with Newbigin's critics would have been illuminating: for example, Foust has identified a 'dual discourse' whereby Newbigin deploys Polanyi's 'from below' epistemology in order to humble the western *credo*, but leaps to a 'from above' revelational positivism to leave the gospel-narrative invulnerable to critique. Consequently Newbigin (and Goheen) regard the apparently self-contained narrative as truth itself. Their understanding of contextualisation betrays this conflation, recognising that the singular universal narrative is partially inculturated in diverse contexts, but not that the gospel narrative might itself be an open story of receptivity to reconfiguration through encounter with otherness.

My reservation also betrays my 'ecumenical' rather than 'evangelical' positionality, but Goheen's book overall is commendably persuasive in terms of Newbigin's 'painful tensions' and his holistic understanding of the gospel.

doi:10.1017/S0036930620000174

Robert Louis Wilken, *Liberty in the Things of God: The Christian Origins of Religious Freedom*

(New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019), pp. x + 236. $26.00.

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The newest book by the renowned classicist Robert Louis Wilken is a map buster. Wilken pursues the origins of religious freedom much as an explorer searches for the source of a great river. Through persistent inquiry, he shows that other explorers have not pushed far enough upstream and that the river emerged at a point and in a manner that few others have conceived. What results is a new and startlingly revised map.

To be sure, Wilken focuses on explaining and evidencing his own map and spends little ink analysing the other maps. Yet he poses a sharp challenge to most other major cartographers of the history of religious freedom.

On the first page of his book, Wilken does mention briefly what is probably the most prominent account of religious freedom in the western secular mind, namely that eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers pioneered this principle as a solution to centuries of religious war and persecution. Latter-day political philosophers like John Rawls and Mark Lilla have sustained this narrative, arguing that religious freedom, and free institutions more generally, could emerge only once Christianity was sidelined from politics. A like-spirited contemporary view holds that a generalised right to conscience emerged enduringly from the Enlightenment and that religious beliefs, while a species of this right, have no special claim to a right of their own.

More radical is a postmodern view, whose chief guru is anthropologist Talal Asad, in which religious freedom is the product of the Reformation's novel construction of religion as a matter of beliefs and interior convictions, which the West then imposed on non-western societies through colonialism and imperialism. Friendlier to religion is the account of historian Perez Zagorin, who locates religious freedom's origins among Protestant Christian dissenters of the late seventeenth century. Then, there is the English and American Protestant account of religious freedom, by which it was the Reformation itself that liberated the individual conscience from the despotic hierarchy of the Catholic Church and paved the way for the United States to adopt the principle into its constitution and promote it through foreign policy and international law.

Wilken's new map shows all of these maps to be inaccurate or incomplete. Against the Enlightenment account, he shows that it was committed Christians, not secularists, who pioneered religious freedom. He agrees that the period of the Reformation and the conflicts it sparked were critical to incubating arguments for religious freedom, but he shows that these arguments emerged at the onset of the Reformation, far earlier than Zagorin reports, and also that, contrary to the classical Protestant narrative, the case for religious freedom is not to be found among the leading-edge Reformers. Virtually all of them, including Martin Luther, John Calvin, Philip Melanchthon, Theodore Beza, Ulrich Zwingli and Andreas Osiander, sanctioned the coercion of dissenters within new Protestant territorial states. It was rather more radical Reformers, and even persecuted Catholics living under Protestant temporal rule in Germany, England and elsewhere, who set forth the most thoroughgoing arguments for religious freedom.

Wilken's map, though, is not bordered by his redrawn Reformation period. He proffers the even bolder claim that religious freedom originated over a thousand years earlier in the thought of early church fathers. Tertullian of Carthage stated the principle for the very first time in the early third century, Wilken claims. The other major expositor of religious freedom during this period, Wilken shows, was Lactantius, a court theologian to the Emperor Constantine during the early fourth century, when Constantine converted to Christianity and shortly thereafter proclaimed religious freedom (or its close equivalent) within the Roman Empire.

In finding that religious freedom emerged in these early centuries, a discovery to which scholars such as political philosopher Timothy Samuel Shah, historian Elizabeth DePalma Digeser, classicist Peter Garnsey and others have also contributed, Wilken challenges the widespread view that religious freedom is a solely modern development. 'This book is an effort to bring together intellectual developments of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on religious freedom with the inheritance received from early and medieval Christianity', he explains (p. 4). Early modern European Christian thinkers drew explicitly upon Tertullian and Lactantius in formulating their case for religious freedom.

Wilken clearly sets forth the common components of arguments for religious freedom in both of these periods. The first is that religious belief is an inner conviction 'resistant to compulsion'; the second, that 'conscience is a form of spiritual knowledge that carries an obligation to act'; and third, that two powers, temporal and spiritual, govern human society (p. 4). A subsidiary motif, he writes, is that religious freedom is merited for communities, not just individuals (p. 5). Still another motif I discern in his argument is that religious freedom is something more than toleration, which is dispensed, and potentially withdrawn, by governments. Rather, it is a natural right granted by its defenders not only to Christians of differing theologies but also to Jews and Muslims. Wilken identifies these components of religious freedom in Christian thought in respective chapters on the early church, on conscience and toleration in medieval thought and then a series of chapters on early modern contexts, including Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, English Catholics and English Protestant dissenters.

Wilken's new map is compelling – amply evidenced, described through his characteristic lucid and mellifluous prose, and likely to stand as the leading account of the origins of religious freedom. It raises at least two questions that are not necessarily Wilken's burden to answer but are worthy of pursuit.

First, if it is a 'simple truth' that religious freedom is an 'inward disposition of the mind and heart', as he declares, why have so many Christian thinkers advocated coercion over the centuries? Even many thinkers who have stressed the free character of faith, including Augustine, Aquinas and the leading early Reformers, also have sanctioned punishing heretics. How is this possible? Wilken alludes to rationales: social stability requires religious uniformity; heresy destroys the spiritual ecology and leads others into confusion. Might these rationales be identified more systematically? And how have arguments for religious freedom sought to refute them?

Second, if religious freedom has Christian origins, as Wilken shows, then can it be rooted robustly in other religions? Several of the thinkers he describes viewed religion as a natural right, one that any person can endorse reasonably. Religious freedom's place in today's major international human rights conventions also points towards a natural universal basis. But what non-theological reasons can ground the principle?

Both questions point to further territory whose exploration Wilken's superb new map encourages.

doi:10.1017/S0036930620000186

Scot McKnight, *Reading Romans Backwards: A Gospel of Peace in the Midst of Empire*

(Waco, TX.: Baylor University Press, 2019), pp. xv + 220. $29.95.

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If scholars were to take a photograph of the landscape of Romans, the rocky outcrop of Romans 1–4 would likely be the dominant feature. Some photographers might adjust the focus to add a little clarity to Romans 5–8, and others might even seek to shift Romans 1–4 out of focus as much as possible. However, Scot McKnight, through his plea to read Romans backwards, refocuses the lens completely. Romans 14–15 is brought to a position of prominence in the landscape and remains the lens through which to read the entirety of Paul's argument. Three themes therefore dominate McKnight's interpretation of Romans: the identity of the 'strong' and the 'weak', the tension between these two groups, and christoformity as the solution to these problems.

The strong and the weak, whose identities are established principally through their depiction in chapters 14 and 15 but are fleshed out throughout the rest of the letter, play