

opponents' argument in its most extreme form (usually Hoeksema) and succeeds magnificently in destroying the straw man. The partisan and polemical nature of the book helps to explain why his use of other authors is black or white: they are all either villains or heroes. Among recent writers on election, Galling, Vriezen, and Packer receive no mention; nor is there any reference to Zanchius, who probably had more influence on Puritan (and therefore post-Puritan) beliefs about predestination than any other writer in the Reformation age. Berkouwer barely gets noticed (three minor plusses), Barth a shade more (four plusses).

Despite vast quantities of imprecise formulation, however, Daane is not Barthian in his view on election. He quite escapes Barth's slippery path toward universalism. Nevertheless his vehement attack on decretal theology has betrayed him into making many overstatements, quite unsupported by Scripture. His stress on corporate election—Israel, Jesus, and the Church—is overdue: most Reformed theologies quite omit it. But he over-reacts, and fails to consider the election of individuals so underscored by John (eg, 6:37, 65; 10:26ff; etc.) but discernible also in Paul (eg, Rom. 9:6ff) and Luke (eg, Acts 13:48). While trying to eliminate an Aristotelian god, Daane comes close to describing a neo-platonic church. The concept of Remnant receives bare mention. Reprobation on a par with election is rightly rejected; but Daane not only fails to come to grips with difficult passages (eg, Jn 9:39-41; 12:37-40; Rom. 9:22f; Jude 4), but goes so far as to say that God is immutable in his elective purposes of grace, but mutable in his wrath. The method used to demonstrate the truth of such a proposition—a carefully-selected array of texts—could equally be pressed into service to prove the reverse.

Daane's basic criticism of the rise of decretal theology cries to be read in churches of Reformed persuasion; but because he has not formulated a basic over-all structure, he is not likely to get much of a hearing where he is most needed. He does not, for example, even discuss the implications of biblical insistence upon divine omniscience and omnipotence. Surely an omniscient and omnipotent God is related in some way to everything that comes to pass. Escape into statements suggesting that illogical contradictions do not exist for the God for whom all things are possible reveals a staggering philosophical naïveté about notions of logicity and impossibility. For a start, Daane needs to read something like G. I. Mavrodes, *Belief in God* (Random House).

James Daane, *The Freedom of God: A Study of Election and Pulpit* (Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans, 1973), 205 pp., pb \$5.95.

This is one of those books in which the main point is both valid and important, but which is marred by repetition, debatable subsidiary points, and unfair compartmentalizing of opponents' arguments.

The main point needs stressing: from the seventeenth century onward, Reformed theologians have tended to treat the divine decree as one aspect of God and his essence. In this they follow Beza and the medieval scholastics, but not Calvin, who preferred to discuss the divine decree under soteriology. The result of "Reformed scholastic decretal theology" has been a portrait of God more akin to Aristotle's "Unmoved Mover" than to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Everything that comes to pass is understood to be the direct result of the divine will. The decretal theologians, therefore, do not hesitate to speak of God as the cause of sin, escaping from the obvious dilemma by appealing to ill-defined notions of secondary causality. Further, because of insistence on God's reason—God as "exhaustively rational"—all events are seen as equally necessary, necessitated indeed by God's very essence. Such decretal theology eliminates the freedom of God to choose, destroys the concept of grace, and degenerates into the unpreachable. This last aspect brings us to the subtitle, which reveals Daane as the Professor of Practical Theology at Fuller: his concern is for preaching. His charge is that Reformed churches do not preach election as it emerges from decretal theology, because it is basically unpreachable. At best it can be advanced as a post-conversion explanation.

To prove his point, Daane interacts with Hoeksema, Van Til, Berkhof, and Clark among the moderns, and notably with Turretin among the older theologians. Unfortunately, in his zeal to establish his point, Daane tends to tar the lot with the same brush. He frequently sets up the

For a more balanced presentation of biblical election, the present reviewer still prefers Berkouwer's *Divine Election*, read in conjunction with his earlier volume, *The Providence of God*. Turn to Daane for a specific attack on the weaknesses of present-day decretal theology. In any case, Daane's chapter on the election of Christ is almost worth the price of the book.

Both Berkouwer and Daane confirm a deep-rooted suspicion in the reviewer's mind, that future writers on the subjects of election and predestination would be well-advised to spend more time wrestling with the way the biblical writers *use* and *do not use* the concepts in question, instead of drawing many inferences out of naked propositions whose contexts and purposes are inadequately explored.

D. A. Carson

(The reviewer, a native of Canada, is pursuing PhD research in NT at Cambridge.)