Luca Baschera, Bruce Gordon and Christian Moser (Eds.)

This book contains eleven chapters written by esteemed scholars with shared interests in the Reformation in Zurich and Zwingli’s successors. As an edited volume by multiple authors, the book does a wonderful job of maintaining several key themes across the manuscript as a whole. In one way or another, each essay contributes to a larger conversation concerning the role of models, memory, history, and the Bible for the formation of Reformation Zurich. The opening essay by Bruce Gordon sets the stage brilliantly for the shared themes of the book by offering a rich account of the roles humanism, memory, imitation, the Bible, church history, and historical figures played in Zurich Reformers’ search for and implementation of various models of exemplary practices for Christian leaders, scholars, and laypersons alike. Gordon argues that through the use of biblical models, models from church history (i.e., memory), and the Erasmian principle of *emulatio*, Zwingli and his successors were able to apply the learning from the past to their present circumstances to aid in the cultivation of true worship and a godly, Christian society.

After the introductory essay by Gordon, the next six essays showcase the central role of biblical models in Zurich reform, as well as the continued engagement with church tradition and the use of the Church Fathers. Mark Taplin highlights the ways in which Zurich leaders employed early church models to navigate doctrinal controversies of their day—particularly concerning the Eucharist and Christology. Applying the ancient Christological heresies of Nestorianism and monophysitism to Zurich’s theological opponents, Josias Simler and his colleagues aimed to establish Zurich’s orthodox faith upon its historic apostolicity. The essays by Wood, Kirby, Moser, Giselbrecht, and Rüetschi explore compelling examples of the use of biblical models for the godly formation of Zurich’s pastors, civil leaders, laypersons, women, and families respectively. Wood persuasively maps out Bullinger’s shifting models for Zurich’s pastors, tracing the progression from the prophet as the initial model (over and against the priest) to a melding of prophet and priest to a later revisioning of Zurich pastors as a collective priesthood with prophetic qualities to address the eschatological realities of their time. Torrance Kirby, on the other hand, examines Peter Martyr Vermigli’s letter to Queen Elizabeth to demonstrate the ways in which Vermigli appeals to the biblical model of Christ himself, the model of prophet and king, and the examples of Deborah, Jael, and Esther to exhort Elizabeth in her role to establish true religion, as godly rulers ought to do. Christian Moser adeptly demonstrates the role commentaries on
the Book of Ruth played in the goal to shape the values and practices of family, marriage, and kinship toward the Christian virtues of godly fear, faithfulness, obedience, and piety. Furthermore, Rebecca Giselbrecht traces the changing views of Mary in Reformation Zurich. She argues that the Zurich Reformers “chose to tread lightly” by gradually reducing Mary’s role. From the start, however, Zwingli rejected Mary’s intercessory role, yet retained an emphasis on her eternal virginity and tolerated a fair amount of Marian piety in the early years of the Reformation in Zurich. Under Bullinger, Mary’s role increasingly became one as a model of faith for all Christians and, more specifically, a model for women of the virtues of humility, obedience, and submissive faith. Lastly, Kurt Rüetschi provides an in-depth description of two sermons by Rudolf Gwalther in order to provide an example of how Gwalther’s sermons on the text of Luke 2.41–52 (concerning Christ’s childhood) were used to mold views and practices of childhood and parenting. These are all excellent essays; my only complaint is that Rüetschi’s essay tended to lack the analysis demonstrated in the former essays, as the chapter is mostly a descriptive account of Gwalther’s sermons and does not bring this into conversation with scholarly literature concerning early modern views of childhood and parenting or the use of sermons for formation.

The next two essays expand beyond a focus on Zurich’s leaders’ employment of models from the Bible or church tradition to ones from classical texts or classical philosophy. Urs Leu examines the use of morally questionable pagan literature for pedagogical purposes. He provides a description of Conrad Gessner’s 1544 Martial edition, in which Gessner deletes most of the morally offensive poems and arranges the remaining epigrams in thematic groups. Though Leu provides an interesting summary, the essay is disappointing for its lack of analysis for the implications Gessner’s edition might hold for the place of classical poetry in Zurich’s curriculum. On the other hand, Luca Baschera provides an excellent investigation into Otto Werdmüller’s views on the relationship of theology and ethics to Aristotelian philosophy by concretely indicating the ways in which his views followed and went beyond those of Melanchthon. Departing from Melanchthon, Werdmüller, argues Baschera, posits a complementary view between theology and moral philosophy around Aristotle’s teachings on virtue.

The last two essays are well arranged as partner essays that explore the ways in which Zurich’s leaders themselves could serve as models for the generations to come. Matthew McLean examines the teacher-student relationship between Konrad Pellikan and Sebastian Münster to argue for the ways in which they exemplified the model teacher, scholar, and student and the ideals of free exchange of ideas, communal learning, hospitality, and the commitment to multi-lingual and multi-disciplinary studies. Bruce Gordon sets forth the signif-