

3; Titus 1) and that forbid women from teaching or exercising authority over men (1 Tim 2:12). Readers should not be surprised that Edwards, an egalitarian, gives an egalitarian perspective on 1 Pet 3:1–7, but he does not provide convincing arguments against complementarianism. Finally, some may wish that in affirming “divine judgment” Edwards would have more explicitly affirmed the evangelical belief in eternal conscious torment in hell (pp. 176–78). He condemns making divine judgment “the central message” of Christian preaching, and he decries “those who avoid the topic of divine punishment altogether,” but he does not define what form that punishment will take (p. 177). In these instances, Reformed complementarian readers of this commentary will find Edwards’s arguments unconvincing.

Despite these occasional disagreeable assertions, *1 Peter* remains a commentary that would be helpful to pastors and spiritually mature lay readers (e.g., Sunday school teachers or small group leaders) alike as they study 1 Peter. This commentary’s strengths lie especially in its citation of potential parallel biblical texts to a passage from 1 Peter at the beginning of each chapter and its discussion of many other inner-biblical (and extrabiblical) allusions and echoes. Edwards’s background in urban ministry contexts is apparent in many pages of his commentary, and while people ministering in similarly urban contexts will find this book an especially applicable resource, its “Live the Story” sections will likewise prove thought-provoking for those working in rural contexts. Pastors preparing sermons on texts from 1 Peter should likely have on hand a more technical commentary, such as those of Paul J. Achtemeier, John H. Elliott, or Karen H. Jobes, for ready reference as they encounter exegetical difficulties, but *1 Peter* by Dennis Edwards deserves a place on their shelf as well.

JORDAN ATKINSON

Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

Crawford Gribben, *An Introduction to John Owen: A Christian Vision for Every Stage of Life*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2020. Pp. 194. \$17.99, paper.

“John Owen (1616–1683) was the greatest—and certainly the most formidable—of English Protestant theologians” (p. 13). Likewise, Crawford Gribben offers a most formidable volume on this Puritan luminary. Gribben is Professor of Early Modern British History at Queen’s University Belfast. His interests include Calvinist literary cultures with special interest in John Owen and John Nelson Darby. He is the author of numerous works, including *John Owen and English Puritanism* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and his forthcoming *J. N. Darby and the Birth of Dispensationalism* (Oxford University Press, release 2022).

Having read and written on Owen for more than twenty years, Gribben offers a new perspective with *An Introduction to John Owen: A Christian Vision for Every Stage of Life*. It is not simply a fresh systematizing of Owen’s theology; “it offers an introduction to Owen’s work but one that is framed around his representation of the spiritual life” (p. 43). Gribben’s approach is well thought-out, intensely informative, and at times

convicting. The reader should “discover the kind of life [Owen] hoped his readers would experience” (p. 13).

This book is about the sustaining grace of God in the life of the believer from “infancy to death—and beyond” (p. 14). It consists of four chapters describing that Owenian spirituality through the stages of life—chapter 1, Childhood; chapter 2, Youth; chapter 3, Middle Age; and chapter 4, Death and Eternal Life. Gribben includes several aids: (1) a six-page, annotated Owen timeline, (2) a lengthy (23 pages) introduction that explains background and purpose, and (3) an appendix (Prayers for Children from John Owen, *The Primer*). Gribben’s purpose is to describe “Owen’s suggestions as to how that grace should flow through the Christian life, from birth to the beatific vision, as the gift of the one who is the source, guide, and goal of all things” (p. 15).

Chapter 1 sheds light on Owen’s perspective that “the grace that sustained spiritual life began in a distinctively Christian childhood” (p. 51). These sustaining graces are *Baptism, Formation* and *Catechism*. The deaths of Owen’s children made him “acutely aware of the brevity of childhood and the responsibility of parents and churches to prepare their young people for the present life as well as the life to come” (p. 47). While his thoughts on infant baptism evolved, emphasizing “its significance as sign and seal” (p. 55), nevertheless, “he consistently regarded baptism as the beginning of Christian formation” (p. 59). *The Primer* (1652), a small pamphlet to aid formation and catechism in the life of “young learners,” affords “a glimpse into the ideal Christian household as Owen imagined it” (p. 60) where “doctrinal teaching in the home and in the church created a virtuous circle that energized growth in grace” (p. 68).

Chapter 2 provides a glimpse into Owen’s return to Oxford where he reimagines his Calvinism into a more intimate theology. Shaped by Henry Scudder’s *The Christian Daily Walk* (1627) he began to stress genuine spirituality. While at Oxford he came to the realization that even the unregenerate could articulate theology: “He concluded that the difference between true Christians and those who merely imitate the life of faith could be found in their affections” (p. 75). Through his interaction with students, Owen penned *Of Communion with God* (1657) which revealed his journey from scholasticism to deep Bible study and pursuit of the knowledge of God.

The next chapter focuses on spirituality for the middle-aged. Later in life, Owen moved from many previously held designs on toleration and politics. During these middle-aged years Owen penned *A Brief Instruction in the Worship of God* (1667) which became the catechetical defense of the regulative principle. For the middle-aged Owen felt, “Believers were to do what they could to contribute to the good of their society, in the fellowship of the church, while always remembering that there was much more to spiritual life than the temporal achievements of a dangerous middle age” (p. 116). The concluding section covers death and eternal life. For Owen “death was not the end but another step on the journey toward the consummation of spiritual life” (p. 117). His *Meditations and Discourses on the Glory of Christ* (1684), the book he proofread during his “dying time” (p. 119), provides a glimpse into Owen’s thoughts on death as he prepared for his first physical glimpse of his Savior. Heaven and the beatific vision were the blessed hope “for the spiritual life that began in childhood [that] would enter a significant new stage at death” (p. 140).

A few highlights are worth noting: (1) the modern Christian home would do well to heed the wisdom of Owen. Owen's *Primer* led children to "understand basic ideas about God as Trinity, the creation of humanity, the fall, and redemption through Jesus Christ" (p. 64), and there was an expectation for the home to "reinforce the teaching of the church" (p. 68); and (2) while Owen was a man of convictions, one of his many legacies is allowing Scripture to shape him constantly on a variety of issues (scholasticism, education, culture, politics, suffering, baptism, etc.) during every stage of life. While it is obvious that Gribben is a champion of Owen, he does not fail to chronicle Owen's human frailty.

There are no significant limitations to Gribben's work, simply a few Owen surprises: (1) his rejection of a formulaic Lord's Prayer based on the gift of the Spirit (p. 61), (2) though Puritan, in some areas "he had more in common with Baptists than with Presbyterians" (p. 57), and (3) amazingly Gribben states, "Owen, who had elsewhere debunked accounts of vampires and werewolves, took the occasion to explain to his congregation the origin of the ghost stories.... He wanted his listeners to focus on Scripture rather than superstition" (p. 134). How often have we had to offer a vampire and werewolf apologetic? But such was the culture of Owen's day.

If potential readers were to dismiss this book as "only another work on Owen," they may in fact be discarding treasure, for this is no stale narrative but instead a history that will draw the reader in: "an exercise in biographical theology" (p. 14). Gribben fulfills this belief: "Most work on Owen continues to focus on the reconstruction of his doctrine, but there are signs of increasing interest in a more rounded appreciation of his life" (p. 42). This is one of those "signs," or perchance a "jumbotron." This book should be a welcome addition to any church, seminary, or Christian home. If you are unfamiliar with Owen, this will serve as a good introduction; if he is an old friend, then it will rekindle some old conversations and add some new, for "Owen's readers have yet to exhaust the significance of his eight million words" (p. 43). For further investigation of this *beau idéal* of Puritanism, Gribben provides a veritable treasure trove of about 250 bibliographical entries, with primary sources from Cromwell, Locke, and Owen and secondary sources that include popular authors such as Haykin, Ferguson, and Piper. No matter what stage of life we find ourselves in as believers, may we remember that "it was grace, rather than activity, that sustained the busyness of true spirituality" (p. 27).

TONY A. ROGERS
Southside Baptist Church
Bowie, Texas

Cory C. Brock, *Orthodox Yet Modern: Herman Bavinck's Use of Friedrich Schleiermacher*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2020. Pp. xvi + 295. \$28.99, paper.

This fine, detailed study takes its place among recent books on Herman Bavinck (1854–1921) establishing better understandings of his theology and its attendant features. Brock has carefully worked on a question of strong interest to Bavinck scholarship for

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