

critical but steadfast embrace of the state as having the limited ability to safeguard the conditions required for these themes to be realities in society. Chartier's account also entirely ignores the entrenchment of the late modern nation state in late-stage capitalism. The market is somehow untouched by these critiques.

When Chartier turns to asserting his alternative of cosmopolitan consociationalism, suddenly human nature becomes much more salutary. In the absence of the state, legal networks would allow people to resolve disputes peacefully and individuals would want to avoid violent networks. Somehow (it is not carefully argued how or why), the 'opportunity of exit' from these consensual networks would prevent sinful people from seeking power as they do in states, and even if some corrupt people acquired some power, they would not be able to do as much harm (p. 198). 'Exit' would also 'naturally serve to winnow out many unappealing rules' (p. 198), preventing these networks from being oppressive, violent or conformist. Chartier drops a passing mention that these legal networks may use military force, but he does not explain how, or why this would not be dangerous and oppressive as he has established state military force to be. (Does the libertarian commitment to consent trump its resistance to violence?) Chartier promises to show that there are historical and contemporary examples that prove the possibility of such networks, yet in 297 pages, he spends just one paragraph (on p. 180) listing his examples of successful non-state consensual legal associations. In the end it is unclear why readers should take Chartier's critiques of the state seriously without those same principles of critique being allowed to interrogate the market and the proposed consensual associational networks.

I am in no way suggesting that anarchy is out of bounds in Christian political theology. Careful conversations about the traditions of Christian anarchy are important, and careful, thorough arguments for such positions should be openly pursued and engaged. Perhaps elsewhere Chartier makes such contributions. But promotion of anarchy should not be smuggled in under the radar as it is in this volume, in either popular or scholarly discourses.

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Cory C. Brock and N. Gray Sutanto, *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction*

(Bellingham, WA: Lexham Academic, 2022), pp. xxii + 322. \$24.99.

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In *Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction*, Cory Brock and Gray Sutanto provide a clear, well-organised and extremely helpful introduction to key elements in the theology of the first generation of Dutch neo-Calvinists: Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck. In this definitive study, the authors state that their aim is 'to present what Kuyper and Bavinck themselves offered as the distinctive marks of their own theological work' (p. 7).

Brock and Sutanto argue that, for Kuyper and Bavinck, 'neo-Calvinism' is not only rooted in Calvinism's holistic or full-orbed view of Christianity (in contrast to

Catholicism, Lutheranism and secularism), but also offers a 'holistic model' that relates theology to modern science and learning. Brock and Sutanto make clear that Kuyper and Bavinck do not simply regurgitate Calvin's theology, but creatively and critically retrieve key ideas from Calvin. In short, Kuyper and Bavinck base their theology on what they see as the essence of traditional orthodox Christianity even as they address modern concerns. Kuyper and Bavinck advocate a catholicity of the church that confesses Christ as Lord while also recognising that the universal faith must express itself 'in diverse ways in each place and generation' (pp. 68–9).

In the area of theological prolegomena, Kuyper and Bavinck combine a classic Reformed affirmation of general revelation with 'a romantic emphasis on the *affective* dimensions of revelation's reception', so that the reception of general revelation is 'an unconscious, affective, and felt knowledge' (pp. 72–3). Thus, they see general revelation as producing 'an affective and implanted knowledge of God quite independently of the exercise of creaturely reason' that can then be reflected upon by reason (p. 96). In an especially insightful chapter on Scripture, Brock and Sutanto argue that Kuyper and Bavinck offer an 'organic' account of Scripture that recognises both the 'divine origins' and the human authorship of Scripture, as well as the value of Scripture and theology within the modern university (p. 99). One important function of Scripture within neo-Calvinism is to form 'a system or a worldview through which one interprets the deliverances of the exact sciences and places them into their proper places within the organism of knowledge' (p. 100). Scripture shows that all things the sciences investigate derive from and depend on Christ.

Brock and Sutanto highlight the neo-Calvinist themes of creation, fall and re-creation. For Kuyper and Bavinck, 'the goal of re-creation is the end of creation yet by different means.... Re-creation's end is creation's original end: that God would make his dwelling place with humankind, Immanuel, God with us' (pp. 134, 184). At its heart, neo-Calvinism sees '*God's action of re-creation as the essence of Christianity and the meaning of world history*' (p. 135). Both Kuyper and Bavinck see humanity's fall as rooted in rejection of God rather than in an ontological deficit in humanity, for they see humans as created by God for God's glory as the climax of creation. Christ as the second Adam is the agent of regeneration who rescues fallen humanity from their individualistic separation from 'the organism of humanity' and makes the regenerated 'fully human' (pp. 209–10). Brock and Sutanto expend considerable effort defending neo-Calvinism against Hans Boersma's criticism that the neo-Calvinist emphasis on the renewal of creation undermines the beatific 'vision of God in the face of Christ' in eternal life (pp. 168 ff.).

The neo-Calvinist themes of common grace and the church–world relation occupy one-fourth of the book. Kuyper and Bavinck see 'God's common grace [as] God's general favor that sustains the creation order despite sin', whereas 'God's special grace restores, renews, and recreates creation order as the kingdom of God' (p. 213). God's special grace builds on God's common or sustaining grace towards fallen creatures. In common grace, God shows patience and love towards the cosmos. Even the incarnation of Christ is an 'affirmation of creation' and therefore 'a common grace to all humanity' (pp. 231–32). After an analysis of differences between Kuyper and Bavinck on the church (and especially how the church is an 'organism'), Brock and Sutanto argue that despite their differences both Kuyper and Bavinck see the meaning of history as the kingdom of God, with the church occupying a sphere in life alongside family, state and culture. The church's task is to be a leaven and an agent of renewal in the world.

Among the many strengths of this book are its emphasis that Kuyper and Bavinck retrieved traditional Calvinism by engaging the modernity of their time and showing that the genuine catholicity of the church means that Christianity ‘can reshape any philosophy or culture it encounters’ (p. 292). The volume could have been enhanced if it had placed Kuyper and Bavinck alongside other theological movements of their day (in addition to Catholicism) and also considered more concerns or weaknesses in this first generation of neo-Calvinism. For example, was the racism against sub-Saharan Africans that one sees in Kuyper and some of his followers (e.g. in South Africa) an aberration or an integral part of his vision of Christianity?

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Yuliya Minets, *The Slow Fall of Babel: Languages and Identities in Late Antique Christianity*

(Cambridge: CUP, 2022), pp. xvi + 418. \$120.00 (hb)/\$36.99 (pb)

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According to Julian ‘the Apostate’, the infamous nephew of Constantine who publicly renounced his Christian faith upon accession to the Roman imperial throne in the 360s, the Genesis narrative of the tower of Babel had all the hallmarks of a philosophically bad story. Not only did the humans of the tale unrealistically imagine they could build a tower to heaven, and not only did the God of the tale feel the need to suffer dislocation by making the long trek down from the skies to check the mortals in their enterprise, but the story itself only explained something of minor importance. Instead of explaining the plurality of languages, Julian surmised, a more necessary aetiology would have accounted for the plurality of cultures and ethnic identities throughout the world (see his *Against the Galileans*, frags. 23–24). What Julian seems to have missed in his polemical assessment, however, is the ways in which language could become implicated in such identities. Indeed, as *The Slow Fall of Babel* demonstrates, Christians had been and would continue to mull over the Babel episode and allow it to become a fruitful locus for developing representations of the ‘alloglottic Other’. Reading, thinking and writing in a diverse range of languages throughout the first six centuries, Christian intellectuals adopted a wide range of interpretations of the passage in their articulation of the world and its peoples, as well as of the God who gifted or punished those peoples with a polyphony of languages.

Minets’ book is more than merely tracing the history of interpretation of the Babel episode. Instead it tackles the entire nexus of early Christian modes of thinking about language diversity and identity: two initial chapters setting the background of the linguistic situation experienced by Christians in late antiquity (chapter 1) and the various ways of thinking about languages and otherness by Greeks, Romans and Jews (chapter 2) precede two central chapters on the varied Christian exposition of the focal biblical passages for this study, namely the Tower of Babel episode (chapter 3) and the