fatalism and nihilism could put him off of his view that faith in God—what-
ever his source and however he may appear—as somehow necessary for “a
truly healthy and vigorous soul” (180).

Hurth’s account of Transcendentalism’s brush with unbelief is a fine
contribution to the intellectual legacy of American progressive religion. If
she is unable to finally provide a satisfactory answer to Transcendentalism’s
apparent unwillingness to grapple with the “atheistical” implications of its
own thought, it is no fault of her scholarship or writing. In an otherwise fine
volume, the best answer to this open question may be the eclectic nature of
a theological and spiritual movement that just happened to emerge during
a particularly volatile period of American religious history; perhaps it was
simply that the dogmatism of atheism appeared to its adherents no less
dogmatic than the dogmatism it had already rejected.

—Jeffrey A. Wilcox

Ioannis Calvini, Scripta Didactica et Polemica, vol. 3 by Anthony N. S. Lane,

This most recent addition to the new series of critical editions of Calvin’s
works is Calvin’s treatise on the bondage and liberation of the will, Defensio
sane et orthodoxae doctrinae de servitute et liberatione humani arbitrii, adversus
calumnias Alberti Pighii Campensis. Anthony Lane, with Graham Davies, pro-
vides this critical edition after having already produced an English transla-
tion in 1996 (The Bondage and Liberation of the Will: A Defence of the Orthodox
Doctrine of Human Choice against Pighius). Lane admits that the overlap
between the introduction and the notes of the two volumes is significant,
but this volume, obviously, works much more deeply with the Latin texts
of Calvin and Pighius (books 1–6 of Pighius’ De libero hominis arbitrio are
reproduced in facsimile on pages 331–450 of this volume).

In the introduction, Lane notes that the importance of this edition is
two-fold: first, it is Calvin’s fullest treatment of the issue of the relationship
between grace and free will (containing important material not found else-
where in his writings) and second, it contains more discussion of the early
church fathers than any other of Calvin’s works besides the Institutes of the
Christian Religion.

Calvin’s work was originally written to combat the teaching of the Dutch
Roman Catholic theologian Albert Pighius (1490–1542). Pighius was edu-
cated in large part at Louvain and served in posts in Rome and Utrecht.
During his career, Pighius wrote many significant works, many of them
defending Roman Catholic ideas against the Protestants. It was in one of
these polemical works, the De libero hominis arbitrio of 1542 that Pighius
embarked on a wide-ranging attack of Calvin’s understanding of free
choice, nature, grace, sin, and divine foreknowledge. Calvin responded in
the months following: His Defensio sane et orthodoxae doctrinae was available
in 1543. Because of time constraints, Calvin only managed to respond to the first six books of Pighius’ treatise at this time. However, Calvin discussed remaining issues a decade later in the debate with Jerome Bolsec in his De Aeterna Dei Praedestinatione of 1552 and in the subsequent editions of his Institutes.

Before presenting the text itself, the editors of the present volume discuss the text history and translations. The text appeared in several Latin editions in the sixteenth century and in one French edition. The French version (the only translation until the modern English translation noted above) was translated from a second edition and not by Calvin himself, according to the detailed study by Lane (29–40).

Calvin’s book follows the order laid down by Pighius. Calvin desires to understand the issues of the freedom-bondage of the human will and human choice. As Lane notes, considerable space is given in Calvin’s argument to discussing the views of the Fathers in general and of Augustine in particular. Lane underlines the main issues in the debate: Pighius critiques Calvin for his seeming rejection of the term *liberum arbitrium*, which church fathers (including Augustine) accepted. Calvin responds that most people, including Pighius, mean something different by the term, thinking that a free will has the power to choose good and evil by its own strength—there is a freedom but only one that is compatible with the bondage of the will to sin (46–47). Calvin notes that the will is *bound*, which “because of its corruptness is held captive under the authority of evil desires, so that it can choose nothing but evil, even if it does so of its own accord and gladly, without being driven by any external impulse” (cited in English on p. 47 and in the original on p.138). A significant issue in the whole debate is an understanding of sin and grace, with much time spent understanding the church fathers’ positions on these topics. As Lane notes, Calvin could have avoided the church fathers by claiming the clear teaching of Scripture, but “it would have gravely undermined the plausibility of his case” (51).

The text of the *Defensio* is clearly presented with notes to all significant classical references, textual variants, and helpful contemporary historical links. This volume continues the high standard of scholarship of the earlier volumes of this new series of Calvin’s work. One can especially congratulate Lane and his collaborators for the close attention they pay to the details of the text and its history. Obviously, the issues discussed by Calvin in this volume have been of great interest in subsequent generations of Reformed and Roman Catholic Church leaders. The present volume will certainly help to understand the details of the beginnings of the Reformed understanding.

—Jason Zuidema

Bruce McCormack has written yet another outstanding book on the theology of Karl Barth. I say outstanding because McCormack is a penetrating reader of the doctrinal commitments that hold the Church Dogmatics (CD) together. Foremost in McCormack’s mind is the work the doctrine of election undertakes in Barth’s mature doctrine of God, as enunciated in CD II/2. Therein Barth argues that it is God’s decision or decree to never be himself apart from humankind, from the covenant of grace that is determinative of God’s being. It is that which supplies material unity, according to McCormack, to Barth’s theology. It is the radicalism of such a move, as it comes to the fore after 1936 that McCormack draws out throughout the four parts of the book: (1) Barth’s relationship to nineteenth century theology, (2) postliberalism and postmodernism, (3) Barth’s theological ontology, and (4) a series of occasional writings.

It is the third part of the book, Barth’s theological ontology, that finds McCormack at his most incisive and probing. Accordingly, Barth is modern inasmuch as he is concerned with the problem of the knowledge of God. Barth takes Kantian epistemology seriously when it comes to the problem of knowing God: the problem of revelation. Barth is orthodox “in the realm of Christology under the conditions of modernity” (232). That is to say, Barth as a modern thinker is concerned with history, with integrating “the concept of ‘history’ into his concept of ‘person’ ” (229). Barth secures the classical orthodox concern—the ontic unity of Father, Son, and Spirit—in a distinctly modern fashion by way of a realist concept of history.

What is perhaps most important and controversial in McCormack’s reading with respect to contemporary Barth scholarship is his invocation of the language of “anticipation” to describe Barth’s understanding of the relationship of God’s eternal being to God’s action in time. For example, “God freely determined that his eternal being would be, already in eternity-past, constituted, by way of anticipation, by the incarnation of the ‘Son’ in time (and the outpouring of the Spirit in time)” (154). This important theme weaves its way throughout all of the essays: McCormack identifies, in an even stronger sense than does Barth, the material content of the immanent trinity and the economic trinity. Not that the later Barth—the Barth of CD II/2 onward—would disagree, but Barth is not always as consistent as McCormack would want him to be as concerns the ontic implications of Barth’s own claims regarding the self-revelation of God: God determines himself to be God only in relation to humankind. This is not to say that Barth does not for a moment disavow or, as McCormack reminds us, ever suggest that God’s activity, activity in accordance with God’s decision, lacks determination as far as God’s being is concerned. The language of anticipation seems to be a moving beyond Barth on McCormack’s part for