With all of the historical help that Giles’s book offers, a book with the same concerns that took Calvin’s Reformed, trinitarian concerns and formulations seriously could be a great step forward for future evangelical discussions.

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Is the grace by which Christians are saved effectual or merely enabling? Does God resurrect sinners who then irresistibly and willingly believe or does he only offer salvation to sinners and empower them to accept or reject it? Does a sinner respond in faith to the new life God infallibly imparts or does God respond to the sinner who independently decides to cooperate? To put it precisely, does a sovereign, unilateral work of the Spirit to regenerate particular, spiritually dead sinners provide the necessary and sufficient condition for saving faith (monergism)? Or does man’s libertarian free will and choice to receive new life in Christ—a will and choice, according to classical Arminianism, made possible by prevenient grace—supply the sufficient condition for the course of action chosen (synergism)? Those allergic to theological precision or polemics might chalk such questions up to an internecine squabble between overzealous Calvinists and Arminians. But for Matthew Barrett, nothing less than “the glory of God is a stake” (p. xxvi) in whether, and especially how, we think about regeneration and faith, grace and conversion, God’s sovereignty and man’s act of belief.

*Salvation by Grace: The Case for Effectual Calling and Regeneration* is an abridged version of Barrett’s Ph.D. dissertation (supervised by Dr. Bruce Ware and available on Kindle as *Reclaiming Monergism*) at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Like a prizefighter swarmed by his trainers and entourage as he enters the ring, the book opens with no less than twenty-five endorsements, including seven from the author’s alma mater. The real setting for *Salvation by Grace*, however, is not the boxing ring but the lectern and pulpit. As the subtitle indicates, the book primarily aims to defend and commend the historic Calvinist position on how redemption is first applied to the sinner. Noting Warfield’s remark that monergistic regeneration is “the hinge of Calvinist soteriology” (p. xix), Barrett argues that “the biblical view is that God’s saving grace is monergistic—meaning that God acts alone to *effectually* call and *monergistically* regenerate the depraved sinner from death to new life—and therefore effectual calling and regeneration causally precede conversion in the *ordo salutis*, thereby ensuring that all of the glory in salvation belongs to God and not man” (p. xxvi; emphasis in original). Barrett thus calls evangelicals to “reject the temptation of synergism” and “return to the traditional Calvinist position, which is most faithful to Scripture” (p. xxvii).

Chapter 1 offers a well-documented history of the defense of monergism in the Christian church from Augustine, through key figures of the late medieval period, Calvin and the Reformers, and on to Dordt and Westminster. This survey helpfully flags
different uses of key terms (e.g., “free will”) across the ages and lays to rest a few common misconceptions of the Augustinian-Calvinist position (e.g., that sovereign grace violates human personal agency). Particularly useful for grasping the deep historical roots of the modern debate is the way Barrett draws upon the ancient positions of Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, and semi-Augustinianism to introduce the reader to what he calls, respectively, humanistic monergism (man alone is able to merit eternal life), human-initiated synergism (man makes the first move toward God, prompting the aid of divine grace), and God-initiated synergism (universal grace enables man to cooperate with God unto salvation), each still laboring in some form or other today in opposition to Augustine’s divinely-initiated monergism.

Chapter 2 lays a scriptural foundation for divine monergism by surveying the trans-testamental witness to man’s total depravity and bondage to sin. Along the way, Barrett gives ample attention to the common Arminian objection that man’s spiritual inability would negate his responsibility before God. In response, he shows how the same Paul who affirms natural man’s inability to keep God’s law also holds the sinner responsible for his sin (p. 49). Further, because his depravity is expressed in the fact that “he loves sin, willfully and perpetually choosing to make sin his master” (p. 54), fallen man’s inability “actually aggravates and increases his culpability” (p. 58). With an arsenal of additional arguments from Scripture and church history, Barrett concludes that the measure of man’s (in)ability does not set the bar of his obligation before God, nor do God’s commands imply man’s ability to fulfill them apart from utter dependence upon divine power.

Building on the doctrine of total depravity, chapters 3 and 4 present biblical evidence for effectual calling (i.e., God’s “special, effectual call for his elect by which the Father draws sinners to his Son” [p. 69]) and regeneration (i.e., the instantaneous work of the Holy Spirit “to unite the elect sinner to Christ,” resurrecting his heart “so that he is . . . now able to repent and trust in Christ as a new creation” [p. 127]). Regarding the former, Barrett insists that effectual calling does not conflict with God’s well-meant universal offer of the gospel; and those who think it does display a “rationalizing” tendency that wrongly concludes that either natural man must be spiritually able to repent (the Arminian error) or that the gospel is not genuinely offered to all (the hyper-Calvinist error). Moving naturally from depravity to the Spirit’s regenerating work, Barrett explores many of the images Scripture employs (circumcision, resurrection, rebirth, washing) to describe this indispensable divine miracle that gives rise to saving faith. How different is the Wesleyan Arminian conception of salvation where, as Barrett quotes an honest William Cannon, “man is the sole determinative factor in the decision of his own justification” (p. 194)!

Although, as we’ve seen, Barrett responds to Arminian objections and interpretations of key biblical texts throughout the book, he devotes the final three chapters (5–7) to explaining the Arminian view(s) before offering a more extensive critique. I imagine this section of the book will be the most illuminating for Calvinist readers. Focusing largely on (a) the notion of prevenient grace, which he calls “the very hinge of Arminian and Wesleyan soteriology” (p. 208), and (b) libertarian freedom, also known as the freedom of contrary choice, Barrett spends nearly forty pages carefully unpacking the
argument for Arminian synergism. He shows how, despite affirmations of the need for divine grace and (at least by some) of man's total depravity, the *sine qua non* of Arminian soteriology remains finite man's independent and ultimate choice to be saved, irrespective of the will or intention of almighty God (at least beyond his intention to supply prevenient grace to all). As Barrett puts it, "Synergism, then, is grounded in the adoption of libertarian freedom" (p. 230). While God may enable, warn, invite, and plead, man remains able to resist, thwart, and even kill the divine grace extended to him. For Barrett, both tenets of Arminianism—prevenient grace and libertarianism—"rob God of his glory in salvation by . . . exalt[ing] the will of man over the will of God" (pp. 247-48). A text by text rebuttal of the alleged biblical support for these tenets, as well as their own internal inconsistencies (e.g., the Arminian allows for irresistible prevenient grace while demanding that subsequent grace be resistible; libertarian freedom entails arbitrary choice-making), leads into an equally persuasive critique of so-called "middle ways" proposed by Millard Erickson, Gordon Lewis, Bruce Demarest, Kenneth Kealhley, and others, which are shown to harbor the same liabilities as classical Arminianism.

Barrett is to be commended for the sheer content and analysis he has managed to pack into a single popular work. Additionally, instead of the bluster and bare proof texting that stymies so many informal Calvinist/Arminian exchanges, *Salvation by Grace* displays a scriptural awareness and delivers a patient analysis of the historic Calvinist position and opposing Arminianisms (the plural being one of the book's eye-openers) that may actually advance the discussion for a modern audience. Perhaps one of the most penetrating aspects of the book is the way it challenges the Arminian tendency to allow rational deductions (e.g., depravity denies responsibility; the Spirit's regeneration of some entails injustice on God's part) and extrabiblical assumptions (e.g., the divine command to believe presupposes libertarian freedom) to hold hermeneutical sway over key texts, rather than to allow the full range of biblical mysteries to hem our theological conclusions. Whether or not it was Barrett's intention, I believe he has helped to clear a path for deeper discussion between Calvinists and Arminians by pointing his readers behind the presenting issue of soteriology to a few of the more basic epistemological and hermeneutical differences that separate the two groups. If only as a means of extending this trajectory of thought, aside from its many strengths, this book deserves a wide readership from Arminians and Calvinists alike.

Despite the praise it has earned, however, *Salvation by Grace* displays a few weaknesses. While an Arminian will likely cry foul—often, in my view, illegitimately—over a number of the book's criticisms of his theology, he will undoubtedly object to Barrett's tactic of inserting an Arminian connotation of a word from one text into other texts containing that same word, rendering them nonsensical (see, e.g., Barrett's contention of Matt 27:42 based on an Arminian reading of Mark 16:16 on pp. 304-5). A far more prevalent, if less serious, practice is the way Barrett leans heavily on Reformed voices when offering up scriptural support for his position—at one point quoting from Thomas Schreiner nine times in a span of four pages (pp. 98-101). Aside from potentially distracting the reader from his own flow of thought, Barrett risks opening himself to the charge of making his favorite commentators do the work Scripture must do if one's "case" for monergism is to bear scrutiny. That being said, *Salvation by Grace* still deserves high ranking among
popular works on monergistic regeneration and effectual calling. Except that its author is so concerned to give all glory to God, it could be said that the book allows Barrett to leave the Calvinist/Arminian ring with his fists raised high.

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Jude P. Dougherty’s latest volume comprises nine lectures that outline his commendation and defense of a classically Aristotelian account of scientific knowledge over and against modern descriptivist versions of the same. He begins his task with a short historical prologue which recounts the demise in modern times of Aristotle and the Scholastics’ recognition of causes and processes that lie beyond sensory data. Philosophers of the British Isles such as Locke and Hume denied respectively Aristotle’s doctrine of substantial form and his robust metaphysical account of causality as having any reality outside the mind’s construction. Dougherty relates how these denials, among others, precipitated not only the collapse of metaphysics in the modern era but also a transformation of physical sciences into something other than an attempt to investigate nature with hopes of discovering the causes and the essences of its constituent members. As an alternative to this state of affairs, Dougherty endeavors to reclaim a realist perspective on scientific description where “the fundamental goal of science is to render intelligible that which is unintelligible in terms of itself. [Dougherty’s lectures] will insist, contrary to popular opinion, that science is not reducible to description, to prediction, or control, but rather is directed to an understanding of the processes of nature” (p. x). While advocating such an approach, Dougherty’s philosophy of science retrieves a hierarchy of abstraction, with an emphasis on metaphysics and natural philosophy’s role in providing the necessary “principles of thought and being” for scientific inquiry.

Among the consequences of the shrunken metaphysics of the modern era are theories of induction that deny access to the *natures or essences* of the items under scientific investigation. Dougherty reiterates Jacques Maritain’s concern that modern science is relegated to the sensible individuals which are collected, categorized, and called by terms on the basis of a perception of like traits: modern science is nominalistic. Against the nominalism of our day, Dougherty advocates an older Aristotelian model of induction which “proceeds from what is first in the order of experience to what is first in the order of nature—from the apprehension of the sensible facts to the apprehension of general principles out of which we subsequently construct the sciences” (p. 25). These “general principles,” towards which scientific knowledge aims, are not sensible; they are indeed intelligible, yet “without sense experience there is no knowledge of intelligible principles” (p. 25). Maritain had expressed this with examples: modern theories of induction would attempt to pass from *some* metals (for example) to *all* metals while the Aristotelian model of inductions proceeds from the individual metals under