

Calvin” (p. x). Thus it is not focused on providing creative interpretations or adjudicating secondary scholarly discussions. Rather, for the most part it admirably highlights the main threads of Calvin’s thought (using Calvin’s own structure, order of presentation, and even words). The discussions of providence and predestination, so important but challenging for introductory readers, are especially sensitive and insightful. Overall, the book’s second section is successful in emphasizing what matters most. This little volume will be warmly welcomed and much used by teachers, pastors, theological students, and interested lay readers seeking a basic introduction to Calvin’s life and thought.

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### **The Mission of Demythologizing: Rudolf Bultmann’s Dialectical Theology**

by David W. Congdon

Minneapolis: Fortress, 2015. 988 pp. \$99.00 (cloth). ISBN 978-1-4514-8792-3.

IN THIS MASSIVE VOLUME, David Congdon re-examines Bultmann’s proposal to demythologize Scripture in order to show ways that Bultmann shared common theological ground with Karl Barth. He presents a surprisingly fresh re-evaluation of the strained relationship between these two twentieth-century theological giants. Congdon makes this case by pointing out the primary goals of dialectical theology that Barth and Bultmann shared in their early theological work in order to argue that the task of demythologizing Scripture is a logical outcome of this theological common ground. As Congdon claims, “Between them [Bultmann and Barth] lie not two paths for theology—a view that the present work seeks to debunk—but rather two competing narratives of dialectical theology” (p. 8).

Congdon demonstrates that the theological initiative for both Bultmann and Barth shared a

“common key” in their primary commitment to the mission of the church. Here, the shared task is to allow the scandal of the gospel to challenge our own self-understanding. A christological foundation lies at the center of their theological commitment. It is in this context that Bultmann’s method of demythologizing seeks to allow the kerygmatic claims of the gospel to confront us with our need for God. Rather than diminish or deny Scripture, the task of demythologizing remains focused on allowing us to “hear again and afresh what the kerygma proclaims” (p. 835).

While wading through the details of this lengthy book may be too much to expect of busy pastors, the brief and insightful conclusion of this volume should be required reading. Congdon persuasively argues that the church must return to the task of demythologizing Scripture if our theology is to reclaim the soteriological center espoused by Bultmann’s theology (and shared by Barth). To this end, theology takes its cues from Bultmann’s insistence on the claim of the kerygma on our lives. Or to quote Congdon, “Demythologizing therefore denies every possible *Weltanschauung*, even the doctrinal or moral world-views dearest to the church’s heart” (p. 831). In these days when the proclamation of Christian faith often seems beholden to the preacher’s liberal or conservative commitments, Congdon uncovers important ways in which a reassessment of Bultmann (and Barth) can help us hear the gospel address us anew.

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### **Hannah Arendt and Theology**

by John Kiess

Philosophy and Theology. New York: Bloomsbury, 2016. 256 pp. \$21.99. ISBN 978-0-567-6285-10.

JOHN KIESS CONTENDS that Christian theologians would do well to engage the unflinching and at times controversial thinking of the political philosopher Hannah Arendt. Arendt began her