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An All-Surpassing Fellowship: Learning from Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Communion with God – Dr. De Vries

We can learn from all the saints when we want to understand and know more of the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passes all our knowledge. A saint I want particularly to mention is the Scottish preacher Robert Murray M'Cheyne (1813-1843).

Already during his own lifetime MacCheyne was known for his godly walk. The writings of M'Cheyne and his biography by his close friend Andrew Bonar has encourage many Christians over the years. Not only in the Anglo-Saxon world. His writings were translated in a couple of languages.

David P. Beaty, pastor of River Oaks Community Church, Clemmons, North Carolina, wrote a moving study of the life of M'Cheyne and the lessons that can be learned from it. M'Cheyne felt the weight of souls, who knew the reality of the coming wrath but above all he knew the reality of the all-surpassing fellowship with Christ.

In a powerful and urgent manner he preached Christ. Lovingly he spoke about him in personal conversations. Here is an example for every preacher and pastor today. Reading Christian biography is a means not only for pastors but for all believers to be guided in a closer walk with God. This is certainly true of books written about the life of M'Cheyne.

The biography of M'Cheyne by David P. Beaty is well written. It reveals afresh the source of M'Cheyne's blessings: a holy, prayerful dependence on the Savior. I can heartily recommend this new bio-graphy of M'Cheyne. Not only for person who never read a biography of M'Cheyne before but also for them that know already quite a lot about him. Reading anew about M'Cheyne will stimulate to pursue God in our age.

An All-Surpassing Fellowship: Learning from Robert Murray M'Cheyne's Communion with God - New Horizon – OPC Publication (Iain Wright)

David Beaty has done us no small service in distilling the godly example of a man of eminent piety in the scope of a few pages. The work is divided into three sections, giving us a brief biography, a description of M'Cheyne's communion with God, and finally a section on learning from him. The last section alone is worth the price of the book. In five studies from 'Really Understanding the Gospel' to 'Passion for Revival', Beaty not only opens up in brief compass the deep motivation for the glory of Christ that undergirded the prayers and ministry of M'Cheyne,

but also concludes with simple recommendations and thoughtful exercises designed to assist the thoughtful reader toward that experimental Calvinism of which M'Cheyne was so eminent a practitioner.

Anselm of Canterbury – Cross Focused Reviews

“As we’ve come to expect from the “Christian Biographies for Young Readers” series, *Anselm of Canterbury* is a high quality, hardcover book with thick pages and a sewn binding making it sturdier than many books published today... I highly recommend Anselm of Canterbury and pray that many will grow in their understanding of the necessity of the incarnation and of the importance and value of studying church history as a result of this fine work!!”

Reviewer: Elizabeth Hankins

Rating: 5 Stars

“This is another excellent biography in this series. Simonetta Carr’s writing is clear and age--- appropriate. She highlights aspects of Anselm’s life that would be of interest to a young reader, but she goes beyond citing facts and delves into the theological impact of her subject... We are never too young or too old to learn about church history.”

Reviewer: Persis Lorenti

Rating: 5 Stars

“Parents, please get hold of this book, as well as the others in this series. Read them to your children, even if they’re old enough to read. You will learn alongside your children. All of you will be glad you did.”

Reviewer: Kevin Sorensen

Rating: 5 Stars

“For parents who might want their child to have a deeper understanding of a figure of church history such as Anselm of Canterbury and to understand why his life bore such an impact, Carr’s book is a wonderful beginning point. Additionally, as a parent, I would recommend taking a read through this book as well. You will be sure to learn something and at 63 pages, it is both a quick read and a book that someone can return to over and over. After reading this book, I am now curious to check out the other offerings in this series.”

Reviewer: Michael Boling

Rating: 5 Stars

“I didn’t expect to be convicted while reading a children’s book on church history, but I was... I highly recommend this series. In fact, we’ve already ordered two more books in the series and plan to purchase more soon! I am sure that had I read a series such as this during my childhood years, I wouldn’t have avoided church history during my seminary years.”

Reviewer: Betsy Cypress

Rating: 5 Stars

“*Anselm of Canterbury* is a wonderful book about the life of Anselm, a man who is appointed archbishop. The awesome pictures in this book bring the book alive and the story is captivating, so that you won’t want to put it down. I really enjoyed this book!”

–Amelia (age 10)

“This book is a great read with fun, engaging illustrations, and text. It gives a good look at Anselm’s life from when he was a child to when he became a monk. He had a love for God and enjoyed learning about Him. The book’s text is great and it has long words and covers interesting details. I like this book a lot! 5 Stars!”

---Jeremiah (age 13)

“One of my favorite parts of this book is the use of illustrations and photographs. I was intrigued with the photographs, which where he lived and what he saw. Seeing the portraits made him more real to me... My children and I really enjoyed this book. I highly recommend it to all children and adults.”

Reviewer: Rani Grant

Rating: 5 Stars

“Simonetta Carr has done it again. She has given us a superb historical biography of an important figure in Christian History written for young readers. And once again, an older reader like me, has enjoyed it as much or more than the intended audience.

Reviewer: Robert Hayton

Rating: 5 Stars

“*Anselm of Canterbury* is a lovely book; a beautifully designed layout full of wonderful photos, captivating historical reproductions and delightful illustrations. It is suitable for readers young and old.”

Reviewer: Roberta Hegland

Rating: 5 Stars

“It is very exciting to me that books like these are being written. I encourage you to grab a copy for yourself and your children. Neither you nor they will be disappointed (unless, of course, you only read a chapter per night)!”

Reviewer: Adaryll Jordan

Rating: 5 Stars

“I would highly recommend this book and this series. The world puts out much worthless writings for children these days, we should be quick to support Christian authors that provide wonderful, God---honoring material for our kids!”

Reviewer: Joey Parker

Rating: 5 Stars

“The timing could not be more perfect for our family, as we will be studying the Middle Ages this year in our homeschooling curriculum. I plan to use this as a supplement, and will look for more books in this series that also fit with our timeline. I would recommend this to all parents as an excellent series to add to your collection.”

Reviewer: Allison Redd

Rating: 5 Stars

Anselm Of Canterbury – The Heidelblog

(R. Scott Clark)

Too often modern evangelicals, especially since the middle of the 19th century, have tended to view the medieval church not so much as part of the great stream of the history of the church but as an exception. Evangelicals may know the Book of Acts and a little about the history of the Reformation but the medieval period tends to be ignored. That’s a mistake. It’s essential for evangelicals and confessional Protestants alike to know what happened after the patristic church and what set the stage for the Reformation. It’s an undiscovered country.

A scholar friend once said that, when he begins to study a new field, he begins with children’s literature. That’s a great idea and have I got a book for newcomers to the medieval church and for children, Simonetta Carr’s

new book on [Anselm of Canterbury](#) (with beautiful illustrations by Matt Abraxas).

Part of the Christian Biographies for Young Readers Series (RHB), this volume is clear and well written. It tells the story well. Anselm was a rambunctious young man who became a monk, a scholar, and churchman. Judged against exploding cars on screen, that might not seem to be an outline for a terribly exciting story but that would be misleading. The years in which Anselm lived were very important for Western history and Anselm is one of the most important figures in the history of the Western church. His defense of God's existence and his defense of the atonement are two of the most important arguments in the history of the church. He was also involved in controversies with Kings and Popes over the question of who has authority to invest church officers with their office. As a matter of theology, the Reformed doctrine (e.g., in the Heidelberg Catechism) of the atonement is heavily influenced by Anselm.

The volume is well printed on high quality paper. It's highly recommended.

Anselm Of Canterbury -- Fundamentally Reformed

Simonetta Carr has done it again. She has given us a superb historical biography of an important figure in Christian History written for young readers. And once again, an older reader like me, has enjoyed it as much or more than the intended audience.

Anselm of Canterbury is now the sixth title in the "Christian Biographies for Young Readers" series, a set of superbly illustrated and beautifully crafted hardcover books for children. Reformation Heritage Books is to be thanked for providing this coffee table quality set of treasures. This work on Anselm is even better than the earlier works, from Simonetta Carr, I read. Perhaps his story is more intriguing or less known, but I found the work even more captivating than the previous volumes, while the artwork was an engaging and the history as fascinating as ever.

Anselm became the unwilling archbishop of Canterbury who would rather have lived a life of solitude. Instead he served his fellow man and his church and state superiors. Known for his teaching and his care of the sick and the poor, Anselm is best remembered for his book *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God-Man?). In this book he develops his satisfaction theory of the atonement, providing a well-reasoned argument for why Jesus had to become the God man. In the simplified explanation of Simonetta Carr:

According to Anselm, even one "small" disobedience to God is greater than many worlds. Only one person could save people from this terrible problem— someone who was fully God, so He could live a perfect life

and take the terrible punishment for all the sins of others, and fully man, because it was man who sinned, so man should repay. That's why Jesus, who is fully God, became fully man for us. (p. 43)

As the above excerpt shows, Carr's writing is suitable for older children and doesn't dumb down history to be accessible. She aims to unfold the study of history for young readers but her care for accuracy prevents her from adjusting the story to be simpler and easier. She presents the real history, with its conundrums and questions, for her young readers. This title raises the question of the role of church and state, and the function of the Roman Catholic pope. She satisfactorily explains the quandary of church relations with the state, but only briefly sketches the nature of the papacy. In doing so she provides a platform for careful parents to engage their kids in the informed assessment of church history without overly simplifying complex debates and forcing premature conclusions.

Like the other titles in the series, period maps and illustrations illuminate the pages of her book. Masterful illustrations by Matt Abraxas and engaging full color photographs spark the imagination. Also included are excerpts of Anselm's writings and interesting facts about the customs and lifestyle of his time period.

If you pick up a copy of this book, you will want to pick up the entire set. Books on Augustine of Hippo, John Calvin, and John Owen are also available.

Athanasius – Modern Reformation

(William Boekestein)

Simonetta Carr's newest book in her Christian Biographies for Young Readers series depicts the life of this hero of the faith. And again, in a way that is both engaging and informative, she has skillfully woven the main character's biography with the doctrine for which he labored. The beautiful layout and art work by Matt Abraxas beckons readers to learn about this man who, though small in stature, loom large on the pages of Christian history.

Beauty and Glory of Christ – Peace and Truth

This symposium contains the addresses delivered at the Puritan Reformed Theological Conference at Grand Rapids in 2010. It is full of good things: the Lord Jesus is unambiguously identified as the Servant in Isaiah and the King in the Song of Songs. The glory of His incarnation, parables and death shines forth clearly also.

Two unusual but relevant pastoral messages present the savior as Master of Storms and of Stress. Other topics are His imputed righteousness and His compassionate heart for sinners. Marrow Theology is given a brief airing. 'Calvin, Kuyper and Politics' too while the series concludes with exhilarating calls to anticipate Christ's

glorious exaltation, investiture as the Lamb in the midst of God's throne, and as the focal point of all the doxologies in heaven and earth. Warmly Recommended!

Beauty and Glory of the Father – Gary Shultz Jr., Trinity Journal

Despite the prominence of God's fatherhood in Scripture, few books explicitly concentrate on the beauty and glory of God as Father, or what it means to experientially know God as Father, or what it means to experientially know God as Father. Yet these are the twin themes running throughout *The Beauty and Glory of God the Father*. The purpose of the book is to not only explore the theme of God's fatherhood scripturally, but to move the reader to worship and delight in God as Father. Each essay in the book, focusing on a distinct aspect or implication of God's fatherhood, accomplishes this purpose.

Though the book is a solid biblical and theological work, its purpose is primarily doxological. The historical treatments in particular are academically rigorous. Pastors especially will find material to help in sermon or worship preparation, and students of Trinitarian theology or Puritan history will also especially benefit from the book...All readers looking to grow in their love of God through an appreciation of an underemphasized aspect of God's person will find much in these essays to help them glory in the Father's person and work. – Gary Shultz Jr., Trinity Journal

The Best Method of Preaching – World Magazine (Caleb Nelson)

For all the hubris of its title, *The Best Method of Preaching* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2013) is actually a very humble-and humbling-little book. Petrus van Mastricht, a 17th-century Dutch preacher, found huge manuals of sermon preparation to be unhelpful, so he wrote what in its original Latin folio edition came to 12 pages of indispensable instruction for those who want their congregations to flourish. A joint project with the Dutch Reformed Translation Society, Reformation Heritage's English edition (the first ever translated) runs 60 pages. With the logical acumen characteristic of its era and a tightly packed condensation of material rare for any era, van Mastricht's work will greatly benefit anyone who wants to apply the Word of God to his own soul.

The method is this: First, read the text. Then exegete it—that is, dig out its meaning. Look first and

always to context. The teaching of the entire Bible, and the immediate context, will be your surest guide in determining what the passage is talking about. This done, think about it doctrinally—what truth does this text teach? Van Mastricht warns that you must always and only look to the text: The doctrine “should certainly be in the text,” because God does not want His children to draw out “just any word of God, but precisely the particular word that is in [t]his text.”

Finally, take the truth you just found and apply it to yourself (and your hearers). The Best Method of Preaching spends almost half its time on application—and for its author, application is not limited to conviction of sin. It can be for comfort, building up the distressed; “nouthetic,” for changing one’s view of sin; “exploratory,” for praising goodness; or “paranetic,” the straightforward moral exhortation often associated with application.

Preaching exists to change lives, so does van Mastricht’s manual.

By Good and Necessary Consequence – World Magazine (Caleb Nelson)

Jesus did it. The apostles did it, too. But that doesn’t matter; most Christians are extremely skeptical of this exegetical method. Known as “good and necessary consequence,” it is not a general idea but a technical phrase from the discipline of logic. It refers to the laws of inference by which the implications of a proposition may be drawn out. A “good consequence” is any valid inference. A “necessary consequence” is any inference that, given two or more propositions, cannot possibly be avoided. The method, therefore, teaches that not only everything the Bible says, but also everything it necessarily implies or assumes, is the Word of God. In other words, “good and necessary consequence” relies on rational comparison and deduction to draw out truths hidden below the surface of Scripture. For example, Jesus taught that the dead are resurrected based not on clear, obvious Old Testament assertions in Daniel 12 and Isaiah 26, but on God’s claim to be the God of Abraham. This *implies* that Abraham is alive, and therefore that the physical resurrection of the dead will take place.

Orthodox Presbyterian Church pastor Ryan McGraw’s *By Good and Necessary Consequence* (Reformation Heritage Books, 2012) explains and powerfully defends this principle. In detail, he shows that it is not merely a possible method of reading Scripture, but, based on the actual use of the Old Testament in the New Testament, the only correct method. Indeed, a refusal to accept it has historically been the major distinguishing feature of heresy. Those who will not accept it must deny the doctrine of the Trinity, which is biblical but can only be found by logically following the implications of all the Bible’s statements about the being of God and the subsistence of the

Persons of the Godhead.

Want to exegete like Jesus? Read Ryan McGraw!

Captivated: Beholding the Mystery of Jesus' Death and Resurrection – British Church Newspaper

(Dr. S. Westcott)

Books that deal faithfully with the essentials of saving religion, that do so in plain, attractive, easy readable language, are theologically sound, avoid sidetracks and denominational stances, and so do all this in a compact and affordable fashion are rare, and to be valued accordingly. This is exactly what Pastor Anyabwile has achieved in this rich little volume.

The author has a valid criticism of evangelical churches and believers in Europe and America: he says that we typically 'take glances at Christ' and then get busy with our church activities, rarely taking time to stop and gaze in his wonderful face or sit, Mary---like in adoration and spiritual hunger at his feet. We may be saved and know we are saved, but do we rest on that fact and keep the real, living, present Jesus Christ at arm's length?

This book leads us directly to Christ the Saviour. It provides a salutary reminder for Christian's, and is a fine book to give to seekers. May it be granted a wide circulation.

Children at the Lord's Supper

(Donald Van Dyken)

A number of years ago when I was trying to wade through all the material I could find on paedocommunion, I looked for a Reformed defense of credo-communion. I found none then, but now am thankful to Dr. Venema for filling that void. His book is in defense of the historic Reformed position on participation in Holy Communion.

It is a very readable and scholarly defense. His tone is peaceable and careful and his conclusions are well thought out.

I would urge all who hold leadership in Reformed churches to study this book. If any reader has been faced with a challenge to credo-communion, you will find this book an able defense of the historic Reformed position. And if in your own discussions you will adopt his plain-spoken, reasonable, and careful arguments, and as he does, avoid all wild charges, assertions, and caricatures, you will bring light rather than heat to the discussion of this important topic.

China's Reforming Churches – ChinaSource (Jennifer Guo)

For Christians with a passion for missions, China is on center stage. We certainly recognize this strategic mission field of approximately 1.35 billion people, and tremendous evangelistic fruit is being seen as a staggering number are becoming Christian daily. While fervent evangelistic efforts surely need to continue, especially since many of China's minority groups are considered **unreached/unengaged**, the astounding growth rate of the church poses critical and urgent needs in relation to church development. In this area, *China's Reforming Churches* is a unique book in that it focuses more on ecclesiology than missiology, more on building up the church than on evangelism (though of course these are connected). "Indeed, the proper goal of the church's mission has never been just to announce the good news to those who have not heard or to call unbelievers to faith and repentance; the church's mission also includes establishing a well---ordered church in every land for the welfare of God's people and perpetuation of the ministry" (17).

More specifically, the particular ecclesiology espoused in this book is the Presbyterian/ Reformed variety. *China's Reforming Churches* is written from the conviction that the need for church development in China is largely the need for the development of a healthy and robust Presbyterianism through an understanding of a biblical theology of the church as articulated within the Reformed tradition. As such, this book has a narrow focus and target audience. I have read some reviews criticizing this narrow focus and asserting that this book would be more helpful and have a wider audience if it were not written from this perspective; however, the focus and perspective were intentional and therefore cannot legitimately be criticized. This narrow focus is actually what drew me to this book; general books about mission work in China abound, but I am not aware of any other book that looks at the reformation that is going on in China. In fact, I did not even know that such a reformation was underway!

Reformed theology is being disseminated and embraced throughout China; Reformed confessions of faith are being translated or written and adopted; new attention is being paid to worship, preaching, and leadership; local congregations, and in a few cases entire networks, are being organized or reorganized along Presbyterian lines; Reformed seminaries are being established throughout the country; a Chinese Presbyterian polity has been drawn up; presbyteries are being formed in various places and are in communication with one another; ministers are being trained, examined, and ordained; and the great works of the Reformed tradition are being brought into open circulation. All of this is just the beginning of an attempt by Chinese pastors and church leaders to meet the needs of God's people and lay a firm foundation for the future. Despite their vigorous efforts, every one of them "would agree that the church is struggling to keep up with the demand for trained leaders and other resources" as the gospel continues to spread and grow

in the world's largest mission field (Baugus 22-23).

The above quote is likely to shatter many people's conception of Christianity in China. Typically the Church in China is primarily thought of as a persecuted church where non-registered house churches have no freedom to congregate and practice their faith, and where unthinkable physical persecution is the norm and not the exception. Therefore, Presbyterianism (or any highly formalized training or organization, for that matter) is often not thought of as possible in China. However, *China's Reforming Churches* frequently corrects common erroneous presuppositions and reveals that within China there is a surprising amount of freedom for Christians and even for the officially illegal, unregistered churches. It is an entirely different story when foreigners are involved, and the book goes into more detail about that.

China's Reforming Churches is an excellent survey of Presbyterianism in China— from its history (part 1), to the current landscape (part 2), to current challenges and opportunities (part 3), and to how China's reforming churches are appropriating the Reformed tradition in their context (part 4). Birthed out of a conference of Presbyterian and Reformed Christians interested in Presbyterianism in China, the content in this book is from a combination of fine American scholars and Chinese reforming pastors. *China's Reforming Churches* provides much valuable insight into China in general, as well as what God is doing there in a general sense. With the awareness that this book is from a presbyterian perspective, any Christian with an interest in the church in China would benefit from this book, though non-presbyterians will disagree with its fundamental driving conviction. However, those who identify with the Reformed tradition in any way would find this book most enjoyable, beneficial, and encouraging. *China's Reforming Churches* is essential reading on missions and ecclesiology in China from the Reformed perspective.

China's Reforming Churches-Haddington House Journal (Jack Whytock)

Many readers of a certain generation have had their thoughts about the Church in China coloured by stories of martyrdom like that of John and Betty Stam or the horrific persecutions of the Cultural Revolution. Names like Watchman Nee and Wang Ming-Dao are the reference points for our thinking about Chinese Christianity. This book is a helpful challenge to outdated thinking about China and shows how in the forty-or-so years since Mao's failed Cultural Revolution the churches of China have matured and been faced with perhaps more difficult challenges.

The compilation of conference presentations into book form often leaves the reader with the “you had to be there” feeling, but this book’s thoughtful organization and careful editing enable it to avoid that snare. There is some new material included in the book which did not form part of the original conference. A helpful preface and introduction set the stage and whet the appetite for the articles that follow.

The essays are grouped into four parts:

1. The History of Presbyterianism in China
2. Presbyterianism in China Today
3. Challenges and Opportunities for Presbyterianism in China
4. Appropriating a Tradition

Each section prepares the reader for the chapters to come, and often the reader will find himself flipping back a section to re-read a paragraph that contains information that will clarify something another author assumes some knowledge of. There are also a couple of helpful appendices which contain historical documents which also give further insight into the subject matter at hand. One of these is the translated document of Robert Morrison’s 1811 Catechism. In total, eleven different contributors have prepared the chapters of this book: Bruce Baugus, G. Wright Doyle, Brent Fulton, Luke Lu, Michael M., A. Donald MacLeod, Sung-Il Park, Phil Remmers, David VanDrunen, Guy Prentiss Waters, and Paul Wang.

As the titles of the four sections indicate, the book is unapologetically Presbyterian in its approach to the subject matter both in the historical review and in prescribing a pattern for the best approach to the spread and the nurture of the Church in China. As the first three chapters point out, no doubt one reason for this is that much of the early Protestant mission to China was Presbyterian and Reformed. Scots, Dutch Reformed, American, and Korean Presbyterians made up a significant portion of the early missionary labourers in China, and their work in areas such as linguistics and education bore fruit well after Western missionaries were expelled from China in the mid-20th century.

The chapters dealing with the current challenges in China are also very helpful to the Western Christian because they help to explain the very complex political and social situation within which Chinese Christianity functions. Christians in the West have tended to see the Three-Self Patriotic Movement churches as only a tool of the

Communist Party and the House church movement as the true church, and this understanding is shown to be simplistic and at times harmful to forward movement.

The Church in China has had to deal with many of the same issues and cultural struggles as the Western Church; the difference is that they have had to do so in a highly compressed time frame. Challenges of training for pastors and elders, opportunities for legal Christian publishing, and the indigenization of biblical and Presbyterian orthodoxy are all addressed in the final chapters.

I commend this book to those who are interested in what has always been a major mission field for the Western Church. Scholars, pastors, and laymen will find that it will challenge stereotypes and enable far more intelligent prayer for our Chinese Presbyterian brothers and sisters. Dr. Albert Mohler in a recent radio interview said, “The Lord has told us that He will always have a Church on the earth; what we need to realize is that it might not be centred here in the West.” One suspects that Baugus and his co-contributors would utter a hearty “Amen” to that sentiment.

China’s Reforming Churches -New Horizon – OPC Publication (Paul Browne)

Bruce Baugus and ten other contributors, including three OP ministers, walk us through the history, the present situation, and the challenges facing Presbyterianism in China, with a final fourth part of the book laying out how best to further this modern-day reformation. The committed Christian reader will find this book generally accessible, often fascinating, and sometimes thrilling! The final section of three articles may be of more specialized interest.

For us as believers in the U.S., often facing discouragements, it is encouraging to learn how Christ is building his church in China. It is a matter for praise that of the 1.35 billion people in China, an estimated 130 million are believers. There are more evangelical believers in China than in any other country. More Chinese go to church on Sunday than in all of Europe combined. There are more Christians in China than atheists! The articles together picture the Chinese church in her context, a land of staggering numbers poised to lead the world. We can thank God that Christ is visibly at work there.

Various authors here overturn our old assumptions. Besides the government registered churches and the underground churches, there is now a third stream: unregistered urban churches filled with professionals,

sometimes flourishing in their own comfortable building! The Chinese Internet teems with openly Christian website. Wealth, busyness, and ‘privatization of belief’ have become issues there as here.

Several articles trace the tortuous history of missions in China, focusing on the Presbyterian effort. The church’s blunders are as clearly portrayed as her magnificent examples and sacrifices. There are lessons here for a missionary- minded church – with missionaries now in China.

We see again how Christ may us Satan’s rage to build his church. Before Mao came to power in 1949, there were over 8,000 missionaries and 500,000 Chinese Protestants. During the Cultural Revolution (1966-78), Mao used all his power to remove every opponent of ‘Maoist orthodoxy’. The church bore the brunt; unknown numbers of believers suffered and died. Yet, at the end of the Cultural Revolution, it was found that Protestants had not disappeared from China, but increased to around six million!

As Presbyterian and reformed believers, we can rejoice that the church in China is experiencing reformation akin to our own, centuries ago. Churches are seeking connections with others; the plurality of elders is being embrace; Reformed theological training and literature are becoming available. Indeed, this book led me to rejoice again over the treasures we have freely received in the OPC, but too easily take for granted. Many of the articles here serve as excellent primers on our understanding of the church and the kingdom.

God alone knows how far this leaving will spread among the churches in China, but China’s Reforming Churches provides a stimulus to pray for such a glorious transformation.

China’s Reforming Churches – OPC

China’s Reforming Churches grew out of the China’s Reforming Churches Conference, held in College Park, Maryland, from January 2–4, 2013. It is an engrossing read not only for those concerned about China, or even missiology, but also for those committed to the Reformed faith and to how its distinctives and dynamics impact church and society in the unique historical, political, and cultural context of China. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the Reformed faith is universally relevant in carrying out the Great Commission. Right from the introduction, the editor’s deep conviction comes across concerning the “rich biblical and theological resources of the Reformed tradition and Presbyterian polity” (1), a theme which is repeated in various places throughout the text.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of Christian believers in China over the last few decades. Part of that growth has been built on the work of early Presbyterian and Reformed missions in China, which is

covered in the first part of the book. This is a necessary and helpful inclusion, as this history has tended to get lost in the accounts of Chinese church growth during the last several decades. Even the history of earlier periods has tended to focus, not without merit, on the labors of Chinese evangelists and church leaders, such as Wang Mingdao and John Sung, as well as those of Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission. But how many of us were aware, for instance, that the term “Three-Self,” the government organization of officially recognized and supervised churches since the early 1950s, actually originated with nineteenth-century Presbyterian missionary to China John Nevius, as a sound model for indigenous church planting?

The book goes on to offer an overview of Presbyterian and Reformed work in China today. Western misconceptions (and there are quite a few) about the Chinese church and its political and cultural context are dealt with. We see the distinctives of the Reformed faith spelled out regarding their relevance to the “on the ground” experience of Chinese church and culture today, particularly as they impact the life of the church and offer authentic biblical witness to the broader culture around her, under an authority that is still officially atheist. A particularly fascinating account of this experience is a conversation with two of China’s leading reformers—one of whom is known to me—as they speak of the current state of church and society, the role of Reformed theology, efforts to develop an indigenous Presbyterian church polity, and the impact they foresee of Reformed Christianity on the wider society.

Another theme stressed throughout the book is that of great challenge and difficulty, yet through which there is also much opportunity, evident in the essay on the endemic social conditions in China today. The book contains several essays on the importance of church government, including a thoughtful study and insightful reflection on the Council of Jerusalem recorded in Acts 15, from which observations are drawn with implications not only for the church in China, but everywhere.

Finally, there is an overview of Christian publishing and theological education in China, both areas with which I am involved. It is suggested that, notwithstanding the establishment of Christian schools and hospitals of a bygone era, past neglect of Christian publishing, i.e., the publishing of solid, substantial books in Chinese, has cost the church dearly. Surprisingly, the greatest obstacle to such publishing today is not the government, but lack of funds. What is needed is both accurate translation of solid theological works and the development of indigenous scholarship. The rise of Reformed “house-church” seminaries, while still in a formative stage, is an encouraging development to this end, as well as for the building of the church, yet not without its own restrictions and challenges.

It is emphasized more than once that opportunities are before us and they are now; and owing to the political and social climate in China, things could change very quickly. Yet Chinese church reformers are growing stronger and are gently and respectfully pressing forward.

In summary, not all that was presented at the conference is presented here, and not all presented here was presented at the conference. The book is offered, however, as an extension to the conference, especially valuable to those such as myself who desired but were unable to attend, as well as a summary for those who were present. The stand-out themes are clear and relevant to all: the rich biblical and theological resources of the Reformed tradition and Presbyterian polity; circumstances that are at once formidable barriers but also present unprecedented opportunities; the need for biblical church polity in an environment of rapid increase in the number of believers, as essential for church growth and work of the Great Commission; and finally, the ultimate goal—the long-term development of the church and church leaders, and indigenization of Reformed Christianity in China and throughout the world.

God has revealed the eternal truth of the gospel and mandated a corresponding polity for the church. Yet as one of the contributors put it, “our aim is not constitutional regularity” or “mechanical perfection” for its own sake. These have no power in themselves to prosper the church. This is the Spirit’s work. It is to him, not to procedures, we must look as the source of the church’s life and blessing” (242), even as we seek to be faithful to God’s revealed truth, which the Holy Spirit has authored. And Baugus concludes:

Presbyterian and Reformed folk strive to advance Reformed theology in China—or anywhere else in the world—only because we believe it is the purest and fullest exposition of the gospel of Jesus Christ that the church has yet achieved...We do not hope to see presbyterianism established in China out of petty sectarian pride, but out of a desire to see God glorified through a deeper and fuller enjoyment of Him and His steadfast love for us in Jesus Christ. (306)

For me, there is deep joy in being a small part of this transcendent enterprise on behalf of his beloved servants laboring throughout that great land. And this book, as I read it, only served to sharpen that sense.

Christ’s Glory Your Good – British Church Newspaper (Dr. S. Westcott)

The value of this small book lies in the fact that it not only contains sound and important doctrine but succeeds in being ‘theology made easy’ (which, as preachers will know, is no easy task!). The author is concerned, rightly, that much of today’s evangelicalism is openly man-centred and the purpose of the gospel is typically presented as being only the salvation of individual humans. McGraw reminds us that it is not us, but Christ, who is

the center of the gospel, His glory is its purpose, and that we are saved that He may have the praise and glory through eternity.

The Puritan John Owen pointed out that all weakness in theology, all deficiency in Christian living, stems from ‘inadequate meditation upon the glory of Jesus Christ.’ With this book to hand we should never be guilty of that error. May it have the wide circulation that it deserves!

Christ is All - Peace and Truth Magazine

Here we have a brief biography and sixty-five extracts from Horatius Bonar’s writings that capture both the spirit and the substance of his fervent devotion to Christ. Rich in matter for prayer, the title sends out a clarion call to our poverty-stricken souls to live holily, witness faithfully and spend much time with our God, the first two being impossible without the last. A first-rate compilation!

The Church’s Book of Comfort – Mid America Journal of Theology (J. Mark Beach)

Anyone who loves the Heidelberg Catechism – especially pastors who regularly use this document in their labors within the church, both in teaching and preaching – will heartily welcome this recently translated volume by Reformation Heritage Book.

The reader will find this handsome and sturdy volume to be well-illustrated – sprinkled with interesting portraits of important personages, facsimile pages, and sketches – even as the reader will find a significant and useful bibliography of both primary and secondary sources.

Students of the Heidelberg Catechism – pastors, scholars, and interested laypersons – will not want to pass up this highly recommended volume.

Christians Get Depressed Too – The Banner of Truth (Jeremy Walker)

Born of deep pastoral concern, this deliberately slim volume sets out to provide, from a reformed Christian perspective, a biblically balanced introduction to the issue of depression that will be helpful to sufferers and care-providers alike. Its brevity, together with its methodical solidity and alliterative structures, may help those who cannot handle something weightier. Murray sets out the crisis regarding depression (its reality and effects) before moving on

to its complexity (resisting unhelpfully simplistic and sweeping declarations about the nature of the beast, but taking into account various spiritual, physical and mental factors). The chapter on the condition itself takes in the sufferer's circumstances, thoughts, feelings, physical symptoms and behavior – the sections on thoughts and feelings are particularly helpful in terms of understanding more or less helpful tracks and tendencies in our attitudes (general spiritual health issues of which all saints should be aware). Again, in considering the cause Murray ranges over a number of potential contributors, as he does when looking at the cure. Finally, there is a chapter for the care-givers, offering some encouragements and counsels.

In a book of such brief scope there is always a danger of over or understating a case, or a lack of definition, but I was still impressed with the thoughtfulness and tenderness with which Murray writes, his careful use of Scripture to support and defend his assertions, and his awareness of the interplay of various factors in understanding and addressing depressing. He interacts critically with a variety of literature. He does not gloss over sin in its relationship to depression (as cause, concomitant, or consequence) but neither does he simply default to sin (or anything else) as the catch-all explanation for all sorts and degrees of depression. It is very much an introductory piece, but will be sufficient for many in getting a healthy and accurate grip on the issue of depression among believers. If you need help on this issue, you would find a good start here.

Christian's Reasonable Service – Books at a Glance Reviewed by Fred G. Zaspel

We may not have read his works, and we may not even have heard of him, but that says much more about us than it does about him. Wilhelmus à Brakel (1635-1711) is one of the most outstanding and influential theologians of the Dutch Second Reformation (c. 1600-1750). His magnum opus, a major work of systematic theology entitled *De Redelijke Godsdienst*, originally published in 1700, went through some twenty editions in the eighteenth century alone and is now available in English as *The Christian's Reasonable Service*. Joel Beeke calls this his “desert island book”: if you're stranded on a desert island and have only your Bible and one other book, this should be it!

Why title a work on systematic theology, “The Christian's Reasonable Service”? Well, if you have at all caught the spirit of the Dutch Second Reformation, as it is called, it makes perfect sense: God's self-revelation rightly understood inevitably compels the redeemed heart to serve him as the “reasonable” thing to do. Like the

English Puritans the Dutch “Further Reformation” was marked by a zeal to see doctrine lived out and experienced in faithful service to God, and à Brakel’s compendium of Christian theology models this worthy goal famously. Taking his title from Romans 12:1 states his goal precisely.

Written not just for theologians but for those in the pew *The Christian’s Reasonable Service* is no bare display of theoretical teaching. Rich with learning it is indeed, and each next section reflects long, careful, informed consideration. But it breathes of worshipful devotion and faithful pastoral application also. This - systematic theology pastorally considered – is theology as it ought always to be done, and it was for centuries as popular in the world of the Dutch as Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* was in the English world. It often served as fathers’ reading material for their children in their daily devotions.

This pastoral intent is obvious from just a glance through the Table of Contents. The esteemed Dutchman covers all the major departments of theology, but all of volume 3 and much of volume 4 are given to an exposition of Christian living and practical godliness – the ten commandments, important Christian virtues (love, the fear of God, obedience, hope, contentment, self-denial, sincerity, patience, prayer, etc.), the Lord’s Prayer, spiritual exercises (fasting, watchfulness, secret prayer, meditation, singing, etc.), spiritual growth, temptation, spiritual deadness, perseverance, and so on. If this seems like imbalance, consider it a needed corrective. Little of this is seen in your typical Systematic Theology, but who could deny its rightful place? A pastor-theologian always, à Brakel unpacks the biblical teaching regarding the Christian life with precision and care.

This humble, worshipful tone continues throughout, and à Brakel’s approach is simple. With each next section he states the doctrine, then gives it fuller explanation with biblical support, then handles various objections, and finally gives some pertinent exhortations and applications. The method is effective and is strikingly reminiscent of the Puritans.

Volume 1 of this English edition begins with more than a hundred pages of introductory matters – a Biographical Sketch of the author, an informative historical overview of the Dutch Second Reformation, and à Brakel’s own Preface, “To the Congregation of God.” And volume 4 concludes with a lengthy Appendix, “The Administration of the Covenant of Grace in the Old and New Testaments,” which includes a discussion of typology and a surprisingly robust defense of the future conversion and restoration of Israel to her land – interesting not least in that no one would accuse Wilhelmus à Brakel of harboring dispensationalist sympathies!

The Communicant's Spiritual Companion – New Horizons

Preparing to take the Lord's Supper is an important aspect of the Christian life, but I suspect that many Christians are at a loss as to how to prepare for it. What should they think, pray, or meditate upon as they anticipate taking the Supper? Reformation Heritage Books has republished a little devotional book written by eighteenth-century Anglican minister Thomas Haweis. In this book, Haweis presents seven brief chapters, ranging from the nature of a sacrament to the different ways people should prepare to take the Supper. The original context for this book was a Sunday afternoon series of catechetical lectures for congregants, so the book is aimed at the average person, which makes it readable and easily accessible to most in the church.

Such a book can be useful and helpful for Christians who sometimes find themselves at a loss for words or thoughts regarding the Supper. Or perhaps some might find themselves in a rut and go through the same routine before and after the Supper.

Compassionate Jesus – Cross Focused Reviews

“My wife works in the medical field and I thought I had a pretty good grasp of what I believed about the medical field from a Christian perspective. However, Mr. Bogosh really challenged my thought-process and caused me to re-think a lot of the things I thought were true about not only the medical field itself, but also how I should view myself interacting with that field from a Christian perspective.”

Reviewer: Joshua Davis ([GoodReads.com](https://www.goodreads.com/user/show/100000000-joshua-davis))

Rating: 5 Stars

“This book is a must have for health professionals, Christians, and anyone interested in learning how to look at modern medicine and practices more ethically and biblically.”

Reviewer: Conrade Yap (booksaint.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“If you're looking for a book that will transform your thinking about medical science and you're wondering what the Bible states about health and the health care system of today, then this book is definably the one to read!”

Reviewer: Andrew Smith (runningtowardschrist.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“With the complexity of health care and insurance the way it is today, we all need to be forewarned and forearmed with information. But most of all, we need to keep all these issues within the purview of our Christian belief system.”

Reviewer: Beverly Terry (beverlylynnt.wordpress.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“What you will find in this book is a pastor/nurse who has wrestled with modern medicine practices aligned next to scripture and wants to inform you of what he found & became convicted of.”

Reviewer: Louis Zinc (louiszinc.tumblr.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“As a former RN with thirteen years of experience in a variety of medical settings... I was both inspired and

encouraged by Compassionate Jesus, and I highly recommend it for its ease in reading (even for those without a medical background), biblical foundation with multiple scriptural references, and valuable information on the history of health care and the philosophy of modern medicine and medical science.”

Reviewer: Patricia Hunter (pollywogcreek.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

Contentment, Prosperity & God’s Glory – Cross Focused Reviews

“A short yet vital book for our day and age, *Contentment, Prosperity, and God’s Glory* is a theologically sound and valuable handbook for how to deal with whatever time in life God has brought you so that you may live your life, whether that be a time of prosperity or adversity, to the glory of God.”

Reviewer: Michael Boling (intelmin.org)

Rating: 5 Stars

“This book explains the idea of being full to the Glory of God. I think Rev. Burroughs would have been an amazing preacher to hear, and I am so glad that his books have been reissued for this generation.”

Reviewer: Faith Farrell (foundchristianbyhisgrace.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“This book will help Christians to gain a biblical view of God which will in turn help them to understand the nature of contentment in good and bad times. If ever there was a book that spoke to a our times, it is this one, which is why I pray that every Christian will pick up *Contentment, Prosperity and God’s Glory* and learn from the godly Burroughs.”

Reviewer: Dave Jenkins (servantsofgrace.org)

Rating: 5 Stars

“This is a very short book that is just 119 pages, but I have sticky notes on almost every page. I can’t write every word from those notes here for this review because if I did, then you would not need to read this book.”

Reviewer: Daniel Mac (fiveintelligiblewordsblog.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“Since most American Christians are rich, especially by Puritan standards, most would benefit from giving this book a careful read. And for those who are not rich, an understanding of the dangers of riches may help them to be more content in their poverty.”

Reviewer: Benjamin Shaw (gptsrabbi.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“The Puritans understood that they were strangers and aliens on this earth and they traveled light, content in times of adversity and prosperity. In this book Jeremiah Burroughs in a gentle and pastoral way challenges all of us to do the same. A must read!”

Reviewer: Alex Houston (reformed-at-last.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

Covenanted Uniformity in Religion --- Haddington House Journal

(D. Douglas Gebbie)

Up until last year, access to Wayne Spear’s 1976 Ph.D. thesis was limited to bound photocopies of the typed dissertation. Now, thirty-seven years after it was submitted and eight years after his retirement from the Chair of Systematic Theology at the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Spear’s research is at last in print and might have the audience which it deserves.

The subtitle, *The Influence of the Scottish Commissioners on the Ecclesiology of the Westminster Assembly*, describes what the book is about. After the preface and introduction, there is the first part of the book which has three chapters. Chapter one sets out the historical background of the Westminster Assembly. Chapter two describes the way that the Assembly conducted business, with an emphasis on the structure of the committees. Chapter three deals with the Scottish Commissioners and their work.

The second part has four chapters which treat the church and its officers, the local church, governmental assemblies, and ordination. The pattern followed by Spear is to state the final formulation at which the Assembly arrived; to describe how, through the work of the committees, the formulation was developed; and to pick up on issues which were of particular interest to the Scots by describing the existing Scottish practice and noting the extent to which the Scottish Commissioners were able to either persuade the English Divines to adopt the Scottish way or to safeguard its continuation in the Church of Scotland. While doing this, Spear also notes the differences between the Scots and the English over which elements of church government were considered to be mandated by the Word or which were agreeable to the Word.

Drawing from his research, Wayne Spear concludes by describing what use was made of the Form of Presbyterian Church Government composed by the Westminster Assembly in England and Scotland, reviewing the aims of the Scots at the Assembly, and analysing the degree of Scottish success.

Why publish a dissertation completed in 1976 now? The answer is that until Chad Van Dixhoorn's edition of the minutes of the Westminster Assembly arrived in 2012, access to this primary source of material was rather limited. Now, with this increased access comes increased interest in, and opportunity to interact with, studies which have relied on this source. Spear's work is one such study.

Do I need this book? If you have an interest in Presbyterianism, whether as an academic study or as the form of government to which you adhere, then the answer is yes. This book is an introduction to, summary of, and bibliography for historic Scottish Presbyterian Principles. A grasp of these principles is required to understand the background and context of all subsequent discussions. You have to know your Gillespie before you can interact meaningfully with Thornwell and Hodge.

The Day of Worship – Free Presbyterian Magazine

By Matthew Vogan

This is not simply one more book on the principle of keeping the Sabbath. Neither does the book primarily

focus on practical issues relating to the Fourth Commandment. The author maintains that widespread rejection of Sabbath-keeping is a symptom of other major problems. Wrong attitudes towards the law of God and the world prevail. These must be addressed to prepare the way for accepting the biblical concept of Sabbath-keeping. In short, the Puritan, biblical Sabbath will never be adopted until Puritan attitudes to the Christian life are understood and accepted as scriptural.

The book seeks to address “the primary underlying issues behind the widespread neglect of the Sabbath Day”. It responds to those who “have dismissed this viewpoint out of hand, as unwarranted from Scripture, legalistic, and inconsistent with the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ”. The book is about much more than the Sabbath itself. It addresses “significant issues such as the kind of obedience required by the gospel, the relation of the believer to an unbelieving world, the relationship between the law and the gospel, and the focus of our hope of eternal life”.

The Day of Worship is a robust yet accessible resource that can yield benefit. The chapters are concise and contain much in little. In some cases they are self-contained in their treatment of a subject. There is a direct style of engagement with the reader. It is more unique and hard-hitting than the title would suggest on face value.

Developing a Healthy Prayer Life – Presbyterian Network

In his foreword to the book, which contains 31 meditations on the subject of communion with God, Geoffrey Thomas writes, ‘I wish this book had fallen into my hands fifty years ago when I was a young Christian.’

It is an ideal book for young people. It runs to only 99 pages and no chapter is longer than three and a half pages, making it very suitable for daily devotional reading. The authors write with great simplicity, clarity and perception, on topics such as, Who should Pray? Pray in Christ’s name; Pray believingly, Pray submissively; Pray by the Spirit; Pray with Scripture.

Developing in Biblical Counseling – Sam William, Journal of Biblical Counseling

J. Cameron Fraser’s book offers a brief history of biblical counseling, but it is more than that. It is also a personal account of his journey to reconcile the seminal insights of Jay Adams with his own experience as a

counselor, and with his understanding of the Puritans' approach to personal ministry. He writes comfortably, bringing the clarity and descriptive skill of a good journalist to bear in this short book.

Fraser does not view himself as an insider, meaning that his primary vocational calling is not biblical counseling. He avoids extensive analyses of the personalities of his subjects, sticking more to what they have written or what has been written about them, relying heavily on David Powlison's book on the history of biblical counseling. He acknowledges his commitments but keeps his own biases in the background and does not seem to have much money on any of the horses in the Christian counseling race. He is theologically trained so he possesses a capacity for thoughtful theological engagement with the key issues and controversies within Christian and biblical counseling.

Developments in Biblical Counseling begins with Fraser's personal and yet archetypal history, one that will sound familiar to counselors who aim to be Christian. He grew up as a Bible-believing Christian, but sensed a disparity between the theology and the practice of his church when people with mental illness were reflexively referred to mental health professionals, rather than counseled by their pastors. The lights came on for Fraser when he encountered Jay Adams's nouthetic counseling at Westminster Theological Seminary. He and his wife experienced the practical effectiveness of biblical truth as they began to counsel others. Then, he writes, "as time went on and we were faced with more difficult cases...treating clinical depression as sin only seemed to make things worse...increasingly we felt out of our depth" (p.xii). Fraser's counseling journey then took a significant turn. After reading Larry Crabb, who seemed more cognizant of the complexities of human suffering, Fraser experienced a kind of counter-enlightenment, noting, "what Crabb wrote seemed to ring more true to life as we were experiencing it" (p.xiii). These disparities led Fraser into conversations with J.I. Packer, and then further research and writing, comparing Adams and the puritan, Richard Baxter.

Fraser offers a brief intellectual history of Jay Adams, recounting significant early influences upon Adams's development as a theologian (Robert Rudolph and Cornelius Van Til) and counselor (O. Hobart Mowrer). Fraser describes premonitory differences between Adams's "unadorned biblicism" and John Bettler,² his pastor and first colleague at Westminster. Fraser contrasts Adams's strong emphasis on the antithesis separating Christian and secular thought with Bettler's aversion to fundamentalist separatism, and his open but cautious willingness to learn from secular psychologists. This sets the stage for another key theme in the book: how to reconcile Adams's counseling model and methods with those who followed him. He describes and cites Adams's acerbic responses to

Heath Lambert's mild critique in *The Biblical Counseling Movement after Adams* (2011). Fraser sees Adams as "resistant to the idea that his basic approach can be improved upon biblically" (p.13).

Using five categories of analysis, he goes on to provide a fair-minded summary of "Biblical Counseling 1.0," per Jay Adams. These same categories are the main themes addressed in the book: sufficiency of Scripture; definition of biblical counseling; biblical counseling's relationship to psychology and psychiatry; means and methods of behavioral change; and sin, suffering, and Satan.

Fraser summarizes three typical criticisms and concerns about Adams's version of biblical counseling:

1. Adams's epistemology relies too heavily upon Van Tillian presuppositionalism, which results in a negation of God's common grace manifest in secular psychology.
2. The focus of first generation biblical counseling is reductionistic in practice, with an over-focus on sin and behavior change, and a neglect of internal dynamics.
3. Biblical Counseling 1.0 evinces a thin understanding of the role of external influences on people's experiences and behavior, such as Satan, the family, and unbidden suffering.

Next, he describes recent developments in biblical counseling, tracing epistemological and conceptual differences that persist between Adams and "Biblical Counseling 2.0"—Ed Welch, David Powlison, and others. Finally, he compares and contrasts nouthetic and biblical counseling with the counseling of the Puritans, of which Fraser is a proponent.

Developments in Biblical Counseling serves the counseling community well as a kind-hearted editorial on the contours and tensions in the contemporary biblical counseling movement. Its concise history of biblical counseling fairly describes the seminal distinctives formulated by Jay Adams, and then advanced by the 2.0 generation. It grapples straightforwardly with the perennial epistemological and anthropological challenges that all counselors must sort out: Are people and their problems simple or complex? Can we learn from psychology? How does the sufficiency of Scripture work out in our counseling model and its practice?

Who should read this book? Anyone who is interested in seeing biblical counseling continue to develop can benefit by listening to a thoughtful assessment from a sympathetic observer/participant. Biblical counseling is not a finished product. It is an unfolding project, because practical theological wisdom always needs to develop.

Devoted to the Service of the Temple – Gospel Standard

We wonder how many of our readers have heard of Hercules Collins? Sadly, the names of the founders of our denomination, under God, are forgotten – yet they were godly, worthy, able men who suffered much for Jesus’ sake. The Waldenses, the Huguenots, the English martyrs, the Covenanters – all are well known, but not the sufferings of the early Baptists.

Hercules Collins (1646/7-1702) was pastor of what is usually acknowledged as the first Particular Baptist church in England. We have an account of his life, and how he was imprisoned for the truth’s sake. He attended the 1689 Assembly in London and was one of the signatories of the Confession of Faith. His last text was: “They overcame by the blood of the Lamb,” which he experienced in his death. Like many other worthies he is buried in Bunhill Fields.

This little book takes its title from one of his own works, *The Temple Repaired*. In all it includes thirty-five pieces selected from his writings.

A bibliography is included, and parts of the funeral sermon preached by John Piggott. There are a number of pictures.

The book is one of a series: “Profiles in Reformed Spirituality.” We are delighted that Hercules Collins has been remembered, and hope that more similar works will follow.

Discovering Delight – New Horizons

This is a sweet little gem of a book, presenting meditations for each day of the month. They are uplifting and nicely written. The book goes through Psalm 119, one section at a time. It also includes a few meditations on other passages in order to make a total of thirty-one chapters. Each day there is a series of three questions to help you reflect on the passage and how it applies to your own life.

Mrs. Mathes has compiled nicely thought-out chapters. They are long enough to be substantial in their content, but short enough to read for a daily quiet time. Her doctrinal base is sound and solidly Reformed. She doesn’t beat you over the head with God’s law, but rather encourages a genuine love and appreciation for it, highlighting the way God shows his love in his law.

This would be a wonderful little gift book to use when you need a little something to take along as a thank-you present or for a special teacher or friend. It would be of interest to both men and women in any walk of life.

Divine Rule Maintained – Ordained Servant, Ryan McGraw

The function of God’s law in Scripture has always raised difficult theological questions. With the advent of modern exegesis and theological methods, the proposed options for understanding divine law have only multiplied. In this climate, historical theology often challenges contemporary assumptions and pushes us beyond the bounds of current proposals. Stephen Casselli’s work on Anthony Burgess does all of these things and more. Since Burgess was a prominent member of the Westminster Assembly, this book helps explain the teaching of the Westminster Standards on God’s law, bringing a vital strand of the Reformed tradition into contemporary debates.

Casselli’s book is a useful introduction to Westminster’s teaching on God’s law. In six concise chapters, he introduces his topic, sets Burgess in his historical context, and then treats in order creation and law, the law in the Mosaic covenant, and the law/gospel distinction, followed by a conclusion. His findings include ideas such as the law as an expression of God’s nature, natural law and moral law, the threefold division of God’s law, the threefold use of God’s law, the Mosaic covenant as a covenant of grace, and the law and the gospel as expressing primarily the relationship between the Old Testament and the New. He delves deeply and broadly into British Reformed theology, introducing English readers to a wide array of important resources. Though Casselli writes historical theology, he does so with his finger on the pulse of today’s church by singling out law and creation (including the nature of natural law), law and covenant, and law and gospel (139–43). One of the most useful features of his analysis is his observation that Burgess distinguished between the law as a reflection of God’s character and the law as a covenant (61). This distinction undoubtedly undergirds chapter 19 in the Westminster Confession of Faith (“On the Law of God”). The tendency in much modern theology to ignore or to deny this distinction renders this chapter in the Confession virtually unintelligible.

Though *Divine Rule Maintained* is well written and useful, some points require greater clarity. For example, Casselli treats natural law as virtually synonymous with moral law. Yet James Bruce shows helpfully in his recent work on Francis Turretin that natural law referred to natural relationships between God and people and between people and one another as created by God. The content of moral law was identical with natural law, but the relationship between them is that of underlying principle and its outward expression.

A related issue is how Casselli classifies Reformed uses of law. Though he notes most of the vital components of Reformed teaching, such as the threefold division of law (moral, ceremonial, and judicial), the threefold use of the law, the law as a covenant of works, the law as the Old Testament, and the law as distinct from the gospel, he does not always distinguish these categories clearly. The most prominent example of this is his chapter on the law and the gospel, in which he states without explanation that Burgess treated the law as the Old Testament and the gospel as the New. While hinting at the fact that Lutherans dichotomized law and gospel regarding justification and showing that Reformed authors agreed with them on this point, he does not illustrate adequately how and why Reformed authors modified the law/gospel distinction. James Bruce has established elsewhere that Reformed authors treated the law as reflecting God’s character, which led to natural law as reflecting God’s relation to his creatures, which then led to moral law as its outward expression.^[2] This moral law was the bedrock of the three divisions and three uses of law. The gospel created these uses and divisions of the law. This raises the related issue that in Reformed theology, law as opposed to gospel referred to various things. It could refer to the covenant of works as opposed to the covenant of grace. It could refer to the Old Testament versus the New Testament. Or, it could refer to the Mosaic covenant versus the new covenant. The complexity of treating the law in Reformed theology reflected the diversity of the uses of law in Scripture. What Casselli highlights rightly is the close relationship between the law and covenant theology. However, his study raises a number of unanswered questions regarding the above Reformed uses of law. This may result from the virtual absence of Latin Reformed dogmatic works, without which readers lose some of the precise distinctions within Reformed orthodoxy as well as its international character.

Casselli’s book on Anthony Burgess on the nature and function of divine law cannot solve today’s theological difficulties. Scripture alone can serve this purpose. However, his work shows us that contemporary voices on the subject are not the only ones worth hearing. The church needs books like this one in order to help her read the Bible better by lifting her gaze from her current outlook to the horizon of church history. Though the church is not infallible, yet since Christ continues to direct her “by the Holy Spirit speaking in Scripture” (WCF 1.10), we do well to hear what she has had to say.

The Doctrine of Justification By Faith – Gospel Standard

(J.A. Hart)

The treatise begins by opening up the depravity of the human mind by the Fall in that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Hence all our works of righteousness are as filthy rags, and God being infinitely holy cannot look upon sin with any degree of allowance. Faith is God's gift and is preceded in the sinner's experience by conviction of sin. The Lord Jesus Christ by the sacrifice of Himself suffered the punishment due to His people's sins and they are justified by this sacrifice once offered and made righteous by the imputation of His righteousness which He wrought out by His fulfilling the holy law of God.

The author states in chapter 10 (page 251): "There is a justification of convinced sinners on their believing. Hereon are their sins pardoned, their persons accepted with God, and a right is given to them, to the heavenly inheritance. This state they are immediately taken into upon their faith, or believing in Jesus Christ." Whilst the reading of this book requires very careful attention, it is full of precious truth. We warmly recommend it to our readers.

Encouragement for Today's Pastor – Robert Strivens

Pastors are often in need of encouragement and this book will do just what it says on the cover – it will encourage you, and it will do so with the help of fine pastors from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It will be most appreciated by those in gospel ministry (and, I suspect, their wives), through it can be read with profit, for encouragement, by all believers.

Joel Beeke and Terry Slachter have put together a very readable handbook in six parts, each addressing different areas of pastoral ministry and Christian life. It is not a manual providing instruction on pastoral ministry. Instead, it addresses areas of life which are liable to lead to discouragement, challenge and difficulty, particularly for the pastor.

So, for example, the authors deal with the perennial problem of discouragement from lack of growth in numbers and apparently poor response to preaching. They do so by reminding us of God's sovereignty and promises, and helpfully recalibrate our thinking to remember that faithfulness in fulfilling duties is what is primarily required of the Christian, whereas results and success lie in God's hand.

We are warned against comparing ourselves with others and our ministries with theirs – counsel much need in our celebrity-seeking age. Among other subjects, the volume stimulates us to take God's Word to our own hearts first and foremost, before seeking to apply it to others. It examines helpfully the vexed subject of the call to

ministry. It underlines the central importance of doctrine and theology in pastoral work. It reminds us that we need to be always submissive to God's will, even in times of grief and suffering.

The authors hold before us the privilege and immense reward of gospel ministry. All of this is supported by quotations from quite a wide range of Puritan writers. The reality of the difficulty of pastoral ministry is faced and great help provided in this small volume.

A Faith Worth Teaching: The Heidelberg Catechism's Enduring Heritage (Jason Helopoulos)

If you can keep a secret, I will share it with you: I am falling in love with the Heidelberg Catechism. As a Presbyterian pastor, the Westminster Standards hold a special place in my heart (I don't want my fellow presbyters overreacting here), but the Heidelberg has been encroaching upon that Westminster-dominated region over the past year. A year ago, I took a call to labor "out of bounds" at a Reformed Church located squarely in the Dutch Tradition. This sent me scurrying in every direction to find resources that would help this newbie in learning the Three Forms of Unity. To my shame, I hadn't spent much time with these confessional documents and this new call came with an immediate desire to know the Belgic Confession, Canons of Dordt, and Heidelberg Catechism. As I have begun to study them, the Heidelberg Catechism has quickly become a favorite.

As I have searched for good resources on the Heidelberg Catechism, there have been some helpful additions to my library. Early commentaries on the Catechism like William Ames' *A Sketch of the Christian's Catechism* and Zacharius Ursinus' *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* have been invaluable. More recent commentaries on the Catechism such as Fred Klooserter's *Our Only Comfort* and Kevin DeYoung's *The Good News We Almost Forgot* have been beneficial in preparing to preach through the Catechism for the first time. They both are written in a pastorally sensitive and theologically rich way. Two recent books, both of which are collections of essays, have offered insight into the Catechism. The first is Willem Van'T Spijker's *The Church's Book of Comfort*, and the second is Lyle Bierma's *An Introduction to the Heidelberg Catechism*. And yet, the availability of helpful resources in the English language on this 450 year old confessional standard is still quite insignificant. That is why I was excited to see this new volume on the Heidelberg Catechism, *A Faith Worth Teaching*, edited by Jon Payne and Sebastian Heck.

A Faith Worth Teaching rightly brings to our attention the importance of this catechism on its 450th

anniversary. The contributing authors demonstrate the monumental effect this catechism has had upon the church in the past, with a hopeful outlook for its effect upon the church going forward. In this way, the book is a well-ordered plea divided into four parts. The first part addresses the history of the Heidelberg with regard to its formation, as well as its use, in the United States.

This section is followed by four chapters that highlight the Heidelberg Catechism in its relationship to the means of grace: preaching, baptism, and the Lord's Table. Part three considers Christian doctrine and the Heidelberg Catechism with chapters on the Church, Justification and Sanctification, Christology, and the Holy Spirit. The final portion of the book ends with three chapters on the Heidelberg Catechism as an actual catechetical tool. Each of the fourteen chapters of the book are written by well-respected scholars and pastors of significant ability. Each of the contributors demonstrates thorough knowledge about the subjects on which they write. The editors are also to be commended for selecting men from various Reformed communities and a number of countries (Germany, Netherlands, and the United States).

As would be expected, certain chapters stand out above others, but there is no chapter that the book would have been better without. With any book of this type, every reader will have suggestions about what should have been included, though obviously the editors couldn't include everything. I will offer a few critiques and suggestions as we look briefly at each chapter in a given section, with the caveat that I thoroughly enjoyed and appreciated this book in its entirety.

The first section includes two chapters. The first chapter is how a book of this genre should begin. Lyle Bierma provides a helpful and brief history of the Catechism. He helpfully engages the theological movement in Frederick III and Ursinus that led to the writing of the Heidelberg Catechism. In addition, he aids the reader in understanding the movement of Reformed theology across the European continent. My one critique of this chapter is that it would have been helpful to have a few facts detailing why the academic community now believes Olevianus had a more minor role in writing the catechism than was once believed. The assertion is made, but no genuine evidence is given to support it. The second chapter was one of the more disappointing in the book. Hart is an able scholar and I was looking forward to reading this chapter. However, his restricted focus on commemorations as a gauge of the Heidelberg's continued use and influence was too limiting. In addition, his personal scruples and concerns about revivalism showed forth more than was warranted and was often distracting for a chapter on this subject and of this length. In addition, I would suggest that the first section would have

benefited from a chapter on the Heidelberg's spread, use, and current state in other parts of the world where the Reformed church exists (i.e. South Africa, India, France, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Australia, etc.).

The second section begins with chapters three and four by Joel Beeke, which were two of the finest chapters in the book. These chapters alone are worth the price of the work. The chapters were well-structured, thorough without being pedantic, and incredibly practical. His second chapter, though focused particularly on catechetical preaching, may be one of the most overall helpful, brief, and practical works on preaching that I have read. The fifth chapter, written by Sebastian Heck, addressed baptism and was written in a scholarly manner. It is an in-depth analysis and interaction with the Heidelberg's questions and answers on the subject.

Contained within this well-written chapter is a thorough-going Reformed case for covenantal baptism. Jon Payne's chapter on the Lord's Table is pastoral in tone and positive in approach. It was quite refreshing. The second section would have benefited from a chapter on prayer, but that seems like nitpicking in what was by far the most well-written and helpful portion of the book.

The third section was not lacking in well-written and useful chapters either. It begins with one of my favorite chapters (chapter seven) in the book, featuring Michael Horton at his best. His chapter on the church is Christological, interacts with different traditions of the Christian faith, and is sensitive to current issues. He helpfully details the differences between Legalism, Antinomianism, and the Reformed faith, as well as Roman Catholic, Anabaptist, and Reformed theology. If that wasn't enough, Horton also contrasts the Reformed view of the church and its mission with the current "missional church movement." Cornelius Venema's chapter on justification and sanctification is a useful corrective to many of the errors prevalent in evangelicalism and Reformed circles today. Mark Jones' chapter on the Christology of the Heidelberg Catechism is a tour de force. It is a rich and concise interaction with the catechism's Reformed view of the work, natures, and person of Christ. One has trouble imagining a better effort in so few pages on this crucial subject. The tenth chapter by d'Assonville is an interesting look at the three offices of Christ in the Heidelberg Catechism, but read more like a journal article than a chapter in a book. However, that may be only a particular irritation for this reviewer. Daniel Hyde's chapter closes this section with a helpful rejoinder to critics of Reformed theology regarding its perceived lack of emphasis upon the Holy Spirit. This chapter could easily be the most significant in the book, given current pressures upon the Reformed community. Hyde provides a ready answer to the Pentecostal and Charismatic concerns on one side and Hyper-Calvinism on the other side.

The fourth section begins with Robert Godfrey's comparison of the Heidelberg Catechism with the two Westminster catechisms and the two catechisms written by Calvin for Geneva. As someone who knows the Westminster tradition and is just delving into the Heidelberg Catechism this was a chapter I was hoping would be included in the book. It is a helpful chapter, but I walked away thinking it could have been more so. Godfrey uses a few subjects (faith, Christ's Ascension, etc.) as samples for comparison. These are beneficial in and of themselves; however, a more full and complete conclusion would have aided this chapter. In many ways the overall differences are swallowed up in the particular analysis offered and a short conclusion which emphasizes a united Reformed identity. Chapter thirteen by Willem Verboom is a quality introduction to the history of the Heidelberg Catechism as an actual catechetical tool. In addition, the beginning of his chapter helpfully lays the foundation for proper catechizing. The book closes with a chapter refuting the accusation that the Heidelberg Catechism is too deeply indebted to scholasticism.

William van't Spijker presents the convincing case and rounds out this book with a gospel-saturated chapter. His chapter ends the work by highlighting Ursinus' conviction that theology should begin, proceed, and conclude upon the foundation of Scripture. What better way to conclude a book about the Heidelberg Catechism?

A Faith Worth Teaching is a volume that I heartily recommend. Payne and Heck have served the church well with this addition. I expect that most of you will find this book, devour it, and enjoy it as much as this reviewer did. Even more importantly, with the contributors to this book, my overriding hope is that reading this work will encourage the church to celebrate the Heidelberg Catechism on its 450th anniversary by getting to know it, love it, and use it. This Presbyterian is doing just that.

Faithfulness under Fire – The Voice of the Heidelberg Reformation Association

This book tells the story of Guido De Bres. Guido is the author of the Belgic Confession. It is a well-crafted story that starts with De Bres begins as a painter of church windows with his father through his death by hanging for taking a stand for the Reformed view of Scripture. The illustrations are beautifully and tastefully done given the subject matter. In the postscript to the book, Boekestein says this:

The Life of Guido de Bres is not exactly a pleasant read. The story is sad, and, in our age of tolerance, at times it is uncomfortable. Yet we believe his story is important because it really happened. In fact, it happened a lot! In other words, de Bres was not all that extraordinary. He was one of countless Christians who spent their lives in devotion to the Lord and in commitment to His Word...we don't believe it is necessary to shield even young children from the ugliness of life as long as we also provide a context in

which this life can be lived victoriously. Guido de Bres thrived in tragedy because he was hoping in the gospel of Jesus Christ... This is the value we see in teaching our children about Guido de Bres - not to glorify him, but to be drawn by his example to live to the glory of God.

The book presents the realities of the Protestant/ Roman Catholic conflict. The truth of the hostilities is presented without undue attention to the gory details. What makes the book work is the way in which de Bres is portrayed as man who was compelled by the love and glory of God to follow Him in obedience, even unto death. The story is a wonderful illustration to children of faithfulness to God in spite of the costs. Our children need real heroes and real stories. Most of what is passed off as stories of faith is fluff. Our kids are given vegetables and Bible superheroes. They need real heroes. Guido de Bres is a hero that we can set before our children as man concerned with God's glory above all. If you are looking for a story that will illustrate to your children or grandchildren what it means to have God's glory as the aim and purpose of their life, this book will do that.

Fighting Satan – Evangelical Times

Some people perceive so much demon activity that personal responsibility is undermined. Others so totally ignore Satan that they effectively deny his reality. Joel Beeke avoids both extremes, and offers a balanced attitude. He points out that demon possession was fairly frequent during the ministry of Jesus, less prominent in the book of Acts, and is never mentioned in the New Testament letters.

However, he recognizes that in gospel pioneering situations, or in today's western world (where skeptical secularism and the rise in occult activity sit, ironically, side-by-side such phenomena are likely to reappear. He insists that the New Testament's silence on techniques for demon expulsion imply that the solution is not to attempt to perform exorcisms, but to powerfully preach the gospel.

He also attributes such things as the rise of heresies within the church and persecution against the church as satanically inspired.

The book's main purpose, though, is to help believers wrestle successfully against Satan. It falls into four parts. The first outlines biblical teaching on Satan and documents examples of his activity in church history. Part two is based on Ephesians 6:10-18. The third section outlines Satan's typical strategies and offers practical advice on how to avoid falling into sin, while part four shows how we can wage spiritual warfare in our personal lives, church lives and life in the world.

Running through the book is heartfelt application to both believers and unbelievers.

Fighting Satan – Gospel Coalition

Brian Borgman

I know I should resist the temptation to use an overused quote, but I can't help it: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested." The reason I couldn't resist is because Joel Beeke's *Fighting Satan: Knowing His Weaknesses, Strategies, and Defeat* is a book that should be chewed and digested.

Fighting Satan was originally published as *Striving Against Satan* (Bryntirion Press, 2006), but now Reformation Heritage Books has republished it under a new title. If you're looking for a book that teaches special prayers and spiritual warfare formulas, keep looking—this book is not it. Likewise, if you're looking for an academic treatise on Satanology and demonology, keep looking. This book certainly is biblical and theological, but it's not academic. If you're looking for a book that stirs your soul and equips you to fight the good fight of faith, then *Fighting Satan* is definitely one to read.

Joel Beeke, who serves as the president and professor of systematic theology and homiletics at Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, writes in a warm and devotional style. He is simple, straightforward, and full of pathos. His love for the Savior and the Scriptures, as well as his depth of knowledge of the Puritans, makes this an ideal devotional book.

Know Your Enemy

So what does "fighting Satan" mean? Beeke does not underestimate or overestimate the Devil. From the outset he says things like "Satan wants you back" (1). "Life and death are at stake" (2). "As unpleasant as the subject of Satan is, we need to study it" (3). His goal is preeminently pastoral and practical:

Through this study of Satan and his devices, I trust that what we learn will assist us to fight strenuously, to fight well, and to fight on, until we obtain complete victory over the enemy. (4) I would summarize his approach to fighting Satan as knowing your enemy, knowing your victory in Christ and the gospel, and knowing his Word and the power of prayer. We fight both as individual believers and as comrades in the church.

Beeke deals extensively with the doctrine of Satan and demons. But the treatment is not some

preoccupation with the powers of darkness, filled with anecdotal scary stories.

Instead, he makes a straight line to Christ and the fulfillment of the first gospel promise ([Gen. 3:15](#)). Satan's head is crushed on Calvary as our Savior is bruised. With direct and personal appeals throughout, *Fighting Satan* reads like an impassioned friend sharing the truth with someone he cares about.

Fighting With Prayer and the Puritans

Beeke of course talks about fighting Satan defensively and offensively, taking up the classic spiritual warfare text from [Ephesians 6:10–20](#). I was stirred most fervently as Beeke wrote about prayer as part of our weaponry. The section is powerful and salted with gripping Puritan quotes concerning the power of prayer.

This little book is a treat for Puritan lovers. In the section titled “Knowing Satan’s Strategies: His Devices and Their Remedies” one can already hear echoes of Thomas Brooks’s classic *Precious Remedies Against Satan’s Devices*. Here Beeke is at his best as he weaves together, almost effortlessly, “the cream of what six Puritan authors said about Satan’s devices and their remedies” (67). He masterfully utilizes this Puritan wisdom, employing contemporary language to evaluate Satan’s strategies. In 1988 I took a course from Beeke on Reformed experiential preaching. In one of the classes, he preached a John Bunyan sermon titled “The Jerusalem Sinner Saved.” I marveled at his ability not only to master Bunyan’s words, but to so preach as to make them his own. That is what happens repeatedly in *Fighting Satan* and especially in this section. Beeke has been gripped by the Puritans and their words have become his employing contemporary language to evaluate Satan’s strategies. In 1988 I took a course from Beeke on Reformed experiential preaching. In one of the classes, he preached a John Bunyan sermon titled “The Jerusalem Sinner Saved.” I marveled at his ability not only to master Bunyan’s words, but to so preach as to make them his own. That is what happens repeatedly in *Fighting Satan* and especially in this section. Beeke has been gripped by the Puritans and their words have become his.

He then drives home numerous resolutions for fighting Satan. Beeke builds his resolutions on the indicatives of Christ’s victory and ultimate triumph over Satan. The very first resolution is to live according to your identity in Christ (98–100). These resolutions aren’t just moralistic pieces of advice; they’re saturated with Jesus and the gospel. Again, I was struck at how each one could be read slowly and prayerfully as a part of my devotions.

Best Chewed Slow

Joel Beeke has done the church a service by making this work more broadly available. It's informative and, above all, soul-stirring. These 141 pages are designed to equip us to fight Satan by faith in Christ. I was incredibly encouraged and I think you will be too.

Fighting Satan deserves to be chewed slowly and digested.

The Forgotten Fear

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THE FEAR OF GOD? DO YOU HAVE IT? DO YOU NEED IT?

“The fear of God is a massive and dominant theme in Scripture.”

Having made what to many sounds like an audacious assertion, we must back it up. Thankfully we can indeed demonstrate from Scripture that this not over-the-top. The compelling evidence is found in the fact that there are many key specimen passages from Genesis to Revelation which validate these stark opening words. Thus, this claim constitutes the inevitable conclusion to which anyone will come to who is willing to let the voice of Scripture itself be heard as it speaks on this vital theme.

But what does it mean to fear God? A helpful Bible-based definition of the fear of God, demonstrates that there are basically two kinds or varieties. One of these fears, described as the “fear of dread and terror” is fundamentally removed by the grace of God when a man or woman experiences a genuine Spirit-wrought conversion (1 John 4:18). The other of these fears is the “fear of awe and reverence” - the fear that is implanted in a believing sinner's heart by that same grace (Jer. 32:40). Having set forth these foundational issues it is then important to understand other vital aspects and its characteristics, namely, the ingredients of the fear of God; the source of the fear of God; and the relationship of the fear of God to our ethical and moral conduct.

But how should this affect me? Well, if the reader has grasped these aspects of the Bible's teaching concerning the fear of God, he will then be led to ask the following imperative question – “How may I attain, maintain, and increase the fear of God in my own personal Christian experience? Again the answer is found by looking to the Scriptural precepts, precedents, and principles related to the subject of the fear of God. That is our only authority. That is where we find all the answers to life's greatest questions, including that of our own salvation

through this God whom we must fear in a biblical manner.

One more vital question – “How should the fear of God shape the contours and create the atmosphere of our worship of God?” This question is answered by directing the reader’s attention particularly to Hebrews 12:18-29, with a special focus upon verses 28-29.

What a vital topic! Do you fear God? Do you fully grasp the magnitude of what that means? If you do it will transform your life. I close this brief introduction to the book by quoting a paragraph from the Foreword written kindly by Dr. Geoff Thomas:

The solemn distinctive of a world that has rejected Christ is “there is no fear of God before their eyes” (Romans 3:18), while the voice from heaven addresses the world, crying out, “Fear God and give glory to him” (Rev. 14:7). Fearing God is not some option for a few special Christians. It is foundational to all who name God as their God – an utterly essential mark of true religion. A stranger to the fear of God is a stranger to the living God himself. This grace must characterize all true Christian worship under the blessing of God.

Albert N. Martin

Jenison, Michigan

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