theological synthesis.

While Jipp's work has a more specific focus than some studies of New Testament theology (such as Craig Blomberg's excellent recent volume with Baylor University Press), and so is not an alternative to such books, his work will be of great value to students, preachers and teachers who wish to read the texts of the New Testament with particular sensitivity to the messianic emphases which pervade them.

Alistair I. Wilson, Edinburgh Theological Seminary, Edinburgh

Marriage, Scripture and the Church: Theological Discernment on the Question of Same-Sex Union. By Darrin W. Snyder Belousek. Baker Academic, Grand Rapids, 2021. ISBN: 9781540961839. xxi + 325 pp. £22.24.

Marriage, Scripture, and the Church surveys and engages the theological debate around same-sex marriage through the lens of a historically informed, biblical theology of marriage. Darrin Belousek, a scholar who serves within a denomination which itself is divided on this issue, seeks to provide a resource for the church to discern the matter critically, compassionately, and faithfully. The back cover calls it ‘A Theology of Marriage for the Contemporary Church’, and it is that, on a number of significant levels.

The book is divided into four sections and is supplemented by several online appendices. In section one, ‘Surveying the Situation: Where We Are’, Belousek scans the developments of the last century in society and theology which have led to this debate, and follows up with an explanation of the assumptions underlying his approach. These assumptions include the primacy of Scripture, the responsibility of innovationists to justify their proposals, the need for consistency and charity in interpretation, and the relevance as well as insufficiency of experience in working out doctrine.

Section two, the longest at nearly 140 pages, is titled ‘Framing the Question: A Matter of Marriage’ and provides a succinct but thorough biblical theology of marriage. Rather than narrowly address scriptural passages which explicitly discuss same-sex relations, Belousek argues that the issue is about the theology of marriage and whether it may be revised. To discern this question, he first surveys the biblical teaching on marriage. He concludes that marriage is consistently defined as a man-woman covenant relationship and as such is a controlling theological metaphor throughout Scripture. Belousek drills down on the teaching of Jesus on marriage and observes that Jesus, as the prime interpreter of Scripture, anchors marriage to the creation model of a man-woman relationship of lifelong fidelity.

Additionally, in this section Belousek mines the resources of church history for both theological boundary markers and past examples of error which needed correction. In doing so he demonstrates persuasively that, despite a range of disagreements concerning marriage, the church has always, in all places and at all times, held marriage to be a man and a woman joined in covenant. This supports his assertion that the burden of

proof for changing the church's theology of marriage lies with the innovators.

While throughout the book Belousek engages the debate on same-sex marriage, it is in Part 3, 'Evaluating the Case: Assessing Arguments for Marriage Innovation', where he engages at length with several major arguments. Chapter 7, 'Hasn't the Church Changed Before?' offers respectful and careful rebuttals to proposals that changing the doctrine of marriage is similar to previous changes in marriage practices in ancient Israel, ideas about cosmology, and views on women and slaves. Chapter 8, 'Might Scripture Provide Support?' critically evaluates biblical arguments based on analogy with eunuchs and Gentiles, the concept of hospitality, and Paul's counsel, 'it is better to marry than burn'.

Part four, 'Seeking a Direction: Which Way to Walk' evaluates first an alternate approach of innovationists unlike those seeking a biblical or historical rationale: '[move] the church along a path toward sanctioning same-sex union without meeting a burden of proof' (p. 257). Next, using Acts 15 as an interpretive framework, he evaluates the idea that the Holy Spirit may be giving the church a new revelation which legitimizes same-sex marriage; this would in fact be a remixed version of the early heresy of Montanism, and would introduce another Jesus to the church.

Belousek concludes that the church does not have warrant to modify its doctrine of marriage, but that it should embrace, care for, listen to, and learn from gay believers faithfully living out their discipleship.

I expect most innovationists will find this a challenging read. Belousek leaves few rocks unturned in his methodical evaluation and rebuttal of a wide range of innovationist proposals. He shows the issue is not simply ethical but theological, having implications for the doctrines of creation and salvation. These features, along with the biblical and historical theology of marriage undergirding the work, will make this an extremely useful text for those seeking to articulate a traditional view of marriage in response to various arguments for revision.

However, Belousek does not spare traditionalists in his critique. He provides evidence that the protestant church's openness to contraception use for intentionally non-procreative marriage, no-fault divorce and remarriage, and laxity concerning heterosexual sexual sins seriously weakens its defence of traditional marriage. He challenges those who would seek to change a gay person's sexual orientation: 'More important than one's sexual orientation this way or that is one's spiritual disposition toward, or away from, God' (pp. 196-97). And, especially, he models integrity in representing his dialogue partners and charity in disagreeing with them.

Almost as an aside, Belousek notes at the outset that the next related theological debate will be over sex outside marriage. Trends among younger evangelicals confirm this; if he addresses it in a future work, I expect it will, like this one, be an important resource for the church's discipleship in the 21st century.

David Mitchell, Connect Church, Kirkaldy

Reading with the Grain of Scripture. By Richard B. Hays. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN: 978-0-8028-7845-8. xiv + 467pp. £39.56.

Since the first edition of his doctoral dissertation, *The Faith of Jesus Christ*, Richard B. Hays, has been leading the way in New Testament interpretation. Now Hays has gifted us with an anthology of his work that deserves a wide readership. In *Reading with the Grain of Scripture*, Richard Hays has (lightly) edited and collated several important articles and essays written in the latter half of his career, with the earliest going back to 1996, and the latest appearing in 2019. The essays themselves cover a diverse range including hermeneutics, the historical Jesus, the apocalyptic theology of Galatians, and host of theological themes found throughout the canon. As one would expect, the most significant ideas that have characterized Hays's scholarship – intertextuality, echoes, and theological interpretation – can be found in almost every chapter. While we have long been accustomed to the importance of intertextuality for Paul, *Reading with the Grain of Scripture* gives examples of just how fruitful his model can be across the canon. For those who are unfamiliar with Hays or who have not spent time reading his works, this book gives an excellent introduction to just how significant Hays's thought is for the field.

The book is divided into four parts, each dealing with major portions of New Testament studies. The first section focuses on New Testament interpretation. For those who have grown weary of the myopia present in some works of interpretation, these articles here are a balm. The essays offered here take seriously the credal confessions of the church and do not divorce history and theology into different, disconnected spheres. Also refreshing is Hays's commitment to the integrity of the canon. Unlike many others, Hays adamantly promotes the idea of theological and hermeneutical unity based on divine authorship. In his interpretation of Old Testament in light of the revelation of Christ, Hays is most influenced by the so-called 'apocalyptic school of Paul'. However, regardless of one's approach to interpretation, Hays presents an encouraging and fortifying account of how to read Scripture as a whole in light of the triune God and the resurrection.

The second and third sections deal with Jesus and Paul, respectively. The former concerns various aspects of the historical Jesus debate. Those up-to-date on historical Jesus studies, while benefitting from Hays's perspective, may find these a bit of an old hat. Of the four articles, one concerns the Jesus Seminar, hardly an influential group in the guild today, and two are responses to books, one by the former pope, Benedict XVI, the other from the pen of NT Wright. The last article is a reprint of a section from Hays's justly famous *The Moral Vision of the New Testament* (HarperOne: 1996).

As to be expected with a collection, the book is uneven. In general, the unevenness is due to the age of some essays. Others are so occasional that their relevance is difficult to judge. However, the value of this book lies not so much in what it advances but rather in what it offers. *Reading with the Grain* gives readers a glimpse into the mind of Richard Hays as he has wrestled with Scripture over the course of a lifetime. Hays's contribution to the world of New Testament studies is hard to overstate, and the essays compiled here demonstrate his wide-reaching influence. To those who know Hays well, each essay provides further evidence of his stature.

Not every exegetical conclusion will convince, and Hays's tendency towards critical scholarship will dissuade some. One should read Hays with discernment, but one should nevertheless read him. Since the essays are generally on a more popular level, some non-specialists, even laypeople, may find large chunks, if not the whole, accessible and edifying. For pastors, seminarians, and more advanced readers, this is a fine volume worthy of your time.

J. Brittain Brewer, Calvin Theological Seminary, USA

Revelation. By Buist M. Fanning. (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020. ISBN: 9780310244172. 623pp. £40.

Well known and widely respected, the Zondervan Evangelical Commentary on the New Testament (ZECNT) seeks to provide an accessible academic exposition of the Greek text. The latest addition to the series written by Buist M. Fanning (Professor emeritus, Dallas Theological Seminary) on the book of Revelation is a welcome addition, aligning well with the aforementioned goals.

The volume begins with an introduction handling issues of genre, hermeneutic, dating and authorship. Fanning embraces a threefold genre for the book (apocalypse, prophecy, epistle) but majors on the role of prophecy throughout. A few details are worth noting. First, Fanning opts for non-apostolic authorship suggesting instead 'another church leader,

a prophet known to the churches of Asia Minor, also named John and influenced by the apostle' (p. 28). Understandably this will be a point of contention for some since a good case can be presented for the apostolic alternative. Secondly, he adopts an eclectic hermeneutic, drawing together futurist, preterist and idealist interpretations of Revelation's many visions. Although Fanning holds an eclectic position he favours a futurist approach. This means that the commentary follows an adapted form of futurist dispensationalism which, on the whole, resists literalism.

Given the smorgasbord of OT references and allusions in Revelation a typological reading proves helpful, and Fanning outlines these benefits in his introduction (p. 40-49). I find this a convincing position as it can be clearly demonstrated (e.g. Exod. 7-12; Rev. 8-9; 16) and takes seriously the relationship seen across scripture between OT type and eschatological antitype. One area where this reading falls down is how the interpreter discerns which of these types have found fulfilment in the first century and which are awaiting fulfilment at the eschaton.

A significant point in Fanning's commentary is his view of the Millennium (Rev. 20:1-6). He outlines 'the phasing of the earthly messianic kingdom into a preliminary stage (the millennium) and a culminating stage (eternity in the new creation)' (p. 511). As with other dispensationalists, Fanning advocates that this period of time is when God's promises to defeat his enemies and the promised messianic rule from Jerusalem will be experienced. The division between preliminary and ultimate is something I do not find convincing since the expectation of the messianic rule from God's city is intricately linked to the promise and visions of the new creation (Rev. 21-22) in a way which it is absent from the millennial text (Rev. 20).

That being said, Fanning's earthiness provides something important to engage with. For example, it is possible to skirt the implicit physicality of the new city (Rev. 21) by favouring an overly spiritual reading. Since this city is being set up as an alternative to the physical reality present in the Roman world of John's recipients (Rev. 17-18), it would make sense that he is communicating about a physical alternative to reorientate the minds of believers. This would also make sense of the wider theological view of scripture where work, commerce, community and Christ are not mutually exclusive.

Structurally, the ZECNT contains both Greek and English texts at the beginning of each verse under discussion. Fanning's volume continues this valuable inclusion making it easier to engage in more detail with the authors comments. Practically, this is a good tool for use in the classroom where students have direct access to the text on the same page. There are also some helpful textual observations in the footnotes which prove ben-

eficial for further engagement. It would also be a good resource for pastors teaching through the book of Revelation.

Martin Paterson, OMF International, Glasgow

A Companion to the Theology of John Webster. Edited by Michael Allen and R. David Nelson. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2021. ISBN: 9780802876744. 366pp. £40.99.

Over the last two decades, John Webster produced a flurry of essays which, both friends and critics agree, ignited a movement of Protestant *ressourcement*. Webster's early death and the unfinished status of his magnum opus – a multi-volume systematic theology – leave his future influence uncertain, but this volume is a compelling testament to his ongoing relevance.

The *Companion* includes a forward by Kevin Vanhoozer sketching the way his own theological development followed Webster's trajectory, a masterful biography from Webster's colleague and confidant Ivor Davidson, five chapters on Webster's 'theological development', eleven chapters on Webster's treatment of central dogmatic *loci*, and a concluding chapter from David Nelson outlining the prospective shape of Webster's unpublished systematic theology on the basis of a proposal submitted to Baker Academic. The essays on the whole are well executed, and while largely appreciative, the *Companion* is no hagiography; even the most glowing essays offer incisive evaluation. The *Companion*, furthermore, manages to serve both as a helpful introduction for novices while likewise offering engaging interpretations of Webster which offer insights for even the most seasoned of readers. I was particularly struck by Nelson's account of the way in which Webster's early criticisms of Eberhard Jüngel motivated his mature theological methodology, Sarisky's crisp portrayal of the importance of the category of 'sanctification' in Webster's doctrine of scripture, and Wittman's description of Webster's critical adoption of Ingolf Dalferth's approach to metaphysics.

The vexed question of Webster's development, how Webster began his career commenting on Jüngel, moved to Karl Barth, and in his final years gave sustained attention to Thomas Aquinas, the patristics, and the Protestant reformers and scholastics, is dealt with artfully. While some variation can be seen amongst the contributors – Holmes and Nimmo identify a more pronounced shift between Webster's 'apocalyptic', Barthian phase and his later engagement with Thomas than some others – the overall tone of the volume is remarkably consistent. The contributors largely agree that certain dogmatic emphases regarding, for example, divine aseity, the way in which divine action evokes rather than competes

with human moral agency, and the need for a *theological* rather than ‘neutrally’ philosophical or historical response to contemporary intellectual quandaries, were present from the outset. Webster’s expanding set of conversation partners did not signal a fundamental shift – though there was development at certain points – but allowed him to more perspicuously formulate convictions present in his earliest writings.

In one of the finest essays, Katherine Sonderegger captures something of what it might mean for evangelical theology to benefit from Webster’s approach. Sonderegger cites some of Webster’s most incisive criticisms of evangelical theology, suggesting that the harshness of these criticisms is precisely because Webster sees himself as speaking in some sense ‘to his own’. Sonderegger’s essay as a whole concerns Webster’s Christology. Her thesis is that while Webster’s Christology might appear blandly conservative – as he without anxiety redeploys Chalcedonian categories in sharp contrast to the wide-spread Christological revisionism of the twentieth century – this misses the moral dimension of Webster’s thought, which follows Barth in emphasising the irruptive witness of the risen Christ. Webster is keen to stress that Christ is not collapsed into the past, the church, the tradition, or the Bible itself, but speaks for himself today, demanding a hearing and shattering our defences. The lesson, when juxtaposed with Sonderegger’s citation of Webster’s criticism of the dominant path of contemporary evangelical theology, is that Webster’s methodology may well be termed ‘traditional’, in that he lovingly retrieves the riches of historic catholic and Protestant divinity, but nonetheless unlike many of his evangelical followers, Webster refused to denigrate modern theology and was not uncritical in his reading of the Christian tradition. As Ivor Davidson correspondingly notes, for Webster, ‘*ressourcement* or retrieval also needed care: no idealising – or demonising – of epochs and their legacies; no drift of ‘tradition’ into stasis or self-satisfaction; no conflation of the revelatory authority of the living one with the church’s proprietary stock’ (p. 14).

Let us close, in view of the helpful insights offered in this *Companion*, asking tentatively what shape an evangelical theology attentive to the legacy of John Webster *might* take? It might involve not repristination or slavish repetition of the past, nor an anxious policing of the boundaries of evangelical ‘orthodoxy’ – some of which, Webster would likely suggest, is not ‘orthodoxy’ anyway – but a joyful return to the sources of Christian doctrine with the expectation that our own ‘evangelical’ assumptions and beliefs will not only be confirmed and strengthened but likewise overthrown and challenged by the gospel witness. One of the great maladies of evangelical theology, according to Webster, is the false assumption that we can ‘take as read’ our current theological assumptions, which leads us

to view theology as basically polemical and apologetical (*i.e.* as answering objections to what we *already* believe; see John Webster, 'Jesus Christ', in *The Cambridge Companion to Evangelical Theology*, eds T. Larsen and D. Trier, CUP, 2007, p. 52). In contrast, Webster suggests: 'The text of Scripture is a permanent protest against the tendency of Christian culture to 'de-eschatologise' itself and its condition, that is to convert the presence of God into 'what may be touched', and thereby to refuse to stand beneath the sign of its own contradiction....It is because we are bitten or stung by God through the biblical text that we talk of the 'authority' of Scripture' (John Webster, *The Culture of Theology*, eds Ivor J. Davidson and Alden C. McCray, Baker Academic, 2019, p. 71). Yet alongside this, an evangelical theology which learned from Webster might cultivate a studied indifference to the fashions and prejudices of academic culture and a willingness to trust that the patient exposition of scripture and the Christian tradition offers the best riposte to modern unbelief. Most of all, an evangelical theology which learned from Webster would commit itself to patient attention to and contemplation of the triune God, whose living Word resists all attempts at domestication. It would consist in redeemed men and women continually brought face to face with the 'disorienting goodness' (p. 229) of Jesus Christ. I am thankful for the ways this new *Companion* might contribute to such a theological revival.

Jared Michelson, Cornerstone, St Andrews

The Ministry of Women in the New Testament. Reclaiming the Biblical Vision for Church Leadership. By Dorothy A. Lee. Baker Academic, 2021 (Paperback) ISBN: 978-1-5409-6308-6 221pp. £13.50.

My heart slightly sank on encountering yet another book on the role of women in church leadership. The arguments on both 'sides' are well rehearsed. However, I very soon warmed to the rigour and nuancing of Dorothy Lee's interpretive skill and conclude that this is a monograph well worth reflecting on.

Dorothy Lee is an Anglican priest in the Diocese of Melbourne, Australia and a research professor of New Testament at Trinity College, Melbourne. In the Preface she sets out her stall. Her concern is what she perceives to be the hermeneutical imperialism (p. xi) that 'blithely ignores' both the clear diversity of the New Testament witness to the role of women in the early Christian movement and its cultural context. She is troubled by 'a hidden misogyny' which she suspects drives some of the debate and finds the terms 'complementarian' and 'egalitarian' distinctly unhelpful. Women's perspectives, she argues, are unique and need to complement that of men – but in an egalitarian way. For Lee it is careful and attentive

biblical interpretation which is key, which involves not only holding to the objectivity of the text and its authorial intent but being open to what Paul Ricoeur called 'a surplus of meaning', where fresh insights can be discovered as the text interacts with new contexts.

The most stimulating and refreshing aspect of the book is her extended and well researched treatment of the witness of the Four Gospels. She not only makes some sharp observations about Jesus attitude to women but paints a moving and detailed portrait of the role of women in the ministry of Jesus, underlining 'that all Christian women, like all Christian men, have one and the same fundamental vocation: to be disciples of Jesus Christ' (p. 11). She notes from Matthew/Mark, for example, how the four male disciples who were first called fade into the shadows when it comes to the passion and it is a group of ministering women who emerge confidently into the foreground. Women too become the primary witnesses to the resurrection. Lee makes the helpful point that women were almost certainly present in many (crowd) scenes where they are not explicitly mentioned, advocating (quoting Lynn Cohick) that we need to 'exercise more imagination to repopulate the ancient landscape with women' (p. 33). Were women present, for example, in the sending of the Seventy and other mission activities? In her treatment of Luke/Acts, Lee emphasizes the use of the verb *diakonein* for the women who supported Jesus (Luke 8:3) and for Martha who 'serves' Jesus, and highlights the women described as 'co-followers' (*synakolouthousai*) of Jesus (Luke 23:49). She wonders whether the number of named female disciples in Luke's Gospel, which adds up to seven, is as intentional as the number twelve. In Acts she notices the relative lack of prominence of women in key roles but argues that there is still an inclusiveness, an inclusiveness which one day will come to fruition. For her the key issue is 'where the text faces' (p. 73), namely re-defining roles and relationships in terms of the Gospel rather than patriarchy. In John's Gospel she particularly draws out how such women as the woman of Samaria, Mary Magdalene and Mary who anoints Jesus become models of faith.

Dorothy Lee's treatment of the Pauline texts is less thorough and breaks little new ground. She highlights the extraordinary list of women in Romans 16 and explores the various options for the more contentious passages of 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 1 Corinthians 14:34-36 and 1 Timothy 2:11-15. She argues, for example, that the prohibition of women 'not to have authority over a man' refers to 'a dominating authority that seeks to gain the upper hand over others' (p. 125). The lack of detailed treatment of these passages compared to that in the Gospels was disappointing. After reviewing the rest of the New Testament material, a chapter follows on the role of women in the post-apostolic tradition where she makes the inter-

esting, if inconclusive, observation that 'continuing arguments against women's ministry point to its persistence in the early church' (p. 165). This is followed by a slim chapter on the theological issues at stake and the bold conclusion that 'women's sense of calling in the contemporary church is not primarily a product of Western feminism – though it has played its part – but largely a re-calling of the church to its evangelical roots, not only in the New Testament but also in the early centuries of the church's life' (p. 183).

This book has a number of strengths, most notably its thorough and stimulating treatment of the Gospel material. Many treatments of this topic far too quickly migrate to the Pauline material. I also appreciated some fascinating scholarly details such as the existence of some women leaders in ancient synagogues. Her central argument that the biblical material forms a *trajectory* rather than simply a mirror, a future pathway rather than a present reality, is well made. However, there were major weaknesses too. Although the book is a *New Testament* overview, Lee's theological reflections were surprisingly limited with minimal consideration of the significance of Pentecost (p. 179), no consideration of the present age as an anticipation of the new creation, the debate over the trinity and role subordinationism, and no assessment of the gifts and offices of the church.

A generous reading of the *Ministry of Women in the New Testament* would see her argument as subtle and subversive – for central to her thesis is the question of what is meant by leadership. If, as Jesus modelled and taught, leadership in God's Kingdom is not about upholding patriarchal domination, as in the Roman Hellenistic world, but rather about embracing a counter-cultural model, then this was precisely what was exemplified by many of the ministering women of the New Testament. If leadership is about 'discipleship writ large' or 'icons of Christ' as she prefers to term it, then women are most certainly to be included (p. 34). A more critical assessment would argue that precisely because the author never offers a clear definition of church leadership, let alone ordained ministry, she has conflated the idea of women's status and dignity as model disciples with the particular role of an overseer of a Christian community. That said, there is much here to move us, challenge us and bring us back to Scripture with fresh eyes.

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The Beauty of Preaching: God's Glory in Christian Proclamation. By Michael Pasquarello III. Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 2020. ISBN 978-0-8028-2474-5. 288pp. £21.99.

This work of homiletical theology by American Methodist Michael Pasquarello, with its focus on the potential of preaching to reveal God's beauty, is a goldmine for preachers. Here they will find valuable insights for proclaiming Christ attractively as well as food for a preacher's soul. Pasquarello calls on preachers to root their preaching in 'attentive receptivity to God's self-sharing by which the Spirit illumines our minds to contemplate, delight in, and long for the beauty of Christ's holiness as the fruit and effect' of their preaching (pp. xix-xx). As the book title indicates, beauty and glory are regarded as synonyms.

In order to persuade modern preachers to develop a 'homiletical aesthetic', the author draws extensively on three historical exemplars: Augustine, John Wesley, and Martin Luther. He also borrows in passing a multiplicity of quotations from a wide range of others, from Pope Francis to Eugene Peterson, as well as providing numerous useful footnotes referencing other works. Pasquarello on his own account also explores biblical texts which he regards to be key to his theme, particularly from Isaiah, Romans and Mark.

Two early chapters trace the beauty of God and the beauty of preaching as recurring themes in Augustine's *Confessions and Expositions*. Augustine's exposition of Psalm 103, is cited as a call for the church both to give thanks for the beauty of creation and to confess the reality of sin. For Augustine beauty is supremely revealed in redemption. Christ is beautiful, 'fair of form beyond all humankind', both in his person and in loving the church even when she was ugly. 'To make her [the church] beautiful he became ugly himself' (*Expositions* 5:111, on p. 103).

Pasquarello moves on to remind us that John Wesley believed God's 'design' was to 'spread scriptural holiness in the land' (p. 137). In the Wesleyan understanding, God's holiness is beautiful (cf. Pss 29:2; 96:9): 'The beauty of holiness shines forth with the brightness of the Father's love manifested in the Son, the express image of his person in whom the divine glory dwells in human form' (p. 156). Pasquarello reminds us that the good news Martin Luther announced was that a beautiful Saviour became ugly so that sinners, made ugly through sin, might be made beautiful through the work of divine grace. Lutheran scholar Mark C. Mattes' summary is quoted: 'God loves sinners not because they are beautiful, but they are beautiful because they are loved' (p. 168).

The author shares his aim in writing this book: 'I want to show that responding to the beauty of God's glory is the heart of preaching' (p. xxii).

For Pasquarello preaching is worship, and ‘the end of worship is the glorification of God and the sanctification of all things human’ (p. xxiv). Preachers, he says, ‘must be rooted in prayer, in attentive receptivity to God’s self-sharing by which the Spirit illumines our minds to contemplate, delight in, and long for the beauty of Christ’s holiness as the fruit and effect of our preaching’ (p. xx). Preaching is ‘doxological speech, the offering of a preacher’s whole self in adoring praise to God, and its purpose is to summon hearers to embrace ‘a doxological way of life’ in praising the true and living God (p. 15). Pasquarello believes the beauty of preaching can help pastors who struggle in churches where ministry is framed primarily as ‘a mode of faithless, market-driven competition and soul-less ecclesial survival’ (p. 14).

Pasquarello is persuasive in identifying God’s beauty with his glory and in lamenting the marginalisation of divine beauty in much contemporary preaching. But sometimes the reader senses a tendency to decry the instructional component in preaching, and to look somewhat askance at substitutionary atonement. And the typological treatment of Jesus’ anointing in Mark 14 may be over-stretched. Further, while doxological preaching would, no doubt, contribute towards much needed healing of ecclesial and theological fragmentation – as Pasquarello contends – serious theological study and dialogue are also required. However, such qualifications do not negate the usefulness of Pasquarello’s book as a rich resource on the oft neglected theme of divine beauty.

All readers who preach will strike homiletical gold within its pages. There are many *nuggets* to be found here!

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Grace and Freedom: William Perkins and the Early Modern Reformed Understanding of Free Choice and Divine Grace. By Richard Muller. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. xii + 230pp. ISBN 978 0 19 751746 8, 751748 2, and 751749 9. Hardback £47.99.

This erudite monograph is the latest from Richard Muller, the reigning godfather of early modern (Reformed) historical theology. Thematically, the volume extends his prior study of grace and free will, *Divine Will and Human Choice* (Baker, 2017), doing so with particular focus on William Perkins of Cambridge (1558–1602). This choice adds to the current rehabilitation of Perkins’s legacy, catalyzed by W.B. Patterson’s *William Perkins and the Making of a Protestant England* (OUP, 2014) as well as the recent reprinting of the Perkinsian corpus (in 10 volumes) by Reformation Heritage Books.

The project is comprised of seven dense chapters which do not lend themselves to short-form synopsis. Several of their key activities, however, deserve mention. First, there is the way Muller nicely situates Perkins in his context. In this vein, he astutely illumines the way in which Perkins's ideas were responsive to Catholic-Protestant debates. And he also provides a timely clarification on Perkins's relationship to the Puritan movement of the late-Tudor England. Like Patterson, Muller maintains that Perkins 'was not an Elizabethan Puritan,' even though his thought had 'a major impact...on later Puritan piety and doctrine' (p. 14). Additionally, the volume perceptively pinpoints the various and sometimes subtle influences on Perkins's thought. Some such sources are unsurprising (e.g., Augustine, Ursinus, Zanchi, etc); others may cause eyebrows to raise, such as Perkins's appropriation of the theory of *praemotio physica* from the Dominican theologians Dominico Bañez and Francisco Zumel.

At the centre of the project is Muller's (very) careful exposition of Perkins's thought on grace and free will and the way they relate. To a large extent, this explication centres on Perkins's 1601 *Treatise on Gods Free Grace and Mans Free Will*, though this is hardly the only place in his oeuvre where the topic is engaged (Muller helpfully catalogues Perkins's other ruminations on this subject in pp. 25–42). In probing Perkins's perspective, Muller provides a clear presentation of his definition of the will (i.e., a faculty or ability for choosing or rejecting) and considers how this squares with the more voluntarist or more intellectualist conceptions of willing which were extant in late medieval/early modern anthropology. He also highlights the Augustinian hue of Perkins's doctrine; following Augustine, Perkins contemplates of the will's freedom with reference to the four-fold (theological) state of humanity, that is, humanity before the fall, after the fall, after regeneration, and within the glorified state. The implications of each state for the functioning of the will are charted and evaluated over the duration of chapters 4–6.

Among other notable lessons deriving from this study two are particularly important. First, as Muller underscores in his conclusion, Perkins's defends a 'fundamental liberty of nature' (p. 186). In other words, his efforts to reconcile grace and free will within the economy of salvation – even while clearly assigning the priority to the former – neither lead to nor countenance a fatalistic, deterministic ethos (pp. 172–181, 187–188). Second, and relatedly, this means that Perkins's conception, as Muller notes right from the start, disrupts the compatibilist–libertarian dichotomy typifying much post-Enlightenment rumination on grace and free will (pp. 3–5, 186–188). What Perkins proffers is another alternative, in which the divine determination of a regenerate will in no way 'removes

the basic liberties of contradiction and contrariety, the will's capabilities of electing and rejecting its objects' (p. 164).

The virtues of this project are many. For example, it leaves readers with an understanding not merely of Perkins's views but also of wider Reformed thought on the will's freedom. It also offers a clarion reminder that even while Perkins's theology is markedly experiential and devotional (hence his being dubbed a 'father of pietism' by Heinrich Heppe), it is also properly scholastic. Further, and especially appreciated by this reviewer, there is Muller's remarkable capacity for parsing and explaining the finer points of Perkins's scholastic deliberations. In this arena, high points include Muller's commentary on Perkins's ideas about God's sovereignty and the advent of sin (pp. 99–108), the nature of cooperation in the context of salvation (pp. 126–135), and the ways in which God governs the human will (pp. 167–172).

At the same time, it is precisely such fine-tuned commentary which will, I suspect, limit this book's accessibility. Indeed, Muller's exacting exposition can prove quite tedious at times, all the more so for those with limited background knowledge. For this reason, I disagree with another reviewer's suggestion that the volume stands to be a helpful resource for pastors who would teach on its subject matter. To the contrary, this is a work foremostly for specialists; even for advanced graduate students, it will demand much effort. Notwithstanding, the ideas it illuminates would be of great benefit to a wider audience, certainly those who are perplexed or existentially burdened by the interface between God's grace and the human will. Accordingly I hope that someone may consider transposing its key systematic themes into a more congenial form for engagement by pastors and educated laypersons. I must confess that attempting just such an undertaking has crossed my mind.

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