delighting in God through his gifts, mother, friends, flowers, sea, food, and every other "other" we encounter.

Reading *The Mother's Smile* has also brought some questions. First, how does this challenge theological education and even Bible exposition, which is often focused on amassing theological and practical knowledge and on dissecting the Bible through inductive study, devoid of embodied encounter with the world? Second, how much reality and delight could we lose if we delegate a lot of our cognitive-based work to AI, for example, if we stop reading books and articles and focus on their AI summaries, or if we let AI translate these works effortlessly, but also physically unengaged with outside reality? Third, I believe that Meek's post-critical epistemology offers a great way to avoid both the modernist infatuation with the factual confirmation of the Bible in apologetics and the postmodern relativization of all truth.

In conclusion, I heartily recommend you read this book. Reading this review without delving into the work itself would be a very modernist approach. You get all the information, but you lack the formative experience the book gives. You lack the "Gestalt," the beautiful whole, the garden of insights and stirred up memories, even regrets, that only reading and imbibing can give you. You will not regret it; on the contrary, you will be delighted with it.

Miroslav Balint-Feudvarski

Kelly M. Kapic
Communion with God: The Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2024. pp. 284

If someone were to mention John Owen, few Christians from Southeast Europe would recognize his name. Maybe only those who took a deep dive into the 17th and 18th-century church history. We rarely hear about Puritans nowadays. However, here in front of you is a book review about the theology of one of the best Puritan theologians of its time. His books and treatises are still published (Crossway has a new series of his completed works), and he is read by laypeople and theologians in the West (especially among Reformed scholars). You can find many editions of his individual works. Yet none has been translated into Croatian (not even abridged versions published by The Banner of Truth Trust). My goal is to provide local readers of Kairos with a review of the book that actually addresses John Owen's theology. The title speaks for itself: *Communion with God: the Divine and the Human in the Theology of John Owen* - Kapic dives deep into the works of

John Owen and shares with us the relevance of the insight that the Puritan had and still has for generations to come. Kelly M. Kapic is a professor at Covenant College. He is the writer of many books, including *Mapping Modern Theology, The God Who Gives,* and *You're Only Human.* This book is his republished edition with a different preface (the first published edition had J. I. Packer's preface). His PhD thesis was on the same topic, but this book was edited for a wide readership. The book has acknowledgements by Sinclair B. Ferguson and Joel R. Beek, very well-known scholars and professors from Reformed backgrounds. In his preface, Kapic concludes: "This book lays out Owen's attempt at a holistic account of what it means to be human, framed around the idea that people were made for communion with God" (p. 10).

In his first chapter, "The Lingering Shadow of John Owen," Kapic discusses the continuing presence of Owen. He tells us about his life, his published works, and the repositories that contain them, but he also emphasizes his influence on the people of the past (Kuyper, Spurgeon, Wilberforce). His works have been translated into Dutch, Korean, Scottish Gaelic, Welsh, and Spanish. Here, Kapic introduces us to Owen's view of humanity. Three principal sources guide Owen's reflections: Scripture, historical theology, and experience. He tries not to portray Owen as a dry rationalist, but rather a man who moves from his theology to experience. "Although there was debate about how to incorporate one's experience into one's theology, in seventeenth-century England, it was not unusual to value learning from participation in daily life; this is the context in which Owen was nurtured" (p. 23). Owen's life was marked by his zeal for study. He completed his B.A. and M.A. at Queen's College, Oxford. In his youth, he spent his time as a tutor, chaplain, author, and, for one period, a pastor. He found his peace with God at the age of 26, having a radical experience of faith. Shortly after this experience, he began writing his first books. Owen became a very knowledgeable preacher who was even allowed to preach before the Parliament. Kapic states: "His tremendous influence in seventeenth-century England is clearly shown by identifying some of those with whom he corresponded: Oliver and Richard Cromwell, leading Generals Charles Fleetwood and George Monk, members of Parliament, the governor of Massachusetts, Richard Baxter, and others. Shortly after serving at Whitehall, Owen was appointed dean of Christ Church, Oxford (1651), and then vice-chancellor of Oxford University (1652)" (pp. 25–26). During his time at Oxford, he wrote many books on theology. One interesting note from his life is that he was a friend of John Bunyan, whom he helped to publish the classic work, *Pilgrim's Progress.* Owen was aware of his spiritual heritage, he was Puritan and here are several characteristics of his puritan theology: "(1) uncompromising commitment to the authority of the Bible as guiding all of life; (2) a heavy Augustinian accent on human sin and divine grace; (3) an intense focus on spirituality, especially communion with God; and (4) a persistent prominence given to the Spirit's role in

the Christian life" (pp. 28–29). To understand him better, one must realize that currents of thought found in him are Augustinianism, Aristotelianism, scholasticism, and humanism. In the text that follows, we will closely summarize how his trinitarian theology reflects on his view of *imago Dei.* While English Calvinist theology was characterized by anthropology, Calvin's theology by Christotheology, Kapic analyzes and interprets Owen as, in fact, *anthroposensitive.* He uses "sensitive" to avoid "simplistic classification of Owen as either theocentric or anthropocentric" (p. 33).

In the second chapter, "Created to Commune with God," Kapic examines Owens' view of *imago Dei.* He is distinguishing between "image" and "likeness" on this topic, as church fathers do. Likeness is "resemblance unto that holiness and righteousness which are in him, Eph 4:23-24, etc." (pp. 37–38). Owen follows in Calvin's view – the relation character was destroyed. Still, human faculties are the means that make our relationship with God possible (p. 38). For him, there is a "loss" of the image of God in humans, but its vestiges remain - a person cannot, after the fall, naturally worship the Creator. Kapic takes note: "In Owen's view, likeness communicates righteousness. As a result of the fall, humanity becomes sinful and completely unlike God. Yet the image, though marred, remains because it is this aspect that allows for the relationship between the divine and human" (p. 41). What remains are actually humanity's faculties. Because of sin, incarnation is necessary, and that is why the perfect image of God must come to restore the communion destroyed by sin. Christ's role as the Image of God is of the utmost importance for Owen. Jesus is the true *imago Dei.* Only by him, there is restoration in the communion with God; the defaced image of God in us is now restored. When we return to the human faculties as means of a relationship with God, we see that Owen builds on Aristotle. Three main faculties are used for describing the whole person. The first one is *mind*, and the other two that depend on mind are *will* and *affections*. These faculties are entangled in humanity's fall, but when the Spirit renews humans, they are positively affected. Here, Owen's view of the role of the Holy Spirit and of Christians' growth in grace comes into focus. Mind is to be renewed by the contemplation of the Truth (God); a Christian's will is renewed, and he is able not to sin; also, his affections are changed where Christ becomes true delight. These faculties are the means through which the Holy Spirit works on a Christian (Owen would not even exclude the *body* from the renewal of the Image of God). Coming to Christian's role, the one is always to seek holiness, the goal of sanctification. Kapic observes the importance of understanding Trinitarian theology in Owen when it comes to the restoration of humans: "While a person's redemption is secured by the work of Christ, the application and actualization of redemption are only possible by the work of the Holy Spirit" (p. 61). And this is where we turn to Owen's Christology.

The chapter titled "Humanity Actualized" is about the incarnation of Christ. Because of the human debt and need of redemption, there was a need for Christ to become man - he that is truly God and truly human. "Owen believes that all of humanity has 'always had a common apprehension that there was a need of a nearer and more full representation of God unto them…'" (p. 72). For him, although only the Son becomes incarnate, yet the whole incarnation is the work of the Holy Trinity. Kapic observes that "in Owen's thought, three crucial elements are required for the redemption of humanity: authority, love, and power…acting out of his sovereign authority, the Father sends the Son and gives the Spirit. Second in the 'order of subsistence' is the Son, who in the 'order of operation puts the whole authority, love, and power of the Father in execution.'" (pp. 74–75). Because Christ is also the representation of God, communion with God is possible through him. Building on this, Kapic conducts research into Owen's theology of the humiliation of Christ, seeking to answer the question: how did the Word become flesh? Owen follows in the language of the later fathers, introducing us to the term *assumption*, meaning the "'divine constitution of the person of Christ as God and man'" (p. 79). This language of assumption protects the distinction between the two natures of Christ. For him, assumption is the only way to show how the incarnation came to be and how it functioned. If it were not for assumption, the divine would have to cease to be divine by becoming human. Owen observes on this that Christ "was made flesh as man, in that he took our human nature to be his own" (pp. 81–82). In his way of understanding incarnation, he never distinguishes himself from the orthodox doctrine of incarnation and the work of the Trinity: "...whatever the Son of God wrought in, by, or upon the human nature, he did by the Holy Ghost, who is his Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father" (p. 85). Continuing on incarnation, Owen spends a lot of time focusing on the role of the Spirit in Incarnation, i.e., in the life of Christ. In distinguishing our humanity and Christ's humanity, it is to be noted that the Son took on himself human nature uncorrupted by original sin, and with it he lived in the fallen world. Only by having that human nature that was without sin can he take away the sin of the world. From incarnation, we move to justification.

The next chapter is titled "Reconciling God and Humanity." To make our communion with God possible, the Son had to assume human nature (without sin). However, to change our human nature, Christ had to justify us before the Father, and to be justified, one needs to profess faith in his Son. In addition, as we noted earlier, the image of God in humans is shattered - we don't have a clear vision or communion with God. From above, the Savior needs to come to renew the image of God in us. This chapter explores anthropology and the dual emphasis of Christology and praxis. When Owen writes about the doctrine of justification, he places great emphasis on faith. He describes faith in four respects: (1) causes of faith, (2) a person's duty before faith, (3) object of faith, and (4) nature of faith. When Kapic

is discussing the causes of faith, he observes a tension that is visible in Owen: "*God commands* certain duties or responses by people; *God alone empowers* rebellious people to respond and obey him" (p. 113). Regarding the person's duty before faith, like Luther, Owen emphasizes the law that brings consciousness of sin. He also presents the person of Christ as the object of faith, pointing to the restoration of communion. A man does not need to become academic to be justified, but rather he needs to turn to the one who makes a call - living Christ. Owen continues to explore the nature of faith in terms of trust in Christ. The Spirit of God transforms a person. He recognizes transformation as a gift of faith that results in the obedience of the individual. Continuing on justification, by reading this chapter, we come to understand that Owen affirms only one justification by faith and rejects two justifications (the Roman Catholic view). He argues that Rome confused justification by works with sanctification. When it comes to imputation, Kapic observes, "Owen again finds himself stressing Christ's person, only here he does so in terms of the mystical union that exists between Christ and his church. The means by which this union is accomplished is unquestionably the 'uniting efficacy of the Holy Spirit'" (p. 139). Owen uses the word "person" to speak less about mystical union and more about the person of Christ. For him, imputation of the divine Christ's righteousness to humans relies on human and divine natures in Christ. Jesus, who was fully obedient to the law, is communicating his righteousness to us based on the relationship between his two natures, human and divine. Going from here, Owen observes that Christ's obedience "'performed in the human nature; but the person of Christ was he that performed it'" (p. 143). From the Christological part, now we move to the theology of communion with God.

John Owen is, for Kapic, an anthroposensitive theologian. His works indeed focus on doctrines that are always applicable to Christian living. In the most exhaustive chapter, "Communion with Triune God," Kapic focuses on his doctrine of the Trinity and how the communion that God has within the Trinity is reflected in regenerated humans. It is important to note that Owen wrote a treatise with a longer title, *Of Communion with God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Each Person Distinctly, In Love, Grace, and Consolation; or, The Saints' Fellowship with the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost Unfolded.* For a man to have communion with God, one must realize how his fallen human condition resulted in separation from God. To bridge this separation, Jesus came as truly human and truly God to die for those who would believe and to restore the fellowship that had been broken between God and men. For Owen, communion relates to things and persons, state and condition, and actions (p. 151). It is the union that we have in Christ that makes our life in Christ possible, and this union is the foundation for a relationship with the Lord. In Christ, we are accepted before him and by Him. Owen holds to the basic orthodox view of the Trinity: "God is one; - that this one

God is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that the Father is the Father of the Son; and the Son, the Son of the Father; and the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of the Father and the Son; and that, in respect of this their mutual relation, they are distinct from each other" (p. 159). For him, a divine person is divine essence, and each of the persons in the Trinity has the understanding, the will, and the power of God. Each person becomes a distinct principle of operation, yet all their actings are the actings of God – all works are works of one, self-same God (p. 160). The whole doctrine of economic Trinity should inform believers how to have communion with the Lord. Concerning the communion that we have with Father, we need to recognize Father as the fountain of love. Our communion with him should be mutual – we should respond with rest in him, delighting in him, with reverence and obedience.

When Owen turns to the theme of communion with the Son, he divides it into two major themes: the character of the Son and the Son's affections for believers. Taking into consideration the character of Jesus, one must observe that the incarnate Lord has an abundance of grace and love for his believers. Owen notes several affections of Christ towards his people. He delights in them, he values them, and he has pity and compassion. The communion that we have through the purchased grace results in our acceptance with God (making us acceptable), and in our adoption by him. Owen, as an orthodox Calvinist, sees the Holy Spirit as a distinguished person of the Trinity. Kapic spends some time on Owen's grammar regarding the Spirit, as well as on the unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the one who applies the work of Christ to believers. The third person of the Trinity engages all of a believer's natural faculties that are created in the image of God. By receiving the Spirit, a believer is able to pray, worship, and enjoy intimacy with God. However, when it comes to communion with the Spirit, there are negative commands with positive duties to be found. We should not grieve, quench, or resist the Spirit's work through the Word. From here, Kapic takes us to the last chapter that deals with the signs that point to continuing communion with God.

"Signs of Continuing Communion" are the Lord's Day and the Lord's Supper. The means of communion between God and us are found in the ordained patterns of worship mentioned above. While observing the creation ordinance in the context of the day of sacred rest, Kapic writes: "Whether humanity sets aside Saturday, Sunday, or some other day of the week, what is fundamental to the design of creation is that a day be set apart to enter God's rest, primarily through corporate public worship. This original rest included (1) 'peace with God,' (2) 'satisfaction and acquiescence in God,' and (3) 'means of communion with God.' All these were lost by the entrance of sin, and all mankind were brought thereby into an estate of trouble and disquietment" (p. 211). Kapic also shares Owen's argument, holding that the Lord's Day falls on the first day of the week, when Jesus was resurrected. He sees Hebrews 4 as not applying to eschatological rest, but he sees in the text

the rest that humanity in Christ can have before the eschatological glory. Owen writes on God's rest that "'God resteth ultimately and absolutely, as to all the ends of his glory, in Christ, as exhibited in the gospel – that is, he in whom his *soul delighted*'" (p. 216). Because Father rested in Son, and Son has accomplished the life of God for us, we can now worship him and enjoy him. Regarding the Lord's supper, Owen does not see pure symbolism or transubstantiation in it. There is the presence of God for believers in taking the Lord's supper: "If there was no more in this ordinance exhibited but only the outward elements, and, not by virtues of sacramental relation upon God's institution, the body and blood of Christ, his life, and death, and merits, exhibited unto us, we should come to the Lord's table like men in a dream, eating and drinking and be quite empty when we have done; for this bread and wine will not satisfy our souls" (pp. 226–227). Only by faith do we obtain this communion with the Lord. In this communion with God, we see and taste his love and acceptance. Kapic again sees in Owen here a work of the Holy Trinity: "'A great part... of the essential blessedness of the holy Trinity, consists in the mutual love of the Father and the Son, by the Holy Ghost; which is the love of them both'" (p. 231). God's love is first inside the Trinity, given to us in Christ. Now, in Christ, who is the object of Father's love, we can have rest, and our image of God is being renewed. God communicates to us, through the Lord's Supper, his Trinitarian love that is embodied in Jesus for us.

In the last short chapter, "Epilogue," Kapic offers a conclusion and restates his thesis, which runs throughout the book on the topic of communion, and also encourages the reader to believe that Owen can shape today's theology even more. He expresses disappointment that the readership of Owen is small and that theologians do not read and implement this *anthroposenstive* 17th-century Puritan. The reasons for writing this book were to present Owen's anthropology in light of the theology of communion with God and to introduce readers to the neglected Owen. The books also include a small appendix comparing the Westminster Standards and John Owen on humanity. The writer, Kelly M. Kapic, used many primary and secondary sources, which are quite exhaustive in the bibliography. The book contains a name index and a subject index.

How can this book serve a reader? First, it summarizes John Owen's theology. Also, if one takes careful notes of John Owen, one would be invited to read him. Kapic faithfully observes the major topic of *Communion of God* in John Owen's theological framework and interpretation. He faithfully quotes this Puritan holding unto his conclusions and arguments. However, when reading the Puritans, one should be prepared to encounter older English; and if one chooses to read Owen, especially *Communion with God*, this book will help the reader better understand the Puritan theologian and benefit more from his writings. John Owen was called English Calvin, pastoral and doctrinal, both of which we need in our context of Croatia, and to look to him. The call to read Puritans in the West is high, and

maybe this book can help someone become a Puritan reader, a wise man who takes the valuable time for the gems of the past and becomes a person who has understanding for reading people like John Owen. For me, this book stirred my intellectual will and heart to dive deeper into Owen's mind through his works. I hope it will stir other readers, too, both lay readership and pastoral ones.

Matej Sakač

T. C. Schmidt
Josephus and Jesus: New Evidence for the One Called Christ
Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2025, pp. 317

In a stimulating piece of detective work spanning a thousand years using five ancient languages, T. C. Schmidt has succeeded in re-opening, and likely overturning, a near consensus of scholarship that the *Testimonium Flavianum* (TF), a brief section of text from Josephus' *Antiquities* (18.63–64) about Jesus, is either heavily interpolated by later Christians or wholly inauthentic. Schmidt demonstrates, rather convincingly in my view, that the TF can be shown to be wholly authentic, written by Flavius Josephus in the late first century CE. Below is the Greek text of the TF along with the traditional English translation by Whiston:[1]

> [63] Γίνεται δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον τὸν χρόνον Ἰησοῦς σοφὸς ἀνήρ, εἴγε ἄνδρα αὐτὸν λέγειν χρή· ἦν γὰρ παραδόξων ἔργων ποιητής, διδάσκαλος ἀνθρώπων τῶν ἡδονῇ τἀληθῆ δεχομένων, καὶ πολλοὺς μὲν Ἰουδαίους, πολλοὺς δὲ καὶ τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ ἐπηγάγετο· ὁ χριστὸς οὗτος ἦν. [64] καὶ αὐτὸν ἐνδείξει τῶν πρώτων ἀνδρῶν παρ᾽ ἡμῖν σταυρῷ ἐπιτετιμηκότος Πιλάτου οὐκ ἐπαύσαντο οἱ τὸ πρῶτον ἀγαπήσαντες· ἐφάνη γὰρ αὐτοῖς τρίτην ἔχων ἡμέραν πάλιν ζῶν, τῶν θείων προφητῶν ταῦτά τε καὶ ἄλλα μυρία περὶ αὐτοῦ θαυμάσια εἰρηκότων. εἰς ἔτι τε νῦν τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀπὸ τοῦδε ὠνομασμένον οὐκ ἐπέλιπε τὸ φῦλον.

> [63]Now, there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works—a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. He was [the] Christ; [64] and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other

1 The Greek text is taken from the Accordance digital version, based on the 1890 edition of B. Niese, *Flavii Iosephi Opera*. The English translation is from William Whiston, *The Works of Flavius Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*, New Updated Edition (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1987).