

in particular. According to MacDonald, the metaphysical excesses of Enlightenment rationalism motivated the creation of a 'universal' connotation of 'monotheism', which excluded the possibility of other gods and favoured the cognitive and propositional aspects of YHWH's divinity.

In the rest of the thesis MacDonald tests the historical conceptions of monotheism against a close exegesis of Deuteronomy's key monotheistic texts. He identifies the Shema of Deuteronomy 6:4ff as the centre of Deuteronomy's theology – and Deuteronomy's 'monotheism' – in order to offer a less 'enlightened' definition of monotheism, which appears to consist of two claims. First, he concludes that Deuteronomy allowed for the existence of other gods that could be worshipped by the nations, while restricting Israel's worship to YHWH in his 'oneness' and 'uniqueness'. Second, with detailed and often persuasive exegesis, MacDonald argues for a the theology of 'monotheism' in Deuteronomy in the context of confession, love, remembrance, election and idolatry, especially as seen in the theological frame (chapters 4, 5, 6, 7-9 and 32).

By adopting a 'canonical' or 'synchronic' reading of Deuteronomy MacDonald is able to attest to the beauty and range of Deuteronomy's literary and theological expression that has often been neglected in the history of Deuteronomy research. One cannot help but be drawn into MacDonald's re-telling of the Deuteronomy story as grounded in mutual love between YHWH and his chosen people Israel. In lucid detail, he describes the underlying web of themes and dialectics that unite the book in its final form: blessing-curse, obedience-disobedience, remembering-forgetting, clean-unclean, immanence-transcendence etc.

As for the two specific claims in MacDonald's resistance towards the Enlightenment notion of monotheism two areas deserve further attention. First, while he has astutely capitalized on new and exciting opportunities to rethink the relationship between ideologies and interpretation, his strong resistance to the Enlightenment seems to lead to a false dilemma. That is, MacDonald seems too ready to assume that the philosophical terms coined by Enlightenment thinkers *by necessary inference* fail to capture ancient theological truths. A degree of philosophical and biblical theological sophistication may be somewhat lacking in this way. So, while I appreciate his suspicions of 'objectivity' as attributed to Enlightenment rationalism, I cannot follow his theological exegesis which inconsistently relates Deuteronomy to its biblical theological context. For example, one senses a disproportionate zeal to deny Deuteronomy even a hint of exclusionary monotheism. In denying the missiological significance in Deuteronomy's theology (p. 175), which might otherwise be connected to the universal promise (Genesis 12:1-3) and the knowledge of the nations (Isaiah 40-55; Ezekiel 39, etc.), MacDonald lacks interaction with scholars like Christopher Wright and Daniel Block.

Second, it is with great skill that MacDonald ties the first commandment to the *Shema* (the great commandment), idolatry and monotheism as they unite the theme of YHWH's oneness throughout the entirety of Deuteronomy. The significance of 'monotheism' (oneness) as it relates to knowledge and obedience is not appreciated by most Deuteronomy scholars and it is tremendous to see it worked out so convincingly here. In this context, however, MacDonald makes what I take as an especially ironic move in arguing for a literal interpretation of the *Shema* 'writing' commands (6:6-9) and a metaphorical reading of the *herem* command (chapters 7 and 21). By juxtaposing these concepts in his interpretation, MacDonald shows either an inability or an unwillingness to consistently avoid what can fairly be described as 'Enlightenment innovations' in his interpretation.

In the end, I think MacDonald has undoubtedly succeeded in showing that a mere cognitive or propositional notion of monotheism is inadequate to describe the far more relational and situational aspects of knowledge and monotheism as they are expressed not only in Deuteronomy, but in OT theology as a whole. I would suggest that he has been less successful in defending his claim that Deuteronomy's monotheism (and that of the OT in general) does not inter-textually and progressively deny the possibility of other gods. In any case, MacDonald has helpfully broadened an emerging field of study that combines close exegesis with theology and the history of interpretation as they have been influenced by deeper philosophical interests.

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Karl Barth, The Theology of the Reformed Confessions

Translated and Annotated by D. L. Guder & J. J. Guder

Columbia Series in Reformed Theology

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SUMMARY

Barth's Theology of the Reformed Confessions is a well-researched and erudite discussion of the function of confessions in the Reformed Church and its attitude towards confessions. Following discussion of the significance of confessions and the relationship between confession and Scripture, the bulk of the book analyses the theological content of both major and minor Reformed confessions. This is an important book which gives an insight into the early theological development of one of the most important theologians of the 20th century.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Barths Theologie der reformierten Bekenntnisse ist eine gut recherchierte und gelehrte Diskussion der Funktion von Bekenntnissen in der reformierten Kirche und ihrer Haltung Bekenntnissen gegenüber. Nach der Diskussion der Bedeutung von Bekenntnissen und der Beziehung zwischen Bekenntnis und Schrift behandelt der Hauptteil des Buches den theologischen Gehalt sowohl der großen als auch der kleinen reformierten Bekenntnisse. Es handelt sich um ein wichtiges Buch, das einen Einblick in die frühe theologische Entwicklung eines der wichtigsten Theologen des 20. Jahrhunderts gewährt.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette théologie des confessions réformées de Karl Barth est un examen approfondi et érudit de la fonction des confessions de foi dans l'Église Réformée et de l'attitude de cette Église à l'égard des confessions. Il traite d'abord de la signification des confessions de foi et du rapport entre confession de foi et Écriture. La majeure partie du livre est consacrée à l'analyse du contenu théologique des confessions de foi réformées, des principales au moins importantes. C'est là un ouvrage marquant, qui permet de mieux connaître les premiers développements de la pensée théologique de l'un des plus importants théologiens du XXe siècle.

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This book consists of a series of lectures given by Karl Barth as the first incumbent of the 'Reformed Professorate' in the theological faculty at Göttingen. They were delivered in 1923 and were his fourth lecture series since taking up his appointment in 1921. The lectures are divided up into three sections, corresponding to the three chapters of the book: 1. The Significance of the Confession in the Reformed Church; 2. The Principle of Scripture and its Grounds; and 3. Reformed Doctrine as a Whole.

In the first chapter, 'The Significance of the Confession in the Reformed Church' (1-37), Barth compares the position given to confessions in Lutheranism (especially the *Augsburg Confession*) with the significance of confessions in the Reformed Church, noting the tendency of the Lutherans to elevate Augsburg almost to the status of being 'inspired'. He then identifies five characteristics of the Lutheran Confessions: they are ecumenical, they require unity of interpretation; they act as symbols; they have authority; and they place obligation on the teachers of the church. In the remainder of the chapter, Barth analyses the Reformed confessions on the basis of these five characteristics and finds them wanting. He notes, however, that this is no bad thing since the Reformed confessions have a somewhat different form and purpose. He does, however, insist on the need for confessional orthodoxy and bemoans the Liberal abandonment of such.

In the second chapter, 'The Principle of Scripture and Its Grounds' (38-64), Barth is very positive about

the nature of Reformed confessions and argues that all of the supposed deficiencies in the Reformed confessions, which he had identified in the last chapter in comparison to the Lutheran confessional approach, are in fact 'fundamental necessities' (39). He notes that the significance of a Reformed confession lies not in itself but rather in that which is beyond itself, that to which it points, namely, to the Word of God. In this context, he presents a very high view of Scripture, speaking of the content of Scripture as 'written by God's finger on the paper of the Bible'. He also says, no doubt with the Lutherans in mind, that Scripture is the '*articulus stantis et cadentis ecclesiae*'. Interestingly, what he says here about confessions (their significance being found in that to which they point and not in themselves) is almost precisely what he would later say about Scripture itself and its relation to Christ. Later in the chapter, he qualifies this somewhat and comes much closer to his own fully developed doctrine of Scripture. He speaks highly of Calvin's view of Scripture which, he says, lacks any 'special interest in the literal text of the Bible and the difficult distinctions and investigations that must occur as soon as the inspired text as such is the object of our consideration.' (62) His own conception of inspiration (or revelation) is of 'one single timeless, or better, simultaneous act of God upon the biblical authors and upon us.' It is clear that he regards the Bible as the vehicle by which the living words of God are heard (64) and therefore of vital importance to the church.

In the third chapter, 'Reformed Doctrine as a Whole' (65-225), we come to the main body of the book, the preliminary questions having been dealt with. Barth outlines various ways in which the confessions could be analysed (65-69) then settles for a four section approach. First, he speaks of 'The Debate with the Old Church'. In this section, he notes that the Reformed confessions are more anti-Roman than the Lutheran. Interestingly, he argues that the dispute between the Reformed and Rome is not simply an argument over the re-formulation of the content of Christian doctrine but arises out of 'a passionate interest in the *theme* of Christian doctrine' and particularly the doctrine of God. Barth goes on to say, 'This insight, God is God, has burst upon them like an armed warrior [see Prov. 6:11], as something totally new, alien and surprising. *This* is what has drawn them into an irreconcilable contradiction to the old church.' (79)

The second of Barth's four sections in this chapter is entitled, 'The Positive Doctrine of Christianity'. In this section, Barth ranges widely across the confessions and some of their key issues. For example, he recognises that Calvin's doctrine of justification is 'strictly imputative' whereby we are justified through receiving the righteousness of Christ. (99) He also comments on Beza, suggesting that his theology was destined to end in Pietism and the Enlightenment! (123) He also comments on Anglicanism, his view being that its 'High Church hierarchical tendency' is 'a matter of necessary compen-

sation at the institutional level for a certain noticeable flatness of doctrine'! (129) As a Scot, I was taken by the high regard in which he regarded the *Scots Confession* of 1560 and his astonishment that we would exchange it for the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (henceforth *WCF*). In fact, his strongest critical comments in this section are related to the *WCF*. Surprisingly, however, his critique is not the same as that of many modern Barthians. Rather, he argues that the *WCF*, through its emphasis on the application of redemption and the quest for assurance, is focussed too much on anthropology instead of theology (150, 151).

The third section of the chapter is on the controversy with Lutheranism, clearly a key issue for Swiss and German Reformed theologians. In this section, he particularly addresses the Lutheran doctrine of the Lord's Supper and, in a very profound and searching analysis, demonstrates that its weakness lay in a Christological error, namely, the Lutheran notion of the ubiquity of the body of Christ, wherein certain attributes of his divine nature were wrongly regarded as having been communicated to his human nature (181ff.).

The fourth and final section of the chapter and of the book concerns 'The Battle against Modern Christianity'. In this section, he discusses at considerable length, the decisions of the Synod of Dort, which he regards both as 'the classical document of what the Reformed church at that time wanted to be and not to be over against modern Christianity' but also as 'the mausoleum of the early Reformed movement'. (212) His analysis here is searching and is a fine model for his call (addressed to his students) for further engagement with the Reformed confessions and their doctrinal development, in order to assist in the assessment and critique of modern theological trends.

This is a remarkably erudite book, in which Barth displays a remarkable acquaintance with and grasp of, not only the main confessional statements but many which are largely unknown today. The careful research which he would later display in the historical sections of the *Church Dogmatics*, is already evident here. This is also an important book, not least because of its place in the early theological development of one of the most important theologians of the 20th century. Here we can see in seed (and sometimes in more developed) form many of the themes which he would later develop in the *Church Dogmatics*. Above all, the book provides additional support for that school of Barth interpretation (Bruce McCormack and others) which argues for a fundamental continuity between the early and the later Barth.

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*Central Sanctuary and Centralization of
Worship in Ancient Israel: From the Settlement
to the Building of Solomon's Temple*
(Gorgias Dissertations Near Eastern Studies)

Pekka Pitkänen

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\$45.00, pb, ISBN 1-931956-16-2

SUMMARY

In this wide-ranging work, Pekka Pitkänen offers a critical reinterpretation of the centralization requirement in the pentateuchal law codes. He then analyses the application of these requirements in the biblical period from the Settlement to the completion of Solomon's Temple. Pitkänen argues that the worship requirements in Ex. 20.22-26; Lev. 17 and Deut. 12 are mutually consistent. Leviticus 17 presents us with a wilderness ideal and Deuteronomy 12 is the requirement upon Israel when she is in ideal circumstances (i.e. having fully conquered the land and not threatened by any of her neighbours). In Pitkänen's estimation neither entirely excludes the existence of local altars depending on certain circumstantial factors. The history from Settlement to Temple see these factors in play. The rhetorical examination of the biblical texts provides certain insights, but this reviewer finds the historical methodology and its application unsatisfactory.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In dieser weit ausgerichteten Studie bietet Pekka Pitkänen eine kritische Neuinterpretation der Zentralisations-Forderung in den Gesetzestexten des Pentateuch. Er analysiert dann die Anwendung dieser Forderungen in der biblischen Periode von der Landnahme bis zur Vollendung des salomonischen Tempels. Pitkänen argumentiert, dass die Anbetungs-Vorschriften aus Ex. 20,22-26, Lev. 17 und Deut. 12 miteinander vereinbar sind. Leviticus 17 präsentiert ein Wüstenzeit-Ideal, und Deuteronomium 12 bringt die Vorschrift für Israel, wenn das Volk in idealen Umständen ist (d.h. wenn das Land vollständig erobert ist und das Volk nicht von den Nachbarn bedroht wird). Nach Pitkänens Einschätzung schließt keiner der beiden Texte die Existenz lokaler Altäre (je nach bestimmten Umständen) aus. In der Geschichte von der Landnahme bis zum Tempel spielen diese Umstände ihre jeweilige Rolle. Die rhetorische Untersuchung der biblischen Texte bietet gewisse Einsichten, doch dieser Rezensent hält die historische Methodologie und ihre Anwendung für unbefriedigend.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans ce travail qui embrasse un large champ, Pekka Pitkänen propose une ré-interprétation critique de l'exigence de centralisation dans les codes de loi du Pentateuque. Il étudie ensuite comment ces exigences ont été appliquées au cours de la période biblique, depuis la conquête jusqu'à l'achèvement du temple de Salomon. Il défend la thèse de la cohérence entre elles des exigences cultuelles que l'on trouve dans divers textes (Ex 20.22-26