

to tackle this source, especially the letters by Clemens August, is to be pitied for the horrible handwriting of the two.) Weyhe demonstrates that Clemens August was an useful sounding board for Franz, especially in the early 1930s when the two were debating the risks of remaining in the German Centre Party and of supporting party chair Monsignor Ludwig Kaas and Reich Chancellor Heinrich Brüning. Bishop von Galen proved to be one of the greatest thorns in the side of the National Socialist regime as a fierce critic of euthanasia and the secularisation of public education.

While Weyhe is careful not to overextend her analysis, her biography of Galen provides scholars with a much more differentiated understanding of the German Catholic nobility in the twentieth century. Weyhe paints a picture of Franz von Galen as a profoundly moral, duty-driven individual devoted to his wife and children and his noble status. Weyhe also differentiates between Galen's loyalty to his sovereign, the Prussian king, and his dream of a Germany reunited with Austria under a Hapsburg emperor. While Weyhe is sympathetic to Galen, she maintains a critical perspective that permits her to highlight the strengths of his character and behaviour but also to see the increasing alienation from the reality of a secularised German state and society. Finally, as she notes, her work further undermines the already questioned concept of a coherent and homogeneous Catholic *milieu*. This work is a valuable volume for scholars of German political Catholicism and the German Catholic nobility.

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*Duty and destiny. The life and faith of Winston Churchill.* By Gary Scott Smith. (Library of Religious Biography.) Pp. xii + 255. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm B. Eerdmans, 2021. £22.99. 978 0 8028 7700 0

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Winston Churchill's relationship with the Almighty, if indeed he had one at all, has been puzzled over by many historians, perhaps because, as Gary Scott Smith points out in *Duty and destiny*, 'in the final analysis, Churchill's faith is an enigma' (p. 5). However, Churchill's faith may not be so mysterious. In *My early life* (1930) Churchill described his coming of age as soldier in India where he read voraciously including Winwood Read's *The martyrdom of man* (1872) and went through what he called a 'violent and aggressive anti-religious phase'.<sup>1</sup> Though Churchill admitted passing through this phase, he never fully embraced the Church but rather, as he famously said, chose to be 'more in the nature of a buttress, for I support it from the outside'.<sup>2</sup> Keeping to that view, he told Lord Moran in 1952, after a medical scare, that 'He did not believe in another world; only in black velvet – eternal sleep.'<sup>3</sup> Sir Anthony Montague Browne, Churchill's final private secretary

<sup>1</sup> Winston S. Churchill, *My early life*, London 1930, 129.

<sup>2</sup> Roy Jenkins, *Churchill: a biography*, London 2002, 49n.

<sup>3</sup> Lord Moran, *Winston Churchill: the struggle for survival, 1940–1965*, London 1966, entry for 2 July 1952 at p. 417.

and personal friend described him as ‘an optimistic agnostic’.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, Andrew Roberts has even said that ‘Historians and biographers of Churchill, who concur on little else about him, all agree that it was at the still impressionable age of his early-to-mid-twenties that Churchill rejected Christianity altogether.’<sup>5</sup> Churchill did however have a genius for attaching religious rhetoric to politics. He frequently wrote of historical progress and spoke of ‘Western’ or ‘Christian civilisation’, at the centre of which was the role of the British Empire, to Churchill’s mind a civilising and enlightened power working toward ‘Providence’. This is where the author shines the most. He does very well to illustrate how the complexities of this belief created incongruent positions in Churchill’s philosophy that were at odds, so that by ‘defending Christian civilisation’ Churchill affirmed values around race, class and gender which clashed with Christian values (p. 182). The author is also certainly good at shining a light on the role that the religious context of the age played in shaping Churchill’s character and that while the religious life of many American presidents have been explored ‘the faith of British prime ministers has received much less attention’ (p. 3). In this way, Smith’s second section ‘Setting the Scene’ is very useful, although the author might have included more on the role of religion in political issues contemporary with Churchill’s life. For instance, nuances of Churchill’s view on religion in his political life between 1901 and 1931, when he switched to the Liberals and then back to the Conservatives, might have more drawn out. In the end, the great enigma of Churchill’s faith might be that he was simply an orator who knew how to invoke the spirit of God in the darkest of circumstances. In any case, *Duty and destiny* is a well written and valuable addition to scholarship on Churchill’s relationship with religion.

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*One nation under Graham. Apocalyptic rhetoric and American exceptionalism.* By Jonathan D. Redding. Pp. x + 182 incl. 2 figs. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2021. \$34.99. 978 1 4813 1519 7  
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This timely book aims to show the lasting effects of one man’s biblical interpretations on contemporary US politics. The argument is straightforward. American exceptionalism, in Redding’s telling, was the driving force behind Billy Graham’s unabashedly nationalistic interpretations of apocalyptic biblical literature. The tendency to read the books of Daniel and Revelation primarily as commentaries speaking directly to the interpreter’s own particular social and political *milieu* by no means began with Graham, however. According to Redding, Christian history has been rife with such readings. By allowing their respective contexts to control their interpretations of Daniel and Revelation,

<sup>4</sup> Winston Churchill, 28 June 1950, in *Harold Nicolson: diaries and letters*, ed. Nigel Nicolson, London 1966–8, iii. 191.

<sup>5</sup> Andrew Roberts, ‘Churchill Proceedings – Winston Churchill and Religion – A Comfortable Relationship with the Almighty’, *Finest Hour* vol. 163, p. 52.