who wish to be are in a right relationship with God, regardless of their response to Christ during their lifetime.

Such conclusions on the part of O'Collins put him outside the realm of orthodox Christianity and, perhaps more pertinently, outside the official teaching of the Roman Catholic communion of which he is a part. He writes on p.? that instead of the traditional Roman Catholic commitment to *extra ecclesiam non salutis* it should be an *extra ???*. One senses the freedom O'Collins perhaps feels in his newly acquired distance from Rome – geographically and perhaps theologically.

It is disappointing that a work which promises so much delivers so little. O'Collins indulges in special pleading, illegitimate inferences, in drawing conclusions from arguments from silence, and in assuming the answers to questions before the evidence has been examined. From a theologian as good as O'Collins this is as surprising as it is disappointing.

Myk Habets

J.L. Walls, and J.R. Dongell. *Why I Am Not a Calvinist.* Downers Grove: IVP, 2004. (230pp.)

R.A. Peterson, and M.D. Williams. *Why I Am Not an Arminian.* Downers Grove: IVP, 2004. (224pp.)

The two volumes under review came out in the same year and were helpfully devised as companion volumes. The idea is a good one: to present the fundamental objections of each system by advocates of the opposing system. The discussion throughout these volumes is marked by an irenic tone, a healthy respect for the other system and its advocates, and an appreciation for the Great Tradition from which both streams of thought flow. A welcome omission in these works is the often-uncharitable polemical nature of the debate that has marked more than one interchange on this topic in the past. This does not mean that the two volumes are not direct, hard hitting, and at times blunt. Both present a coherent, consistent, and lucid discussion of the issues and as such provide a useful overview of these historic systems.

The issue of Arminianism and Calvinism is a perennial one amongst evangelical Christians and in recent years the discussion has become something of a flashpoint, at least in North American evangelicalism. In an Australasian context this may not be quite so acute but systems of

theology, especially these two, are back on the agenda of many, especially baptistic churches. This makes these volumes timely. *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* is written by philosopher Jerry Walls and biblical scholar Joseph Dongell of Asbury Theological Seminary, while *Why I Am Not an Arminian* is written by systematic theologians Robert Peterson and Michael Williams of Covenant Theological Seminary. The two works have much in common but they are not carbon copies of the other. They are, in fact, very different books. The following review is in three parts: first; a review of *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*, second; a review of *Why I Am Not An Arminian*; and third; a critical review of the two works in comparison.

I. *Why I am Not A Calvinist*

Why I Am Not a Calvinist is divided into two parts: the first primarily by Dongell and focuses on the biblical objections to Calvinism; the second primarily by Walls and focuses on the philosophical objections to Calvinism. In the first section Dongell spends a chapter 'Approaching the Bible'; as the title states. This is a very fine introduction to the nature of theological discourse and method and on its own would be of great value. While much wider in its concerns than the Arminian-Calvinist debate it does provide a useful reminder to readers, many of which will be seminary students or pastors, of how to formulate theological ideas and how to present them in gracious dialogue. This chapter is required reading for any who wish to take part in such a debate as this one. Dongell then gets to work in the second chapter 'Engaging the Bible' where he surveys the issues of God's sovereignty, the gracious nature of salvation, and predestination. For each issue the Calvinist position is stated and then an Arminian critique is offered. Not surprisingly Dongell presents a view of corporate election over individual election, and in his focus on Romans 9-11 provides some useful counters to a standard Calvinist exegesis. One of the disappointing things of this chapter, however, was the actual scarcity of biblical texts directly referred to. This tended to diminish the usefulness of this chapter and was an obvious weakness of the book.

Jerry Walls then tackles the philosophical/theological issues that divide Arminians from Calvinists, including the issues of human freedom, divine sovereignty, and pastoral applications. Walls' writes with precision, and is not afraid to draw conclusive summaries from his philosophical surveys. For Calvinists reading this work Walls presents some serious objections and issues that need to be addressed. Walls pays special attention to the works of Packer, Sproul, Piper, Carson, and McGregor-Wright as he mounts an impressive argument against the

consistency of Calvinism. Walls surveys the positions of Molinism, libertarian freedom, determinism, and compatibilist freedom in this section of the work and shows how, in his view, libertarian freedom is the only viable option for a consistent theology which makes sense of Scripture and works in the real world. He shows up weaknesses in the determinist worldview, not in terms of philosophical coherence, but pastoral viability. He also points out, quite effectively, how many Calvinist writers are inconsistent in their application of theology, holding to a determinist view of God's sovereignty but presenting either a compatibilist or a libertarian freedom view of human responsibility. Walls asks that Calvinists be consistent in their theology and if they cannot do this, then their theology is quite obviously faulty. Of the Calvinists who are consistent, including John Piper, Walls is adamant their pastoral application is woefully inadequate.

Throughout this work Westminster or Federal Calvinism is the only form of Calvinism that is interacted with and critiqued; but what of the other streams in this tradition such as the Puritans, or the Scottish Presbyterian Calvinism of the Torrance's? Due to the limited but unstated focus of the critique a slight caricature of Calvinism was implicit throughout the work, despite the occasional but useful citation of Calvin himself. The form of Arminianism represented in these pages is a Wesleyan version, it may be suggested, given the prominence Wesley plays in this account. What was missing, however, was a more nuanced presentation of Wesley's Arminianism, influenced so heavily as it was by Eastern Orthodox theology as mediated through the patristic thinkers predominantly. Arguably, John Wesley's view of divine sovereignty and human freedom was such a nuanced view of Arminianism, but not quite Calvinistic, that it may indeed be a middle-way and deserves more thorough investigation in its own right (something Peterson and Williams address).

Despite the weak biblical section and the rather limited focus on one stream of Calvinism this work succeeds in presenting an honest and polite articulation of why these two thinkers are not Calvinists. This is useful reading and thought provoking, even if it would not be sufficient to persuade Calvinists to change their minds.

II. *Why I am Not An Arminian*

Why I am Not An Arminian consists of nine chapters which canvass the thought of Augustine, the theology surrounding the Synod of Dort, the Arminianism of Wesley and his successors. After a useful introduction the Augustinian-Pelagian controversy is examined as the necessary background to these two systems, with a focus on predestination and

perseverance. Next the Synod of Dort is canvassed followed by a chapter each on freedom, inability, grace, and atonement. As such this is a more systematic work than the earlier volume and exhibits a far greater unity between the two authors than Walls and Dongell achieve. In addition, this work has as its focus a theological exposition of Scripture, something the Walls and Dongell work never succeeded in doing well.

Peterson and Williams point out in the Introduction that they would have preferred to author a book on *Why I am a Calvinist*, pointing out that the false-choice fallacy is a weaker form of argument than that of a constructive argument for a position. They also distance themselves from a polemic against Arminianism and aim to be advocates for Calvinism as the most faithful and coherent way to systematize the biblical material, noting that no system, Calvinism included, is devoid of rough edges and difficulties. In order to achieve this goal the work begins with the following affirmation to show that Arminianism is not a heresy in their opinion: 'The Arminian Christian believes that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh to save sinners and that the saving work of Christ comes to the sinner by way of the grace of God received through faith. Whatever issues relevant to salvation we disagree upon, let us agree on this: the Calvinist and the Arminian are brothers in Christ' (13). Such a strong affirmation of soteriological solidarity is a welcome start to this irenic volume. In order to be fair this volume interacts with thinkers whom Arminian writers cite as precedent for their own arguments, namely, Jacob Arminius (especially his 'Declaration of Sentiments' and the subsequent 'Remonstrant Articles'), John Wesley, H. Orton Wiley (*Christian Theology,* 3 vols. [Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1940-1943]), H. Ray Dunning (*Grace, Faith and Holiness: A Wesleyan Systematic Theology* [Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1988]), and J. Ken Grider (*A Wesleyan-Holiness Theology* [Kansas City: Beacon Hill, 1994]).

In the Augustinian-Pelagian controversy the authors are careful not to paint Pelagius as an arch heretic and then develop a guilt by association tactic for subsequent Arminians (although they do believe Pelagianism to be heretical). In fact, the authors state: 'Arminianism is not Pelagian' (39). Peterson and Williams do a superb job in this section of outlining the differing views of freedom between these two adversaries. For Pelagius, the human will is autonomous and possesses a libertarian freedom. For Augustine, the human will attains freedom by grace such that redemption is monergistic. The authors then state: 'Yet as stark as the difference is between Augustine and Pelagius on sin and grace, they share one thing in common. The structure of each person's understanding of sin and redemption is monergistic' (34). Augustine's was a monergistic view of God's salvation; Pelagius' was a monergistic

view of the meritorious nature of human works. A second point of division was the basic asymmetrical understanding of salvation in the Augustinian tradition such that sin and salvation cannot be treated in the same way. God saves the elect and yet passes over the reprobate. According to Peterson and Williams, Augustine did not hold to double predestination, a point which reappears in the later sections on the theology of Calvin and the Synod of Dort.

In response to the theologies of Augustine and Pelagius the subsequent tradition wrestled with the nature of sin and salvation. In the wake of the Synod of Orange in 529, the theological stage was divided between Augustinians (gracious monergism), Pelagians (meritorious monergism) at the poles, with two mediating groups: Semi-Augustinians (gracious synergism), and the Semi-Pelagians (synergism). In answer to their question 'Where do Calvinism and Arminianism fit?' (39ff), Peterson and Williams reply: 'The Calvinist…closely conforms to Augustine's gracious monergism' (39). The Arminian is not a Pelagian, as already stated, so that leaves either Semi-Pelagian or Semi-Augustinian. According to the authors, Arminians are not Semi-Pelagian as the Semi-Pelagians thought of salvation as beginning with human beings, arguing that we must first seek God; and his grace is a response to our seeking. The Arminians of the 17th century held that the human will has been so corrupted by sin that a person cannot seek grace without the enablement of grace. They therefore affirmed the necessity and priority of grace in redemption. 'This suggests that Arminianism is closer to Semi-Augustinianism than it is to Semi-Pelagianism' (39). Thus 'Semi-Augustinianism was not a Pelagianism that had moved toward Augustine but rather a softening of Augustinianism that sought to modify or excise elements of Augustine's teaching that were found offensive…' (40). This is a helpful schema and establishes clear lines of division between these two systems.

In the subsequent chapter on predestination a theological exposition of Scripture is provided, in which the Arminian position is given, followed by a volley of texts which are claimed to show the individual, unconditional, gracious election of individuals to salvation based on grace not divine foresight of people's faith. The authors move through the election of Abraham, Jacob, and Israel before examining predestination texts in the gospels, focusing especially on the gospel of John, before moving on to Acts, Revelation, and Paul's epistles. The chapter on perseverance examines nine texts claimed to prove that God preserves his people for final salvation (Lk 22.31-32; Jn 6.37, 39-40, 44; 10.27-30; Rom 5.9-10; 8.28-39; Eph 1.13-14; Heb 6.17-20; 7.23-25; and 1 Pt 1.3-5). Arminian objections are raised, taken seriously, and while respected, are rebutted throughout, concluding with statements such as

the following: 'The Arminian rejection of the doctrine of preservation is not due to any lack of clarity in the scriptural witness but is due to a prior commitment to the freedom of the human will in matters pertaining to salvation' (77).

In the second part of the book concerning the Synod of Dort, the Remonstrants, and contemporary Calvinism and Arminianism, Peterson and Williams develop a compelling case that much of the Arminian argument against Calvinism centres around a rebuttal of Calvinistic supralapsarianism (the view that God decreed 1) to save the elect and damn the reprobate, 2) to create both the elect and the reprobate, 3) to permit the fall of humans, 4) to provide salvation for the elect). Peterson and Williams accept the general thesis that Calvinism post-Calvin adopted a greater emphasis upon philosophical and metaphysical concerns than Calvin entertained. Under the leadership of Theodore Beza, Calvin's son-in-law and successor at the Geneva Academy, this scholastic approach led to the dominance of double predestination in Calvinist circles to such an extent that many, Calvinist and Arminian alike, equate Calvinism with supralapsarianism. The authors set themselves the task of correcting this misconception and show that Augustine, Calvin, and the Canons of Dort all affirm an infralapsarianism, and thus all polemic against supralapsarian Calvinism is a caricature of what the authors call 'evangelical' Calvinism. Infralapsarianism (the view that God decreed 1) to create human beings, 2) to permit the fall, 3) to save some and condemn others, 4) to provide salvation for the elect) is presented as the dominant confessional position among Reformed churches (although there is no real support in their work for this contention from the Reformed confessions). Infralapsarianism fits with Augustine's asymmetrical view of the work of Christ and his presentation of passive reprobation. It was Beza's supralapsarianism that Arminius reacted to so strongly in his 1608 'Declaration of Sentiments' in twenty objections. The thesis that true Calvinism is infralapsarian in nature and not supralapsarian is one of the linchpins of Peterson and Williams' argument. In objecting so strongly to supralapsarianism, Arminius also showed his objections to any infralapsarianism as well. For Arminius neither election nor reprobation is causal in any way.

In another crucial move, Peterson and Williams develop the thesis that Arminius was advocating a consistent Molinism as developed by Luis de Molina (1535-1600) and Francisco Suarez (1548-1617). Citing Muller, the authors write: 'Although Arminius nowhere cites either thinker, 'his argument is quite similar to, and probably based upon, Molina's hypothesis of a divine middle knowledge or *scientia media*: here God

provides the conditions for the future contingent acts of individual human beings.' Like the Molinists, Arminius sought to bring together a doctrine of divine decree with an affirmation of human freedom through the construct of a cognitive, noncausal divine prescience: God elects or reprobates on the basis of a prior knowledge of human response to sin and the gospel' (106).

In presenting such a hypothesis Peterson and Williams are following the lead of Richard Muller and other contemporary Calvinists. This is an important move for, if correct, it shows several things: first; Arminius was not a Pelagian or a Semi-Pelagian, second; Arminius was a Semi-Augustinian and it is this synergistic conception of salvation which is enshrined in the 1610 Remonstrance. Accordingly, 'We believe that the Arminian notion of libertarian free will is false both experientially and biblically. It enshrines an almost idolatrous doctrine of the autonomous human being that is in fact closer to a biblical description of sin than true humanity' (117). The 1619 Canons of Dort represent a rebuttal of the 1610 Remonstrance and include the now (in)famous 'Five Points of Calvinism' which respond to the Five Points of the Remonstrance. Peterson and Williams make clear that the Five Points 'Do not sufficiently define Calvinism, and certainly do not say all there is to be said about the Reformed faith' (120). What it does say, however, is important; namely, that a Calvinistic infralapsarianism is faithful to Scripture and thus the Five Points of Calvinism must stand: Total Depravity (not that the Canons of Dort used this terminology), Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

The authors conclude their examination of Dort with the comment: 'The central point of contention between the Calvinists and the early Arminians was whether election is unconditional or conditional upon human acceptance of the gospel, whether salvation is to be understood monergistically – God exercising his sovereign right to choose and save whom he will – or synergistically – God offering salvation to all, but leaving it up to each person to accept the gospel and thus complete the act of salvation: 'All other issues of dispute emanated from this core disagreement' (134). What follows is a discussion of differing views of freedom and free will: libertarian (Arminian), compatibilism (Reformed), and determinism (hyper-Calvinist). Through theological exposition and philosophical argument Peterson and Williams attempt to show the superiority of the compatibilist view over any others.

The final chapters examine some of Wesley's views on prevenient grace and Grotius's governmental view of the atonement and further the

argument made throughout the book that the Arminian system of theology is not as biblical, or orthodox as that of infralapsarian evangelical Calvinism.

Why I Am Not an Arminian is an important work and makes a clear and consistent case for the superiority of Calvinism over that of Arminianism. The authors are articulate, polite, and erudite, include copious amounts of theological exegesis, and support their arguments with appeals to tradition, philosophy, and pastoral praxis. This is a compelling work which will hold its own against most Arminian protests and, even if not accepted by Arminians, will have to be argued against for Arminians to further a defence of their system.

III. Critical Comparisons

A critical comparison of the two works under review highlights the fact that these are two very different volumes. *Why I Am Not a Calvinist* is more lightweight, includes far less theological exegesis of Scripture, and while strong on philosophical argumentation never quite succeeds in dealing with the heart of the Calvinistic system. As a result its critique lacks compulsion, the theological analysis lacks depth and nuance, and the final appeal rings hollow. *Why I Am Not An Arminian* on the other hand, is a highly nuanced, theologically erudite work which presents Arminianism in the best possible light and then shifts the focus onto a positive construction of Calvinism to counter Arminian claims. Peterson and Williams show a greater understanding of the differing streams of both Arminianism and Calvinism enabling their critique to be more focussed and their advocacy of Calvinism to be that much more convincing. Peterson and Williams also show a greater tendency to acknowledge the weaknesses of their own system and refer to some of the worst advocates of Calvinism in order to highlight the difference between what is at essence Calvinism and what is a caricature of it.

As the two volumes under review were not commissioned to be a rebuttal of each other's arguments directly, it is natural that each volume includes arguments not directly addressed by the other. Walls and Dongell make a number of good philosophical arguments against the consistency of Calvinism, especially Westminster Calvinism. Peterson and Williams address Augustine and Dort, but never comment directly on Westminster or Federal Calvinism (there is not a single entry in the index to Westminster). This is disappointing. If Westminster and some of the more scholastic forms of Calvinism (past and present) were also included in Peterson and Williams' discussion the work may have been of even greater use to Calvinists within those traditions and not simply to Arminians reading the work. This omission is all the more surprising

given the thesis of the work that true or evangelical Calvinism is infralapsarian and not supralapsarian. Does Westminster theology support this claim or not? And what of the accusation of Walls and Dongell that many contemporary Reformed theologians oscillate between compatibilist and libertarian views of human free will? One wonders if Peterson and Williams have limited the true scope of Reformed thought on this issue in order to defend their own versions of Calvinism not only from Arminians but also from some of their fellow Calvinists. If so then a more explicit treatment of these issue would have been welcomed.

Read in tandem these two volumes provide a fine survey of the strengths and weaknesses of the two systems and show why the issue of Calvinism vs Arminianism is a perennial point of contention in the church. In the wake of these two introductory volumes expect to see a number of more specific works come off the printing presses that seek to pick up the discussion these two works have initiated. If subsequent works can show the same irenic and Christian tone of these works then the church has much to be thankful to these authors for.

Myk Habets

Anthony N.S. Lane. *A Reader's Guide to Calvin's* Institutes. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009. (174 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-8010-3731-3]

Anthony Lane (Professor of Historical Theology, London School of Theology) is one of the leading Calvin scholars working today and has established a reputation for his articulate, precise, and exhaustive knowledge of Calvin, his contexts, sources, and theology. Over numerous books and articles Lane has proved himself a reliable and sympathetic reader of Calvin's thought, and yet as a first rate scholar he is able to turn the critical spotlight on Calvin and show where and how his theology is as a much a product of his time as it is prophetic to his time. In this work Lane provides a 'reader's guide' to the 1559 edition of Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* as it is found in the McNeill-Battles English translation (Westminster, 1960). As such this work is to be used specifically in conjunction with this English translation, with page numbers matching that work.

What is a reader's guide? It is a brief outline, summary, comment, and direction through the four large books of the *Institutes* and the eighty