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The C. S. Lewis Encyclopedia: A Complete Guide to His Life, Thought and Writings, by Colin Duriez, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000. 240p., \$17.99

Duriez has done yeoman service in this thorough compilation consisting of short definitions and essays about things Lewisian. The work should be useful both to the Lewis scholar and the beginning reader of Lewis. The entries are accurate, well written, and provide easily understood cross-references. They cover persons associated with Lewis very well, and places only slightly less well (one is somewhat puzzled by the lack of entries for Magdalen and Magdalene Colleges, for instance). The work especially shines in its explanations of terms and concepts found in Lewis's thought and writings such as "joy," "undeception" and "old west." There are two short, selected, but helpful bibliographies, the first a list of Lewis's works, the second, a listing of secondary sources about Lewis. The sole quibble one might have with this excellent contribution to Lewis studies is the word "complete" in the subtitle. Few Lewis aficionados would admit that any work had plumbed the depths of this remarkable Christian!

Mark G. McKim

A Confessing Theology for Postmodern Times, edited by Michael S. Horton, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 2000. 256p., \$22.00.

Operating from the premise that it is not only possible but also highly desirable to do theology amidst the acids of a post-modern society, the authors of this collection of essays attempt to work through some of the problems associated with that endeavor. If there is one theme that unites the essays, it is an emphasis on the value of the various historic Protestant confessions as guides for doing theology and interpreting Scripture. While this is a needed and salutary correction to the frequent evangelical tendency to disregard tradition, and the wisdom of those who have gone before, in favor of constantly reinventing the theological wheel, at times some of the writers in this volume give the impression they would almost allow such confessions to have an authority which should be reserved to Scripture alone.

As in most such collections, the quality of essays varies considerably. Some of the pieces are excellent. For instance, Charles Arand provides a helpful explanation of the distinctions between biblical and doctrinal theology, and Paul Raabe provides a balanced piece which sets out how dogmatics needs biblical scholarship and vice versa. D. G. Hart's piece, on theological education, argues cogently that among evangelicals, the egalitarian impulse has run amok, such that every individual Christian's interpretation of Scripture is regarded as being equally valid as every other. Little value is attached to the accumulated wisdom of the church and the communion of the saints, or the scholarship of devout pastors and theologians of the present. On the other hand, one is puzzled to discover an essay by Southern Baptist Seminary president, Albert Mohler, in a volume about confessing theology, as Baptists are, by historic conviction, not a creedal people. It appears Mohler thinks it possible to have a theological system practically identical with God's revelation as recorded in Scripture. But in fact, the Protestant conviction is that as human creations, no theological system or formulation or confession is ever perfect, and consequently every system is always subject to the ongoing scrutiny of Scripture. It is not theology that is sacred but the revelation that precedes it.

Mark G. McKim

Constitutional Theology: Notes on the Book of Church Order of the Reformed Church in America, by Allan J. Janssen, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. xii, 320p., \$25.00.

This outstanding book is an article-by-article commentary on the 1999 edition of the *Book of Church Order* of the Reformed Church in America. The editor of the Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America, Donald J. Bruggink, is to be commended for choosing the Rev. Allan J. Janssen to be its author. Janssen has served for more than twenty-five years as a pastor of Reformed congregations. He has been the stated clerk of a classis, served on many committees of regional synod and of the General Synod of his denomination. He is also thoroughly conversant with the theology and history of Reformed Church orders since the sixteenth century.

One could ask how a bound copy commentary can remain a valuable resource for a *Book of Church Order* that now is amended annually and is printed for placement in a loose-leaf binder. I believe that such is the case for three reasons. First, in a time of rapid change, the theological roots of a Reformed church order are imperative lest the church lose its bearings. Janssen consistently calls attention to the theological principles that have provided direction for the Reformed understanding of ecclesiastical offices, assemblies, and judicatories for the past four centuries and more.

Second, the assemblies and office bearers need an article-by-article commentary about the history of each article and the intention of the church at the time when specific changes have been made. Janssen's long experience in specific issues of church order will enable his readers to move appropriately in ministerial practice.

Third, this commentary will be indispensable for those who are called upon to vote upon proposals to amend the *Book of Church Order*. Not only does one find here the underlying theological principles and historical developments for each of the articles, but one also receives information about points that remain ambiguous or where changing patterns of church life and culture continue to call for revision.

Every Reformed Church pastor and consistory should be required to have a copy of this book. Given its thoroughly ecumenical perspective, it is also recommended to persons in other denominations, especially to those in the Reformed tradition, who will come to a better understanding of their own denomination's church order.

Eugene Heideman

The Dutch-American Experience: Essays in Honor of Robert P. Swierenga, edited by Hans Krabbendam and Larry J. Wagenaar, Amsterdam: VU Uitgeverij, 2000. \$39.95 (available from the Joint Archives of Holland, at Hope College).

The Dutch American Experience was an event as well as a newly published book. The essays were written as a festschrift, honoring Robert Swierenga for his multiple scholarly

contributions to the study of Dutch-American immigration. The book was presented to Swierenga at a conference at Hope College, in Holland, Michigan, on June 9, 2000. At this occasion Swierenga was also honored by being named "Knight in the Order of the Netherlands Lion." To add to the bi-national flavor of the collection, the book was edited by one Dutch and one American editor, the copy editing was done in the United States, and the book was published in the series, "VU Studies on Protestant History," at the Free University in Amsterdam.

This brief review cannot begin to discuss and critique each essay. Let me merely indicate the breadth of the selections. Section 1 is devoted to an appreciation of Swierenga's scholarship, including a bibliography of his writing. Section 2, "Immigration and Ideology," covers significant ideas and views among the Dutch immigrants. These include the familiar Calvinist religious mindset but also give a glimpse into the world of the (numerically very small) socialist immigrants. Section 3, "Immigrant Mobility," discusses settlements and migrations after arrival in America, including the settlement of Roman Catholics in Wisconsin. Section 4, "Dutch American Religion," has one essay on the growth of the Reformed Church in America, from 1830-1920, and one on the formative years of the Christian Reformed Church. Section 5, "Portrait Gallery," contains a diverse group: two ministers, Lammert Hulst and Egber Winter; Professor Geerhardus Vos; the Pieter Groustra family; and the journalist, Hendrik Willem Van Loon. The latter is hardly a typical subject covered in Dutch immigrant studies, but it is a fascinating portrait.

The collection demonstrates clearly that Dutch immigrant studies have gone far beyond the older scholarship about Dutch emigrants (mostly peasants) leaving the Netherlands because of religious persecution and flourishing in the new country while maintaining the faith. These essays exhibit a wide range of topics, developed with sophistication and finesse, and readers on both sides of the Atlantic are indebted to the book. At the same time, the essays are a tribute to Robert Swierenga and his academic work, as he often was (to use an immigrant metaphor)

the scholarly pioneer in exploring the lives and times of Dutch emigrants to America.

Harry Boonstra

The Earliest Christian Mission to 'All Nations' in the Light of Matthew's Gospel, by James LaGrand, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999 (c. 1995). xiv, 290p., \$32.

This previously published book is a revised dissertation and has the merits of careful research that such projects entail. At the same time, it is a readable work that will be of interest both to students of the Gospel of Matthew and to missiologists. LaGrand demonstrates that, in Matthew's understanding, there was no tension between the particularity of Israel and the salvation of the nations. Indeed, it is God's purpose that Israel should be a light to the nations.

In a brief introduction, LaGrand sets the stage for the discussion, in regard to positions taken on the subject by previous scholars. He then carefully defines the terms "Israel" and "the nations" and traces their use in the Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint. He also analyzes the use of these terms in near-contemporary literature and that which followed, particularly elsewhere in the New Testament.

The second part of the book is a treatment of Jesus and the "nations" as seen through the writing of Matthew. This includes a brief but fascinating study of proselytism by the scribes and Pharisees, as encountered in Matthew 23:15. Preachers on Matthew will appreciate particularly the literary analysis through which LaGrand lays out the place of the nations in the design of the Gospel, under the subheadings, "signals of things to come," "proclamation in word and deed," and "establishment of the kingdom." Careful textual analysis of the "Great Commission" leads LaGrand to the conclusion that this abrupt ending is authentic. It puts us all "in the Council of Yahweh for the final revelation of the mystery of the Kingdom of heaven" and dismisses us with our marching orders. Throughout the study, Matthew's theme of fulfillment of the prophets is shown to be true to the Old Testament's earlier vision of the role of Israel in blessing the nations.

Terrance Tiessen

Jesus, the Son of God: The Gospel Narrative as Message, by Jacob van Bruggen, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990. 307p., \$24.99 (paper).

Dr. Jacob van Bruggen is professor of New Testament at the Theological University at Kampen, Netherlands (old Kampen, not the theological school of the "Vrijgemaakten" [Liberated Reformed Church] in that same city). In this book, he begins from the standpoint that the four gospels are early Christian documents written by eye witnesses of Jesus' earthly ministry (Matthew and John) or by those who wrote reporting eye witness accounts (Mark and Luke). Therefore, van Bruggen takes the position that the gospels accurately report the events and reflect the actual conditions of Jesus' earthly ministry.

Van Bruggen begins with a study of the various groups that made up the Jewish and non-Jewish population of Palestine in that day. The main groups in the land were the Jews, the Samaritans, and the Greeks. The Pharisees were the most influential group among the Jews and considered themselves the guardians and maintainers of the ethical, moral, and religious life of Israel. The Pharisees maintain Ezra's injunctions not to mingle with the Gentiles, to the extent that when the Pharisees come home from the market where contact with Gentiles could not be avoided, they carefully wash themselves to remove "pollution" (Mark 7:4).

Van Bruggen makes great efforts to *rehabilitate* the Pharisees, pointing out that Jesus does not call all Pharisees "hypocrites," nor does Jesus refuse to eat with them. Besides his efforts to alter our perception of the Pharisees in the main part of the book, van Bruggen has added a sizable appendix in which he attempts to put the Pharisees in a better light.

Van Bruggen does not see the Zealots as a group seeking the overthrow of Roman rule in Palestine, nor does he regard the criminals crucified with Jesus as "freedom fighters" but only as violent criminals. If anything, van Bruggen minimizes the antipathy that must have existed in the Jewish population against the Romans and their client rulers, the Herods.

Both John the Baptist and Jesus were in the Pharisees' and Sadducees' disfavor. They would not endorse John the Baptist, who baptized Jews as if they were Gentiles who had to be *naturalized* into the Kingdom. Jesus'

reference to Jews as "the lost sheep of the House of Israel" was received as an insult to those who considered themselves the faithful shepherds of Israel.

Van Bruggen emphasizes the importance of the person and ministry of John the Baptist. John is the *authenticator* of Jesus. His identification of Jesus as the *Bridegroom* and the *Lamb of God* was of great importance to the disciples. So respected was John as a prophet that the Pharisees did not dare say anything against him, whereas they denigrated Jesus and spoke slightingly of him without compunction. John the Baptist is the bridge person between the Old and New Testaments.

The greater part of this book consists of a study of what the gospels mean with the "kingdom of God" and the "kingdom of Heaven," carefully pointing out that the *kingdom* is more than a *kingship*. Van Bruggen also makes a very careful and in-depth study of the names, titles, and designations of our Lord. Jesus presented himself as the messianic king, but he refused to conform himself to the people's expectations of his kingship and kingdom. Jesus' disciples saw themselves as the king's council and "shadow cabinet" to be actuated when Jesus actualizes his kingdom. Jesus also functioned as lawgiver, giving his disciples new instructions. In casting out demons, Jesus used none of the exorcist formulas of those who claimed to be exorcists, but instead spoke to demons directly and made them submit to his authority. Jesus worked many miracles, but none for his own benefit.

In this book, van Bruggen shows himself to be a New Testament scholar par excellence. He "demythologizes" nothing and draws sensible meaning out of everything. In contrast to many "lives of Jesus," which need to be winnowed and sifted, here is a study of Jesus and his ministry that I can recommend without reservations.

Arie Blok

Marriage and Divorce in the Thought of Martin Bucer, by H. J. Selderhuis, translated by John Vriend and Lyle D. Bierma, *Sixteenth Century Essays and Studies*, Volume XLVIII. Kirksville, MO: Thomas Jefferson University Press, 1999. 406p., \$49.95.

We tend to think of marital crises and divorce as modern problems. Surprisingly, many of the ecclesiastical discipline cases dealt with in the Reformation period had to do with these issues. This was not only the case in Calvin's Geneva, but also in Strasbourg, whose reformer was Martin Bucer. Bucer does not get the press he deserves, but he was one of the most prominent Reformed leaders and theologians of the first half of the sixteenth century. He was also a mentor to, and close friend of, John Calvin, who sought refuge in Strasbourg after being forced out of Geneva in 1538.

This scholarly study by Herman Selderhuis, the successor to William Van't Spijker as professor of church history at the Theological University in Apeldoorn, the Netherlands, treats for the first time Bucer's views on marriage and divorce. The author first gives an overview of the theory and practice of marriage on the eve of the Reformation and during the Reformation. In the latter discussion, he focuses on the views of the Catholic humanist Erasmus and Heinrich Bullinger, the Zurich reformer. These two wrote more on the subject than Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin who are only dealt with in passing. (Bucer persuaded Calvin to marry and introduced him to several candidates, finally succeeding with Idelette de Bure, a widow and wife of a former Anabaptist.) Then follows a brief biography of Bucer and chapters on Bucer's views of marriage, divorce, and celibacy.

This is a very good historical study based on a thorough examination of the original sources combined with a judicious use of the secondary literature. Although this work will be of primary interest to Reformation scholars, Selderhuis also has apologetic and pastoral motivations. Regarding the former, he defends Bucer against the charge by some of his contemporaries that he was too permissive. Nevertheless, one is surprised to find Bucer far more willing to grant a divorce under certain conditions than many Reformed/Presbyterian churches in modern times. Even more remarkable, given the times, is Bucer's special concern for women in unhappy marriages. They and their children usually suffered the most and Bucer's sympathies clearly are with them. In cases where a woman and children were being abused in a bad marriage, Bucer felt that a divorce contributed stability both to

the home and the society. Since adultery was the only grounds for divorce, in such cases Bucer recommended an annulment of the marriage.

Contrary to the marriage view of Augustine and later Roman Catholics (which at worst was considered a necessary evil in order to avoid being consumed by lust, and at best primarily a means of procreation), Bucer viewed marriage as a covenantal relationship that was a gift of God's grace. Sexual intimacy within the bond of marriage is not only for the purpose of raising children. "Conjugal relations," said Bucer, "still yield the advantage that not only the sinful desire for carnal pleasure is avoided but also that between a husband and wife . . . love, friendship and service are substantially practiced and enhanced by it" (176). Note the emphasis on service. For Bucer, healthy, loving marriages not only contribute to a godly society but are also the foundation of it. We have seen our own society depart from this view with catastrophic consequences.

In many ways, Bucer was a synthesizer. Yet Seldehuis is convinced that the reformer does more than combine the traditional givens in a unique way.

This focus on the emotional aspect of the marriage relation, this concern for the position of women, this theological approach to the problems around celibacy, those proposals relative to cohabitation and remarriage, can neither be found in the work of predecessors, nor in the works of his contemporaries, not even in the thought of many later figures (357).

Bucer's ideas on marriage and divorce were not accepted by many of his contemporaries. Beza, among others, was critical of them. However, Seldehuis generally defends Bucer's views on the grounds that his critics failed to understand the theological foundations and pastoral motives of his proposals. Bucer, like modern-day pastors, often had to deal with "the tension [of] being bound to the law of God and the believer's Spirit-given freedom" (354). It is an interesting sidelight that Bucer's principal champion in the seventeenth century was the Puritan poet and political pamphleteer, John Milton.

In any case, Bucer's general approach to these questions, and in particular his beautiful view of love and marriage, still merit serious consideration.

I. John Hesselink

Quiet Conversations: Concrete Help for Weary Ministry Leaders, by Alan C. and Cheryl D. Klaas, Kansas City: Mission Growth, 2000. vi, 104p., \$16.

I highly recommend to pastors this splendid, insightful, and helpful book dedicated "To the children and spouses of parish pastors. They have endured so much."

The book involves a "chance" encounter between a weary minister and an ecclesiastical "professional listener" at a ski area. They share experiences. David, the "listener" observes: "The phrase, 'I was called to be the shepherd to my flock' is always the trump card stated by pastors in dying or stagnant congregations!"

David describes three types of "pk's": those who are comfortable in their situation; those who disconnect from it; and those who rebel against it. He invites Paul to enjoy his condo for a weekend to set certain prescribed guidelines Paul must follow in relating to his wife and children. Paul listens. The family reconciles.

Paul listens to David urge him to give up control, to do less. David explains that "people lead the way they experience being led." He quotes Ken Blanchard "EGO means Edging God Out."

They discuss the differences between a minister being a missionary and minister being a shepherd. Paul examines his calendar and realized that he spends almost no time with non-members. David notes: "When congregations focus on the Great Commission, they are also focusing on building the spirituality of their members. These congregations aggressively find ways to help members discover ministries that directly touch the lives of people. . . ." David adds: "Sadly, inwardly directed congregations never seem able to satisfy members. Why? Because you can never fully satisfy a self-centered person."

At the conclusion Paul puts this sign on his desk: "Great Commission is about mission, not meetings. Spiritual development occurs

rapidly in people who are in mission. A pastor who is not in mission cannot expect members to be in mission." I heard this from Gordon Cosby forty-five years ago. He and the Klases are right on.

Appendix A lists books for further reading. Appendix B presents "steps in transforming from internal focused to a great commission focus." This little volume fulfills the authors' promise. It lifts the reader's spirit and raises new hope.

Robert J. Hoeksema

A Short Systematic Theology, by Paul F.M. Zahl, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. viii, 109p., \$12.

A short systematic theology. Isn't that an oxymoron? Aquinas's *Summa Theologiae* and Barth's *Church Dogmatics* come to mind. But in just over one hundred pages the dean of the Cathedral Church of the Advent in Birmingham, Alabama, is able to pack a considerable amount of theological discussion. He is able to do that because for him Christian theology is Christology.

The book is comprised of three chapters. The first concerns Jesus Christ as the subject of theology. The second focuses on the atonement of Christ as the organizing principle of theology. The third sets forth theological methodology, which is the intellectual freedom to criticize the Bible. The discussion is organized according to twenty-five theses.

Zahl believes that "short is better." For what purpose? For whom? The blurb on the back cover suggests "a variety of educational settings." From statements within the book, it would seem that one of the intended settings is to be found within church congregations. The "theory" of the Trinity, for example, although deemed important in that it "safeguards Christ's divinity," is viewed as "too intellectual . . . to fuel the Christian movement . . . too speculative to motivate mission and too distant to provide immediate hope and comfort to the hopeless and the comfortless." For such congregational settings that intend theological discussion as an aid to mission, hope, and comfort, this work may be of help.

For other educational settings the book may be too short. In the introduction, for instance, a first cause that has set everything in

motion is regarded as mere speculation without proof. If that speculation is unacceptable without proof, why are New Testament statements accepted without proof? For such educational settings further discussion would be needed.

Other of the book's conclusions would seem to require a more extensive theological background than is usually found in congregations. For example, that God is unknowable apart from Christ or that the teaching of Jesus is fundamentally discontinuous with that of Moses as lawgiver and of "those who composed the Old Testament in the voice and authority of Moses."

Glenn Wyper

Still Sovereign: Contemporary Perspectives on Election, Foreknowledge, and Grace, edited by Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000. 354p., \$19.95 (paper).

This book is a compilation of essays by a number of authors from various traditions. Most of the articles are essentially exegetical in nature. By that I mean that they examine elements of Calvinist thought by examining relevant Scripture passages. Raymond C. Ortlund writes about "The Sovereignty of God: Case Studies in the Old Testament" and examines crucial statements of the Old Testament on God's sovereignty. Robert W. Yarbrough writes about "Divine Election in the Gospel of John" and exegetes the various referenced to God's sovereignty in human salvation in John's Gospel. Donald J. Westblade writes about "Divine Election in the Pauline Literature" and examines pertinent texts in Romans, Ephesians, etc. These articles all evidence careful thought and great integrity in exegesis. The writers are very intent upon demonstrating that God's grace is not only an attitude of divine favor toward the sinner, but that God's grace is also *effectual*, that is, that by his sovereign grace, God also turns sinners from the darkness of sin to his marvelous light and salvation. Ortlund comments that "the book of Jonah demonstrates that God has more ways of confronting Jonah than Jonah has ways of evading God" and that "the Book of Jonah insists that the divine control of the

events of our lives is our only hope." Yarbrough insists that "John's Gospel explicitly asserts God's choosing, His election of lost sinners to eternal life." Westblade sets forth Paul's great emphasis upon human depravity and the wonderful initiative of God in salvation. He also insists that "Infallible knowledge of a future event presupposes the necessity of that event and therefore precludes its real freedom." In other words, Westblade insists that God's foreknowledge cannot really be separated from his determination of future events. Thomas Schreiner shows that the Arminian effort to limit divine predestination to God's predestination of Jesus Christ as Savior is simply an attempt to evade clear biblical teaching. John Piper discusses how there can be two wills in God and concludes that there is indeed "a difference between what God wills to happen and what God would like to happen." The Scriptures lead us again and again to affirm that God's will is sometimes spoken of as an expression of His moral standard for human behavior, and sometimes as an expression of His sovereign control.

This reviewer is less satisfied with Wayne Grudem's treatment of Hebrews 6:4-6 (138-40) and D. A. Carson's treatment of these same verses (267). Both Grudem and Carson argue that the terms used in describing those "who were once enlightened," "tasted of the heavenly gift," and "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost," are *inconclusive* for identifying those persons as believers. My problem with this conclusion is that the writer to the Hebrews is trying to combat a "drop out rate" due to persecution and has deliberately chosen those terms to *conclusively* identify those persons in order to set up an *even if* or *even though* situation in order to deliver the most dire and emphatic warning that *even if* those things can be said of us, we still will not be able to enter heaven if we turn our backs on Jesus Christ under even the most fearsome of pressures.

All in all, however, this is a very good book. The constant references to Bible passages rather than to theological works make it easy for the layperson to understand. This book should be mandatory reading for all of our theological students. Then perhaps we could hear more sermons preached in our

churches that are specifically Reformed in character.

Arie Blok

Theology in the Service of the Church: Essays in Honor of Thomas W. Gillespie, edited by Wallace M. Alston, Jr., Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. x, 281p., \$35.

As the book's editor sees it, "The big issue before the church is how to live faithfully as a minority community in a culture in which the cards are no longer stacked in its favor." David B. Watermulder asks, with a particular look at the urban church, "How we may 'be aglow with the Spirit' as we work with people for whom proper ecclesiastical order is the last thing that would ever occur to them."

One of the subjects that may be of immediate use to the busy pastor is that presented by Western Seminary's Leanne Van Dyk, "Doctrine and Preaching: The Task of Theology as Servant of the Church." In it she notes that it is no longer accurate to assume that congregations know the basic teachings of the Christian faith or the traditions of their denomination. She then reviews the nature and function of doctrine, using George Lindbeck and Alister McGrath as her guides, and completes her essay with four characteristics that should be a part of doctrinal preaching.

Another essay that may be of immediate help to the pastor is that by Peter J. Gomes, "Preaching as a Matter of Trust: Recovering the Nerve of the Pulpit." Robert M. Adams's comparison of stewardship and generosity may also offer immediate help.

Strictly biblical topics are presented in P. D. Miller's consideration of the hermeneutics of imprecation in Psalm 137 and E. Schweizer's exegetical examination of 1 John 1:7.

All the essays are appropriate to the concern of President Gillespie that is expressed in the book's title: *Theology in the Service of the Church*.

Glenn Wyper