theological realm once more today" (411). She concedes "the majority's return to liberal theology," but nevertheless remains convinced that,

> theology is not primarily concerned with human cultural performance of religion, but with God…. Theological thinking must begin with God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ, in which the Christian church believes, and orient itself toward that…. Ultimately Barth's theology is a continuation of the Reformers' insight that human beings do not get beyond themselves by themselves (411).

With this I can certainly agree, and commend this fine book for its careful, lively portrayal of this still-relevant theologian. Though he is dead, he still speaks.

Bruce Gordon*, Zwingli: God's Armed Prophet.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021. (xxi + 349pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-300-23597-5].

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> Unlike the Florentine Dominican preacher Girolamo Savonarola, Machiavelli's 'unarmed prophet,' Zwingli never made the mistake of separating the vision of godly reform from political and military power. Zwingli was God's armed prophet, but not simply because he fell at Kappel, cut down by Catholic soldiers. The weapons with which this visionary was armed were many (1-2).

So begins Gordon's account of Huldrych Zwingli. Gordon portrays his subject armed with immense personal capabilities and attributes: a sharp and superior intellect, an accomplished musician, a zeal (and matching capability) for biblical and humanist studies, an energetic disposition, pastoral warmth and approachability, an effective preacher with a talent for articulating the new faith with remarkable persuasion, and a flair for working with those who possessed power. Zwingli burned with twin loves: first for his God, then for his country, although in the end he seemed willing to sacrifice the latter for the former. He had an unrelenting hostility toward Catholicism and Anabaptism, and an unwavering belief in divine providence and the righteousness of his cause: reform, a purified church, and a godly society. Already by 1520 Zwingli's concern at official opposition to church reform 'had found darker expression.' 'Zwingli's perspective had shifted … For the rest of his life, Zwingli would view the gospel in terms of a seismic Pauline struggle between light and darkness. The opponents would vary – from Rome to the Habsburgs and Luther; but the conviction never ebbed' (59). His language became more martial as would, in time, his demeanour and action. Remembered both fondly and despised, Zwingli was a divisive figure during his life and after his death—and remains so even in modern Zurich. For Gordon, Zwingli was neither hero nor martyr but an

embattled prophet (in the mould of the Old Testament prophet), a visionary of what would become Reformed Christianity, a founding father of the Reformation although not an authoritative voice: 'Zwingli could not be a model for the future' (274).

Gordon's story unfolds over twelve very readable chapters each with detailed referencing and a guide for further reading. His command of the source and secondary material is exhaustive though he writes with a light and accessible touch. The first two chapters introduce the reader to Zwingli's early life and career. We find a happy youth raised in a well-to-do family and given the best educational opportunities his family could manage. He was a Swiss patriot with strong political views that would get him in trouble with the Swiss patrician families, an aspiring scholar, had a reputation as a womaniser despite being a priest, was decisively influenced by Erasmus, and as a teacher was 'learned, stern and exacting' but also 'caring, encouraging and humorous' (39). Gordon emphasises the spiritual 'conversion' Zwingli experienced in 1516—prior to Luther's *95 Theses*—which led to a 'remarkable break with medieval practice' and a 'realization that scripture was the only true authority for the Christian life' (40-41).

Chapters three through five recount Zwingli's ministry in Zurich from 1519-1525 in which he is portrayed as a disruptive, dedicated, and focussed preacher-leader intent on implementing his vision of a renewed church. Zwingli challenged Catholic religion, structure, liturgy, tradition, and authority, as well as the cosy financial arrangements of the social leaders benefiting from Swiss mercenaries serving in foreign wars. The 'sausage affair' showed him a provocateur though his secret marriage to Anna Reinhart and public appeal to the Bishop of Constance for clerical marriage show a more cautious side to his character. This caution is evident also in his political savvy; Zwingli was committed to an orderly society in which the reform of the church would be supported, protected, if not led by the civil authorities (as in the City Council's 1524 insistence on infant baptism). Reform was made all the harder by the emergence of competing visions concerning the nature, scale, and speed of the reform. Erasmus sought reform within Catholicism, Zwingli to tear down Catholicism and in its place establish a reformed church, while some of his followers (Grebel, Manz, etc.) sought to extend his reforms beyond what Zwingli could allow. His desire for reform without unleashing social chaos required the integration of the magistrates in his programme. So, too, did the growing threat to Zurich from fellow Confederates. Zwingli's reform of the mass, removal of icons, whitewashed walls, the abolition of liturgical seasons and feast days changed the Zurichers' experience and understanding of Christian faith and life—with many opposed to these changes, although they were marginalised: dissent was not tolerated. Gordon finds that Zwingli's achievement was not merely a new liturgy but a form of worship previously unknown. His establishment of the *Prophezei*—the pastoral-theological leadership of the reform, and the Froschauer (Zurich) Bible (1531) were other major achievements.

A strength of the book is that each of Zwingli's major works receives some analysis and commentary. Chapters six and seven deepen the exploration of Zwingli's reformation theology first by examination of his *Commentary on True and False Religion* and second with respect to the sacramental debate, and especially

the division between Luther and Zwingli, Wittenberg and Zurich concerning the Lord's Supper. Gordon accentuates Zwingli's distinct theology and thus his independence from the more famous German reformer. Justification, for example, only appears marginally in this account. More central for Zwingli is the divine goodness and providence which order all things. Predestination of the elect is an aspect of this providence in which God implants a proto-faith as it were in the lives of the elect which will germinate and bear fruit when the word of the gospel comes to them. True religion is thus a supernatural endowment issuing in piety, the orientation of the whole life to God, hearing his word and holding fast to God in trust. We know God through Jesus Christ our captain or leader and in whom the elect are chosen. An emerging covenant theology enabled Zwingli to understand the church as a covenant people in continuity with Old Testament Israel, the sacraments as covenantal signs, distinguishing his position from that of the Catholics, Luther, and the Anabaptists. Gordon notes that Zwingli's understanding of the Lord's Supper in terms of the Passover came to him in a dream, which he understood as a prophetic revelation. Luther and Zwingli were both at fault at Marburg. Both rejected all compromise and viewed the other as Satan's minion, determined to break the church. In Gordon's view, the fracturing of the two parties was virtually inevitable given (a) the theological and contextual differences, and (b) the temperament and self-understanding of the two men involved. It was evident that both reformers shared much common ground though ultimately they could not coexist. 'Neither man was either the hero or the villain. They were irreconciliable' (181).

Chapters eight through ten narrate the growing opposition and conflict faced by Zwingli and the Zurich Reformation in the final years of his life. The reform movement had support in Basel, Bern, and Strasbourg but was strongly opposed by the Catholic cantons, in association with allies in Austria and the Empire. Zwingli began to understand the broader political and international ramifications of his reforms, but the formation of Protestant alliances was occurring without Zurich and beyond his control. In the end, says Gordon, Zwingli 'was a casualty of his own willingness to use force to religious ends' (232). He was prepared finally to go to war to ensure the freedom of gospel preaching in all Catholic lands. God's 'armed prophet' died in the Second Kappel War on October 11, 1531, his body then desecrated and burned by the Catholic soldiers.

The final two chapters provide accounts of contemporary responses and evaluations of Zwingli, and modern historiography concerning the reformer, including a film review! Gordon notes that the ongoing febrile situation of the 1530-1570s influenced his memory and reception. Calvin barely mentions him. Luther and the Catholics are sure he is in hell. Reports by Zurich associates as well as Oecolampadius and Bucer were more favourable although they too were concerned at his belligerence. Modern studies have often used Zwingli's memory for their own projects, whether as the forerunner of modern liberal theology, or an advocate of obedience to civil authorities, or a counter-example for the necessity of the separation of church and state, etc. Gordon's biography ably corrects common misconceptions about the reformer. His story has 'focused on a man of inspiring imagination, of poignant artistic and literary gifts, and of arresting

limitations' (301). Zwingli is portrayed sympathetically but honestly in the complexity of his character, his faith, his work, and his legacy. The biography is highly recommended.