pneumatic body, i.e. a body consisting of the 'best matter' (*pneuma*). Chapter 12 ponders what this would mean for Jews (and not only for gentiles) in the end.

This book has many good attributes. While many recent monographs, edited volumes and articles have successfully situated Paul within his first-century Judaism, readers have been waiting for an accessible introduction to Paul that incorporates these insights. Thiessen's book meets the expectations, presenting a coherent and intelligible construct that readers can use to make sense of Paul 'without the common anti-Jewish baggage' (p. xi). Also, the author's attempts to discover early readings of Paul that resonate with his interpretation invites further interdisciplinary study. Finally, the author's vivid writing style, including ingenious examples and his personal anecdotes, is engaging and enlightening.

A few suggestions can be made. First, I am unconvinced by his use of Stoic physics for unpacking Paul's thought. For example, it is unlikely that *sōma pneumatikon* means a body solely made up of *pneuma*, unless one demonstrates *sōma psychikon* is a body consisting of *psychē* as matter, both for Stoics and for Paul. Second, the prevalent use of modern scientific analogies, such as the infusion of the *pneuma* as 'gene therapy' and 'moral steroids', is a double-edged sword. Despite his intention to 'make Paul weird again', to 'let Paul speak his own' and to avoid anachronism, Thiessen's analogies modernise Paul. Since the author admits that it is hard to 'shed [our modern] expectations' (p. 2), why not engage a more dialogical hermeneutical model than that of 'historical paleontology' (p. 17)?

Due to the book's focus, it lacks some material that one might expect to see in newer introductions to Paul, such as the political implications of Paul's messianic ambassadorial work within the context of the Roman empire, or the social-historical realities of Paul's communities, or the new rituals performed in the Messiah's name, or Paul's 'others' and their unheard voices. However, this book does not pretend to be comprehensive. In his conclusion, Thiessen predicts that readers might raise several 'what abouts', and he modestly notes, 'I am merely *introducing* readers to a particular approach to Paul, not providing a definitive defense of it' (p. 161). Despite possible criticisms, Thiessen's contributions will remain. His particular approach and provocative insights will undoubtedly inspire many scholars and general readers to freshly engage Paul's letters.

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Thomas H. McCall, Caleb T. Friedeman, and Matt T. Friedeman, *The Doctrine of Good Works: Reclaiming a Neglected Protestant Teaching*

(Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023), pp. xvi + 208. $27.99

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This volume aims to correct a commonplace yet reductionistic Protestant sensibility concerning the nature of salvation: the equation of 'justification with salvation

simpliciter' (p. xiv). According to the authors, this sensibility hinders the church's witness by breeding a vision of salvation in which a robust commitment to justice and mercy is easily marginalised. Such marginalisation does not sit well with either seekers or sceptics, many of whom are keen to see how gospel makes a difference concretely.

In responding to this 'crisis of credibility' (p. xi), the book begins by canvassing the classical Protestant and biblical emphasis on good works within the economy of salvation.

Chapter 1 surveys confessional and scholastic Lutheran and Reformed teaching on good works as a key aspect of salvation, with attention to historical as well as more recent treatments of this topic. Based on the focal sources, the authors cogently demonstrate how good works have been considered integral and even indispensable to the process of being saved. In pressing this claim, they make good use of historical illustrations, such as Wollebius' analogy of a person who receives a grand inheritance. While the inherited gift is entirely unmerited, the recipient must 'go somewhere to get it' (p. 16). Doing good works is analogous to making this journey of retrieval.

Chapters 2 and 3 plumb germane portions of the Old and New Testament in further support of the centrality of good works. With attention to the opening chapters of Genesis, as well as the story of Abraham's call, they adduce the necessity of good works for being saved. With respect to Abraham, the authors note that while his call from God was 'unconditioned', it was not 'unconditional' (p. 34). Put another way, Abraham responded to his call with the good work of obeying God, without which his salvation would not have unfolded. This same point is reinforced with attention to some Psalms and a brief foray into the prophecy of Micah.

Just as the Old Testament consistently presents 'good works as a natural element of right relationship with God', so too does the New (p. 58). Out of a survey of pertinent Gospel texts, several chapters from Acts, a few Pauline descriptions of salvation and James' teaching about Christian life, the authors conclude that, according to the New Testament, 'no [Christian] should expect to be saved without [good works]' (p. 98).

With chapter 4 the book's constructive aims come to the fore. In digesting the preceding expositions, the salvific imperative of good works is confidently affirmed. Although good works play no role in justification, they are yet necessary for salvation. This necessity is grounded in (1) creation (i.e. God works good for and *with* us); (2) anthropology (i.e. as image-bearers, we have a responsibility for good works of piety and mercy) and (3) union with Christ (i.e. good works will flow out of those united to Christ by the Spirit). In explicating the link between union with Christ and believers' good works, the authors profitably requisition insights from 'joint attention' theory (p. 107–8).

With this theology of good works in tow, the final two chapters move to application. Chapter 5 spotlights four churches in three countries (ranging from 250 to 8,000 members in size) as exemplars of an integrated doctrine of good works. Chapter 6 offers nine principles of leadership for pastors who would see a robust emphasis on good works reclaimed and nurtured in the churches they serve. There are some very handy tips and resources offered in this section, such as a protocol for empowering church members to launch good works initiatives.

I finished this otherwise timely and learned book with a few small qualms.

First, I worry that the authors' attempt at a nuanced parsing of salvation runs the risk of sowing confusion. Certain terms could be used with greater care and precision, such as 'necessity'. Moreover, in depicting good works as 'means and even causes of salvation' (p. 119), they rely on an Aristotelian taxonomy of causation that is likely to be unfamiliar to a wider Christian readership. Perhaps more serviceable would

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have been a re-appropriation of the 'golden chain' motif of classical Reformed thought, in which salvation was portrayed as a concatenated sequence (faith, sanctification with good works, glorification, etc.). The upshot is that while the volume makes a noble effort to overcome a reductionistic (and missionally problematic) vision of what it means to be saved, its offering may fail to achieve the desired traction. I imagine some readers will struggle to fully grasp and embrace the book's insistence that non-meritorious good works are necessary for salvation.

Second, the perspective on salvation being critiqued in this volume is not properly engaged. This certainly seems to be the case with respect to the Lutheran face of the opposition, represented in part by Milliard Erickson. Erickson appears briefly in the introduction and then makes one additional brief appearance (on p. 111). In my estimation, insufficient attention is devoted to Erickson's thought; at the least, a more in-depth evaluation of his wider soteriology, especially his perspective on sanctification, should have featured and would have benefited the project. Notwithstanding this omission, *The Doctrine of Good Works* stands to make an important contribution not merely to Christian thinking but also to lived theology. It admirably presses readers to see how 'good works are…integral to good news' (p. xvi).

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Volker L. Menze, *Patriarch Dioscorus of Alexandria: The Last Pharaoh and Ecclesiastical Politics in the Later Roman Empire*

(Oxford: OUP, 2023), pp. xi + 226. $90.00

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Volker Menze presents an account of the rise and fall of Dioscorus that sets aside most discussion of dogma in order to clarify the political, administrative and interpersonal dynamics at work. Dioscorus here is not the extreme proponent of Cyril of Alexandria's orthodoxy who orchestrated the 'robber council' of Ephesus tyrannically and violently. Instead, Dioscorus was a politically naïve and overly sincere administrative reformer who found himself reviled as a scapegoat for his accession to the demands of Emperor Theodosius II. Although all specialists might not be convinced by these commonsensically sceptical readings of conciliar acts and related sources, this engaging and plausibly revisionist retelling of the factional rivalries and power politics between 443 and 454 deserves attention by all interested in the rise of the churches on various sides of Chalcedon.

Dioscorus rose as archdeacon under Cyril of Alexandria, who gained power through the strategic distribution of expensive 'blessings' (or 'bribes', p. 40) to a range of clerics and palace officials (great and small) in Constantinople. Cyril negotiated the palace and