The volume explores theology which may be broadly described as Scottish. This means that it includes both theologies developed in Scotland and those developed outwith Scotland by Scottish expatriates and exiles. One prime example of the extension to theology developed outwith Scotland is found in Chapter 22, “Early Modern French and Dutch Connections”, by James Eglinton. Links between Scottish theologians and their French and Dutch counterparts are explored, with an emphasis on Scottish theologians who moved to France and the Netherlands.

Despite its manifold strengths, some minor criticisms may be levelled at the lack of accessibility in some areas. While much of the work should be accessible to people with various levels of academic study, some of the work will prove less accessible. Although this is generally due to the technical nature of the subject matter and so is not, on the whole, problematic.

Overall, this volume is an excellent contribution to its field. It is for the most part very readable and it does an excellent job of illuminating current scholarship on the mosaic of Scottish historical theology. I highly recommend this volume and look forward to poring through the subsequent volumes in the future.

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The second volume of the OUP History of Scottish Theology picks up where the first left off in the 1700s and takes the reader through to the early 1900s. Unlike the first volume, the second lacks any section describing the scope of the series. However, from the first volume we know that the set seeks to present the mosaic of Scottish historical theology, not seeking to tell a specific story, but to illuminate the various contexts, themes and texts. As with the first, this volume is an excellent work, deserving a
prominent place on the shelves of theological libraries in Scotland and beyond.

The volume is divided into 29 chapters. It begins with a chapter dealing with “The Significance of the Westminster Confession” and moves through a patchwork of different theologians, themes, and denominational developments through to the final chapter “Liberal, Broad Church, and Reforming influences in the Late Nineteenth Century”. The chapters present a welcome and broad description of Scottish theology over the period, tracing the various contours in a changing world.

As befits a reference work of this sort, the different chapters will appeal to different readers in different degrees. There are chapters focusing on the development of particular theological themes, such as John R. McIntosh’s chapter “Eighteenth-Century Evangelicalism” (Chapter 7), chapters focusing on topics, such as Iain Whyte’s chapter “Theology, Slavery, and Abolition 1756–1848” (Chapter 14), and chapters focusing on particular denominations, such as Rowan Strong’s “Episcopalian Theology 1689–c.1900” (Chapter 19). Due to the size and nature of such a work I will draw from a selection of the chapters below.

The first chapter forms an excellent discussion of the significance of the Westminster Confession of Faith to the Scottish church. Donald Macleod demonstrates that the Confession provided a framework to explore theological themes further. Macleod makes the insightful statement that ‘The fact that there was room for such disagreements [about federal theology] makes clear that though the Confession set limits to theological pluralism, it was careful not to set these limits too tightly’ (p. 5). Macleod then goes on to show various areas within the Confession which provided areas for such disagreement. Despite growing reservations about the Confession over time, there was reluctance to ‘amend or retrench’ (p. 12). However, in the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries there was a move in most Presbyterian congregations to allow reservations on matters that ‘did not enter into the substance of the faith’ (p. 12). Macleod ends his chapter posing the question ‘What is the significance for Scottish theology of the loss of the Westminster Confession?’ and leaves us with the comment ‘It may be too soon to tell’ (p. 12).

There were a number of excellent chapters focusing on different topics. For instance, Anne MacLeod Hill draws attention to the Reformed theology that may be found in Gaelic women’s poetry and song (Chapter
Hill does this by looking at three women whose work demonstrates the influence of Reformed theology: Anne Campbell (Bean a Bharra), Mary MacPherson (Bean Torra Dhamh) and Mairearad Ghriogarach. This study demonstrates how ‘from the mid-eighteenth century, and possibly long before, Highland women have been using their songs to supplement the work of the minister’ (p. 110). Hill shows how they have done this by repeating, paraphrasing, explaining, and thus ‘interpreting biblical teaching in the light of contemporary events’ (p. 110).

Another fascinating topical chapter was that by Colin Kidd titled “Extra-Terrestrials and the Heavens in Nineteenth-Century Theology” (Chapter 27). Some might be inclined to brush such a chapter away as a gimmick. However, this would be mistaken. As Kidd explains, because of the close ties between theology and astronomy in nineteenth-century Scotland, this was a major issue for Scottish theology. It was considered practically certain by many that other intelligent life would be found on a multitude of worlds. This naturally drew to the fore questions of fall and atonement for other rational beings on other worlds, and the possibility of Christ dying multiple times for multiple species. Kidd’s chapter may encourage us to consider how believers have, in the past, interacted with scientific theory and encourage us to consider how this may be relevant for interactions with current theories.

A number of chapters focused on particular denominations. One example of this is Chapter 18, written by Michael Bräutigam and focusing on the Free Church. The chapter, titled “Free Church Theology 1843–1900: Disruption Fathers and Believing Critics”, traces the theological developments in the Free Church from the Disruption until 1900 through the lens of a selection of influential theologians. These make up parts of the two groupings the ‘Disruption Fathers’ and the ‘Believing Critics’. Bräutigam demonstrates how the commitment to reconcile faith and science led to both theories such as the ‘gap theory’ of Chalmers and the move to use higher criticism by the believing critics. It was this question of how the Bible was to be read in light of developments in historical criticism that received different answers in colleges to presbyteries and subsequently caused much controversy and division.

As with the first volume, some chapters require a greater knowledge of the literature to understand than others. However, it should be generally accessible to people with some academic study. The lack of introductory chapter or preface in this volume describing the goals and purpose of the
work means that those seeking to pick up this single portion of the set would benefit from accessing the first chapter of the first volume before beginning.

Overall, this volume is an excellent contribution to its field. As with the first, it is for the most part very readable and it does an excellent job of illuminating current scholarship on the mosaic of Scottish historical theology. I highly recommend this volume.

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There is no shortage of books on the topic of science and religion and the apparent conflict between the two fields. This collection of essays offers a refreshing change of pace from the run-of-the-mill debate. The authors suggest that advances in evolutionary science and genetics need not pose a crisis for theologians. The tensions found between new scientific discovery and theology can instead be used to spark creativity and promote discussion about the way in which certain doctrines are understood.

The book is divided into three sections, each focusing on a different challenge that is posed for theology by the advances in contemporary evolutionary science and genetics. The first section focuses on the doctrine of the image of God, the second on original sin, and the third on the problem of evil. These are not the only doctrines which might need to be re-examined in light of new scientific evidence, but they are foundational teachings for the Christian faith and it seems a logical place to start.

Part One is organized around four typical views of the image of God: the functional view, the structural view, the relational view, and the dynamic view. The functional view posits that God’s image is reflected in the dominant role that humans play in creation. The structural view claims