understanding of literary, linguistic, and cultural context create ways of reading the Genesis text that can reconcile scripture with Darwin. For example, reflecting on Genesis 1:24 ("God said, 'Let the earth produce living creatures …'"), the text records a Hiphil stem (used in Hebrew to express causative action) to the verb translated "produce," implying that it is the earth causing the production of life. Schreiner writes,

> I will never forget the moment when I realized the potential of these statements … To put it bluntly, the semantic framework of the biblical text allows for the attribution of agency upon the created order. By implication, in my mind, the concept of evolution is something that need not be antagonistic to the Christian faith. (p. 62)

However, he is quick to add that God must be the source of Earth's creativity. Failing to recognize this is "one of the severe deficiencies of Darwin's ideas of natural selection" (p. 62). I would suggest the author take a closer look at the frontispiece of *The Origin of Species*, especially later editions, in which Darwin takes great pains to suggest natural selection is not in opposition to, but requires, divine agency. Nevertheless, such statements from a conservative theologian make space for more robust discussion around evolution and faith.

Schreiner's second contribution is a significant and strong rebuttal of young earth creationist rhetoric. He quotes in full, across several pages, a social media post written by Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis. He slowly and methodically exposes the rhetorical strategy Ham employs, and then he shows why a faithful conservative Christian could reject Ham's approach and still be faithful to scripture.

Evolution is only a small portion of this book. More space is given to ecological considerations, Schreiner's third contribution. The Galapagos revealed both the profound harm humans can bring when trying to do good (e.g., invasive species, climate change exacerbated by tourism) as well as the profoundly good (e.g., the success of Galapagos tortoise conservation). The author suggests that this tension can be explained theologically by the concept of the image of God (our capacity for good) and our fallen nature (thus, the brokenness in our solutions). He goes further than I am comfortable with, explaining all interspecies hostilities as a product of the fall. I found this position difficult to reconcile ecologically with scriptures that celebrate God's active participation in feeding the carnivore (e.g., Ps. 104:21). Nevertheless, I can celebrate Schreiner's conclusion "that Christians should not only be concerned with their ecological context, but they should advocate for policies and practices that curb the unnecessary degradation of their ecological contexts and unbridled consumerism" (p. 92). I wish he had engaged more with the negative outcomes of well-intentioned stewardship, but I am glad to hear another conservative voice add to the call for Christ-centered conservation.

Unfortunately, the value of this book is hampered by obvious errors and poor editing: "like" instead of "think" (p. 95), two separate uses of "that" instead of "than" (pp. 50, 51), "guilt" instead of "guilty" (p. 39) are but a few examples. One chapter is entitled "Seal Lions Bites and Frigatebirds"—I assume it should be "Sea Lion Bites" or "Sea Lions' Bites"; this mistake is replicated on the page headers. Furthermore, some of the language in the book is off-putting; for instance, at one point Schreiner says that scientists believe Christians are "ideologically retarded"—given the context, I cannot tell if he is using that term to mean "halted in growth" or as a pejorative that should be excised from his language.

Nevertheless, the conversational nature of this book may be a breath of fresh air for students who were raised in a fundamentalist household and who need to hear a conservative theologian offer the very questions they have been asking, without fear of undermining the inerrancy of scripture or losing one's salvation. I would be curious to hear where these thoughts take Schreiner in the next few decades. I just hope there is a better editor to help him articulate these important conversations.

Reviewed by Matthew Morris, associate professor of biology, Ambrose University, Calgary, AB T3H 0L5.

Medicine and Health

DOI:https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF3-26Lomperis

THE REFORMATIONS OF MEDICINE: Early Modern Beginnings and Contemporary Possibilities by Ekaterina N. Lomperis. Fortress Press, 2025. 250 pages. Paperback; $44.00. ISBN: 9781506491172.

What does Martin Luther have to say to Christians about medical care and suffering in the body today? Ekaterina Lomperis, Richard B. Parker Associate Professor of Theology and Wesleyan Thought at George Fox University, argues that Luther's medical theology offers a surprisingly rich resource for spirituality and contemporary health care. Her book seeks to retrieve and develop Luther's dialectical approach to physical suffering, which she notes hasn't received enough scholarly attention despite the depth of scholarly interest in divine suffering or the "theology of the cross."

Lomperis argues that "for Luther, while internally recognizing the inevitability of afflictions and welcoming their spiritual benefits, Christians also ought to resist suffering by piously utilizing available means" (p. 51). Through close readings of Luther's lectures on the Old Testament, she develops a Lutheran theology of medicine that accepts suffering, not as satisfaction for sin

but as an "alien work of God" that includes physical afflictions that can strengthen and deepen faith. At the same time, Christians should resist that same physical suffering through use of medicines and health care. In addition, Luther teaches, in his lectures on Joseph in Genesis, that it is a sin to recklessly endanger the body, ignore opportunities to alleviate pain, or fail to provide for bodily needs. Lomperis points to Luther's distinction between the inner person (the soul liberated by faith) and the outer person (responsible for action) to highlight that the freedom of the inner person compels the outer person to resist suffering through appropriate means and also to extend care to neighbors in need.

From this foundation, Lomperis develops Luther's "theology of means" and "theology of idolatry." Medicine is a created "means" through which God's Word works healing power. Miraculous faith healings also rely on divine agency; however, Luther believes that God prefers the created means, rather than miracles, for conveying power. As Luther states, "The use of medicine is permitted, yes even necessary, for it is the means created for the preservation of health" (p. 114). Luther's concern surfaces when humans, seeking physical cures, place more trust in the created means (medicine) rather than in the creator God; such misplaced trust constitutes idolatry. Luther's reading of Isaiah 38 illustrates this balance: the prophet prescribes treatment, but healing power resides in the divine Word, not in the remedy itself.

This book fills a notable gap in scholarship on Luther's theology of the cross in relationship to physical and embodied suffering and the proper use of medicine. While Ronald Rittgers explored a *Reformation of Suffering* (Oxford University Press, 2012) and Susan Karant-Nunn a *Reformation of Feeling* (Oxford University Press, 2012), Lomperis extends these trajectories into a "reformation of medicine." Her work situates Luther's theology of the cross within embodied experience, offering a nuanced theological account of how Christians might respond to physical suffering. This well-researched book draws extensively on primary texts such as Luther's biblical lectures and treatises such as *The Freedom of a Christian* and *Whether One May Flee from a Deadly Plague*, while also engaging thoroughly with the historical theology of Luther and of medical care. Lomperis intersperses the chapters with engaging vignettes of Luther's life and story, which place the theological issues within a narrative context.

Lomperis's argument proves pastorally compelling and theologically sound. Luther's dialectic in a theology of medicine—to accept suffering as spiritually formative while resisting it through the created means of medicine—offers a framework for Christian participation in health care that avoids both fatalism and therapeutic idolatry. The final chapter moves from historical analysis to constructive application, urging Christian communities to advocate for equitable health systems. However, the book could go further in addressing these systems. Concrete examples of justice-oriented initiatives, such as the Black Church's tradition of providing clinics for underserved populations, would strengthen the case. Likewise, naming systemic barriers, such as health insurance monopolies and pharmaceutical pricing, would sharpen the ethical challenge.

Stylistically, the book provides accessible content without sacrificing scholarly rigor. Its organization reflects careful thought, and the bibliography is robust. While primarily suited for theologians and ethicists, pastors and Christian health professionals should also find it valuable. In fact, I plan to encourage my brother, a pediatrician, to consider reading sections on Luther's theology of medicine and its applicability in current health-care contexts.

Lomperis offers a timely and faithful retrieval of Luther's theology of health and health care: "when afflicted by physical suffering, Christians should purposefully and diligently utilize available means to resist it" (p. 87). At the same time, Christians place the power of healing with God, without placing an idolatrous trust in the medicine itself. This book deserves attention from anyone interested in the intersection of theology and health care.

Reviewed by Rev. Dr. Melanie L. Dobson, associate professor, Lefler and Wohltmann Chair in Methodist Studies, Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary.

DOI:https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF3-26Sherr

SCRIPTURE AND SCRUBS: A Christian Calling to Healthcare by Michael E. Sherr, Jason K. Lee, and Angelia M. Mickle. B&H Academic, 2025. 240 pages. Paperback; $27.99. ISBN: 9781087789224.

Frontline healthcare workers see medical dramas unfold before them each day—stories of heartbreak, heroism, compassion and diagnostic dilemma no less vivid than plotlines from *The Pitt* or *Grey's Anatomy*. Daily realities may be either more incredible or somewhat mundane, but for Christian health professionals (CHPs), there is always a deeper story. Each interaction provides opportunities to reveal God's loving grace, to be a divine ambassador in a broken world.

Sherr, Lee, and Mickle have collaborated to write a book for frontline healthcare workers, challenging us to see and understand the spiritual significance hidden in every day's work. Their passion is that CHPs would develop spiritual competencies that strengthen their clinical skills and knowledge, modeling both professional excellence and deep spiritual sensitivities, and being willing to be used by God in each patient encounter.