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REVIEWS

The Word in Small Boats: Sermons from Oxford. By Oliver O'Donovan.
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6453-6. 172pp.
£11.99.

It will come as no surprise to those familiar with the prudent work of the former Canon of Christ Church that his *Sermons from Oxford*, gathered imaginatively around the maritime metaphor of a *Word in Small Boats*, proclaim the origin, power, and goal of history that has always defined his ministry: the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Entertaining a few second thoughts about his chosen title for this collection reminds us of the two-fold meaning of 'the Word' and 'small boats.' Biblically the Word (capital 'W') refers both to the eternal Christ who made and redeems the created order, as well as to the revelation of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures: the 'Word' is Christ Jesus himself and the Word he has spoken to humankind. Jesus preaching from a small boat at the shore of the sea reminds us of Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom, issued not infrequently from the shores of the sea. Christians, too, are 'small boats'; impotent vessels made powerful only by their contents. A small boat will hasten its voyage when manned by a capable Captain, where it will always be directed with purpose to an intended destination. The title therefore discloses a great deal about the selected sermons. If there is an irreducible nucleus, or central message to Prof. O'Donovan's sermons from Oxford, it is that the Word of God *must*, in fact, be preached.

The reader is given thirty sermons in this fine collection, bookended by an introductory and concluding sermon. Each sermon falls under one of four headings: The Mission of God's Word; The Community of God's Word; Tradition, Truth, and the Public; and Launched upon Life by God's Word. Dr. Andy Draycott proves a capable and judicious editor to this collection, carefully selecting and arranging each stand-alone sermon into a larger Sermon that defines the text itself. This is by no means an easy project. These sermons are abnormally dense. Only the most attentive listeners of Christ Church would have been capable of detecting all the subtleties of Prof. O'Donovan's sermons. Reading them in text is vastly easier, and the reader is encouraged to read slowly with Bible in hand. Bringing sermons by another preacher into cogent synthesis, doing justice both to the preacher and to his sermons, testifies to Dr. Draycott's achievement in this volume. His introduction to the sermons provides a concise overview and preliminary theological assessment of what is to come. Having spent several years studying Prof. O'Donovan's moral and

political theology prior to publication of this collection, it is apparent that Dr. Draycott *understands* the shape and contours of the sermons he treats.

The length, form, and (of course) text of each sermon varies. Some sermons take as their text the lectionary recommendation for the day, while some do not; some make an explicit address of a relevant moral or political question, and some are generally practical in purpose; some sermons are ambitious in what they seek to convey, while others remain more modest. Regardless of the text or subject of chosen message, however, every sermon is superbly crafted and richly imaginative. One can only wonder how the relevant sermon might have been delivered! These sermons are given to us for our edification, and if received with open heart and mind as the Word of God is meant to be received, that is precisely what they shall accomplish. *The Word in Small Boats* is recommended for academic, pastor, and layperson alike.

Matthew Arbo, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA

Christian Ethics in a Technological Age. By Brian Brock. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2010. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6517-5. x + 408pp. £22.99.

With the publication of Brian Brock's second monograph, *Christian Ethics in a Technological Age*, readers are given a conceptually wide-ranging, thoroughly researched, and theologically attentive engagement with fundamental ethical questions of technology and of technological advance. It assumes (rightly) that humanity finds itself in the throes of complete technological domination; an 'age' of technology that defines the contextual fabric of culture, commerce, politics, and, increasingly, *all* of creaturely life. The manifold problems technology introduces and reintroduces are shaped in conversation with three incisive modern philosophers: Martin Heidegger, George Grant, and Michel Foucault. This exposition Brock describes as an 'Attempt to claim Christ's Dominion,' which also serves as the header for part I of his inquiry. Part II, the more expressly theological treatment of the technological question, is described as 'Seeking Christ's Concrete Claim.' The Christian Ethic of technology is thus framed upon a foundation of Christology.

If Part I is meant to identify, contextualize, and nuance the ethical questions surrounding technology, then Part II is meant to better define the idolatrous conditions of our technological age by exposing its ideological foundations to the light of theological truth originating in Christ's reign. Here the scope of Brock's inquiry widens considerably. Chapter four sets the tone for what is to become a positive Christian ethic of technology. It will not do simply to obey Christ's command by not-per-

forming certain acts—one must *seek* Christ's claim actively. This chapter pivots the text's central argument and becomes a bend in the road where, once taken, the path leads upward beyond the conceptual treeline and into clearer, unobstructed terrain. Seeing through or over the shadowy conceptual forests of technological ambiguity requires understanding of creaturely flourishing. Our guide on this pathway to conceptual clarity is Christ himself, his command being addressed to the sojourner as an invitation to proceed in service to him. Technology offers an alternative invitation in the form of a temptation: 'to actively seek us out and offer us greater and supposedly more powerful access to new gods.'

The ethic for the Christian community is Christ himself and thus to act as unto him is not only to obey his command but to offer him our *worship*. Chapters seven and eight, in particular, explore the doctrine of creation for ethical insights into our accounts of work and Sabbath, as well as to the basic materiality of creaturliness. The latter chapter forms the second climax of the text (chapter four being the first) and surveys a variety of moral tensions generated by worship of the false god technology. Brock's treatments of environmentalism, food, and fertility are especially illuminating in this regard. Human beings are creatures among creatures united in the Divine declaration of 'good' and created to worship the Maker.

Brock's contribution to theological and ethical understandings of technology is commendable in both its depth and breadth, offering to Christian moralists a convincing argument richly supported by biblical insight and theological sensitivity. The shortcomings of the text (principally methodological) would be that its aims are too ambitious and aspire to too much; the amount of space devoted to sustained exposition and commentary on modern texts being but one manifestation of that ambition. And yet, despite its ambition, this volume is remarkably cautious: readers are shown simply and clearly *how* the question of technology is to be theologically and ethically conceived. If one is looking for rationale to 'rage against the machine,' look elsewhere! It might be that the machine rages against you!

Matthew Arbo, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, USA

C.S. Lewis vs the New Atheists. By Peter S. Williams. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013. ISBN 978-1-84227-770-6. 275pp. £9.99.

Among the many books published on the fortieth anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis, this one is a real gem. Although Lewis died some fifty years before the rise of the 'new atheists', Peter S. Williams shows how the various apologetic arguments advanced by him stand up even today against

what is essentially a revival of 'Old-Time Atheism' (the title of the first chapter). Whilst the book is full of historical and biographical interest, its real strength lies as a contemporary resource for probing forensically the various new atheist arguments. The author states his aim as follows: 'In literary company with Lewis, this book will place the central arguments that led him from atheism to Christ into a contemporary dialogue with the new atheists' (p. 21). It is an aim which the author, himself an experienced philosopher and apologist, has achieved with distinction.

Lewis' own journey of faith was, we are reminded, one of multiple stages: moving from what he termed 'popular realism' (materialism) to Christianity via the intermediate steps of philosophical idealism, pantheism, and theism. It is a road that others have since trod, and Williams brings out the influence Lewis has had on former atheists such as Francis Collins. The introductory chapter traces how even non-Christian philosophers have defended Lewis as a philosopher of some competence. The waspish dismissal of Lewis by American physicist and neo-atheist Victor J. Stenger as a mere 'author of children's literature' (p. 16ff) is one which neo-atheists would no doubt cheer, but it is by no means widely shared in academic philosophy.

Chapters two to six cover Lewis' thinking on scientism; the argument from desire; the argument from reason; the problem of goodness; and the historicity of the New Testament's account of Jesus. Each chapter is characterized by a freshness and engagement with contemporary discussions that is truly impressive. In the chapter on scientism, Richard Dawkins may be well-known as acknowledging in his various writings a world of 'awe' and 'beauty' but, as Williams points out, in Dawkins' universe such terms refer to 'nothing but subjective personal reactions taking place within, and relative to, by-products of an evolutionary process lacking any intrinsic meaning or given purpose' (p. 28). Williams also helpfully points out that the well-known definition of faith in Hebrews 11:1 as being 'certain of what we do not see' is not a proof-text for 'blind faith' but rather, understood in the context of the immediately preceding passage, a call to persevere in times of trial 'in the *rationaly warranted* expectation that God will bring his promises to completion' (p. 53, emphasis original). In the ensuing chapters Williams sometimes has to engage directly with the new atheists for the good reason that they have often ignored the arguments of Lewis himself despite referencing him and claiming to have engaged with him; for example Dawkins fails to take the 'argument from desire' seriously, confining his remarks to 'brief and confused comments...' (p. 75). He also draws from contemporary Christian philosophers. Alvin Plantinga complains that '[Daniel] Dennett... doesn't know

anything about contemporary analytic philosophy of religion, but that doesn't stop him from making public declaration on the subject' (p. 75).

The concluding chapter is an impressive and impassioned summary of the flaws in the reasoning of the new atheists. It is made repeatedly clear that they have, on issue after issue, failed to engage properly with philosophy in general and Lewis in particular. Even fellow-atheist Geoff Crocker complains that Dawkins 'has become a campaigner rather than a thinker' (p. 218). The persistent equating of religious faith by Dawkins, Hitchens and others with 'blind faith' in the face of well-known counter-arguments is shown to be itself 'an example of precisely the sort of blind faith that neo-atheists like to accuse believers of embracing' (p. 216)! And '(r)ather than believe in God they believe that our transcendent longings should be satisfied by the very objects that occasion them...' (p. 220).

Williams' style is accessible to the non-specialist, and he usually manages to interpret some of the more abstruse quotations in an understandable way. The book is extensively referenced, and these are helpfully grouped at the end of each chapter into selected works by Lewis, websites, video and audio links, online papers and books, making this a very practical resource for further study.

Alistair Donald, Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh

Contextualization in World Missions: Mapping and Assessing Evangelical Models. By A. Scott Moreau. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8254-3389-4. 428 pp. £19.99.

Written by a lecturer in the Missions and Intercultural Studies at Wheaton Graduate School who has previously been a missionary in Swaziland and Kenya, this publication has received much acclaim. Its concern is to present the missiological implications of Paul's affirmation that he became a Jew to win the Jews. This type of contextualization is relevant to anyone working amongst those of another world religion or even for the pastor called to serve in a housing estate or a stockbroker belt. Many of the author's examples are drawn from one of the most difficult areas of evangelism, that of bringing the gospel to Muslims.

Moreau's book is divided into two main sections. The first, 'Foundations for Evangelical Contextualization' deals with the academic concepts of models and maps in contextualization. In particular he considers the evangelical presuppositions concerning revelation and interpretation, and the marks of a good contextual approach when evangelising. The main concepts amongst evangelicals are those which involve mainly either indigeneity, transformation, syncretism, incarnation, holism or praxis. Moreau considers the different tools to develop contextualization such

as storytelling and the use of redemptive analogies and how these may engage people. He presents the various shades of the insider movement which connects with the question, for example, as to how far a Muslim convert has to leave the culture and religious practices of Islam.

The second main section, 'Mapping Evangelical Models of Contextualization', explains the main approaches evangelicals have used to engage in missions contextually. Moreau bases his findings on an analysis of 249 documented case studies. He concludes that the missionary as an initiator of the evangelistic process is one who has the role of either facilitator, guide, herald, pathfinder, prophet or restorer. For each role is given the methodology, biblical and contemporary examples, along with its strengths and weaknesses. The most commonly used ones are those of guide and pathfinder.

Moreau finally reflects on possible future trends within an evangelical approach to contextualization. At the close of the publication there are 6 appendices mostly summarising the work of other writers, and also a reference list of nearly 800 publications.

Some might find this book unsatisfactory because it basically takes published work by missiologists and missionaries and compares their findings. No one particular approach is advocated and an evaluation of the Biblical data is confined to a few pages. The specialized terminology used in this process can cause confusion.

It is a strong publication however as an academic resource. Moreau has consulted 5,000 missiological reference items, there are 101 keywords or phrases defined, 50 tables and each chapter finishes with questions for reflection as well as a select bibliography. Accompanying PowerPoint slides can be purchased from the publisher. It is the lecturer's dream class text.

Pastors and missionaries should find the discussion of different contextual approaches and the various roles stimulating for their ministry. To what extent are they guides or pathfinders? How much insider movement do they encourage? Certain parts they may find intriguing, such as the 'Camel method of evangelism', and the 'Flaw of the excluded middle'.

For those interested in obtaining a review copy of the book, the Kregel Academic & Ministry Blog offer copies for those who can publish reviews on their own blogs.

David E. C. Ford, Free Church College, Edinburgh

The Practice of Prophetic Imagination: Preaching an Emancipating Word.

By Walter Brueggemann. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8006-9897-3. 158pp. £11.99.

The issue of ‘prophetic’ preaching is in great need of theological reflection today. Walter Brueggemann has consistently brought to the table the urgency of the prophetic task in our contemporary context by mining the practices and situations of the Old Testament prophets. This book builds upon his earlier work, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1978). His fundamental burden then, as now, sees preaching as evoking a compelling, alternative ‘narrative’ of reality over against that of the dominant cultural consciousness. For Brueggemann, preachers are the poets of the contemporary landscape, uttering fresh words which ‘may take our breath away’ (p. 41).

As expected, the Old Testament prophets are quoted *en masse* as a kind of unified symphony of rhetorical thought, along with a highlighting of their particularities and peculiarities. Various preaching themes emerge, such as responding to tragedy and loss alongside hope and expectation. Brueggemann highlights the sheer variety of expression amongst the prophets, which helpfully wards us away from seeing preaching in overly narrow or monotonous modes. Truly, our sermons should be teeming with as much vibrant, adaptable and ‘edgy’ expression as those of the prophets themselves.

However, such incessant emphasis upon the ‘poetic’ responsibilities of the preacher, at times, *over*-ascribes the role of ‘imagination’ to the preacher rather than God. Brueggemann lauds the prophets for their ‘subversive’ metaphors and ‘shocking’ interpretations of events (e.g. the destruction of the Temple). But surely, the prophets—as God’s mouthpieces (cf. Jeremiah 1:9)—were not given *formless* content for their oracles. They were not creative writers reading meaning into cultural events; they were proclaiming God’s word(s) *to* the culture itself. The relationship between divine and human agency in prophetic utterance is complex, of course; Brueggemann’s account suffers for a lack of sustained theological attention to it.

There is also a tendency to import latently postmodern rhetoric into the Old Testament narrative. Thus, Israel offers the world ‘emancipation instead of rat-race production’; ‘covenantal dialogue instead of tyrannical monopoly’ (p. 12), and undercuts the ‘stifling reductionism of the royal consciousness’ (p. 23). Of course, it is important to transport Israel’s narrative *into* the present day, but not the other way around. Evidently, Brueggemann brings a little too much anti-establishment, anti-US, anti-consumerist angst *into* his exegesis. It is difficult to imagine Jeremiah or

Amos being quite so friendly with such distinctly postmodern thought-categories. Indeed, surely prophetic preaching might critique *these* prevalent 'narratives' too.

As to the book's structure, various sets of bullet points and numeral sections are offered with little rationale. One is often lost in a swathe of emphases and intermittent quotations which are never lingered upon long enough to provide sufficient reflective depth or clarity. Along the way, however, Brueggemann offers many insightful pseudo-proverbial reflections upon the significance and theological scope of the preaching task: 'Prophetic preaching is an effort to imagine the world as though YHWH... is a real character and a defining agent in the world' (p. 23); 'The preacher's words, like the embodied Word, refuse the confinements of modern rationality and dare to utter yet another word' (p. 128); 'It is the bite of the prophetic tradition that it can out-imagine the dominant imagination, because it is in sync with the truth of YHWH' (p. 28). Such homiletical gems are extremely valuable.

Brueggemann really does have a lot of perceptive things to say about the theology and practice of preaching. But he does not give a wholly convincing clarion call for the *whys* and *hows* which this book appears to offer. Thus, he succeeds in bringing the uniquely *prophetic* nature of preaching to the forefront of our minds, but fails to bring it home in the way he intends.

Aaron Edwards, University of Aberdeen

Princeton Seminary in American Religion and Culture. By James H. Moorhead. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2012. ISBN 978-0-8028-6752-0. 570pp. £40.99.

Readers of SBET will find this volume to be of compelling interest for more than one reason. On the one hand, a reader from the UK will find here a continuation of the story of how the seminary at Princeton (and still-earlier theological instruction through the pre-existing College of New Jersey) functioned in the same theological universe as the Scottish university divinity faculties and the English Nonconformist theological academies (eventually absorbed within England's emerging 'red brick' universities). Scots John Witherspoon (1723-94) and James McCosh (1811-94) are important components of this story. The Scots missionary-theologian, John R. Mackay (1889-1983) stood at the helm of this seminary for almost a quarter-century. Commonalities continued during the 2004-12 presidency of the Scot, Iain R. Torrance. At Princeton, the trans-Atlantic link has been ongoing and definite.

On the other hand, North American readers of this journal will find a fair-minded and comprehensive account of the seminary's two-century existence—an existence which, they have repeatedly been informed, suffered a fatal blow on the occasion of the withdrawal of New Testament scholar, J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937). Rebuffed when nominated to the seminary's chair in apologetics and apprehensive over the denomination's determination to broaden the perspective of Princeton, Machen and a circle of supportive faculty members withdrew in 1929 to found Westminster Seminary. Eighty-plus years later, conservative evangelicals on this side of the Atlantic still write and speak as if Princeton Seminary is only of significance *until* the year of rupture. Moorhead's massively-researched volume will compel those so-minded to think again, and to acknowledge the complexities at stake in that post-Great War era. The volume is characterized by three great strengths.

Moorhead's treatment of the two-century existence of the school is what may be called consolidative, for it incorporates the research of many into his own skilful narrative. Indeed, the evangelical constituency (just alluded to) will, to a degree, be disarmed on discovering that their journal articles, doctoral dissertations, and published monographs on Princeton in the pre-1929 era have—with others—been duly noted and digested. Had the same constituency researched the post-1929 era, their researches would also be reflected in this consolidative account.

It ought to have been so. The component of the Princeton faculty remaining in 1929 and dominant until circa 1940 was no less emphatically evangelical in its commitments than the element which departed for Philadelphia in 1929. The last of the Hodges to teach at Princeton, C. W. Hodge Jr. (1870-1937), successor to B. B. Warfield, continued in his post until his death. New Testament scholar, William Park Armstrong and the biblical theologian, Geerhardus Vos finished their careers at the seminary. The popular-level Bible commentaries of Charles R. Erdman (1866-1960), the Bible dictionary compiled by John D. Davis (1854-1926), the missionary writings of Samuel Zwemer (1867-1952), the pastoral writings of Andrew Blackwood (1882-1966)—all these continued to assist the broadly evangelical world for decades to come. When Princeton Seminary inaugurated its academic doctoral programs in 1944, evangelical and Reformed students were among those seeking admission.

Moorhead's account is, in addition to being consolidative, strongly contextual. He shows that in different epochs, Princeton Seminary mirrored the sentiments and championed the concerns of large swathes of the nation. In the period up to 1812, theological instruction in the College of New Jersey had—as part of the Witherspoon legacy continued under his son-in-law Samuel Stanhope Smith—taught evangelical theology

from the moderate Enlightenment stance embracing Scottish 'Common Sense' philosophy. This continued well beyond 1812. The early stance of the seminary from its 1812 foundation also mirrored the social outlook of American Whigs; the ante-bellum outlook of the seminary on American slavery mirrored the concern of middle America that slavery be ended (though not abruptly abolished). Until 1900, Princeton's theological outlook was clearly dominant in its denomination and provided the theological 'pulse' of northern Presbyterianism. The difficulty faced by the seminary in the post-1900 period was that it had become self-consciously defensive in the face of a changing theological and social landscape, and stood against a tide of adjustment at work not only in American society but across its sponsoring denomination and her other seminaries.

Moorhead's account further serves as a corrective to an imbalance rooted in the fact that Princeton has been appraised too frequently through the 'lens' provided by the careers and biographies of 'pillar' faculty members such as Archibald Alexander, the Hodges (Charles and son Archibald), and Benjamin Warfield. What colour is added by Moorhead's provision of an extended treatment of Samuel Miller (contemporary to Archibald Alexander), of W.H. Green (1825-1900) 'the Hebrew teacher of his generation', and William Brenton Greene (1854-1928) who from 1892 instructed in what we would today term social ethics and apologetics! There is a texture and a variety to the massively-learned conservative Princeton tradition which may have gone underappreciated.

Yet, with all this said, there are certain things one might have liked to see handled, or handled differently. We have begun by noting Princeton's trans-Atlantic significance. But we do not read here of the trans-Atlantic role played by Princeton which in effect adjudicated much British Reformed theology by the steady awarding of honorary D.D. degrees to pastors and theological tutors across the water. Especially in English Nonconformity, then-barred from the English (but not Scottish) universities and in Scottish Presbyterian dissent (whose Divinity Halls were not linked to that nation's universities), Princeton's trans-Atlantic role was extensive.

Second, while it is evident that Moorhead deeply admired President John R. Mackay, (president from 1936-59), devoting 50 pages to the impact and direction of his presidency, one comes away with the opinion that the sums have not been reckoned quite adequately. If we grant (and we ought to) that the 'old Princeton' endured beyond 1929, it was clearly on Mackay's watch that this era was laid to rest. Moorhead has not adequately explained how Mackay—who took his former professor, B. B. Warfield as his theological hero—could preside over the school's steady embrace of neo-orthodoxy, with Emil Brunner as visiting pro-

fessor by 1937. In the Mackay era, departing faculty members who were unambiguously evangelical were systematically replaced with those who identified with the evangelical position only in some qualified sense. It was this ‘evaporation’ at Princeton which opened the way for seminaries such as Fuller and Gordon-Conwell to become the institutions of choice for PCUSA evangelicals.

Third, while any volume surveying two centuries of institutional history in 570 pages will have had to leave many stories untold, some omissions seem rather glaring. Surely, there is an important story to be told relative to the demise of the *Princeton Theological Review* in 1929 (the year of the seminary’s re-organization) and the not-unrelated commencement in that year of the *Evangelical Quarterly* at Edinburgh? The emergence of *Theology Today* at Princeton in 1944 was a development consistent with the now more inclusive theological stance of the seminary. Surely the omission of any treatment of its editor, theologian Hugh Thomson Kerr Jr., (a faculty member between 1940 and 1974) represents a missed opportunity to explore this change of theological emphasis. The church historian, Norman Hope, who taught at Princeton 1946-78, is completely passed over as is the practical theologian, Donald Macleod, who taught at Princeton from 1948-88. Finally, we are left to wonder as to what was the line of demarcation determining which current faculty members would be mentioned in this work and which would not. One hopes that the faculty members of today accepted the principle of selection used.

Kenneth J. Stewart, Covenant College, USA

Charles Hodge: The Pride of Princeton. By W. Andrew Hoffercker. (American Reformed Biographies). Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2011. ISBN 978-0-87552-658-4. 460 pp. US\$19.99.

For any who regard Old Princeton with gratitude and respect, Charles Hodge (1797–1878) will be a figure of profound importance. Beyond this constituency, however, it might be wondered why this unoriginal and parochial theologian now deserves a large-scale biography. (In fact, not only one but two biographies of Hodge appeared in 2011, the other written by Paul Gutjahr and published by OUP.) Andrew Hoffercker’s authoritative and readable account of Hodge’s life and work should satisfy those from either camp. In fact, the scale of his influence and involvement in nineteenth century American life may surprise those for whom he remains primarily the author of a trustworthy work of systematic theology.

Lives can be messy things, and biographers face the challenge of providing structure for a narrative which inevitably has many diverse, diffuse, yet intertwined strands running through it. Here, it must be thought,

Hodge presents less of a challenge than some, perhaps most. Basically, he went to Princeton, then he went to Europe, then he went back to Princeton and then, some years later, he died. Simple enough—but it barely hints at the scope of Hodge’s importance or achievement. Hoffecker divides the biography into six major sections comprising thirty-five chapters; the first two parts correspond to ‘he went to Princeton’ (‘Roots’), which covers his early life and student days up to his appointment to the faculty of Princeton Seminary, and ‘he went to Europe’ (‘Broadened Abroad’) a brief, two-year sojourn to which Hoffecker devotes careful attention and attaches fundamental significance. The remaining four parts trace Hodge’s theological engagements with different facets of the Presbyterian church in the United States, although the brief fifth part, ‘Interaction with Europe’, picks up his connections to the wider church formed during his youthful European tour.

Hoffecker portrays Hodge as an individual of clear and deliberate thought and integrated convictions, capable of inspiring deep affection but able and willing to engage in combat—verbal or written—where he saw the need. Inevitably, Hodge harboured tensions too: Hoffecker presents a persuasive and appealing account of how head and heart each made their contribution to Hodge’s activity as a public theologian. Even so, one or two fissures in Hodge’s commitments invite comment and explanation, but pass unnoticed. How is it, for example, that he could be so suspicious of ‘voluntary societies’ and opposed to inter-denominational cooperation in the 1840s, yet at the same time produce a popular theological textbook intended for use across denominational lines? And by the meeting of the Evangelical Alliance in 1873, he was able to offer a stirring prayer for evangelical cooperation and deliver an address on ‘Christian Union’—both of which still repay reading and reflection.

In the main, and in the manner of the best theological history, Hoffecker’s narrative constructs a nuanced framework for exploring and explaining Hodge’s theology. That this is done in so sustained a fashion may explain one apparent oddity in the structure of the biography as a whole. Of course, Hodge’s three-volume *Systematic Theology* (1872-73) was the capstone of his writing career and the harvest of a lifetime in theological education and controversy. We catch little glimpse, however, of Hodge at work on this massive achievement, nor do we enjoy much if any exposition of what factors inspired its emergence in just this form. By contrast, Hodge’s theological handbook for use in the churches, *The Way of Life* (1841), produced mid-career, gets a welcome and lively chapter giving just this sort of setting for what is a very appealing part of Hodge’s output—but hardly on the scale or having the significance of the later work.

If this quibble is a sign that at least one reader wanted more, then that is no bad thing. On the other hand, a little less at some points could have helped, too. There is some repetition between text and notes (endnotes, sadly), and in a few cases between text and text (as on, e.g., p. 292) that might have been eliminated (and 'Bovarie Posey' for E.B. Pusey is a bit of a howler on the next page). A firmer editorial hand at these points would have helped. But quibbles these remain, and churlish at that for such a substantial contribution which so insightfully informs in so satisfying a manner.

David J. Reimer, University of Edinburgh

Barth and Dostoevsky: A Study of the Influence of the Russian Writer Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky on the Development of the Swiss Theologian Karl Barth, 1915-1922. By P. H. Brazier. (Paternoster Theological Monographs). Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2007. ISBN: 978-1-84227-563-4. xix + 245pp. £24.99.

During the summer of 1915, a young Swiss minister in Leutwil introduced the pastor in the neighbouring valley, serving the small village of Safenwil, to the writings of Fyodor Mikhailovich Dostoevsky. Through this simple gesture, Eduard Thurneysen propelled Karl Barth's theological development by sharing with him the wellspring without which, as Barth would later claim, he 'would not have been able to write either the first or the second edition of the commentary on Romans,' (pp. 7-8, 75, 139). In this masterful study, P. H. Brazier traces the contribution of the Russian author to Barth's thought, specifically in regard to sin and grace and the *diastasis* between the world and God, during Barth's crucial *Wendung und Retraktation* period. Using Bruce McCormack's groundbreaking work 'as a given and as a base line' (p. 3), Brazier carefully examines not only Dostoevsky's influence upon Barth, but also Barth's early theological development, his catalytic dialogues with Thurneysen, and Thurneysen's own significant scholarly contributions to the fields of pastoral care and Dostoevsky studies.

Brazier divides the seventeen chapters of his book into four parts. The first part traces Barth's early theological formation, including his wartime disillusionment with the theology of his teachers, and introduces his friendship with Thurneysen. Part Two argues that Dostoevsky's understanding of sin and grace influenced Barth's thought during the crucial year of 1915, sowing seeds that would ripen in Barth's later, focused study of the Reformers. Brazier claims that Dostoevsky's 'Idea,' namely that humanity, when adrift from God, acts without constraint, shaped Barth and Thurneysen's emerging view of human sinfulness. The Russian

novelist provided an anthropology that rang true to a generation struggling with the cataclysmic suffering and loss of World War I. Dostoevsky grasped their crisis and pointed toward its resolution, found only in God's grace extended to unworthy sinners. Further, Dostoevsky's novels laid the groundwork for Barth and Thurneysen's detailed study of Biblical texts in 1916, from which Barth's commentaries on Romans would eventually arise, and prepared Barth for his own discovery of 'The Solution' to the futility of human-centred projects through an encounter with the 'wholly other' God of Scripture. Part Three provides an overview of Thurneysen's books on pastoral care and Dostoevsky, considers the influence of various scholars upon Thurneysen and Barth as they interpreted Dostoevsky's novels, and closes with a discussion of the theological existentialism found in both Dostoevsky's and Thurneysen's writings. Part Four examines Barth's correspondence with Thurneysen during the writing of *Römerbriefs 1* and 2, his references to Dostoevsky and others (the Reformers, Overbeck, Kierkegaard) within these volumes, and the convergence of theological themes between Barth's Romans commentaries and Dostoevsky's novels.

The strength of this volume lies in its broad scope, thorough research, and crisp writing. Brazier displays a lucid understanding of the contextual factors influencing Barth's early theological development, skilfully analyzes Dostoevsky's writings in their own right as he also traces their influence upon Barth, and patiently unpacks the contributions of the lesser known Thurneysen. Brazier's challenge lies in the interweaving of these strands, which at times threaten to pull apart as separate narratives straining in different directions. Nevertheless, his broad discussion supplies a new 'base line' that may inspire further, more focused, thematic studies of the theological dimensions of Barth's interaction with Dostoevsky and Thurneysen. Indirectly, Brazier's research illumines the crucial role of artistic media, specifically of novels, in the formation and dissemination of theological ideas. Overall, Brazier's commendable and highly readable book sharpens our view of the vibrant world of literature, theology, friendship, and pastoral ministry that shaped the young Barth and that prepared him for his tremendous theological contributions.

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Jonathan Edwards and Justification by Faith. By Michael McClenahan.
Farnham: Ashgate, 2012. ISBN: 978-1409441786. 228pp. £55.00.

This book is the published form of McClenahan's 2006 doctoral dissertation undertaken at Oxford University. It focuses on the theme of justification by faith, a doctrine that was highly significant to Edwards in

the context of the events leading up to the Great Awakening. The central thesis advanced is as follows: 'Edwards' discourse on justification follows in broad continuity with previous Reformed explanations of the doctrine' (p. 192). This argument for continuity is one that embraces novel elements in Edwards' thought, elements which are interpreted as evidence of the attempt to restate the Reformed tradition in fresh ways rather than as departures from it.

In order to establish his argument, McClenahan offers a close reading of Edwards' discourse, *Justification by Faith Alone*, in the light of its polemical and intellectual context. The contents of the discourse were first delivered in two public lectures in 1734, and subsequently published in 1738 in expanded form. Polemically, the key issue addressed is the Arminianism that Edwards opposed. In chapters one and two, McClenahan demonstrates that it is primarily the Arminian theology that is represented in Archbishop John Tillotson's published sermons that Edwards opposed in his discourse. Key aspects of Tillotson's theology of justification include a version of the covenant of grace in which faith and obedience are conditions, a re-definition of justifying faith that entails obedience, and a view that God accepts a man's sincere albeit imperfect obedience on account of Christ's meritorious obedience and suffering. It is argued that Edwards contended against this 'new fashioned divinity' in defence of the 'old Protestant doctrine' of justification (p. 22).

Having established Tillotson's significance, McClenahan offers a critical exposition of Edwards' discourse in chapters three to five in which he shows that the key tenets of Tillotson's Arminian theology are explicitly addressed by Edwards with the resources of Reformed Orthodoxy. One example will suffice to illustrate McClenahan's approach in these chapters—Edwards' view of imputation. Edwards defined justification in terms of sin's remission and the title to eternal life (pp. 96-100). From the standpoint of sin's resolution, justification entails freedom from the guilt of sin and the legal right to eternal life. This definition lays the ground for Edwards' doctrine of imputation in the light of his covenant theology (pp. 139-147). It parallels Edwards' conception that sin's satisfaction and the perfect obedience of God's law are necessary for justification. The former is achieved in Christ's atoning death while the latter is fulfilled in Christ's perfect obedience to the law, both of which are imputed to believers in their justification. Throughout the exposition, McClenahan shows that Edwards' view of imputation is akin to those of Reformed Orthodox theologians such as John Owen and Francis Turretin. He further shows that Edwards' articulation of imputation is directed against Tillotson's conception that a person's sincere but imperfect obedience counts towards justification.

McClenahan makes a number of important contributions in his reading of Edwards' discourse. His study challenges the conclusions of scholars who undervalue the forensic nature of justification in Edwards for a more Catholic conception of it. In particular, it calls into question Miller's influential thesis that New England covenant theology, with its stress on preparationism and covenantal conditions, departed from Calvin's theology and opened the door to Arminianism. McClenahan has ably demonstrated that it was the Anglican Arminianism of Tillotson that Edwards opposed, and he opposed it as one who drank from the wells of Reformed Orthodoxy. Meticulously researched, rigorously argued, and sprinkled with helpful summary paragraphs throughout, this is a work that will benefit both pastors and scholars on a central concern of the Gospel.

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The Holy Trinity: Understanding God's Life. By Stephen R. Holmes. Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2012. ISBN 978-1-84227-741-6. xix + 231pp. £19.99.

In this significant contribution to Trinitarian debate, Holmes argues that the trumpeted revival of Trinitarian theology over the last decades, far from being a positive development, represents a departure from the classic doctrine.

Holmes correctly agrees with Ayres that Augustine expresses agreement with the Cappadocians and the Constantinopolitan settlement. From this he maintains there is no substantive division of east and west on Trinitarian doctrine. Holmes attributes the east-west model to the arguments of Theodore de Régnon. Photius, the ninth century Patriarch of Constantinople, in fulminating against Augustine and the double procession, generated more heat than light. Indeed, there was no need for a revival of Trinitarianism, for the classic doctrine has always been accepted across the church. The social doctrine of the trinity, with its talk of a divine community, is an abandonment of the entire theological tradition.

There are many positive elements to Holmes' case. Much, if not most, recent writing has effectively removed the immanent trinity or led towards intra-Trinitarian relations that verge on tritheism. Holmes' strong commitment to classic Trinitarian theology is to be welcomed. The book is thought provoking and has generated and will generate considerable discussion and response.

Naturally, there are some points for debate. My concern, as a pastor for twenty five years, has been with the grass roots, with pulpit and pew. In my experience of over half a century of hearing sermons and prayers, I

recall very few Trinitarian sermons, other than those I or colleagues have preached, nor heard prayers invoking the trinity from outside the Book of Common Prayer. From this angle a Trinitarian revival was needed and is needed still.

Moreover, differences between east and west did not arise out of thin air; there was an underlying disagreement. The controversy over the *filioque* was hardly a chimera. The liturgies of the Eastern church are markedly different—and for the East, the creeds, the liturgy and the ecumenical councils are paramount rather than the musings of individual theologians. Simply because Augustine was not in conflict with the Cappadocian settlement, or since recent discussions have reached certain agreements, does not warrant sweeping a millennium or more of conflict under the carpet as though it did not exist.

It is surprising in view of this that Holmes hardly refers to Eastern and Orthodox representatives. Lossky, Meyendorff, Staniloae, Cabasilas, Florovsky, and Bobrinskoy are not mentioned. He overlooks the point that converts from Rome and Protestantism have historically been called on to renounce, *inter alia*, the *filioque* before their chrismation. Seminar papers, journal articles, and theological treatises may seem to set the agenda but for Orthodoxy the unchanging liturgy and the life of the church in creed, councils, and living worship is where the action is. Here Theodoe de Régnon is at most a recent, remote and largely irrelevant footnote.

Along rather similar lines one is struck by the absence of reference to T.F. Torrance, to my mind the pre-eminent figure in recent Trinitarian theology. Where does he fit in Holmes' analysis, one wonders?

Finally, I have some concerns with Holmes' understanding of the classic trinitarianism as he expresses it in his final chapter. Perhaps due to his justifiable opposition to the social trinity he seems to go just a touch in the opposite direction in saying that the only distinctions between the hypostases are the eternal relations of origin. Do not the missions—the incarnation of the Son and the sending of the Holy Spirit—disclose something?

Despite such caveats, Holmes is to be congratulated on writing an accessible book worth reading and pondering deeply.

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