

Book Reviews

Christina N. Larsen. *The Glory of the Blessed Son: An Approach to the Christology of Jonathan Edwards*. T&T Clark, 2025.

This monograph by Jonathan Edwards scholar Christina Larsen is the latest in this excellent series from T&T Clark exploring Reformed theology both historically and constructively. Her analytic approach offers a thought-provoking insight into an untapped aspect of Edwards's Christology. While Edwards's dogmatics on occasion is known to have tested his traditional Calvinistic "boundaries," any perceived theological novelty in his thought is immediately acknowledged by the author and contextualized for the reader. Her theologically technical subject matter is well-informed and conveyed by careful parsing of the developmental progression in Edwards's thought.

Edwards was convinced not only of God's delight in communicating his inner blessedness to his creatures as the blessing of his Son, but that such communication of divine glory is inevitable, and expressed through the occasioning by the Son of the inner blessedness in the hypostatic union of the Trinity. This conviction gives rise to a perceivable tension with the traditional Reformed view, which maintains God's absolute freedom in his external works. Larsen suggests that Edwards's novel method represents his alternative approach to preserving the freedom of God *ad extra*, one that renders the communication of divine glory as good news for the church. The "fittingness" of this work of the Son is measured against two devices (or "registers"). The first is "covenantal" in nature in relating to the performance of Christ's mediatorial office. The second is termed "evocative" in referring to his apprehension of God's goodness. The latter is further illustrated by motifs of 'structure' anticipating the eternal wedding feast, of "diverse excellencies" concerning Christ's attributes, and of "beautification"

describing his bride. Guidance is provided in footnote references to what are familiar authorities within Edwardsean scholarship.

Chapter 1 examines Edwards's novel framework for God's glorification, as occasioned by the Son who communicates God's *ad intra* glory to his creatures. While otherwise adhering to the basic contours of Reformed thought, Edwards considers this outward flow of divine inner blessedness inevitable and is convinced of God's delight in bestowing this upon his creatures. Larsen argues that this does not imply any commensurate divine increase *ad intra*, but is forthright in acknowledging that Edwards's conclusion departs from the traditional Reformed view of God's freedom of indifference. Instead, Edwards considers this in terms of the outflow of God's *ad extra* works, which are grounded in the hypostatic relations of the Trinity and centered on the Son. His psychological analogy of the Trinity is referenced to illustrate this, in which the fullness of God is communicated by the Spirit as the mutual love existing between the Father and the Son. Larsen's measured reiteration of this novel approach to divine freedom throughout her work helps readers grasp the technical facets of Edwards's Christology.

The Son's fittingness in his work of preparation for God's glorification is examined by mapping these into Edwards's three propositional periods of *A History of the Work of Redemption*. Chapter 2 examines the first span of the Old Testament era from the fall to Christ's incarnation. The covenantal register is deployed when considering the fulfillment of the Son's obligations throughout this period. The evocative register affirms his occasioning of God's blessedness for his bride in constructing redemptive history, conveyed through Edwards's structural motif of divine chariot wheels to depict the providential progression of the work of redemption. Chapter 3 continues to examine the same Christological work during Edwards's second redemptive period, focusing on the Son's glorification throughout his earthly life and the performance of his mediatorial office. The covenant of works is fulfilled through Christ's satisfaction and merit, with the Son's obedience expressing the Father's eternal love. Both the "covenantal" register and "diverse excellencies" motif highlight Edwards's Christological view of divine freedom, wherein the Son enacts his blessed divine fellowship with the Father in the unity of the Spirit. This is deemed to be good news, as Christ ends his bride's alienation, making possible the glorious communication of divine goodness to her.

Edwards's final propositional dispensation in *A History of the Work of Redemption* comprises four historical subperiods. Chapter 4 considers the

fittingness of Christ's occasioning of the freedom of God's *ad extra* glorification during the first three of these eschatological segments, during which his bride enjoys gospel benefits, but in part only amid an evil world. The establishment of the Son's covenantal communion with her continues despite her lack of perfect fittingness, by both his enactment of the blessed fellowship flowing from the hypostatic fellowship of the Trinity, and also through their union in the Spirit under the covenant of grace. Edwards scholars will appreciate the author's demonstration of this consistency with Edwards's concept of beauty, as the bride, endowed with a new vision of Christ's moral excellence, consents to his perfect image of his fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. Chapter 5 brings Edwards's final subperiod, the culmination of the Son's work upon the day of judgment. The author details the events surrounding the Son's fitting of his bride for her final glorification and the consummation of their blessed union at the eternal wedding feast. This finalizes his work in expressing God's freedom, which Edwards considers to be evidenced by the blessing of his creatures through the outflowing of glory from the loving fellowship of the Trinity.

Larsen's monograph is highly recommended not only for students of Jonathan Edwards but also more generally for eliciting constructive theological insight from his Christology. She concludes her study by listing several ways in which his particular conviction regarding divine freedom might foster future discussion more widely within Reformed theology, as well as informing a greater articulation of God's blessedness and beauty. More importantly, this work reminds the wider church to confess and celebrate its glorification in Christ, as the recipient of God's perfect, triune blessedness.

—David Reid
PhD Candidate,
Union Theological College, Belfast

Cornelis Jan Meeuse. *De bestrijding van het cartesianisme door Jacobus Koelman*. Labarum Academic, 2024.

The current book has been defended as a doctoral dissertation at Theological University Apeldoorn (the Netherlands) by Cornelis Jan Meeuse in June 2024, at age seventy-eight. However, its origins go back to the time when the author was in his twenties and earned his primary