found himself fighting for the causes of Tuscan and Spanish Protestants against religious persecution. His textual scholarship and distinct attitudes to Scripture also got Tregelles sucked into several heated public controversies in the 1860s, often with the Plymouth Brethren, where his valour trumped his charity. While he did get his Greek edition published, the painstaking demands of Tregelles's work likely ruined his eyesight and contributed to declining health, and his final years were those of dramatically reduced productivity and eventual paralysis.

The life and times is a result of Stunt's long-standing fascination with Tregelles and is built on research in several archives. Transcriptions of six of Tregelles's letters that Stunt made, prior to their disappearance in the 1960s, appear in an appendix. The author apologises for the book's evident enthusiast's flavour: it is a work of Stunt's own self-professedly autodidactic researches. The expert in the field might find the digressions explaining biblical textual criticism unnecessary. The lay reader, by contrast, will appreciate Stunt's clarifications and contextualisations, such as on the intricacies of debates over biblical prophecy. What shines through in this biography is Tregelles's religious calling, the advances made in biblical scholarship by autodidactic amateurs as much as by institutionally-supported professionals such as Tischendorf, the painstaking, eye-watering research involved, and the power games played out over access to biblical manuscripts. Tregelles may have been outdone in manuscript-finding by the better-funded and better-connected Tischendorf, but his piety and achievements are evident, and use of his edition of the New Testament continues amongst biblical scholars to this day. In Stunt, Tregelles has been the beneficiary of a dedicated and balanced biographer. This work should appeal to specialists in the field of nineteenth-century biblical scholarship.

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Die Kirchen der Union. Geschichte – Theologie – Perspektiven. Edited by Johannes Ehmann. Pp. 276 incl. 2 ills and 2 tables. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2019. €35 (paper). 978 3 374 06009 2

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This book attempts to place Germany's united Churches (combining Lutheran and Reformed) in historical and theological context and to consider them alongside recent efforts to integrate Protestant denominations in various parts of the world. Specialists in nineteenth-century German church history and theology will be drawn to parts A and B, written by Johannes Ehmann. Those interested in global trends in the twentieth and twenty-first century will find a diverse array of brief case studies by ten additional contributors in part D. The eight pages of part C are meant to serve as a bridge, though it is not clear why the short segment on the German Evangelical Synod of North America is located here rather than with the other international case studies in part D.

In part A (History), Ehmann traces the origins of united Churches in Prussia and the south-western and Middle German states. In all cases, the union of Lutheran and Reformed Churches coincided with state-building efforts in the aftermath of the Napoleonic wars and the transition from Holy Roman Empire to German

Confederation. The Enlightenment had already weakened attachment to the historic confessions of faith that divided German Protestants, and the 300-year anniversary of the Reformation in 1817 fostered a climate of Protestant solidarity that aligned with state policy.

Part B (Theology) is a series of short sketches on *Vermittlungstheologen* (mediating theologians) who promoted and gave theological legitimacy to the united Churches. Friedrich Schleiermacher and Daniel Schenkel represented the liberal wing of this movement, Schleiermacher *via* a 'radical historicization and contextualization of the Reformation confessions' (p. 82) and Schenkel through his framing of the confessions as a foundation for German Protestantism as an ethical (and national) community. Other *Vermittlungstheologen* like Carl Immanuel Nitzsch, Carl Ullmann, Karl Friedrich Gaupp, Julius Müller and Johann Heinrich August Ebrard tried to steer a middle course between what they saw as weak religiosity on one side and rigid confessionalism on the other. Beyond differences in theology, liturgy and ecclesiology they imagined a higher Protestant unity that encompassed both Lutheran and Reformed traditions. Conservative proponents of the united Churches were content to substitute biblicism for confessionalism, but Old Lutherans rejected state-mandated reforms that undermined the distinct confessional identity of their congregations.

It is a bit jarring to transition from such an extensive and narrowly focused analysis of German church history to a series of brief essays on twentieth- and twenty-first-century efforts to unite Protestant denominations in West Africa, South Asia, North America and Europe. David N. A. Kpobi and Bernhard Dinkelaker describe a failed attempt to integrate diverse Protestant Churches in Ghana but note that interdenominational and interfaith cooperation and respect have improved none the less. Examples of successful unions appear in chapters by Barbara Rudolph (United Church of Christ in the United States), Yan Suarsana (Church of South India), Joël Dautheville (United Protestant Church of France), Jean-Francoise Collange (Union of Protestant Churches of Alsace and Lorraine), Susanne Labsch (Union of Waldensian and Methodist Churches in Italy), Charlotte Methuen (Scottish Union) and Martin Friedrich (*Equmeniakyrkan* in Sweden). The Church of South India stands out for its close relationship to Indian nationalism and independence from British rule in 1947. In other cases, motives included evangelisation, reconciliation social justice work and a commitment to 'unity and diversity' (p. 259). In some regions where Protestant Christians are a small minority, union also serves as a survival strategy.

A final essay by Anne Heitmann sums up what united or uniting Churches have to offer the broader ecumenical movement: 'the ability to live with differences', readiness 'to give up one's own in favor of unity', 'rich experience … making room for others' and service as 'ambassadors for reconciliation and peace' (pp. 259–60). One cannot help but notice the contrast between those contemporary ideals and the controversies over communion and ecclesiology that made integration so challenging in the early nineteenth century. The anti-Catholic inflection of nineteenth-century Protestant solidarity also stands in contrast to the ecumenical and interfaith work celebrated by various authors in part D. Regrettably, neither Ehmann nor the other contributors systematically explores such continuities and discontinuities, nor are other agendas transparent. Are the contemporary

case studies (part D) supposed to shed new light on nineteenth-century German church history (parts A and B), or were the early German experiments a precursor to more recent efforts at integration? Do Germany's united Churches and *Vermittlungtheologie* offer lessons that might inform contemporary interdenominational and interfaith work? Ehmann does not say, at least not directly. Nevertheless, the book at least situates what we might be tempted to see as a national (or proto-national) story in a transnational context that invites comparative analysis. That accomplishment is significant in and of itself.

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Ireland's empire. The Roman Catholic Church in the English-speaking world, 1829–1914. By Colin Barr. Pp. xvi + 566. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020. £75. 978 1 107 04092 2

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Colin Barr's study focuses mainly on the appointments of Irish bishops in six different areas of the world within the Roman Catholic Church between 1829 and 1914. From the United States, to Newfoundland, to Canada, to South Africa, to Australia and New Zealand, Barr charts the movements and key events, often dealing with the circumstances surrounding these appointments. Beyond the focus on the Hibernian aspects of the Church, Barr attempts to show that there was a method to all of these nominations. Conceived of and facilitated by Paul Cullen, Ireland's first cardinal, this global network of Irish bishops coalesced itself into something grander – an Irish empire.

Undergirding Barr's storyline is one of the most impressive hauls of documentary evidence one will likely find within a single monograph. More than a hundred archives spanning several continents are employed. This is remarkable by any measure and that he was able to come to grips with the multiple storylines within each of the chapter settings is no small feat. He is to be commended for carrying out such an ambitious project. To this extent, the book's greatest contributions are in filling in all of the interesting promotion vignettes, for he employed numerous original sources.

But because this book contains so many micro-narratives spread across the globe, Barr struggles to tie these into anything more substantive and produces a very thin history that omits important context. Additionally, the work is void of any sound methodology or scientific rigour related to identity, relying haphazardly on personal missives to conclude that those comprising 'Ireland's empire' were half-Irish, half-Roman.

Barr leans heavily on Paul Cullen's relationship with Propaganda Fide, which acted as the catalyst for Cullen's religious heist. It is true that Propaganda Fide was one of the most important congregations of the Roman Curia. But Barr's understanding of it is over-simplistic, perhaps due to his lack of Italian (no Italian secondary sources are employed): 'If the key to the church was Propaganda, the key to the Propaganda was the cardinal prefect' (p. 9). But cardinal prefects were overworked, juggling a half-dozen different responsibilities. They often relied upon their consultants and the congregation's secretary. What is more, the administrative practices in Rome, some of Europe's most backward,