

to reconcile is a specific type of love to God and to fellow creatures.' (703). The remainder of the volume follows this schema, asking the questions, 'How we are to be in love to God' (Chap. 21A) and 'how we are to be in love-as-neighbour' (Chap. 22). Following these explorations, Kelsey goes on to define human freedom in terms of these relations: Christian freedom is 'not contradicted by also affirming that they are conditioned, dependent, and limited – finite – in multiple ways.' (846) It is here that we see 'eccentric existence' in its essence; it is only by recourse to the triune God of grace and love that the human person can 'be' at all in love to God and in love-as-neighbour. The remaining chapters of the volume explore the distortive effect of sin upon human ultimate and proximate contexts.

In making concluding remarks on such a *tour de force* in theological writing, it is hard to know exactly where to locate the real bearing of this work. It is undeniable that Kelsey's work is an example of a novel (and much needed) approach to theological anthropology. With his emphasis upon the 'quotidian' and the 'proximate contexts' of human existence, Kelsey has gone a long way towards righting the wrongs of previous theological approaches to anthropology. In light of this, the importance of his doctrine of creation in protecting finitude against its slow erosion into something like a repristinated doctrine of original sin cannot be overplayed. Nevertheless, there is something about Kelsey's offering which holds this reader back from unqualified eulogy. The work is long; too long, for it to have the impact it should have. In many senses, *Eccentric Existence* loses its way in the minutiae, falling into the temptation of becoming a systematic theology, and may die the death of a thousand qualifications. The author does not give the reader the dignity of being able to make 'mental leaps' on their own accord and so feels pressured to dot the i's and cross the t's in every chapter. Nonetheless, time will tell whether or not Kelsey's writing will have the effect it deserves within the contemporary theological milieu.

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*Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification:
Reformation Theology and Early Modern
Irenicism*

Oxford Studies in Historical Theology

Brian Lugioyo

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, 256 pp.,
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SUMMARY

Brian Lugioyo portrays Bucer as a pragmatic negotiator of the Reformation who engaged openly (and secretly) with his Catholic colleagues without denying his strong and consistent theological convictions, especially on the doctrine of justification by faith alone. Lugioyo shows that the agreement on justification, as reached at the Diet of Regensburg, not only bears Bucer's signature but also reflects his earlier position as outlined in his *Romans Commentary*. Martin Bucer was, argues Lugioyo, therefore not a weak mediating theologian, as some say, but a consistent theologian with an irenic approach to reform. With his careful and comprehensive study, Lugioyo not only provides an illuminating account of the past but also a helpful interpretative framework for the understanding of the present ecumenical dialogue.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Brian Lugioyo präsentiert Bucer als einen pragmatischen Verhandlungsführer der Reformation, der sich öffentlich (und im Verborgenen) mit seinen katholischen Kollegen auseinandersetzte, ohne seine starken und stimmigen theologischen Überzeugungen zu verleugnen, insbesondere die Lehre über die Rechtfertigung allein aus Glauben. Lugioyo zeigt auf, dass die Übereinstimmung bei der Rechtfertigung, wie sie in Regensburg erzielt wurde, nicht nur Bucers Handschrift trägt, sondern auch seine frühere Position reflektiert, wie sie in seinem *Römerkommentar* dargelegt ist. Martin Bucer war daher, so Lugioyo, kein schwacher theologischer Mediator, wie einige behaupten, sondern ein beständiger Theologe mit einem friedfertigen Ansatz zur Reform. Mit seiner sorgfältigen und umfassenden Studie liefert Lugioyo nicht nur einen informativen Bericht über die Vergangenheit, sondern auch einen hilfreichen Deutungsrahmen für das Verständnis des gegenwärtigen ökumenischen Dialogs.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet ouvrage, Brian Lugioyo décrit Bucer comme un négociateur pragmatique du mouvement de la Réforme qui a dialogué ouvertement (et parfois secrètement) avec ses collègues catholiques, sans renier ses fortes convictions théologiques mais en les maintenant de manière consé- quente, notamment sur la doctrine de la justification par la foi seule. Lugioyo relève que l'accord sur la justification atteint à la Diète de Regensburg, non seulement porte la signature de Bucer, mais reflète sa position antérieure telle qu'il l'avait exposée dans son commentaire sur l'épître aux Romains. Martin Bucer n'a donc pas fait preuve de

faiblesse théologique, contrairement à ce que certains pensent, mais il s'est montré un théologien fidèle à ses positions tout en cherchant à favoriser les réformes de manière irénique. Cette étude soignée et complète rend compte du passé de manière éclairante, et fournit de surcroît un cadre interprétatif utile à la compréhension du dialogue œcuménique actuel.

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In *Martin Bucer's Doctrine of Justification: Reformation Theology and Early Modern Irenicism*, Brian Lugioyo, Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Spring Arbor University, seeks to show that Bucer was not a weak *Vermittlungstheologe* but a diplomat of the Reformation with strong and consistent theological convictions. Over against those who charge Bucer with lacking theological steadfastness, Lugioyo introduces Bucer as an irenic ambassador for unity who did not downplay the importance of the doctrine of justification for the sake of ecclesiastical unity. To illustrate his point, Lugioyo looks at Bucer's position on the doctrine of justification during his dialogue with Roman Catholic theologians from 1539 to 1541, trying to show that it remained consistent with his earlier outline of the doctrine in his *Romans Commentary* of 1536. The author unfolds Bucer's understanding of the doctrine of justification, while at the same time painting a comprehensive picture of Bucer's general soteriological outlook. To bring Bucer in dialogue with his Roman Catholic contemporaries, Lugioyo introduces Johannes Gropper's concept of justification, as penned in the *Enchiridion* (1538), and in a final step traces Bucer's concrete involvement in different Catholic-Protestant debates, culminating in the Diet of Regensburg (1541) where he negotiated as one of the Protestant representatives the Worms Book.

Lugioyo argues that the final version of its fifth article, praised by both Catholics and Protestants at the Diet, was not weak *Vermittlungstheologie*, but is strongly 'expressive of Bucer's theology of justification from 1536' (191). This is obviously debatable, then and now. Whereas Calvin was happy with the final version of the article, Luther was not. Lugioyo points out that 'article 5 is not a patchwork of compromise' (204). However, one could add, it still remains a compromise, and the inevitable problem of a compromise is its openness for the involved parties to read their own interpretation into it. Significant differences might still hide behind the curtain of a sophisticated diplomatic language. Whether one agrees with the picture that Lugioyo paints of the reformer Bucer at Regensburg ('Bucer did not accommodate the evangelical doctrine of justification; he evangelized,' 208), one has to commend the clearly structured manner in which Lugioyo, with close attention to detail, unfolds his line of argument. This is undoubtedly one of the strengths of his work. One could have wished for an illustration of parallels between Bucer and contemporary protestant theologians involved in the ecumenical debate, but that might have been a step too far for

a study that explicitly focuses on 'historical theology.' For those who want to dig deeper, the book comes with helpful features, such as the extensive original German and Latin quotations in the footnotes as well as four appendices, consisting in English translations of relevant chapters of Bucer's *Romans Commentary* and a translation of Article 5 of the *Worms Book*.

As Lugioyo combines historical study with a solid dogmatic treatment of Bucer's soteriological approach, both scholars and students with a special interest in church history and systematic theology alike will profit from the book. Furthermore, Lugioyo's study is a valuable resource in that it not only provides material for the interpretation of recent ecumenical conversations, such as 'Evangelicals and Catholics together,' or the 'Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification,' but also works as a signpost for further dialogue. May the debate continue – and not without listening to Bucer's voice from the past, which undoubtedly has something to say to us today.

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Tight Fists or Open Hands? Wealth and Poverty in Old Testament Law

David L. Baker

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009, xxiv + 411, £23.99,
pb. ISBN: 978-0-8028-6283-9

SUMMARY

David L. Baker's book is an excellent exploration of Old Testament wealth and poverty laws read within the Ancient Near Eastern context that attempts to highlight the Old Testament's underlying compassion towards the poor and dispossessed. The book offers the author's own translations of biblical texts, in-depth research, a topical organisation and careful comparison with Ancient Near Eastern law codes. While other attempts to tackle the topics of wealth and poverty in the Old Testament often lead to liberation theology or health and wealth gospel, Baker offers his audience an accessible and engaging reading of Old Testament law that demonstrates God's desire for justice for all.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

David L. Bakers Buch ist ein ausgezeichnete Forschungsbeitrag über alttestamentliche Gesetze zu Reichtum und Armut auf dem Hintergrund des Nahen Ostens der Antike. Das Werk zielt darauf ab, die dem Alten Testament zugrunde liegende Empathie mit den Armen und Besitzlosen hervorzuheben. Der Autor bringt seine eigene Übersetzung der biblischen Texte, das Werk bietet eine gründliche Studie sowie eine thematische Anordnung und einen sorgfältigen Vergleich mit den Gesetzeskodices des Nahen Ostens der Antike. Während andere Ansätze zum Thema von Reichtum und Armut im Alten Testament oftmals in eine Befreiungstheologie münden oder in ein