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Beeke's "Debated issues in sovereign predestination" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Beeke, J. R. (2017). *Debated issues in sovereign predestination*. Reformed Historical Theology, vol. 42. Bristol, CT: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. 252 pp. \$83.98. ISBN 9783525552605

This book is well-suited for readers seeking more information on systematic theology, soteriology, and the historical development of Christian doctrines. In a thorough and scholarly fashion, prolific author Joel R. Beeke helps readers understand the issues surrounding hotly debated aspects of the thorny subject of predestination, as the doctrines regarding it developed over the last 500 years in Lutheran and Reformed writings. He traces the development of the doctrines from the time of Martin Luther and Philip Melancthon as far as the Formula of Accord. Beeke also explains the historical development of the doctrine of reprobation as espoused by John Calvin, and the succeeding developments of other thinkers in Geneva up through the eighteenth century.

For any believer, this question remains a difficult one to answer – exactly how do free will and God’s election of a believer interplay? Beeke does a masterful job of explaining the key elements of the discussions as various denominations wrestled with the question since the Reformation began.

Beeke’s analysis of the topic is objective and shows a deep understanding of the topic, and this understanding is conveyed clearly and logically; moreover, although scholarly in nature, the text is approachable and very readable. The book is organized into 17 chapters of narrative on the key authors and their contributions to the topic of predestination, and a final summary chapter. Beeke includes a 20-page extensive bibliography of works cited, conveniently divided by broad subject. An excellent subject index at the end is provided as well.

Highly recommended, despite its price, for academic library collections that seek to provide deep and broad coverage of systematic theology, and the history of key Christian doctrines.

Reviewer

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