

Barth's infralapsarian tendencies are pervasive, significant and enduring, and this is a major accomplishment.

Like all rubrics, seventeenth-century supralapsarian/infralapsarian categories reveal some things well, but obscure others. Tseng has written an illuminating study which invites us to consider an unexplored dimension of Barth's theology, and merits a wide readership. By demonstrating the difficulty of explaining Barth's doctrine of election in these confining terms, however, the book may also prompt the creation of some new categories which may better account for all the times Barth follows where scripture leads, charitably but determinedly colouring outside seventeenth-century lines.

It is a rare book that begins with the acknowledgement that its central thesis may be wrong, but maybe it shouldn't be. By including Hunsinger's reservations in the Foreword, *Karl Barth's Infralapsarian Theology* invites ongoing theological conversations that are both intense and gracious. As such, this would make an excellent book for inclusion in a course on Barth's theology, perhaps paired with a book that offers a robust account of the consensus view.

Angela Dienhart Hancock
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
ahancock@pts.edu

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Kimlyn J. Bender, *Confessing Christ for Church and World: Studies in Modern Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014), pp. 391, \$42.00.

This interesting and instructive collection of twelve essays, some previously published, seeks 'to reflect on what it means to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord in our day' (p. 11). A Baptist theologian at Baylor University, Bender's reflections here mostly take the form of controversial theology. That is, he brings a sophisticated knowledge of Karl Barth's theology (evident in his well-received book on Barth's ecclesiology published in 2013) to bear critically upon different theologies.

The first and third essays take on 'evangelical-catholic' ecclesiology, as represented by Reinhard Hütter, Joseph Mangina and others (including, in a minor way, this reviewer). Unlike Barth, they overemphasise the institutional church and tend to identify Christ and church too closely. The second and fourth essays discuss the theology of Evangelicalism. Acknowledging the diversity of this complex and important movement, Bender probes its differences from Barth, and points out some areas it may have in common with him over against Roman Catholicism. Another essay discusses Baptist theology, particularly its ecclesiology, noting Barth's growing appreciation

of congregationalism, as well as a shared emphasis upon the primacy of scripture and its consequences. Barthian concerns are also reflected in the inclusion of an essay on Schleiermacher, a discussion of natural theology by way of what was distinctive in Barth's contribution to the Gifford lectures, two essays on atheism, an exposition of Barth's early scriptural hermeneutics, and a fresh reading of the Barth–Harnack correspondence of 1923.

Bender's analyses and criticisms are consistently well-made and reasonable. His controversialist approach requires him to reduce the diversity within the theological position he examines. Occasionally this prompts some unease. Not all 'evangelical-catholics' agree with Hütter, nor do all orthodox Roman Catholic theologians believe the church must be understood as the continuation of the incarnation. And some Baptists, some Evangelicals and some admirers of Schleiermacher may well have questions about his presentation of their theologies.

But the benefits of his approach are worth any unease. In an essay on atheism and the canon, Bender takes on the atheist Bart Ehrman. Although the latter is described as 'an atheologian of Gospel cynicism' (p. 209), Bender finds Ehrman's sincerity and concern for the truth such that he considers him 'someone with whom a Christian could enjoy having an ongoing conversation' (p. 236). Bender's own work is thoroughly enjoyable for much the same reason. For some readers, perhaps, Barth's way of framing the issues and formulating their solutions may appear at times as if it permits no alternative or criticism. But clearly the appropriate response to Barth and Bender's work would be to counter with one's own controversialist theology, mounted from a different position.

Indeed, some readers of this collection of essays may find themselves wanting rather more controversialist theology like this. Theologians perhaps tend rather too easily to dismiss, or even simply ignore, the work of those with whom we disagree, rather than, as here, grappling with what, more exactly, it is that we object to. No doubt we want to avoid any *odium theologorum*. But without mutual and critical engagement the various theological schools of thought will roll along too smoothly in their parallel tracks, with little or no lateral engagement and perhaps some complacency. Fortright yet calm and well-argued controversialist theology like Bender exemplifies here may help us see whether our differences are a matter merely of style or emphasis, or a 'real and irreducible difference' (p. 61). And if the latter, we may be prompted to consider whether – for theological reasons – there may be room for, and even benefits to, such differences within the church catholic.

Nicholas M. Healy

St John's University, Jamaica, NY 11439, USA

healyn@stjohns.edu