

the “logic of superabundance”: “a lavish, gracious, loving paradigm of excess” (248). He sees this superabundance in covenants, in the grace of God (which is not calculable in the mere transactional terms of the market [Rom 5:20]), and in the cross and resurrection. But note how he moves from this theology to its cultural application:

The superabundance of the cross disrupts and destabilizes the logic of totality, whether it is expressed in totalitarian government (the state as total) or the unfettered free market (the market paradigm as total).... They both begin with the assumption of scarcity and lack, rationing goods either through central distribution (the state) or through differentiated purchasing power (the market).... By contrast to both of these closed and totalizing paradigms, Christ brings not an economy of credit and exchange, but a divine overflow of love. Because it is an event, the cross confounds the necessity of the market in which every credit implies a corresponding debt, every transaction must be balanced, and every commodity or service has its equivalent value in every other commodity or service (422–23).

To be sure: grace is superabundant. And yet in this age, resources remain finite; they will be allocated *on some basis*. How shall that be done? The suggestion that the superabundance motif of grace and gospel is somehow an answer to the fundamental question of economics in an age in which scarcity and finitude remain quite with us strikes me as a quintessential example of over-realized eschatology, an application of future realities to the age in which creation will continue to groan until the revealing of the sons of God.

At base, the disagreement is captured in this sentence: “This makes of the resurrection a manifesto for social change” (442). There will be social change because of the resurrection—when the King returns.

But these suggestions are not a repudiation of the paradigm Watkin has set forth. He concludes about his project: “If you see something missing, add it; if you see something broken, fix it” (604). Where our theologies disagree, our critique of our culture will differ. But the task of a biblical critique of this age is an imperative one, and Watkin’s work is a profoundly helpful contribution to that task.

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The Case for Christian Nationalism, by Stephen Wolfe. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2022. 488 pp. \$24.99.

Stephen Wolfe has given a full-throated, tightly reasoned argument for the idea of Christian nationalism which he defines as “a totality of national action, consisting of civil laws and social customs, conducted by a Christian nation as a Christian nation, in order to procure for itself

both earthly and heavenly good in Christ" (9). Simply put, it is "nationalism modified by Christianity" (10). Part of the implementation of Christian nationalism is that the nation itself must be a "Christian nation" which he assumes America was, at least at its founding, quoting Alexis de Tocqueville (397–98). Of course, there is significant debate on the theological sensibilities of the founding fathers and whether America is now or ever has been a Christian nation, but Wolfe accepts that it was, which drives his argument.

It is important to note several issues about the author and his premises in writing this book. First, he is unapologetically "Reformed" (17) and specifically Presbyterian (20) in his orientation so his discussion will be shaped by those presuppositions. He acknowledges that someone without these views may balk at his case, as the author of this review does because he is a Baptist. Wolfe goes so far as to say that belief in paedobaptism is "most natural to Christian nationalism for baptizing infants brings them (outwardly at least) into the people of God" (217). Second, the work is a discussion of political theory—he emphasizes this more than a dozen times in the text—not exegetical or theological engagement (one is hard pressed to find reference to particular biblical texts in the body of the work, although there is a smattering of verses alluded to in the footnotes). As such, there is little biblical evidence marshalled to support even the concept of a Christian nationalism, much less Wolfe's views.

Wolfe begins by lamenting the secularization of the world in modern times that he traces to the French Revolution:

For decades, theologians have developed theologies that exclude Christianity from public institutions but require Christians to affirm the language of universal dignity, tolerance, human rights, anti-nationalism, anti-nativism, multiculturalism, social justice, and equality, and they ostracize from their own ranks any Christian who deviates from these social dogmas. They've effectively Christianized the modern West's social creed. The Christian leaders most immersed in the modern West's civil religion are those who loudly denounce the "civil religion" of "Christian nationalism" (5).

Wolfe attempts to right this wrong by ascertaining that Christian nationalism is both right and necessary for America as it reclaims its founding principles and reestablishes its destiny.

In the first two chapters, Wolfe walks the reader through idea of nationalism before and after the fall reminding readers of the believer's dominion mandate—"multiplying, filling, and subduing creation as the vice-regents of God on earth" (43). He also highlights the covenant of works and the moral law in the task (49). He holds, contra Augustine and Luther, that civil government would have been necessary in a pre-fallen world (70). "Adam's race, as it spread across the earth, would have formed distinct civil communities—each being culturally particular" (79–80). Despite the entrance of sin into the world, "man did not lose the knowledge of the principles and the faculties that most concerned

his outward, earthly life" (84). As civil life alone cannot remedy humanity's problem, we need salvation and divine sanctification (91). Redemption restores to us our responsibilities including taking dominion (98).

In three chapters, Wolfe discusses what loving and perfecting our nation looks like and how cultural Christianity facilitates the quest toward a Christian nationalism. Cultural Christianity is "a mode of religion wherein social facts normalize Christian cultural practices (i.e., social customs) and a Christian self-conception of a nation in order (1) to prepare people to receive the Christian faith and keep them on the path to eternal life, (2) to establish and maintain a commodious social life, and (3) to make the earthly city an analog of the heavenly city" (208–9). Christian culture both prepares and persuades toward the Gospel (213).

In the sixth chapter, Wolfe describes what civil law can and cannot do while chapter seven describes the efficient cause of Christian nationalism, the civil leader, who he designates as a "prince," "a fitting title for a man of dignity and greatness of soul who will lead a people to liberty, virtue, and godliness—to greatness" (279). The "prince" holds a divine office on behalf of God and does "everything in his power to advance the kingdom of Christ" (293). Included in this is a "national uniformity in sacred ceremonies [that] will certainly contribute to national solidarity," (315). He ends the discussion on the Christian prince with an application of Presbyterian "two-kingdom" theology.

In the final chapters, Wolfe completes his argument, first in chapter eight, where he discusses the legitimate right to rebellion including the right to overthrow tyrants. Christians are justified in using "forcible and violent resistance" to overthrow them (334), including revolution (338). In chapter nine, Wolfe discusses liberty of conscience and declares that governments may suppress this liberty if the national good is a stake. In the tenth and final chapter, Wolfe applies all that he has written to America, summarizing "that we must return to the old Protestant principles of our spiritual forefathers and that we must apply them, with prudence and resolve, according to our own particularity and circumstances" (397–98). Citing examples dating back to the New England experiment, he attempts to show of how those Puritan founding fathers worked to establish America on Christian principles. Baptists were tolerated because they "convinced the paedobaptist core not by argument but by actions that they could be safely brought into a Protestant political order" (404). Later the preaching of credobaptism was denied because it was found to be disruptive to civil unity. Religious toleration could only be sanctioned if it was harmful to a civil society. He argues that the writers of the founding documents were mistaken to omit expressly religious language, but that Christianizing American civil institutions is simply making explicit what is already implicit in them (430).

Wolfe concludes the book with an epilogue that contains a list of statements that answer the question, "Now what?" What should America do to restore a Christian nationalism? "Christian nationalists hold beliefs that run contrary to the prevailing norms of Western society, and

thus a Christian nationalist must have the strength of will to affirm what is true, even if it doesn't feel good to him" (455). Churches and pastors must involve themselves in the process for the good of the nation. America is not lost. There is a robust Christian nationalist movement in towns and cities, counties and states that needs support and encouragement.

It is impossible to engage the argument of this book in this review. It would take a book of equal size and density to examine both the ideas and the implications Wolfe espouses. The book is interesting, well organized, and well written. It suffers from a lack of a bibliography. One needs to examine the copious footnotes to see the source of his ideas. The idea of a Christian nationalism is certainly not new. Calvin tried to impose an early form of it in Geneva, while Henry VIII and Elizabeth I pushed a particularly Anglican version after their break with Rome in the sixteenth century. Even if one could grant that America was founded as a Christian nation, it is certainly not one now. Thanks to immigration, America has no national consensus on religion and attempting to force Wolfe's model would create great internal strife.

"The chief aim of Christian nationalism is ordering the nation to the things of God—subordinating the secular to the sacred in order to orient it to the sacred" (105). What a wonderful concept if it were possible. We look forward to that time when Jesus will rule and reign with a rod of iron and all things will be placed under his sovereign, perfect control. Then and only then will the right Christian nationalism be realized. Until then we wait and do our part to elect candidates who will pass just laws. This is becoming more difficult with each passing year. Even so, come Lord Jesus!

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Gilles Deleuze, by Christopher Watkin. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2020. xxxi + 167 pp. \$12.00.

A volume on the thought of the post-modern philosopher, Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995) at first seems to be an unlikely addition to a series on the "Great Thinkers" promoted by Christian publisher, not to mention one that is confessionally Reformed (after all, P&R stands for "Presbyterian and Reformed"). Yet author Christopher Watkin gives four reasons as to why Christians should engage Deleuze's thought: first, he is a pivotal figure in twentieth-century post-modern thought; secondly, Deleuze helped fundamentally to develop further Western society; thirdly, he questions deeply held assumptions as sources of oppression for the marginalized and disenfranchised; and finally, Deleuze challenges both Christian and new atheistic implications for the death of God.