

fit for translations of primary texts, such as this collection of Roman *passiones*. The advertisement inside of the book for the series OECS is intriguing, with titles such as *Damasus of Rome* by Dennis Trout, a work referred frequently by Lapidge himself.

There is one graphic design detail lacking that would improve the layout of the book: clear subtitles. The introductions of the *passiones* are indistinguishable visually from the text of the *passion*. At a quick look, one does not know where one starts and the other ends. Apart from this observation, the book looks great and is an opportune collection of ancient Christian texts. I will certainly use portions of it in classes on early Christianity and the history of biblical interpretation, in order to show my students the richness of Christian faith and imagination.

Berrien Springs, Michigan

RODRIGO GALIZA

Martin F. Hanna, Darius W. Jankiewicz, and John W. Reeve, eds., *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology*. Theological Studies 11. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2018. xiii + 478 pp. Softcover. USD 29.99.

Debates and discussions over salvation—what salvation is, how it works, and what it means—are not new phenomena within Christian history. Even the apostolic church had questions and arguments over salvation. For example, some in the early church were debating whether Gentiles first had to perform preparatory works—specifically circumcision, which would indicate a conversion to Judaism—before they could receive the Messiah. The Jerusalem Council, along with Paul and the other apostles (Acts 15; Gal 2:1–10), responded with the message of righteousness/justification by faith alone.

It should not surprise us, then, that the Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) movement has experienced similar controversies which impact individuals and congregations to this day. One of our more famous debates came at the 1888 General Conference in Minneapolis and, like the early church, agitations over salvation have continued even into our present situation. Whether agitating over the meaning of the 1888 understanding of the Gospel, debating over Christian perfection and what it means, or encountering variants of Moral Influence Soteriology—which rejects the idea that humans are condemned under a legal penalty, for which Christ died a substitutionary death—Adventists continue discussing and debating the message and meaning of salvation. Within this context, I expected a publication edited by professors from the SDA Theological Seminary at Andrews University to wade into these frays and address each viewpoint. Instead, I discovered that *Salvation: Contours of Adventist Soteriology* seeks to explore the key nuances—or contours—of

a balanced biblical understanding of salvation within the context of the SDA doctrinal framework.

The book is organized into five major divisions titled as follows: section one, "God's Plan in Christ: Is Salvation for Everyone?"; section two, "The Sin Problem: Are Humans Born in Need of a Savior?"; section three, "Jesus Saves: A Perfect Solution?"; section four, "Amazing Grace: Can Believers Earn Their Salvation?"; and, five, "Blessed Assurance: Can Believers Be Sure About Their Salvation?"

The editors' introduction to the book lays down critical foundations for understanding the remainder of the book and should not be skipped. This introduction orients the reader through a brief survey of arguments concerning salvation throughout Christian history. Special attention is given to the controversies between Pelagius and Augustine, as well as to debates between Calvinism and Arminianism. This is important because, in around the first one hundred pages, the authors periodically seek to rebut Calvinist positions without directly naming Calvinism. As the book progresses, though, the references to Calvinism become more explicit. One clear purpose of the book, therefore, appears to be refuting the predestinarian aspects of Calvinist theology along with some of the related implications impacting one's understanding of human free will. This means that the corollary purpose appears to be to provide an apologetics for Arminian soteriology and its accompanying doctrine of human free will.

As part of the defense of human free will, there is a significant contribution from Martin Hanna. His chapter may be the first major publication of a centrist Adventist theology on Divine foreknowledge. Hanna's contribution is by far the most technical chapter in a book that seems otherwise designed to appeal to both non-theologians and to professional theologians in a single volume. In particular, he argues, rightly in my view, that in Scripture, there is a distinction between God's purpose and His foreknowledge: "God's purpose and actions are informed by His foreknowledge of His options. 'God's foreknowledge cannot be contingent upon His will.' God cannot foreknow all things unless his foreknowledge precedes all things" (42; subquote from C. Gordon Olson, *Getting the Gospel Right: A Balanced View of Salvation Truth* [Cedar Knolls, NJ: Global Gospel Publishers, 2005], 263). This would seem to be the opposite of Calvinistic-style theologies, in which God's foreknowledge is determined by His volition: God knows the future for he has decided what that future will be. From an Arminian perspective, this creates significant difficulties in explaining biblical texts that appear to support human free will in the salvation process. For Hanna, the biblical book of Acts "supports the concept of God's foreknowledge of interactive options and interactions" (42). God foreknows all the options and interactive possibilities, and this, argues Hanna, is the basis for retaining Divine sovereignty while providing for human free will. Thus, it seems to me that Hanna argues for a nuanced

form of a Middle View of Divine foreknowledge as the grounding of human freedom, not unlike John Wesley.

Another key area of discussion, engaged by multiple authors, centers on how the Arminian believer can view sinful humans as being totally depraved by sin while believing in some form of free will in matters of salvation. The concept of Prevenient Grace—the Grace that comes to sinner’s pre-conversion—is well explored by several authors, and is offered as the solution to the tension between Total Depravity and Free Will.

Several chapters explore various questions concerning assurance of salvation and the role of works in Christian living. The paradoxical tension between the concept of salvation by faith apart from works and the call to obedience as being an essential element in salvific living will be more keenly felt in faith traditions that emphasize the necessity of keeping God’s commandments. SDAs certainly fit within this demographic grouping. Naturally, multiple authors make strong efforts to demonstrate that, in an Adventist understanding of soteriology, assurance of salvation is definitively possible and desirable. This repeated emphasis on assurance suggests that the authors perceive lack of assurance to be a key pastoral problem within portions of Adventism. Thus, a second, more subtle purpose of the book seems to be to address perfectionist theologies found in some segments of Adventism, yet without directly confronting their published ideas. Sections four and five of this book especially speak to such issues by focusing on the meanings of grace and assurance. The overall goal appears to center on giving a solid call to accept God’s grace and free salvation while explaining how we remain responsible to grow in grace and to seek victory over all known sin, all without losing focus on grace and faith as the only foundations for salvation and assurance.

In addition to this, the discussion of the relationship of faith and works in salvation is also used to critique perceived weaknesses of an Augustinian-dominant soteriology. In general, it is argued that Arminianism has better explanations of the relation of faith and works, offers more hope than Calvinism, and thus is existentially better than Calvinism. This argument is most notably developed by Woodrow Whidden in chapter nineteen.

Whidden records how Arminians warn Calvinists of the dangers of *securitas*, a false assurance rooted in self-deception and presumption on the grace of Christ. Calvinists, in turn, contend that Arminians are subject to the dangers of *desperatio*, that is, a sense that one’s life is such a failure that salvation is impossible. Whidden asks, “So who has the better part of the argument when it comes to the attaining of the alleged golden mean of certitude, a balanced experience which effectively avoids both cheap grace and deadening despair?” (377). Whidden notes that Calvinists and Arminians actually hold much in common. Thus, “it needs to be emphatically stated that the blessings of justifying and forgiving grace are the main default resorts for all believers,

be they Calvinist/Reformed or Arminian.” (392). Whidden sees only two major differences between Calvinists and Arminians. The first is how they view God’s love and the second is their view of the role of sanctification in the life of the assured Christian. In regard to the first difference, he queries if God’s saving love is unlimited, universal yet resistible, or if that love is limited and administered only to a select predestined group irresistibly? For Whidden, the Arminian God who desires all to be saved projects a more attractive picture of who God is.

In regard to sanctification, Whidden notes that Arminians have been more optimistic about what God’s grace can do to make loving obedience an evidence one is in saving relationship with Christ. By contrast, the teaching of John Calvin on “temporary faith”—an attempt to explain how one predestined to reprobation can appear to have a genuine faith experience for a season—leads to questions on how to differentiate between the reprobate in a temporary conversion and the elect who possess the gifts of irresistible grace and perseverance. This is because classic Calvinism promoted the idea that consistent obedience is evidence of regeneration, and thus of election. But this raises the question of how to tell the difference between temporary faith and the faith of the elect: “The reason that the category of temporary faith undermines assurance is the great correspondence between true and temporary faith” (183). Thus, Whidden implies that the Calvinist tension between genuine and temporary faith can easily lead to despair.

From my own research, this angst over distinguishing true from temporary faith is well demonstrated in the Antinomian Controversy in 1630s New England. The Calvinistic Puritans appear to have experienced strong anguish over assurance. How do I know I am one of those predestined to salvation? Efforts to assuage such anguish led to theological revisionism designed to address the problem of assurance in a predestinarian context. It also produced some extreme emotional distress in some of the common citizens. As told by Governor Winthrop, “A woman of Boston congregation, having been in much trouble of mind about her spiritual estate, at length grew into utter desperation, and could not endure to hear of any comfort, etc., so as one day took her little infant and threw it into a well, and then came into the house and said now she was sure she would be damned, for she had drowned her child”—though gratefully, Winthrop reports that the people in the house rushed out and saved the baby (see John Winthrop, *The Journal of John Winthrop*, eds. Richard S. Dunn, James Savage, and Laetitia Yeandle. Unabridged Ed. [Boston, MA: Harvard College and Massachusetts Historical Society, 1996], 129–130). Responding to this story, Eve LaPlante concludes, “This extraordinary act shows the depth of the spiritual fear and how great the need for certainty” (*American Jezebel: The Uncommon Life of Anne Hutchinson, the Woman Who Defied the Puritans* [San Francisco: HarperOne, 2005], 45). Whidden thus makes a defensible case that, through

divine decree, Calvinism implicitly leaves salvation beyond the reach of many, and thus has greater potential to produce anguish over assurance. By contrast, he contends that while both Arminians and Calvinists believe a comparatively small portion of humanity will be ultimately saved, the Arminian position is more optimistic in that it views God as seeking to save all humans and thus, every sinner at least has a chance of becoming part of that small group. Whidden thus concludes that “the Arminian way of salvation is inherently more efficacious than the Reformed version when it comes to any effectual experience of a balanced assurance of salvation” (379).

Of special significance are the opening and closing chapters of the book by Nicholas Miller and Richard Davidson, respectively. First, Nicholas Miller opens with a superb chapter on the roots of Ellen White’s Great Controversy motif. Miller shows how the Governmental Theory of Atonement, first proposed by Hugo Grotius in the early seventeenth century, contains key concepts incorporated into the Great Controversy motif. Grotius’s views evolved over two centuries within some Wesleyan circles and also infiltrated Puritanism in America.

As the Governmental theory grew and evolved, key themes increasingly clustered around the idea that God functions as a moral governor over the universe. This means that moral creatures can understand, appreciate, and imitate the moral nature of God’s government. God’s moral character was the foundation of this moral government. Moral government, however, implies free choice in humans. Thus, the Governmental Theorists have a natural affinity to the Arminian idea that God seeks to save all men. Predestination soteriology was seen as fundamentally at odds with the morality of the Divine Government.

Additionally, Governmental Theorists argued that, just as God’s invitations to salvation are directed towards all men and should be taken at face value, in like manner, the Divine promises of judgment on the wicked are to be taken with equal seriousness. In the final judgment, God is acting as a moral Governor operating under principles of love and justice. His judgments are not personal vendettas based on agitated emotions, but are principled, professional actions based in love and justice, protecting and maintaining the health of the cosmic community. While he loves his subjects, God must first act in his capacity of cosmic Governor to maintain the greater cosmic good. Such ideas appear to provide some of the background from which Ellen White would set forth God as the cosmic ruler who allows free choice—including even disagreement with him—yet who also holds free-will beings accountable to the moral principles of his government.

The significance of Miller’s contribution is his reminder that the Great Controversy is more than a conflict over God’s character. It is first and fundamentally a conflict over leadership: who gets to govern the universe? The challenges against a leader’s character are merely tools used to subvert support

for their leadership. As of this writing, Donald Trump is President of the United States and opponents attack his character attempting to weaken his leadership. Few people attack Barak Obama's character because he no longer is in a position of power and questions over his character are comparatively irrelevant. In my experience, it is not uncommon that when Adventist thinkers reduce the Great Controversy from being a conflict over leadership—who gets to sit on the throne (Isa 14)—and frame it as little more than a public relations problem related to God's character, there is a strong tendency to espouse primarily moral influence views of atonement. This leads to a tendency to deny God's operation of a cosmic court (such as in Dan 7–8) and his executing justice on sinners on the basis of the judgment (as in Rev 20 and the white throne judgment). Miller thus sets a strong foundation for maintaining a balanced view of the Great Controversy, while lessening the risk of wandering into unbalanced, unbiblical theologies. In chapter nine, Denis Fortin builds on Miller's work by showing that the Governmental Model has the ability to take the best aspects of multiple theories of atonement and reconcile them into a more comprehensive theological framework that minimizes the individual weaknesses of any other single atonement theory. This is an especially important contribution.

The capstone of the book is the final chapter by Richard Davidson. Davidson blends solid academic exegesis with his personal testimony of his own journey from legalistic perfectionism—with its angst and defeat—into an assurance of salvation that empowers joy, growth, and moral victory. Davidson explores assurance in relation to the investigative judgment, with special attention to addressing perfectionist concerns. He demonstrates that in the Bible, those in a surrendered, responsible, faith-based relationship with God have assurance throughout the investigative judgment and the eschatological crises at the end of earth's history.

Davidson shares how the investigative judgment terrified and tortured him until he started studying the judgment in the Psalms. Here, he was surprised to find David pleading with God to judge him, for that judgment was his hope of vindication against personal enemies. The Psalms thus have a similar view of the judgment found in the "little horn" portions of Daniel 7–8. There, judgment is in favor of God's people, vindicating them while condemning and neutralizing the power of the little horn. Thus, for God's people, judgment is good news because it promises our exoneration. Christ is an attorney pleading our cases and he has never lost a case; and Christ is our judge who is on our side, wanting to save us! The court is a friendly place for true believers. The only basis of their favorable judgment is the merits of Christ received by faith. While we are judged by our works, those works are merely the evidence of the faith-based relationship with God, and it is this faith-based commitment that grounds favorable judgement. Davidson reminds us, however, that those not in proper covenantal relationship with God—who rebel and resist God's

sovereign rule—will find the judgment rightly terrifying. Thus, Davidson does an excellent job of portraying the joy of salvation and the confidence in the day of judgment mentioned in 1 John 4:17, while maintaining balance with the fearful dimension for the unbelieving.

Overall, this is an excellent volume offering a balanced, biblical theology of salvation. If there is one weakness, it would be that I believe that the significance and importance of conversion/new birth/regeneration for grounding salvific life needs greater emphasis. Conversion and new birth are recognized and acknowledged, even developed to some degree—mostly in section five. The article by Jo Ann Davidson (chapter eighteen) did some excellent work on this aspect. However, ultimately it would be better if conversion was made more integral and foundational to the arguments earlier in the book. This may be due to the fact that Christians who emphasize high standards and ethical behavior often assume everyone is clear on the importance of new birth and thus may not maintain the needed emphasis on the vital importance of conversion for spiritual and moral development. Nevertheless, this book provides a sound, well-balanced exposition of a classic, biblical-centrist Adventist-Armenian soteriology and makes an excellent, stabilizing contribution to our understanding of salvation within the Adventist context.

Southern Adventist University

STEPHEN BAUER

Pennington, Jonathan. *The Sermon on the Mount and Human Flourishing: A Theological Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018. 352 pp. Softcover. USD 23.09.

This volume is the fruit of a seasoned New Testament scholar's long engagement with the Sermon on the Mount (SM) and its affiliated scholarship primarily in the English world. Whether a scholar or a preacher, the reader will find gold on almost every page. Pennington provides a fresh translation of the SM that incorporates his own choices of key words later discussed (xv–xx). The introduction (“An Overall Reading Strategy for the Sermon,” 1–16) demonstrates how the Sermon serves as a litmus test for the theology of the reader—hence the widely divergent interpretations. The remainder of the book is divided into three uneven sections. Part one (“Orientations,” 19–134) attends to key terms and the macro-structure of the SM. Part two (“Commentary,” 137–286) is worth the price of the book with its emphasis on informed theological exposition rather than a verse-by-verse approach. In Part three, perhaps the most interesting section (“Theological Reflections,” 289–310), Pennington reveals his discomfort with aspects of Reformed Anthropology that over-emphasize human sinfulness. Here, and elsewhere in the book, he asserts the necessity of the cultivation of virtue or discipleship as a requisite, if not a pre-requisite, for salvation. Virtue and grace are compatible. Deeds matter for Paul, as well as