the population who encountered the Commandments in this simplified context, rather than through the lens of Puritan theology, the new importance of the Decalogue may have ironically encouraged the sort of "country divinity" that equated salvation with obedience and that Protestant theologians wished to eradicate.

Reviewers often lament the challenge of discussing complex books in a few hundred words, but it is especially true in this case. This is an ambitious book that develops arguments about a wide range of subjects, including (but not limited to) the history of English antinomianism and perfectionism, the nature and dynamics of Puritanism and popular religion, the meanings of church interiors and religious art in post-Reformation England, and the importance of what Willis calls the "cultural history of theology" for understanding the English Reformation (353). At times, more comparison with early modern Catholic readings of the Decalogue and with conformist Protestant readings might be helpful. There is also sometimes an ambiguity about the extent to which the Decalogue might be said to be shaping developments in the English Reformation, or vice versa, but this is perhaps unavoidable and validates Willis's broader point about the complex and important role played by the Decalogue in the religious transformations of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Historiographically engaged and drawing on a diverse range of sources, this book makes many important contributions to our understanding of the English Reformation.

Karl Gunther, *University of Miami*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.210

John Owen and the Civil War Apocalypse: Preaching, Prophecy and Politics. Martyn Calvin Cowan.
Religious Cultures in the Early Modern World. London: Routledge, 2018. xvi + 220 pp. $140.

Cowan's book reflects on the preaching of the well-known Puritan John Owen (1616–83) before Parliament and in other nationally significant settings. Focusing on thirteen sermons from this context, in the years 1646–59, Cowan seeks to illumine ways in which Owen's engagement of national affairs related to his eschatological beliefs about the prophesied end times. "The central thesis of this book," Cowan writes, "is that Owen's sermons from this period are best described as a form of 'prophetic preaching'" (3). Cowan enters into a technical debate in invoking the language of "prophetic preaching." A functional taxonomy in the history of preaching (drawn from the work of John Wilson) regularly terms "prophetic" those sermons that center on human responsibility and agency over against "apocalyptic" sermons that highlight divine action. Cowan seeks to question this binary by suggesting instead that "the significant apocalyptic material in Owen's sermons is complementary to, and indeed

https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2019.211 Published online by Cambridge University Press

inseparable from, the prophetic material." Still further, "for Owen, reformation was required precisely because he believed a great divine transformation to be underway" (3; see also 183).

To make his case, Cowan includes chapters on key facets of Owen's civic preaching: identifying and interpreting Providence (chapter 2); the obligation to "improve" these providential mercies (chapter 3); the godly magistrate's response to such Providence (chapter 4); the godly relationship between magistrate and clergy (chapter 5); and, finally, the appropriate pastoral warnings given to a negligent nation (chapter 6). These chapters make sense of why these sermons are significant: they identify and seek to interpret Providence amid the tumult of mid-seventeenth-century English experience. That epistemological analysis is then followed by ethical and political reflections on how one ought to respond appropriately to such providential perception.

Perhaps the analysis of Owen's claim that Christians are obligated to "improve" upon providential mercies is most notable and at the same time easily misperceived. Cowan shows that the language of improvement does not suggest that all providences are themselves good; indeed, even setbacks are to be improved lest their function as a form of divine discipline be missed. Very specific examples of Owen's tenure as vice chancellor of Oxford are sketched in some detail here (81–86). It is noteworthy that Owen lifts the language of "improving" on Providence from more common usage in the context of baptism, where one is to improve one's baptism by making good use of it in a self-conscious, intentional manner. The language serves to affirm that one suffers or passively receives something (whether baptism or Providence), but that one also has agency and responsibility to act therein faithfully.

The book repays reading. A fascinating figure who experienced successes and then failures comes under examination for his preaching rather than his theological treatises, which adds much to the common portrait of Owen. Yet the most significant contribution to scholarship is the challenge to this binary distinction between prophetic and apocalyptic preaching. Cowan shows that Owen maintained a consistent eschatological commitment from 1646 to 1659 (18, 181), saw his later political failures as a confirmation and not a challenge to his eschatology (170, 182), and ranged over both sorts of homiletical conceptuality: using apocalyptic jargon to attest God's action while also prophetically calling for moral and ecclesiastical reform.

Further theological and analytic work might be done to observe how Owen represents an early modern and Reformed iteration of the long-running Augustinian tradition regarding divine and human agency. As Kathryn Tanner and William Placher have both shown in historical analyses of key theologians in the modern era, earlier Augustinians simply do not accept a competitive relationship between divine and human agency. Owen's own works (especially his treatise *Pneumatologia*) illustrate this approach to Christian theological and moral rhetoric that highlights divine grace and invasive agency in such a way that does not negate but actually enlivens Christian responsibility. That such pairings seem so tension-laden this side of

https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2019.211 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Kantian metaphysics marks one reason that studies such as this one are much needed today.

Michael Allen, *Reformed Theological Seminary*
doi:10.1017/rqx.2019.211

Witness, Warning, and Prophecy: Quaker Women's Writing, 1655–1700.
Teresa Feroli and Margaret Olofson Thickstun, eds.
The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 60; Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies 527. Toronto: Iter Press; Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2018. xxii + 414 pp. $59.95.

Now well established, The Other Voice series, published by Iter Press and the Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, continues to assist scholars in reshaping the early modern canon by providing a platform for diverse female voices. There is perhaps no more appropriate place for an anthology of seventeenth-century Quaker women's writings. As Feroli and Thickstun note, early in their careful and thorough introduction, Quaker women spoke as part of an "early countercultural movement" (3) that aimed to question such pressing matters as "liberty of conscience, separation of church and state, and social justice" (2), and while the Quaker movement was broadly accepting of women as men's spiritual equals, the texts included in this volume demonstrate a wide range of rhetorical techniques required to defend women's voices, in particular. (Comparisons are made between Priscilla Cotton and Mary Cole's oft-cited defense of female speech, *To the Priests and People of England* [1655], Anne Audland's *A True Declaration* [1655], and many more.) A forthcoming volume in the series, containing Margaret Fell's writings, means that Fell is not included in this edition. However, anyone interested in seventeenth-century literature and culture, the history of women's writing and activism, or in the Quakers more generally, will find an extraordinary range of materials here. Feroli and Thickstun's thirty-one-page introduction sets the forty Quaker-authored texts in their political, religious, and social contexts; indeed, students of seventeenth-century religious change would struggle to find a more careful and approachable introduction to the period and its influence on the development of the Quaker movement. Key critical and contextual sources for wider reading are indicated in footnotes and in the work's extensive bibliography, and the reader is elegantly introduced to Quaker parlance ("inner light," "friend," "convince") through an engaging chronological account of the movement's growth and practices. Each text receives its own well-designed one-to-two-page headnote, containing biographical and contextual information, as well as highlighting the main arguments of the text and connections with other writers in the volume.

The forty edited texts (sometimes extracted but mostly presented in their entirety) are remarkable both for their similarities—enhanced by anthologization, of which one

https://doi.org/10.1017/rqx.2019.211 Published online by Cambridge University Press