



ordained servant  
june-july 2018

# Addiction

# Ordained Servant Online

## A Journal for Church Officers

E-ISSN 1931-7115

### **CURRENT ISSUE: UNDERSTANDING ADDICTION**

**June-July 2018**

### *From the Editor*

The so-called “opioid crisis” is a painful reality in almost every community in the United States. Dr. James Berry encourages church officers to understand addiction as disease in his article, “Flesh and Thorn: Understanding Addiction as Disease.” He practices as an addiction psychiatrist and is an associate professor of the Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry with West Virginia University. As an OPC elder, he believes that we are responsible for the choices we make, including those related to addiction, but that Christians have too often discounted the pervasive element of disease in addiction and mental illness. It is all part of being fallen in a fallen world.

Mark Patterson, a member of Christ Community Church in Brisbane, Australia, reviews Sinclair Ferguson’s wonderfully pertinent exploration of the eighteenth-century Marrow Controversy, *The Whole Christ*. Ferguson challenges Reformed ministers especially to get the gospel of God’s transforming grace right or God’s very character will be distorted. This review should whet the spiritual appetites of church officers, especially preachers.

Ryan McGraw reviews Jounghun Cho, *Anthony Tuckney (1599–1670): Theologian of the Westminster Assembly*. This little known Westminster divine was an important theological and spiritual force in the church of his day and in the Westminster Assembly.

David Noe, an associate professor of classics at Calvin College, reviews Richard Muller’s latest gem, *Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought*. Muller’s work on resuscitating post-Reformation theology has caused a revolution in the study of this important postlude to the magisterial Reformation. Muller proves time and time again, through a close study of original sources that the post-Reformation theologians, far from veering off the track into Scholastic rationalism, built squarely on the theology of the magisterial Reformers through meticulous exegesis of Scripture and profound reading of orthodox theology going back to the Ancient Church Fathers.

Ryan Glomsrud, an associate professor of historical theology at Westminster Seminary California, reviews Mark Galli’s *Karl Barth: An Introductory Biography for Evangelicals*. Dr. Glomsrud is currently writing a book called *Calvin’s Free Pupil: The Early Karl Barth and the Reformed Tradition*. He recommends Galli’s book as a good introduction to Barth, with all of the appropriate caveats about Barth’s theology.

Finally, don’t miss our poem this month, “The Rain Gasp’d For,” by the great New England pastor and theologian Cotton Mather (1663–1728).

Blessings in the Lamb,  
Gregory Edward Reynolds

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## FROM THE ARCHIVES “ADDICTION”

[http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject\\_Index\\_Vol\\_1-25.pdf](http://opc.org/OS/pdf/Subject_Index_Vol_1-25.pdf)

- “Addictions.” (M. Van Liuk) 11:4 (Oct. 2002): 67–72.
- “Pastor to Pastor: The Perils of Pornography, Part 1.” (William Shishko) 14:1 (Mar. 2005): 8–10. [reprinted 15 (2006): 69–74]
- “Pastor to Pastor: The Perils of Pornography, Part 2.” (William Shishko) 14:2 (Sep. 2005): 51–52. [reprinted 15 (2006): 69–74]

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*Ordained Servant* exists to help encourage, inform, and equip church officers for faithful, effective, and God-glorifying ministry in the visible church of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its primary audience is ministers, elders, and deacons of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, as well as interested officers from other Presbyterian and Reformed churches. Through high-quality editorials, articles, and book reviews, we will endeavor to stimulate clear thinking and the consistent practice of historic, confessional Presbyterianism.



# ServantLiving

## Flesh and Thorn: Understanding Addiction as Disease

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by James H. Berry

Americans are dying from addiction at an alarming rate. Almost 64,000 people died in 2016 from drug overdose. This is more than the number of Americans who died during the Vietnam conflict, more than those who died at the apex of the HIV-AIDS epidemic, more than those who died from drug overdose in 2015, which was more than 2014, and so on—a horrible pattern that has essentially remained constant for the past decade. Since 2008, more Americans die each year from overdoses than from car accidents and firearms. From 2000 to 2015 more than a half million Americans died from overdoses. Approximately 88,000 Americans die from alcohol related complications every year and around 430,000 die from tobacco-related causes. We are facing an addiction crisis the likes of which has never been seen in this country.<sup>1</sup>

Astonishingly, the life expectancy for Americans has declined since the turn of the century. While one would assume the richest nation in the world, blessed with the planet's best technology and resources, would have the longest lifespan, this is not the case. Why not? Are common chronic diseases such as heart disease or diabetes suddenly killing more people? Is there an epidemic of a deadly infectious disease such as meningitis or an exotic virus such as Ebola? No. There are three main factors driving this accelerated death rate: accidental overdose, suicide, and liver failure. All three are closely tied to addiction-related behaviors and all are *entirely* preventable.<sup>2</sup>

For every death, typically a spouse, parent, child, or friend endured countless hours of soul-wrenching agony attempting to rescue the loved one. Rarely does addiction go unnoticed by those who are closest. Rather, they are acutely aware (indeed, are the collateral damage) of the destructive behaviors of a life ensnared by addiction. In the wake of the devastation, they are often left to pick up the pieces and futilely make sense of the social- and self-destruction caused by the relentless pursuit of a substance. Thousands of dollars are spent on residential treatment programs and hospital detoxifications promising a cure. Thousands of dollars are spent on bail, fines, and court costs. Thousands of tears are spilled in prayer for change. Thousands of hours are spent in sleepless worry that the next phone call will be from the hospital or police department.

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<sup>1</sup> These statistics may be found on the Center for Disease Control website: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

<sup>2</sup> Princeton Economics professors Anne Case and Angus Deaton aptly refer to these deaths as “deaths of despair”: Anne Case and Angus Deaton, “Mortality and Morbidity in the 21st Century,” Brookings Papers on Economic Activity, Spring 2017, Brookings Institution, <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/casetextsp17bpea.pdf>.

As a physician who specializes in treating addiction, I recognize a tremendous need for church communities to understand what addiction is and how to care for those suffering from this disease. When I meet fellow believers and they learn that I am an addiction psychiatrist, I usually get one of two disparate responses: skepticism that addiction and mental illness are diseases requiring treatment rather than sin to be confessed, or relief that a Christian is in this profession and pleas for greater instruction on how the church can minister to those who are suffering. Almost daily I find I must persuade others that addiction is primarily a brain disease with significant behavioral consequences that can be effectively treated. Here I introduce the medical model of addiction with the hope that church officers may benefit from this understanding and be better equipped to serve their parishioners who suffer from this disease.

Addiction is a chronic brain disease that has biological, psychological, and social etiologies and manifestations. The bio-psycho-social model of illness has been established and taught in medical schools for several decades and delineates three interrelated domains forming the basis of disease. The biologic domain consists of a bodily organ or system that is impaired due to any number of factors such as an infectious process, genetic malformations, physical trauma, etc., or due to an unknown cause. The dysfunction of the organ or system results in a predictable constellation of symptoms that are directly correlated with the damaged organ. The psychological domain comprises thoughts and emotions. Thought patterns may lead to decisions that elevate the risk of contracting a disease and then of perpetuating the illness. Furthermore, an emotional state may directly influence the disease state: Research has demonstrated that during periods of heightened anxiety or depression the body makes stress hormones that may wreak havoc on various organs and cause disruptions in normal functioning. The social domain involves the impact interpersonal relationships have on illness. Humans aren't created as isolated islands but are social creatures. Social relationships have a considerable influence on the genesis of disease and its progression. Additionally, each social demographic carries attending health risks or protective factors. For instance, individuals in Native American communities are at increased risk of heart disease. Certainly, there are genetic and interpersonal factors contributing to this risk, but larger cultural influences affect health disparities.

As an example, let's look at how the disease of diabetes fits within the bio-psycho-social model. In diabetes, the main organ of impairment is the pancreas. The pancreas secretes a hormone, insulin, which is essential for transporting blood glucose to the cells of various organs. These organs need glucose in order to survive. Without glucose, organs become energy deprived and break down. In the form of diabetes known as Type 2, in addition to an impaired pancreas, the body's organs do not respond properly to the insulin available. This dysfunction leads to an overabundance of sugar in the blood and causes symptoms such as frequent urination, excessive thirst, and excessive eating. If left untreated, acute life-threatening consequences such as coma and death may occur. How does someone get Type 2 diabetes? While genetic predisposition plays a strong role, so do personal choices and community. Being overweight and living a sedentary lifestyle are the main factors precipitating this disease. Obesity, for instance, tends to run in families due both to genetics and to family-specific dietary and activity habits. In times of stress or depression, many turn to food with high fat and sugar content to self-soothe, which is typically learned behavior from an early age. All these biological, psychological, and social factors contribute to and compound the disease of diabetes.

In addiction the brain is the main organ of impairment. Brain circuitry responsible for memory, reward, and motivation is dysfunctional due to both genetic and behavioral

factors.<sup>3</sup> Normally, the brain releases a neurotransmitter called dopamine during pleasurable activities. Food, exercise, sex, finding shelter, getting praise from others are all examples of rewarding activities that release dopamine. When dopamine is released, an exquisite series of electrochemical communications takes place within the brain's neural network that reinforce whatever activity has caused the release of dopamine. This is a built-in feedback mechanism designed to encourage the person to continue to engage in the activity. The activity is rewarding, we remember how good it feels, and we are motivated to re-experience the feeling. When this activity is repeated frequently over time, neural networks grow, change, and form to encourage this activity. This is advantageous when the activity is finding a warm fire in the middle of a snowstorm but becomes pathologic and detrimental when the activity is repeated use of cocaine. Finding warmth in a storm releases a small amount of dopamine. Smoking cocaine releases a massive amount of dopamine. Because cocaine use causes the release of so much more dopamine than naturally rewarding activities, frequent use will cause the brain to rewire to favor cocaine consumption over other natural pleasures. This is aptly illustrated in studies done with rats. Rats who have been frequently exposed to cocaine will choose to press a lever delivering a bolus of cocaine rather than a lever delivering a food pellet. These unfortunate animals will continue to choose the cocaine lever to the point of starving to death. A dysfunctional reward center has contributed to the rat's destruction.

One of the main biologic features that distinguishes a human brain from a rat's brain is the large concentration of neurons in the human forebrain. A basic taxonomy demarcating a brain's functional structure consists of three interconnected components: the hindbrain, the midbrain, and the forebrain. Moving from hind to fore (or inside-out) increases the degree of functional complexity and sophistication of the animal's neurocognitive capabilities. The hindbrain controls very basic life supporting features such as breathing and reflexes. The midbrain houses the pleasure center, emotion center, and memory center. The forebrain, among other higher order duties, houses the prefrontal cortex. This is the primary area responsible for making rational decisions known as executive functioning. Executive functioning involves balancing the pros and cons of particular actions, anticipating consequences, perceiving reality, and making reasoned decisions. Executive functioning allows us to control our tongue or put the brakes on an impulsive urge. Rats are woefully lacking in prefrontal cortical tissue and therefore do not have the degree of impulse control that humans do.<sup>4</sup> Rats are mostly drive and impulse. Humans are typically better equipped to make good decisions—unless, of course, one has had one too many glasses of wine at a wedding reception. The high amount of alcohol impairs executive functioning, distorts reality, and makes one believe he is a much better dancer than he really is. Over time, frequent drinking episodes in large enough amounts may cause changes in the brain such that the midbrain circuits are no longer influenced as strongly by the prefrontal cortex, and the role of the prefrontal cortex becomes diminished. The midbrain has been unmoored. In addition to this loss of a rational rudder steering the brain's drive mechanism, there is a loss of pleasure in normal activities. When copious amounts of dopamine are released

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive and helpful definition of addiction, see the American Society of Addiction Medicine's Public Policy Statement: <https://www.asam.org/resources/definition-of-addiction>.

<sup>4</sup> Not to sell rats too short, they do have executive functioning that is adaptive for survival and allows them to remember and solve puzzles for rewards. They simply do not have it to the same extent as humans (well, most of us anyway).

repeatedly over time, a negative feedback loop occurs such that the dopamine receptors become less numerous and less active. This results in a persistent state of dysphoria. A dark cloud seems to hang over much of life. The only thing that relieves the doldrums is the pursuit of the substance. Many of my patients report that they don't use drugs to get high anymore, but simply to feel "normal." This is largely due to a brain with low levels of available dopamine and other neurotransmitters affecting a sense of well-being.

Of course, we are much more than a collection of neural tissue. We are bigger than our brains (metaphysically speaking). We are spiritual creatures with minds that are capable of transcending anatomy. We know this is true as Scripture teaches we will continue to be sentient in the time between the loss of our earthly body and the gain of our heavenly body. Nonetheless, while on this earth, we are bound by physical limitations. Matter matters. We see this dramatically illustrated when a person has a major stroke that affects the portions of the brain responsible for speaking or walking. In addition the brain impairment causes distorted thinking, severe cravings, emotional dysregulation, and compulsive substance use despite horrible consequences.

This biological foundation must not be pressed to the point of becoming overly reductionistic or fatalistic.<sup>5</sup> Brain impairment does not *necessitate* addictive behavior at all times and at all costs. If a loaded gun is placed to the head of Tom, who has a serious heroin addiction, and he is threatened with execution for using, Tom will likely not use. The immediate saliency of a potential bullet to the brain will most likely be enough to dissuade Tom. Tom's prefrontal cortex, although diminished, is not dead. However, if Tom is then released from the immediate threat and told he would be shot if caught using in the future, he will likely still use. Tom's ability to feel the full weight of a future consequence is weak and the drive to find relief with heroin in the moment is much stronger. Tom will likely rationalize his use as necessary to survive another day and minimize the likelihood of being caught using. He may even tell himself that living with such pain and misery is so unbearable that finding relief now may be worth a bullet tomorrow. Addiction also does not absolve one of the responsibility for bad behavior. If Tom robs a gas station to pay for heroin, Tom should be held responsible for his crime. Furthermore, we are all required as image bearers of God to behave according to his will. Those who are hindered from doing so are obligated to seek help to manage their disease. Nonetheless, there are incredibly powerful biophysiological forces at work that keep people doing unhealthy, dangerous, and even sinful things.

Much like other chronic diseases, addiction has varying degrees of severity and periods of relapse and remission.<sup>6</sup> Some people have a mild form of the disease and can successfully abstain from the offending substance with little to no treatment. They make up their mind to quit smoking one day and never pick up a pack of cigarettes again. Likewise, some diabetics can simply change their eating habits and maintain healthy levels of blood glucose. The temptation for many observers is to extrapolate a uniform solution as though these examples are normative. "My brother quit drinking by sheer willpower and so should you!" We can celebrate and rejoice that many are able to quit using without much help.

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<sup>5</sup> In fact the bio-psycho-social framework was a reaction against the overly reductionist "biomedical" model.

<sup>6</sup> A good medical review article that outlines addiction as chronic disease and compares rates of remission with other diseases such as diabetes and hypertension is: McLellan AT, Lewis DC, O'Brien CP, Kleber HD, "Drug Dependence, a Chronic Medical Illness: Implications for Treatment, Insurance, and Outcomes Evaluation," *Journal of the American Medical Association* (2000) 284 (13): 1689–95. doi:10.1001/jama.284.13.1689.

This does not negate the fact that many others are not so fortunate and may have a more severe form of the disease requiring intensive assistance. Also, I've had many patients who have been able to go years, even decades, without using and decide one day it is safe to pick up a drink. Before long, they were back in the dangerous position of active, unhealthy, compulsive drinking. A common refrain heard in Alcoholics Anonymous meetings is "One's too many and a thousand's not enough." For most, abstaining for life is recommended.

I encourage church officers to begin viewing addiction through the lens of chronic disease. Yes, as creatures bearing God's image, we are morally culpable whenever we make decisions that transgress God's law. We are morally culpable whenever we want anything more than to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. All of us fail mightily to live according to those values we most highly regard. We inhabit a broken world and this brokenness includes our brains and our bodies. In a fundamental sense, all disease is a result of sin since the Fall poisoned everything. Yet, we must be sensitive to the reality that people who struggle with addiction, by nature and experience, are handicapped by incredibly powerful biologic drives. They do not do that which they truly want to do, and they do that which they truly do not want to do. For the Christian, these forces continue to persist despite conversion. The apostle Paul's thorn was not plucked from his flesh when he bowed the knee to Christ. He continued to suffer but did so in the hope of glory.

Church officers can minister to those entrusted to their care by addressing the biologic, psychologic, and social domains of addiction. Biologically, there are several FDA-approved medications available to help specifically with alcohol, tobacco, and opioid addiction. These medications have demonstrated efficacy to decrease substance use and increase levels of functioning. The use of these medications should not be considered a moral failure any more than the diabetic's use of insulin should be seen as a moral failure. We should praise God that he has given us the science to curb the devastating effects of many diseases and allow people to live healthy lives. Officers should help parishioners obtain access to qualified physicians who can thoroughly screen for substance use disorders and treat medically if necessary. Additionally, many evidence-based psychological therapies help people recognize the cognitive and behavioral patterns contributing to ongoing substance use and develop positive strategies for dealing with these. Well-trained physicians, psychologists, and social workers may be a tremendous resource for helping your parishioner. Finally, the church has a significant social role to play in keeping the parishioner well. Spending time with fellow believers, especially in worship, is critical to shape us according to God's design of wholeness. God, in his kindness, has given us the church to nurture those who are weak and uplift the downtrodden. We should constantly encourage the diligent use of the means of grace, knowing these are God's graces intended to sustain his people in a world of disease, dying, and death. We should always hold forth Christ as both the example to follow in maintaining faithfulness through suffering and the fountain of forgiveness and strength when we fail. We should constantly proclaim the Word, declaring who we truly are in Christ and the goal of our ultimate destination. We hold forth, at all times, that we will be seated in glory, sweetly enjoying God and one another in the perfect union of resurrected body and imperishable spirit—a body impenetrable by any thorn.

**James H. Berry** is a ruling elder in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. He practices as an addiction psychiatrist and is an associate professor of the Department of Behavioral Medicine and Psychiatry with West Virginia University.



# ServantReading

## The Whole Christ *by Sinclair Ferguson*

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by Mark Paterson

*The Whole Christ: Why the Marrow Controversy Still Matters—Legalism, Antinomianism, and Gospel Assurance*, by Sinclair Ferguson. Wheaton: Crossway, 2016, 256 pages, \$24.99.

While it may sound cliché, this book is one that every Reformed and confessional pastor and elder should read, and then re-read at least biannually!

Why? Simply because Sinclair Ferguson has masterfully put his finger on an area where we, as confessional Calvinists, can slip imperceptibly into a grievous deformation of God’s infinitely gracious character, and his equally gracious gospel. It is possible, too, that Ferguson’s thesis helps diagnose the often lackluster growth of our churches, which, of all expressions of the body of Christ, should have the most glorious, attractive, and winsome “camera angle” on the grace of God in the gospel!

*The Whole Christ* employs the historical backdrop of the Marrow Controversy in eighteenth century Scotland to challenge twenty-first century Reformed Christians to consider, “Who is the God whom we come to know in Jesus Christ (John 17:3)? What is he really like, truly like—deep down, through and through?” (19). As Ferguson emphasizes, one’s often unstated thoughts and emotions about these matters can distort how a Reformed pastor conveys both the content and the tone of the gospel in his preaching.

The book, published in 2016, was born of a series of conference addresses in 1980 where Ferguson—then based in Scotland—was requested to draw “Pastoral Lessons from the Marrow Controversy.” While initially bemused that anyone in the United States would be the slightest bit interested in the controversy, he prepared the series to consider how legalism, antinomianism and gospel assurance interact with gospel ministry. In the transcript of the original addresses Ferguson exhorted:

My brethren it is vital—as many of us may have discovered in our ministries—that we turn over these matters in our minds because this is not a curiosity from some recondite source of Scottish Presbyterianism. It is as you may well know a perennial danger in the reformed churches. It is a danger that arises nowhere more than where there is a discovery over a period of years of what we call the doctrine of grace. And at the end of the day we may well find that these very issues of the Marrow Controversy are among the most vital pastoral issues at the deepest possible level that we will ever face.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sinclair B. Ferguson, “The Marrow Controversy #01: Historical Details,” sermon preached at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary, February 4, 2004, <https://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=220484920>.

And, in a manner that still reverberates powerfully in 2018, Ferguson went on to say:

You see, what had happened among these men in the early decades of the 18th century was this. They had mastered the pattern by which the grace works. There wasn't a comma in the *ordo salutis* (the 'order of salvation') with which they were not familiar. They knew their Confession of Faith forwards and backwards and upside down. And yet while they were familiar with the pattern by which grace works and had mastered it, they had never really been mastered by the grace of God in the gospel in their hearts. . . . They were masters of Calvinism who had never been mastered. They were Calvinists with the minds and hearts of natural men, at least as far as these truths were concerned.<sup>2</sup>

In the Foreword, Tim Keller helpfully observes that the "Marrow Men" were combatting an extraordinarily nuanced—but profound—deviation in Reformed preaching and ministry. All those involved had subscribed to the precisely worded statement of justification by faith alone through Christ alone contained in the Westminster standards. "How then" he asks

could charges and counter-charges of antinomianism and legalism arise that would expose a fault line in the church and eventually lead to a split in the denomination? While such theological precision is crucial, evidently it does not finally solve this ongoing problem of the role of the law and of obedience in the Christian life. (12)

None of the parties in the Marrow Controversy were saying, "You can save yourself through works," or, "Once you are saved, you don't have to obey the law of God" (12). However, with great contemporary application, Ferguson shows that both legalism and antinomianism are much more than just doctrinal positions or even simple opposites. Rather, he shows that they are perennial distortions of the truth about God and more "non-identical twins" than polar opposites. He notes that both legalism and antinomianism are born of the same womb of disbelief in the love and goodness of God.

For us as Reformed Christians, who are often assured in our orthodoxy, Keller frighteningly observes:

Neither side subscribed to overt, explicit legalistic or antinomian doctrine. Nonetheless, legalism and antinomianism can be strongly present in a ministry. Each is a web of attitudes of heart, practices, character, and ways of reading Scripture. (12)

So, why specifically do the lessons of the Marrow Controversy have application for the twenty-first century Reformed and confessional preachers and churches? Many reflections are possible but two will suffice. First, we in the West live in an unusually lawless culture—one that has no respect for history, order, authority or even for God and his Law; even the most basic human courtesies are considered a joke. This can be a grievous trial for those who care deeply about such things. Second, we all have "a Pope" of self-righteousness in our own hearts (to mangle Luther's quip). Even the

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

most sanctified heart harbors both unbelief in the love and goodness of God and a powerful tendency to trust self far too much.

This pride and unbelief has its roots back in a broken Eden and, despite the most robust commitments to the doctrines of grace, can metastasize undetected into a distortion of God and the gospel that accommodates increasing degrees of conditionality. Think for a moment: for us who hold the “Solas” dear (and we do!), is it not possible to subtly begin expecting the unchurched to at least start learning our cultural forms or conceptual frames or basic vocabulary to demonstrate they are serious about finding Christ? While we may be too theologically astute to place full blown repentance before finding Christ, may we not be guilty of requiring degrees of outward sanctification from our culture’s lawlessness before we freely and fully offer Christ the Saviour to needy sinners?

Where this is true, it is a diabolical and grotesque deformation of the character of God and the nature of the gospel itself. When gripped by such a spirit, the content and tone of our preaching can quickly become more like that of a graceless Jonah than a winsome Isaiah offering fellow sinners to “buy wine and milk without money and without price” (55:1)! As Ferguson noted in his address: we can find ourselves sitting under our “tree with a heart that is shut up against sinners in need of grace.”<sup>3</sup> With a thousand regrets, does this not describe at least some—if not many—of our Reformed and confessional churches in the West?

According to Calvin, not only are our hearts idol factories but they have “so many crannies where vanity hides, so many holes where falsehood lurks, is so decked out with deceiving hypocrisy, that it often dupes itself” (227). This is as true of the Reformed as it is of any other breed of Christians, or indeed any fallen son of Adam.

Ferguson’s *The Whole Christ* is a salient warning of perhaps a most natural form of subtle but destructive idolatry for those who follow Calvin and the Puritans, as worthy of emulation as they were. Speaking of Thomas Boston, one of the Marrow Men, let Ferguson have the final word:

At the end of the day, what was at stake for him in the Marrow Controversy was nothing less than the very character of God the Father. . . . A misshapen understanding of the gospel impacts the spirit of a minister and affects the style and atmosphere of his preaching and of all his pastoral ministry. What the Marrow Controversy actually unveiled was the possibility of acknowledging the truth of each discrete chapter of the Confession of Faith without those truths being animated by a grasp of the grace of God in the gospel. The metallic spirit this inevitably produced would then in turn run through one’s preaching and pastoral ministry. (71)

**Mark Paterson** is a member of *Christ Community Church in Brisbane, Australia*.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

# ServantReading

## Anthony Tuckney by Joungechun Cho

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by Ryan M. McGraw

*Anthony Tuckney (1599–1670): Theologian of the Westminster Assembly*, by Joungechun Cho. Studies on the Westminster Assembly. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage, 2017, 164 pages, \$40.00.

The Westminster Confession of Faith and Larger and Shorter Catechisms continue to be one of the most important sets of Reformed creeds and confessions to the present day. The series of books in which this volume appears aims to help readers explore historical contexts, texts, and key figures in the formulation of these standards. Doing so helps readers better understand the theology behind these standards, which has potential to aid us in grappling with their continued use in the church today. This study of Anthony Tuckney, who was an important figure in the Westminster Assembly, draws our attention to an important theologian who is largely forgotten in Reformed circles today. As such, this book contributes to a broader understanding of the Westminster Standards that will appeal primarily to ministers, scholars, and interested church members.

Cho treats Tuckney's historical context and role in the Westminster Assembly as well as key themes of his theology, such as the relationship between reason and faith and especially the importance and implications of union with Christ. He includes several interesting facts in his analysis of Tuckney's thought. For example, Tuckney defended the use of creeds and pressed their utility in promoting the unity of the church, but he strongly opposed requiring ministers to subscribe to such creeds (58). It is difficult to see the congruity between these two assertions, since it raises the question as to how creeds that no one subscribes to could serve as standards of unity. Seventeenth century views of creedal subscription, especially surrounding the Westminster Assembly, certainly merit further exploration.

Cho's passing comment that the Westminster Confession of Faith "as a whole" is thoroughly Trinitarian merits further attention as well in relation to the development of Reformed Trinitarian theology throughout every locus of theology (82). While other topics will doubtless grab the attention of other readers, the book traces the primary contours of Tuckney's thought in light of the international, cross-confessional, and catholic contexts of Reformed orthodoxy. The primary contribution of this book to recent scholarship is that it singles out an important member of the Westminster Assembly. There is nothing earth shattering, however, in Cho's assessment of the various loci of Reformed theology, since most of his conclusions are already well-established in light of the broader trajectories of seventeenth-century theology.

While this book is a fair assessment of Tuckney's theology that draws from both English and Latin primary sources, the author does not describe the context broadly

enough. For example, he compares Tuckney to Turretin alone in treating the interrelationship between reason and faith, and he compares him to no one in explaining the relationship between adoption and justification in the order of salvation. With regard to the latter case, he notes that Tuckney placed adoption prior to justification (79). In my estimation, this appeared to be a minority position among Reformed authors, represented by Edward Leigh in particular. This observation about Tuckney is also hard to square with Cho's explanation that Tuckney regarded adoption as the positive side of justification and that justification was the legal right to adoption (119-20). Additionally, it is unclear how this study expands our understanding of Reformed orthodoxy beyond bringing a neglected member of the Westminster Assembly into scholarly discussion. However, Cho's explanations of the areas of Reformed thought remain clear and helpful.

At some points, lack of broad contextualization detracts from the accuracy of his analysis. For example, Cho writes that effectual calling is the first benefit flowing from union with Christ (110). However, the citation that he gives from Tuckney on page 112 contradicts this assertion, since Tuckney stated clearly (in line with the Westminster Standards) that believers are united to Christ through faith in their effectual calling. Cho's analysis requires greater nuance. While some Reformed authors, such as Thomas Goodwin, affirmed a "virtual union" with Christ prior to effectual calling and saving faith, all save the Antinomians and later hyper Calvinists denied that actual justification preceded effectual calling. This means that while every component of the order of salvation was rooted in Christ's person and work, not every benefit of redemption flowed directly from the believer's actual union with Christ (contra Cho's statement about the *ordo salutis* in the Larger Catechism on page 135). Again, a broader contextual study of English and Latin primary sources would add greater nuance to treating such questions.

Cho's study of Anthony Tuckney is clear and helpful, yet it is a bit incomplete. However, it is easy to read and short, and readers can use it to clarify their understandings of the doctrine of divine revelation, the doctrine of God, and the order of salvation in Reformed thought. Though it lacks nuance at points and does not cover much new ground, it is nonetheless an important piece of the puzzle for everyone who desires to gain a better grasp of the historical background of the Westminster Standards.

**Ryan M. McGraw** *is a minister in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church serving as a professor of systematic theology at Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Greenville, North Carolina.*



# ServantReading

## Divine Will and Human Choice *by Richard A. Muller*

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by David C. Noe

*Divine Will and Human Choice: Freedom, Contingency, and Necessity in Early Modern Reformed Thought*, by Richard A. Muller. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017, 336 pages, \$42.75.

There is perhaps no scholar today who enjoys as much well deserved *auctoritas* in historical theology as Richard Muller. Any one of his numerous volumes by itself should earn him the gratitude of church and academy alike, and this is without taking into consideration the magisterial four-volume *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics*.<sup>1</sup> Chapter 6 of *After Calvin*,<sup>2</sup> for example, should be required reading for all students of theology. There one can see the compelling standard of “calling, character, piety, and learning” set by our Protestant forebears which it would behoove ordained men in the OPC, and students of theology more generally, to emulate.

The volume under review is no exception in terms of quality, but it does stand out among Muller’s other works for the difficulty and intricacy of its argument. The main brief of the book is to show that the majority of contemporary interpreters of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Scotus have erred fundamentally in their understanding of how these thinkers were appropriated and used by Calvin and his successors on the topics in question. This thread is carefully followed through the book’s nine chapters, which are helpfully divided into three broad headings: (1) Freedom and Necessity in Reformed Thought: The Contemporary Debate; (2) Philosophical and Theological Backgrounds: Aristotle, Aquinas, and Duns Scotus; and (3) Early Modern Reformed Perspectives: Contingency, Necessity, and Freedom in the Real Order of Being.

The book’s epigram is a quotation from Westminster Confession of Faith 3.1, which Muller apparently takes to be the touchstone (or at least endpoint) for mature Reformed reflection on the titular concepts. This quotation establishes the superstructure of the book, as it seeks to explain the historical development of the relationship between the notion of real human freedom and the doctrine that “God from all eternity did . . . freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass” (WCF 3.1).

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<sup>1</sup> *Post Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003).

<sup>2</sup> *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Before he takes up the main thread of this argument, however, Muller establishes the boundaries of his method on pages 12 and 13. The first is that, unsurprisingly, he will take a historical approach. This means he does “not begin with *a priori* assumptions concerning what must be true either philosophically or theologically about necessity, contingency, and free choice” (12). Like so much of Muller’s work, this dogged persistence to follow the evidence wherever it may lead, combined with nearly unparalleled dexterity and precision in handling source material, pays important dividends throughout the course of the work.

Second, and worth quoting at length lest the reader be misled, is Muller’s caveat about what one may expect when cresting the summit:

It is also important to register what the present essay does not discuss, namely, the issue of grace and free choice in salvation. It does not touch on the perennial debate over monergism and synergism—and it ought to be clear that what can be called soteriological determinism does not presuppose either a physical or a metaphysical determinism of all actions and effects, just as it ought to be clear that the assumption of free choice in general quotidian matters (such as choosing to eat or not to eat a pastrami sandwich for lunch) does not require an assumption of free choice in matters of salvation. (13)

This self-imposed limitation may come as a disappointment to many, since we may want to know precisely what the author thinks are the theological implications of the surgically precise historical work he has done. But in fact, this is the strength of the work, that it hovers above the fray of theological polemic. Fervid and simplistic readings of the historical record on contentious issues like this are abundant.

But there is no shortage of scholarly polemic in this book, and chief among Muller’s opponents are Antonie Vos and his article “Always on Time: The Immutability of God,”<sup>3</sup> as well as Vos’s *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus*.<sup>4</sup> Other targets include the work of Hintikka, *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle’s Theory of Modality*, and Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy*,<sup>5</sup> on whom Vos relies, and also Jacobus Martinus Bac, *Perfect Will Theology*,<sup>6</sup> and Oliver Crisp *Deviant Calvinism*.<sup>7</sup> Yet Muller does not spare praise when it is occasionally due.

No significant Reformed thinker who wrote on freedom, contingency, and necessity (with the odd exception of Beza) is not at least briefly assessed somewhere in the 324 pages. Especially canvassed are Calvin, Peter Vermigli, Franciscus Junius, Francis Turretin, Franciscus Gomarus, Amandus Polanus, and Gisbertus Voetius. Girolamo Zanchi, Zacharius Ursinus, John Davenant, William Perkins, John Owen, Richard Baxter, and Jonathan Edwards, as well as several lesser lights, are also discussed.

It may be helpful for the reader to have a sense of the book’s complexity, to realize that this work is not well suited to the faint of heart or those easily distracted. For example, in his discussion of Turretin, Muller writes:

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<sup>3</sup> Antonie Vos, “Always on Time: The Immutability of God,” in *Understanding the Attributes of God*, ed. Gijbert van den Brink and Marcel Sarot (Frankfurt: Lang, 1999).

<sup>4</sup> Antonie Vos, *The Philosophy of John Duns Scotus* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006).

<sup>5</sup> Jaakko Hintikka, *Time and Necessity: Studies in Aristotle’s Theory of Modality* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973); Simo Knuuttila, *Modalities in Medieval Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> Jacobus Martinus Bac, *Perfect Will Theology: Divine Agency in Reformed Scholasticism as Against Suárez, Episcopius, Descartes, and Spinoza* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Oliver D. Crisp, *Deviant Calvinism: Broadening Reformed Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).

In the composite sense, it is not possible that the event occur and the event not occur—but it remains the case, for Turretin, that the decree ensures the certain futurity of the event without removing the contingent matter of its eventuation: “what, therefore, is impossible not to occur in the composite sense & on the supposition of the decree of God concerning futurity of the event, nonetheless in the divided sense & apart from the decree, was possible not to have taken place.” By removing the “supposition of the decree” from consideration as the root of contingency in the divided sense, the syntax of the sentence thrust into the foreground the location of contingency in the created order. Turretin’s argument places the possibility of the event taking place or not taking place primarily in terms of the potencies resident in finite or secondary causality. (251)

And this is one of the more mild examples. Given the range of the argument and the inherent difficulty of the concepts, I did not find the volume easy to digest (it took many pastrami sandwiches to get through it), and so it may require multiple readings to appreciate fully the force of the argument.

A few niggling comments are in order before concluding. Although Muller’s translations of his Latin sources are generally sound, there are instances (204) where a second set of eyes would have measurably improved the lucidity of his construals. In addition, as with other of his works, especially *The Unaccommodated Calvin*,<sup>8</sup> Muller is not well served by his editors, who allowed a number of small errors to vitiate an otherwise exemplary effort. Instances of omission, misspellings of Latin words, and anacolutha are much too frequent for a work of this caliber and sophistication.

Muller’s conclusion to this volume should be seen as part of the overall project to which his entire career has been devoted, namely to refute the specious claims of the “Calvin against the Calvinists camp,” i.e., those who think that the salutary direction of the early Reformation was hijacked by the bogeyman of Aristotelian scholasticism. Though far more nuanced and focused than previous works, this volume runs in the same trajectory. We close with Muller himself:

Our study has shown, from a philosophical or philosophico-theological perspective, that the determinist readings of Aristotle and Aquinas endemic to the claim of a Scotistic revolution of thought and of its impact in early modern Reformed theology are not supported by the documents. As we have seen, a different narrative is required. The issue for the Western tradition was not to shed a purported Aristotelian determinism but, beginning quite clearly with Augustine, to coordinate an Aristotelian understanding of contingency, potency, and freedom with a Christian assumption of an overarching divine providence, resting on the non-Aristotelian assumption of a creation *ex nihilo*. (317)

**David C. Noe** is a member at Hillsdale OPC in Hillsdale, Michigan, and serves as an associate professor of classics at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He also serves on the Committee for the Historian.

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<sup>8</sup> *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Formation of a Theological Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

# ServantReading

## Karl Barth: Friend or Foe?

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by Ryan Glomsrud

*Karl Barth: An Introductory Biography for Evangelicals*, by Mark Galli. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017, xvi + 176 pages, \$18.00, paper.

This new volume on Karl Barth serves two purposes as indicated by the title. First, it is an introduction to the life and thought of a towering figure in modern theology, pitched for those new to (or not-so-familiar-with) Barth. Second, it is specifically “for evangelicals,” in that the author gives both a diagnosis as well as a suggested remedy for what ails American evangelicalism. The book’s author, Mark Galli, is the editor in chief of *Christianity Today* magazine. Galli has been sympathetic to the so-called “Young, Restless, and Reformed” movement. However, in his role as editor, he is well positioned to offer insider criticisms of evangelicalism as a whole, prosecuting the charges of shallowness and man-centeredness of even some more conservative wings of the movement. In this book, Galli introduces the Basel theologian to a group already familiar with the “God-centered” theology of Jonathan Edwards. The result is a very readable primer to Karl Barth, although it is difficult to imagine “Karl Barth is My Homeboy” t-shirts on sale at a Gospel Coalition conference any time soon. In what follows, I will consider the book first as an introductory biography and then, much more briefly, as an engagement with American evangelicalism.

### Barth’s Life

As a biography, the book doesn’t break any new ground. It presents a summary of the only substantive work of this sort in existence that was published in 1976 by Barth’s former assistant, Eberhard Busch.<sup>1</sup> Galli readily acknowledges his dependence on Busch, but readers may not know (and possibly Galli and many Barth students are similarly unaware of the fact) that the Busch text was not just based on autobiographical writings but was in reality an *autobiography*. Barth himself organized much of the material, chose the letters, and composed many of the transitional sections. This is mentioned merely to point out the rather surprising fact that there is no in-depth biography of Karl Barth in existence, to say nothing of a critical biography like Joseph Frank’s monumental work on Dostoevsky, or Joachim Garff’s impressive study of Søren Kierkegaard. Galli’s contribution doesn’t intend to fill that gap, however, but amounts to a *Reader’s Digest* of the semi-autobiographical Busch volume.

The book consists of fourteen, manageable chapters after the introduction. The introduction and chapters 1 and 14 engage American evangelicalism. Albeit briefly, Galli explores the history of Barth’s relationship to the movement from the 1940s and 50s

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<sup>1</sup> Eberhard Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life from Letters and Autobiographical Texts* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1976).

(with tidbits on Billy Graham, Carl Henry, and Cornelius Van Til), through the 1960s and 70s (mentioning Fuller Seminary luminaries such as Geoffrey Bromiley and Paul Jewett among others), all the way to the present (citing appreciative if critical engagements with Barth by the likes of Allister McGrath, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Michael Horton). Further, Galli prosecutes his critique of evangelicalism in these sections (to which we will return in conclusion), where he observes the striking similarities between the Protestant liberalism of Barth's age and contemporary evangelicalism of our own day.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 are biographical in nature dealing with the early years of the theologian's life. Barth's upbringing in a family that tended towards pietism, and the "positive" theology of his father, which Galli describes as a "moderately conservative and warm" version of Protestantism, is set against the tradition of Protestant liberalism in which Barth was largely immersed and which won him over during university training in Berlin and Marburg. Galli also explores Barth's early pastorate, his involvement with socialism, and his movement away from liberalism at the outset of the First World War.

Galli's treatments of these early periods of Barth's life are standard, none of which are likely to raise a specialist's eyebrows. Still, one could nitpick, though only after acknowledging that the shortcomings aren't unique to Galli but represent something like the received wisdom in evangelical circles concerning the history of modern theology. Four issues in particular come to mind, which in the end are connected and further highlight the need for a scholarly and critical biography of Barth.

First, throughout the book and in Barth scholarship generally, it is often difficult to assign meaningful definitions to the terms "pietism," "liberalism," "Reformed," or even "evangelical." Fuzzy categories and vague descriptions then make it difficult to sustain a coherent narrative. Readers are therefore advised to abandon all preconceptions of such labels and simply try to determine from context how authors define their terms. More often than not, how an individual self-identifies becomes the determining factor, apart from theological or historical analysis. For his part, Galli's book doesn't attempt to resolve these terminological difficulties, and he can hardly be faulted for that. Nonetheless, his attempt to describe Barth's development is open to critique. Frequently, the ambiguity of theological designations obscures the connections between movements and figures.<sup>2</sup>

Second and along similar lines, Galli seems to regard Barth's involvement with socialism as a young pastor as a mere short-term episode of primarily social-political importance, rather than the abiding and theologically-inspiring catalyst that it was. In truth, the tradition of Swiss pietism (known in Barth's day and context as "Swiss Religious Socialism") fed Barth's critique of other streams of Protestant thought. In an

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<sup>2</sup> For example, on a common understanding universities are often assumed to have been liberal while preachers' colleges (or homiletical seminaries) more conservative; liberal theologians, meanwhile, are supposed to be predictably liberal and "positive" theologians relatively more conservative. "Pietism," a term that Galli capitalizes throughout, is virtually undefinable other than with some reference to an experiential, heart-centered approach to religion that is, presumably, semi- if not fully-Pelagian. And yet, history complicates all this and records that Barth's father, a supposed "positive," in actual fact denied the virgin birth and was for this reason occasionally rejected for teaching in a university context; instead, he taught at the Basel Preachers' College. Examples like this expose assumptions about categories of modern theology as misconceptions.



alternative narrative of Barth's early development to the one Galli inherits, one could argue more accurately that Barth moved from one branch of pietism (i.e., his father's "positive" theology) to another, namely Wilhelm Herrmann's liberal pietism, all before returning to a modified version of his father's theology as inspired and glossed by Swiss Religious Socialism (yet another branch of pietism). Of course, Barth developed numerous creative, inventive positions over the course of his life, but the arc of his story began and ended within the pietist tradition. Other classifications, such as "Reformed," "orthodox" or "neo-orthodox," can only be understood in a strictly post-confessional sense.

Third, Galli offers a genealogy of Protestant Liberalism that, while it is well worn in evangelical circles, over-emphasizes the history of philosophy (i.e., Protestant liberalism as an outcome of the epistemological progression from Descartes to Kant and Schleiermacher). To criticize this potted history, passed down in seminary classrooms from generation to generation, may be perceived as wading into the weeds of historical theology. And yet, the story is deficient in some respects. At the very least, it misses the broader context of what is after all called "Cultural Protestantism." In other words, the narrowly philosophical narrative misses the way in which Protestant liberalism emerged from the comingling of pietism (as a church ethos), romanticism (as a cultural movement), and conservative politics (as the indispensable background for the religious awakenings in German-speaking lands). A richer account of the history of modern theology would actually help Galli highlight the myriad connections between the liberalism of Barth's day and evangelicalism today.

The fourth quibble concerns Galli's boilerplate account of Barth's early protest against liberalism, which is often described, misleadingly I think, as a sudden "break" or "conversion." Typically, Barth's disillusionment with Protestantism in 1914–15 is explained as the result of the publication of a manifesto signed by leading intellectuals in support of German war policy at that time. This event is highlighted because most scholars rely on Barth's own comments to this effect, in the Busch "biography" and elsewhere. Barth claimed that the "ethical failure" on the part of his theological teachers (for signing such a document) led him to the subsequent conclusion that these men were also *theologically* bankrupt. "I suddenly realized," Barth recalled, "that I could not any longer follow . . . their ethics and dogmatics. . . . For me, at least, nineteenth-century theology no longer held any future."<sup>3</sup> Neat and tidy as this may sound, the historical record is far more complicated. In actual fact, Barth was somewhat selective in whom he dismissed for supporting the war effort. Adolf von Harnack, his former teacher, for example, was roundly criticized. Meanwhile other signatories, such as Adolf Schlatter, also one of Barth's teachers, escaped criticism, and in fact Barth grew in appreciation of the latter both during and after the war. At the very least, then, it must be said that not all of Barth's teachers were theologically bankrupt, nor did he dismiss "an entire world of theological exegesis" (33–34) as he once claimed. Furthermore, and this is a more delicate point to raise with loyal Barthians, one wonders if the maintaining of a strict calculus of moral failure and theological bankruptcy doesn't in fact open Barth himself to the charge of applying a double standard. I, for example, have always wondered with some perplexity how Barth's own marital infidelity and long-term adulterous relationship

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<sup>3</sup> Karl Barth, *The Humanity of God*, trans. Thomas Wieser (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1960), 14.

with his secretary, Charlotte von Kirschbaum, is rarely considered as a comparable incident of moral failure indicative of theological bankruptcy. It seems inconsistent to condemn some German theologians for supporting a war policy in 1914, a policy which, on the surface of it, might plausibly have generated a number of interpretations and responses, while not asking the same question about moral failures all along the line.<sup>4</sup> Regarding the “plan with the secretary,” as Barth’s mother called it, refusing for a time to mention the woman by name, Galli does an adequate job of flagging the ethical disaster the situation entailed and fully acknowledges that the relationship, in Barth’s words, caused the family, not least Barth’s wife, “unspeakable suffering” (68). And yet, the war manifesto story is passed on from one generation to the next, and is frequently used to prop up the narrative of a radical turn from liberalism to some new, *sui generis* theological position. While Barth may have experienced 1914–15 as a world-changing moment, a dispassionate account would identify a gradual progression of shifting loyalties within Barth’s theological context. In the end, I suspect that Barth’s own account of 1914 was deeply, and I suppose understandably, influenced by subsequent history, namely the kind of nationalism that Barth witnessed in Nazi Germany from 1933 on.

Regarding the middle years of Barth’s life, chapter 7 rehearses the theologian’s rising reputation in Europe in the 1920s, including his appointment to teach Reformed theology at Göttingen. Here, Galli recounts Barth’s discovery of John Calvin and the post-Reformation tradition of Protestant orthodoxy. Engaging these sources, Barth came to believe that the object of theology must be God as he has revealed himself in his Word, and not faith itself, nor any other religious experience, as in Friedrich Schleiermacher, the founder of Protestant liberalism (64). Chapters 8 and 9 then offer a very concise treatment of Barth’s role in the Confessing Church movement, which opposed the Nazification of the German Protestant churches. This is perhaps the best part of the book, as Galli elegantly simplifies a complicated narrative. Barth’s actions at this time are described as bold and theologically motivated, which they were. He is rightly remembered for seeing clearly the threat that Hitler posed to the church and the world. In chapter 10, the Swiss theologian is returned to Basel and Galli concludes his account of Barth’s political theology while setting the stage for a brief exploration of Barth’s magnum opus, the monumental *Church Dogmatics*. Almost as an appendix, chapter 13 describes Barth’s physical appearance and late life, including his relationships to his children and former friends, his enjoyment of preaching in the Basel prison, and how he occupied his time in retirement (Mozart!).

It should be noted that although the book is not intended as an intellectual biography, a reader who is new to Barth will nonetheless become familiar with the broad strokes of his theology from all the chapters. Providing more focus, however, chapters 5 and 6 explore Barth’s ground-breaking commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, wherein the famous “infinite qualitative distinction” between God and man is explored, along with Barth’s insistence on the priority of the divine initiative in revelation and salvation.

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<sup>4</sup> The document in question, “Appeal to the World of Culture,” included six “It is not true...” assertions, such as: “Germany is not at fault for the war and did not violate the neutrality of Belgium”; “German troops did not infringe on the rights of civilians, were not brutal, and did not violate international law,” and so on; see George Rupp, *Culture-Protestantism: German Liberal Theology at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (Missoula, MT: Scholars’ Press, 1977), 11.

Chapters 11 and 12 then explore two themes from the *Church Dogmatics*, namely the Word of God and Barth's concept of universal reconciliation. In none of these sections does Galli champion Barth on controversial points. In fact, he is appropriately descriptive and cautious. As such, I would recommend the book to church laypeople who may be curious to read something non-academic on this important figure.

### **Barth and Evangelicalism**

In bookend sections, Galli attempts to "use Barth to help evangelicals think about our life together as evangelicals" (xv). Galli is surely on target when he argues that "in many evangelical circles, we have begun to equate *our experience* of Christ with *the gospel*, and not something that comes as a result of the gospel" (144, original emphasis). Following in the liberal tradition (consciously or not), Galli suggests that many evangelicals "give more authority to what happens inside us than to the clear, objective teaching of God's Word in Scripture" (144). In this way, "many of us have become . . . disciples of Schleiermacher, the great apostle of religious feeling. Schleiermacher has been born again in evangelicalism" (144). Galli's intention, as he states carefully, "is not to look to Barth as our theological savior" (145). Rather, the point is to be willing to learn from Barth's insightful critique of liberalism and apply it to our own context.

But do we need Barth for this critique of liberalism as evangelicalism? Have we really understood Barth's theological development and his place in theological history? What ought officers in NAPARC churches to think about Barth and his legacy? These are good questions to ask, and I don't propose to answer them here. Doubtless there is much to be learned from Barth on a variety of fronts, and this introduction may help towards that end. However, the book did leave me with one lingering thought. Ironically, Galli's attempt to appropriate Barth for a critique of evangelicalism can't avoid bringing us face-to-face with the Achilles' heel of Barth's own theology, namely his understanding of revelation and the Bible. As other scholars have noted, Barth's "dynamic concept of revelation . . . tends to locate the Word, not any longer in the Bible, but in man's experience of faith." The view is of course "worded in terms of an act of God's self-disclosure, not of religious self-consciousness, but the end result is not very different." Pressing the point, "Not much is gained by putting the Word at the center [of one's theology] if the 'Word' turns out to be an elusive and mystically present 'something' behind and beyond the words of a book."<sup>5</sup> And therein lies the difficulty of using Barth to fix what ails American evangelicalism; in the end, it isn't quite so clear that Barth escaped pietistic liberalism after all.

**Ryan Glomsrud** is an ordained elder at Christ United Reformed Church in Santee, California (URCNA), serving as an associate professor of historical theology at Westminster Seminary California in Escondido, California.

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<sup>5</sup> Colin Gunton, *A Brief Theology of Revelation* (London: T&T Clark, 1995), 66–68.

# ServantPoetry

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## The Rain Gasped For

by Cotton Mather (1663–1728)

*O Father of the Rain*, Look down  
Upon us from on high;  
If thy Land be not *Rain'd* upon,  
What *Lives* on it will Dy .

*Lord of the Clouds*; In thee we hope;  
Thine all the *Bottels* are;  
Except Thou open them, a Drop  
won't fall upon us here.

If thou make Heav'n as *Brass*, and burn  
From thence the groaning Field,  
Thy Earth will soon to *Iron* turn,  
And no Production yield.

O Let thy Seasonable *Rain*  
Drop *Fatness* on our Soyl;  
And grant to most unworthy Man  
The *Harvest* of his Toil.

But, O my SAVIOUR, in a Showre  
Of *Righteousness* descend:  
Gifts on me, with they SPIRIT poure;  
And *Life* that cannot End.

Yea, come upon a World forlorn,  
And with a Quickening Dew,  
Make thou Mankind, of Water born,  
Tho' *Dead*, their *Life* Renew.

In the mean time, thy *Ministers* ,  
As *Clouds*, how *Fat* and *Bright*!  
May they upon *Salvations Heirs*  
Distil Things Good and Right.