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The Glory of Grace: the Story of the Canons of Dort -- World Magazine

William Boekestein proves that it is possible to make the story of a 17th century synod compelling to children. This slender volume with attractive woodcut – style illustrations focuses on a doctrinal battle between Calvinists and Arminians that was important theologically and also played a role in European politics. Boekestein introduces important figures like Pelagius, Erasmus, Luther, and Arminius, and clearly explains their roles. He shows – and is fair toward – what Arminius taught and what the Canons concluded. And he shows why the battle mattered: “Today the Arminian view has become widely accepted in many churches,” while others “are rediscovering the Reformed faith...This synod remains on the highlights in the struggle of God’s people to maintain the glory of grace.”

Godly Conversation – The Banner of Truth (James M. Garretson)

Puritan theology is notable for its strong emphasis on spirituality. Remarkably few studies have examined the role ‘Christian Conference’ played in the development of Christian piety among the Puritans and their theological heirs. Originally Submitted as a doctoral dissertation at Fuller Theological Seminary, Jung’s volume is a carefully researched study of the communal dimensions of Puritan devotional practice. Through careful documentation, Jung notes the prominent role Christian conference, or edifying conversation about spiritual topics, was given in Puritan pastoral instruction for nurturing godliness in homes, friendships, congregations, and ministerial gathering.

Viewed as a means of grace, Puritan theology encouraged godly conversation on aspects of spiritual experience among believers for the purposes of stimulating commitment, reflection, and renewed dedication to wholehearted Christian discipleship. Puritan ministers believed spiritually-minded conversation a critical component in reinforcing the messages of sermons and grounding individuals and groups in a sound grasp of solid theology for sanctified living.

Valuable as an academic study in the history of Puritan spirituality, Jung’s treatment of the Puritan theology of ‘Christian conference’ also provides useful observations for the formation of Christian spirituality in the context of Christian community in today’s churches. Readers not familiar with the depth of Puritan pastoral theology will find Jung’s study a welcome introduction to aspects of biblical spirituality often overlooked in contemporary treatments of the Christian life.

Gospel Call and True Conversion – Cross Focused Reviews

“*The Gospel Call & True Conversion* will definitely be a needed kick in the shorts for most readers. Their understanding of what it means to be saved will be challenged and rightly so.”

Reviewer: Michael Boling (intelmin.org)

Rating: 5 Stars

“I honestly can not recommend this book enough (hence the 5 star rating). It is a book that I will recommend to anyone and everyone who wants a biblical understanding of the Gospel, repentance and conversion.”

Reviewer: Joshua Davis (GoodReads.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“This great book will challenge you in all the right ways pointing you to the sufficiency of Christ alone to save. Its pastoral tone will also encourage the reader to understand salvation from the Word of God so that you may apply its truth to all areas of your life.”

Reviewer: Dave Jenkins (ServantsOfGrace.org)

Rating: 5 Stars

“This book is a clear statement of the nature of a true Christian”

Reviewer: Richard Lucian

Rating: 5 Stars

“I could not stop underlining and making notes throughout this book, from beginning to end. By the time I completed this read, I had gone through numerous pens and highlighters. This book is that convicting & challenging.”

Reviewer: Louis Zinc (louiszinc.tumblr.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“I really had a problem putting it down. Washer has this gift of getting straight to the point without stretching out his words to fill his page... I highly recommend this book.”

Reviewer: Chris Land (keepingthething.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“it is a solid book, and that’s what matters. If you’re looking to know more about what the gospel calls us to do, or what true conversion should look like, this is a book for you.”

Reviewer: Elliot Kang (elliottkang.wordpress.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

“I highly recommend *The Gospel Call & True Conversion*. A biblical understanding of the gospel is vital in a culture where our knowledge may be based more on tradition and sentiment than the Word of God.”

Reviewer: Persis Lorenti (triedbyfire.blogspot.com)

Rating: 5 Stars

Handfuls of Purpose – Gospel Standard

The title is apt, for it is probably a book more to be dipped into than read through, but the transparency of the confessions, the mourning and the rejoicing will be a help, a reproof or a comfort to others who know the same path...This book contains a short sketch of the life of Ruth Bryan, her diaries and a very few of her letters. Ruth

Bryan was born in 1805 in London, the only child of the third wife of a gospel minister who not long afterwards moved to Nottingham, where Ruth spent the rest of her life...To the end of her life in 1860, though poor and in deep straits providentially, often in bitter sorrow, her one desire was as she expressed, to “live Christ”...The preface states, “This little book is sent forth with much prayer, that the anointing of the Holy Ghost may distil upon thy soul in reading it; and that the faithful testimony it bears to the eternal love of God the Father, the redeeming grace of the Lord Jesus, and the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit may be the means of encouragement to many tried and tempted souls.”

The Happiness of Heaven – Peace and Truth

The aim of this warm-hearted study is not merely to expound the Bible’s teaching on heaven, but also to give us a relish for our heavenly Father’s house and our true home. In this it succeeds, not least because it lifts us above the sin and sorrow of this fallen world into realms where our hearts should already be. Those who have relinquished the love of sin, and whose hearts are detached from hankering after this world, will find it a delight.

A Happy Old Age-- Bible League Quarterly

A Happy Old Age has 12 short chapters, and sample headings are, Life’s Journey, Duties of Old Age, Temptations, Trials and Joys, The Aged Christian and His Bible, etc. All is rooted in Scripture, highly practical and has a simple and very gracious style. It has also a strong evangelistic appeal but is supremely suitable for the believer in Christ later in life. For such a one a prayerful reading of it would encourage assurance and, through the Lord’s blessing, find that “the best is kept until now.”

The Holy Spirit and Reformed Spirituality: A Tribute to Geoffrey Thomas – Jeremy Walker

Not every *Festrichift* winds so tightly around its central thread. That this one does so sweetly and successfully is not only a testimony to the insight of the editors and the commitment of the contributors, but also to the influence of Geoff Thomas – honored by this collection – upon the editors and contributors. After a couple of more personal views, a broad selection of pastors and scholars survey the person and work of the Holy Spirit

with regard to salvation, holiness and ministry. Each brings their particular strengths and perspectives, creating a quite delightful but tightly bounded kaleidoscopic effect. The range of writers gives a very helpful balance to the whole; their common affection for Geoff Thomas as friend and mentor and partner provides the momentum; their united theme of the Spirit of Christ in some of the particulars of his gracious work means that the whole breathes a heavenly air. Not many such collections provide such uniform delight. Those seeking a sampler on the doctrine of the Spirit, enriched with a practical air and adorned with the love which the Spirit delights to encourage, will do well to open these pages.

How to Kill Remaining Sin – Cumberland Valley Blog

This small gem is more than a reworking of John Owen on temptation and remaining sin. It is an original piece of work incapsulating the best of the Puritan and Reformed tradition on the biblical concept of "mortification"--putting sin to dearth as a believer.

Pastor Thomas has done his own work and put the cookies down where everyone can reach them. Kudos to Geoff Thomas and Reformation Heritage for such a biblical and helpful booklet. Many saints will meet you in heaven and say thank you for this work!

How Should We Develop Biblical Friendship? – Evangelical Times

The aim of the authors is to answer this question by examining relationships described in the Scriptures and in church history.

This booklet is a useful publication; its style and expression make it very accessible, although more emphasis could have been given to the supreme friendship which exists between the Persons of the Trinity, and the friendship between Christ and his people.

The relationship between David and Jonathan is well examined in its depth and significance, as is the relationship between the mature Paul and Timothy. The writers correctly emphasize that the selfless concern which Paul had for the gospel was matched by Timothy's; a oneness in the gospel produced a oneness in fellowship.

The authors present ten ways of developing and deepening biblical fellowship. These are helpful and

challenging, though there is some overlap. One such skill is listening to one another – a salutary exhortation in the context of the present frenetic world (James 1:19).

In Defense of the Descent – Voice of the Heidelberg Reformation Association

The phrase in the Apostle's Creed "he descended into Hell" has been a source of controversy for nearly 2000 years. Even today we may recite that line with a bit of reluctance. We know it is there for a reason. Someone thought it a Biblical statement. But we find it hard to find where the Bible says this. This is why we squirm when we read it. This book by Daniel Hyde takes away that fear, and restores our confidence that "He descended into hell" is not only Biblical, but valuable for us to confess.

The book begins with a discussion of why some from days passed through modern times have sought to keep this phrase out of the Creed. Rev. Hyde traces the origin of the insertion of the phrase. He also includes the thoughts of contemporary critics. I am glad that he did this. It sets the stage for the rest of the discussion. It also puts those of us who have tripped over this phrase at ease when we see others struggles with it.

The second part of the discussion explains the six basic interpretations of "descent." Rev. Hyde rejects four, and keeps two as the combination of Reformed interpretation of the phrase. Those rejected are: "1. It means Christ went to hell to suffer more than His suffering on the cross. 2. It means Christ went to hell to preach a second chance to those who died apart from him. 3. It means Christ went to hell and pronounced His victory to those who already believed in Him before their deaths. 4. It means Christ went to hell and pronounced His victory to Satan." Rev Hyde presents each of these views and along with those who have supported them, followed up with the reasons these views should be rejected.

There are two views that are presented as the Reformed views as represented by the confessions and creeds of the Reformed churches. "5. It means Christ was buried. 6. It means Christ suffered hell His whole life, especially on the cross." These views are presented not a contrasting views, but as complementary. Chapter four presents both of these views with Scriptural, confessional, and historical support for them.

In chapter five, Rev. Hyde gives us "The Benefits of Retaining He Descended into Hell." I appreciated this chapter because it took this from being an academic or theological argument to one of importance for the church as whole.

Over all, this book is compact (which I appreciate), thorough enough for the scholar, but simple enough

for the layman to understand. This book is worth reading.

John Calvin and Augustine – Christian Biographies for Young Readers– The Outlook

A homeschooling mother of eight children, Simonetta Carr was frustrated by the lack of church history curriculum for children under the age of twelve. There were plenty of books for that age group on presidents, artists, musicians, scientists, and other important figures, and Simonetta explains, “if a young child can understand Martin Luther King’s vision and struggle, he should be able to understand John Calvin’s desire to give direction and organization to a young Reformed church of Augustine’s conflict of the wills.” She tried to persuade some church history graduates in her San Diego, California, congregation to take up the task of writing curriculum and even created a mockup copy of the books she envisioned with some home-made illustrations. When she could convince no one to take up the challenge she decided to send her idea to some publishers.

Thankfully, Reformation Heritage Press recognized the value of Simonetta’s vision, and the first two books in the Christian Biographies for Young Readers series, *John Calvin* and *Augustine*, were released in 2009. In a winsome storytelling style and with illustrations that consist of illustrations, photos, maps, and historic artwork, these books introduce young readers to the lives, thoughts, and writings of the important people of church history.

In *John Calvin*, released in 2009 to commemorate Calvin’s five hundredth anniversary, Simonetta introduces young readers to the great Reformer. In language that is within the grasp of readers age 7-10 yet not condescending, the author traces the events of Calvin’s life, he describes his accomplishments and his writings, and encourages children to one day soon read Calvin’s writings ‘for yourself.’

In *Augustine*, readers are introduced to the church father’s life and writings, and the author tackles the difficult subject of the teachings of ancient heretics, including the Manichees and Pelagius. Other features in each volume include a map on the first page that readers can use to trace the subject’s travels, a time line of the subject’s life at the end of the book, and a ‘Did You Know?’ appendix with interesting facts about the subject and his culture. For example, did you know that in Calvin’s day common people lived on the second floor of two-story houses while their livestock lived on the first floor?

Simonetta Carr has provided a valuable resource for children and families of Reformed churches with the Christian Biographies for Young Readers series.

Children will be both educated and entertained by these delightful, beautifully illustrated volumes.

Labor of Love – Banner of Truth

In almost every age of Christian history the spiritual health of the churches depends largely on the character and usefulness of those called to Christian ministry. This was certainly the conviction of the Puritan age of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This book by US pastor J. Stephen Yuille shares such a conviction. His book makes extensive use of the work of the 17th century Puritan pastor and teacher George Swinnoek expanding on it to set out for readers today the standards of ministry to which those who care for Christ's church should aspire.

The book will be a spur and encouragement to those setting out on the work of oversight and preaching for the first time. It will act as a refresher to those who have been laboring in the Christian ministry for some years. It will be a stimulus to prayer for all who are concerned for the health of Christ's church.

Labor of Love – headhearhand.org

The puritan minister, George Swinnoek, penned sixteen wishes, sixteen heartfelt desires for his own pastoral ministry. Stephen Yuille extracts the essence of these, sums them up in chapter headings such as "A Royal Ambassador," "A Skilled Physician," "A Diligent Student," etc., and expounds them over a few pages for a modern audience. He also includes a beautiful sermon by Swinnoek on Acts 20, "The Pastor's Farewell," preached upon his departure from his own congregation. This is a more devotional book than the previous two, and would work well as part of a pastor's daily devotional reading with each of the 16 chapters in part one being only a few pages in length.

Labor of Love – John Williams, Trinity Journal

A Labor of Love pays homage to the work of George Swinnoek, a seventeenth century Puritan pastor who ministered in Northern England. Unlike many in ministry today who judge their success in ministry by the world's standards, Yuille extracts sixteen keen insights from Swinnoek's magnum opus entitled, *A Christian Man's Calling*. Each essay is between five and seven pages and applies Swinnoek's insights for pastors today. Yuille then provides a small summary and pastoral application at the end of each chapter.

Yuille does a good job of tracing Swinnock's development as a pastor from the preparation stage, to the work that he does in the pastoral ministry, to finishing with his reflections on a life that has faithfully served the Lord. One cannot read the book without realizing Swinnock's love for pastoral ministry, the Word of God, and for his parishioners.

Yuille extracts the most salient points from Swinnock's work and provides practical application for pastors and church leaders today.

Pastors can definitely benefit from Swinnock and Yuille's reminder that shepherding and feeding the flock of God is the highest calling can pursue. Laypersons can use this as a guide to better understand the role of a pastor while using it to better pray for their ministers as well.

Lady Jane Grey – Evangelical Now Newspaper

Simonetta Carr untangles this complicated period of Tudor English history as she shows how Lady Jane, 15-year-old cousin of young King Edwards VI, was declared Queen of England at Edward's death. Mrs. Carr presents an attractive picture of a young person whose courage and faith shine out from the narrative, forming a challenging example for her readers today.

With at least 14 evocative full-page illustrations by artist matt Abraxas, plus numerous other photographs and historical illustrations, this book would make an excellent Christmas present for young people aged between eight and twelve.

Lady Jane Grey – New Horizon OPC

In Simonetta Carr's new book, Lady Jane Grey, the life of this young English monarch is painted clearly for the young reader, both figuratively and literally. It is not a black and white chapter book, but rather, because it is meant to be interesting to readers aged 7--12, it is thoroughly illustrated with vibrant paintings as well as photographs and sketches.

My favorite aspect of Lady Jane Grey is the author's use of original sources, such as Jane's heartfelt letter to her sister. It's one thing to read an account of her childhood and execution, but to read the dying advice of one sister to another, sisters by birth and faith, is quite another. This book be a fine addition to any church or home

library of one who is seeking to educate children in the way they should go, no matter what God intends for their lives.

The Law of Kindness – Free Church Witness (William Macleod)

Mary Beeke is the wife of Dr. Joel Beeke who contributes the chapter on “The kind Husband”. The authoress brings to this work a lifetime of experience – the Christian home in which she grew up, her own work as a psychiatric nurse, a special needs teacher, her life as a wife, mother and pastor’s helpmeet. The book is full of Scriptural encouragement and injunction, as well as loads of common sense. I had never before read a book on kindness. Providing the reader can overlook the Americanisms there is much here that all will find helpful and challenging. The meaning of kindness is examined, and then the roles of the kind wife and husband, and kindness in parenting. Many positive suggestions are made as she deals with kind thoughts and words. There is a chapter on bullying and an appendix on the ideal of the home-making mother. She writes: “Don’t you want to do everything in your power to lead your children in the pathway that leads to God Himself? We are nurturing eternal souls. Nothing else is more important.”

A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs - Banner of Truth (Jeremy Walker)

A lot of people have heard of Burroughs, a reasonable number have read Burroughs, but not many know much about Burroughs. Simpson sets us straight! This is an outstanding biography, dealing carefully and sensitively with periods about which there is little information, but building up a coherent portraits of the man. As Burroughs achieves a little more prominence there is more to work with, and by the time Simpson is handling the material from the Westminster Assembly, his character and convictions are clear, and his reputation as a peacemaker is gracefully adorned by the facts. The various facets of Burroughs’ life as a servant of Christ became apparent: student, preacher, pastor, teacher, exile, debater, author, all of them conducted as a man thoroughly governed by the Holy Spirit. Burroughs shows us that conviction and kindness are not incompatible, that a man can be at once vigorously principled and graciously peaceable. Those who love Burroughs already will want to read this; those who read this will be eager for his sermons and expositions. Quite apart from his labours, the life is a lesson in itself, and one to be earnestly heeded.

A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs – British Church Newspaper

Surprisingly, Philip Simpson's book is the first full-length study of Jeremiah Burroughs (1599-1646). In twelve very readable and informative chapters the author follows this leading Puritan and 'remarkable man of God' from early life and conversion, time at Cambridge University, then a Puritan stronghold and nursery of gospel preachers, through troubled times under Laud, exile in Holland, to his leading role in the Westminster Assembly, where he figured as one of the 'five dissenting brethren' who argued for Congregational, rather than Presbyterian, polity, to his final settlement as an Independent minister in London.

This is an attractive book, well researched, footnoted, and illustrated. In all "the most fitting tribute to the man is for us to study, learn, love and worship God for the wonderful truth of gospel peace."

A Life of Gospel Peace: A Biography of Jeremiah Burroughs – World Magazine (Marvin Olasky)

Psalm 16 tells us, "I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad, and my whole being rejoices." Philippians 4 has words familiar from reciting and singing: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice."

But how do we do that, practically? I've written before about my favorite little Puritan book, Jeremiah Burroughs' *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*. Now I can tell you that the first full-length biography of Burroughs, *A Life of Gospel Peace*, is out-and it's good, since author Phillip Simpson seems content to place the spotlight on Burroughs and not, as some biographers do, use the subject as a way to show off.

I'll try to do the same by simply quoting a lot of Burroughs' wisdom, starting with this crucial understanding: "There is nothing that befalls you but there is a hand of God in it. ... When a certain passage of providence befalls me, that is one wheel, and it may be that if this wheel were stopped, a thousand other things might come to be stopped by this. ... When God has ordered a thing for the present to be thus and thus, how do you know how many things depend upon this thing? God may have some work to do twenty years hence that depends on this passage of providence that falls out this day or this week."

Burroughs faced lots of affliction in mid-17th-century Britain, and explained well how we should regard it: "Am I the soul to whom the Lord has revealed the infinite excellence of Jesus Christ, and yet shall I think such a little affliction to be so grievous to me?" He suggested that we go with God and not fight Him: "Is God about to humble

me? Is God about to break my heart, and to bring my heart down to Him? Let me join with God in this work of His."

Burroughs was consistently God-centered: "What's the end that God has set in all His ways? Surely, it is that His blessed name be magnified, that His glory may be set forth. Then that shall be the great design of my life." He emphasized that "the glory of God should be the chief matter we are to pray for." He noted that in the Lord's Prayer we should "first begin with the glory of God. Mind that in the chief place above all other things."

Burroughs offered practical advice to those with plans to shop until they drop: "A Christian comes to contentment, not so much by way of addition, as by way of subtraction. ... A heart that has no grace, and is not instructed in this mystery of contentment, knows of no way to get contentment, but to have his possessions raised up to his desires; but the Christian has another way to contentment, that is, he can bring his desires down to his possessions, and so he attains his contentment." I'd be remiss if I did not quote Burroughs' excellent advice to husbands: "The husband ought to observe the temper of his wife, and consider what she is to be indulged in with regard of her temper... Do not be rash in contesting one with another. The husband is not to fall upon debating things when he sees the wife in a distemper."

He told wives also to be strategic "when there is any evil misconduct in a husband... You presently fly out in words against him, and then you try to debate the business when he is in a passion. Rather, you should observe the fittest time, when you see him to be in the most loving disposition, then in a loving way debate what has been unjust and amiss in him."

News we can all use.

Living in a Godly Marriage

Change is everywhere. The spirit of revolution is in the air. Change is good when the glory of God motivates people to turn from sin to righteousness. But sadly, the pursuit of moral autonomy drives the present moral revolution, resulting in changes from bad to worse. And this revolution aims at shaking up everything and sparing nothing—not even marriage.

If we ever thought that the biblical view of marriage was so ingrained in our cultural mindset and moral milieu that movement away from it was impossible, the upheaval of our day have proven that assumption to be false.

All around us, we are witnessing the dissolution of marriage as created by God and celebrated in His Word. People are redefining marriage to suit their sinful desires. Christians face a flood of pressures to move marriage away from its God-given purposes.

Living in a Godly Marriage was written with this crisis in mind. This important book enters the conversation with the biblical insights and directives of the Puritans to recover marriage as a God-ordained and God-governed institution and to strengthen existing marriages against the dissolution which threatens them on all sides. As Puritan scholars, Beeke and La Belle mine the wealth of Puritan sermons and treatises to bring us a book on marriage that's *grounded upon the word of God*, who alone has the authority to define and govern marriage, *centered upon Jesus Christ*, whose relationship with the church is the preeminent model marriage, and *aimed at equipping men and women* to live together in a godly marriage.

Addressing the subject of marriage with a breadth and depth that are rare today, this book offers an essential guidance in the midst of our cultural and moral confusion. It is a biblical, persuasive, and comprehensive resource that covers:

- The definition of marriage as an institution created and honored by God.
- The blessings which crown marriage.
- The exhortations which govern it.
- The purposes and benefits of marriage under God's blessing.
- The importance of marrying in the Lord.
- The duties of marriage, grounded in God's word and empowered by God's grace.

Whether you're seeking to be married or have been married for a long time, *Living in a Godly Marriage* is a refreshing and edifying read. We highly recommend it.

Living Zealously – Evangelical Now Newspaper

What is zeal? One Puritan defines it as 'the boiling up of the affections to the greatest heat'. It is 'the vigor and arduity of the renewed, consecrated soul...the effervescence of inward grace'. Laodicean lukewarmness is to be condemned. True zeal is marked by love for God, devotion to good works and submission to Scriptures.

We are given biblical exhortation to be zealous. We need to pray that the Holy Spirit would warm our cold hearts. We are urged, then, to take ourselves in hand and turn our hearts away from unworthy objects, to focus

our zeal on love for Christ and seeking the glory of God.

This volume I warmly commended.

The Lord's Supper and the 'Popish Mass' - Ryan M. McGraw, Banner of Truth Reviews

Cornelis Venema's book is well informed historically. He introduces the context of the Heidelberg Catechism generally and of question 80 on the Lord's Supper versus the 'Popish mass' in particular. Historical context often serves as a two-edged sword. Without it we are liable to misunderstand historic creeds, such as the Heidelberg Catechism. However, some appeal to historical context to make sharp statements like this one appear outdated or irrelevant. Anyone studying a historic confession must ask at least two questions of any of its teachings: What does it mean, and, Is it biblical? Venema provides us with a good model by answering these two questions distinctly and clearly.

Reformed confessions such as the Heidelberg Catechism continue to be relevant to the church today. Times have changed but people have not and truth has not. Just as we still draw the Nicene Creed to help us understand the Trinity so we can draw from the Heidelberg Catechism to understand the Lord's Supper. While historic creeds are not the last word on our understanding of Scripture, they should at least remain the first word in modern discussions. Venema shows us how to do this well.

Marie Durand – Alliance Net

I love reading Simonetta Carr's Christian Biographies for Young Readers. The books in this series highlight those who have persevered in the faith. Some are familiar names, like all the "Johns:" John Calvin, John Owen, John Knox, and Jonathan Edwards. But Carr has also written on some lesser known saints such as Lady Jane Grey. I was eager to read her latest on Marie Durand because I knew little about this French Protestant from the 18th century.

One thing that I appreciate about Carr's writing is that she doesn't debone it. What I mean is, she doesn't take out all of the inconvenient truths and stumbling blocks that most children's authors would remove for easy digestion. Carr tells it like it was and leaves the reader faced with some of the same perplexities as the Christian figures in her books. Our faith isn't in people or in present blessings, but in Jesus Christ our Lord and the

resurrection life to come. Carr's biographies showcase how this truth helped God's people to endure in some of the worst of circumstances. I am reminded of our great cloud of witnesses in Hebrews 11, "These all died in the faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar" (Heb. 11:13).

Carr opens up with a killer hook, "Born in the enchanting region between the Rhine River and the Massif Central Mountains in Southern France, Marie Durand chose to spend most of her life in a dark, unhealthy prison rather than follow a religion she considered contrary to the teachings of Christ" (4). Carr then gives the background of the tension between the French Protestants and the Roman Catholic monarchy, including a time Protestants were allowed to worship according to their conscience under the rule of King Henry IV, his great grandson revoking that law that protected Protestants after his grandfather's death, and the following war of rebellion. By the time Marie was born in 1711, her family had to worship in secret.

Her brother Pierre became a Protestant pastor and also a wanted man. Sadly, because the authorities could not find Pierre, they imprisoned his family. At the age of 19, the newly engaged Marie was sent to the Tower of Constance, "an ancient building that had been used as a watchtower and prison," simply for being the sister of a Protestant pastor (20). She was never to see her fiancé again. The rest of the book unfolds the dreadful living conditions that Marie endured with about twenty-five other female prisoners for the next thirty-eight years. As Marie persevered, holding fast to her confession of hope, she watched some of these women lose their children, lose their mind, health, and some their faith. Some recanted their Protestant faith and converted to Roman Catholicism in exchange for their freedom.

During her long imprisonment, Marie's brother Pierre was captured and executed. Marie developed an intimate correspondence with her niece, Anne. After Anne's mother died, Marie tried to provide that motherly love for her from a distance, sacrificing her own health to make and send Anne new clothes from the prison, and encourage her in the Protestant faith. Carr gives us a glimmer of hope when she shares the happiest part of Marie's life, when Anne was able to live in the area for a whole month, visiting her aunt frequently.

About nine years later, after many crushed prospects for release, Prince de Beauvau was moved by compassion for these women, releasing them against direct orders from his superior. Marie was fifty-seven years old.

This is part where we would think Marie would be able to live out the rest of her life, close to her niece, enjoying her long-awaited freedom. But that is not the case. Her house had been ransacked and robbed by cousins. Anne wedded a wealthy Roman Catholic and cut off correspondence with Marie. "In fact, instead of supporting her

needy aunt, Anne had allowed her husband to rent out part of Marie's farm without asking for her permission and to charge Marie for any repairs he had to make" (50). I can't imagine how devastating this betrayal of the faith was to Marie, who had sacrificed her entire life for it while loving her niece so dearly. Thankfully, a Protestant church in Amsterdam stepped in to support her with yearly donations, saving her from complete poverty. "Marie continued to rely on God's providence until the end of her life and died peacefully in her home at the age of sixty-five" (50).

These kind of stories force the reader to ask some of the same questions that Christians like Marie must have constantly been faced with: Is God sovereign? Is God good? The answer is of course yes, and Marie held this truth until the end, where she has received her true reward, Christ himself.

Simonetta Carr has given us another great biography that can be thoughtfully read by adults as well as children. And the illustrations by Matt Abraxas along with all the accompanying photography further enhance Carr's flashbacks into history. I recommend it, bones and all!

Marie Durand – Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals Blog

Reviewed by Star Meade

When you do a search on Amazon for "biographies for children," you find a list of books about people who are famous because of things they accomplished in their lifetimes--Ben Franklin, Harriet Tubman, Amelia Earhart, Ben Carson to name a few. While a faithful biography may describe the many times someone tried and failed, the account will finally bring us to that great moment when success came at last. That is the point of a biography, is it not? It gives us an account of how someone who did something extraordinary, usually something that made the world a better place for everyone, accomplished that extraordinary thing. After all, what child wants to read a biography about Mr. Gray next door who grew up, went to work at the office every day, raised three average children, retired, and died? It is the achievement that someone is famous for that makes him or her interesting. As parents and teachers, we encourage children to read biographies because a great achievement seldom occurs in a vacuum. Great achievements are the result of diligence, persistence, creativity, and other character qualities that we want our children to imitate.

As Christian parents, however, we value quiet, everyday faithfulness. We hope our children will remain faithful, especially in relation to Christian beliefs and practice, all their lives. Most of our children will never do

anything as earth shaking as inventing the light bulb or developing a system to enable blind people to read. But all of our children will be called upon to believe in Christ and to live out that belief, clinging to it even in the face of gale force cultural winds that seek to loosen their grip.

In *Marie Durand*, Simonetta Carr has given us a biography of a woman whose greatest achievement was just that--quiet, everyday faithfulness. Marie was a young Protestant Christian in southern France at a time when Protestantism was illegal. As a child and as a teen, she witnessed firsthand--and suffered herself--the persecution that has often come to Christians who want simply to remain faithful to what Scripture calls them to believe and do. Marie had just barely grown to adulthood when, as a teen bride of three months, she was arrested and imprisoned with several other women in a tower. Marie spent the next thirty-eight years of her life in that tower. Participation in the Catholic mass would have been the key to her freedom if she had chosen to use it, but she did not. Who knows?

Perhaps, had Marie remained free, she might have achieved some great accomplishment that would have put her front and center on the Amazon page for children's biographies, but all she ever did was to scratch "Resist" into the wall of the room she lived in for thirty-eight years. (Actually, we're not even sure she was the one who did that).

Simonetta Carr has done us a great service in giving us this biography of a woman who accomplished nothing more than remaining faithful to gospel truth in the face of relentless pressure to set it aside. This is the ninth book in Carr's Christian Biographies for Youth series, and she has clearly mastered just the right blend of child-appropriate background explanations with skilled storytelling. *Marie Durand* is full of color illustrations and photography that will capture our children's attention and enhance their understanding, although, for me, it was Carr's superb narration that kept me turning pages to the end (and I already knew the story!). The fifty-three pages of story and illustration are followed by a timeline, a pronunciation key, several pages of additional information ("Did You Know?"), and the translation of an actual letter from Marie while she was in the tower.

Marie Durand is a beautiful children's book that I will give as a gift to some of my favorite Christian children with absolute confidence that they will both benefit from it and enjoy reading it.

Marie Durand - William Boekestein

"No amount of freedom is worth the compromise of biblical teachings" (p. 52). This maxim is a fitting response to recent erosion of religious freedom in the West.

As a reminder that biography can serve as timeless moral philosophy in narrative form, these words reflect the position of the persecuted Protestants living in eighteenth century France. Many who were unwilling to

compromise the gospel lost freedom, livelihood, wealth, and public esteem. Sometimes they lost their lives.

Simonetta Carr's "Marie Durand" (2015, Reformation Heritage Books), like the rest of the books in her "Christian Biographies for Young Readers" series, allows readers to enter the lives of some of the spiritual predecessors upon whose shoulders they unwittingly stand. What readers will see as they taste a thin slice of eighteenth century France (aided by the always-gorgeous artwork of illustrator Matt Abraxas) are sincere believers choosing to endure dire circumstances in order to honor God and their consciences.

In other words, contemporary readers will find in this book a reality check.

We wonder if Christianity is worth it when our convictions become unpopular. We complain when the church air conditioner doesn't keep up with the temperature or humidity. We start watch-checking when it seems like the minister might not say "amen" within his allotted time. We leave churches because the vote on the most recent non-essential matter didn't go our way.

Our toleration for persecution is low. This is understandable. Most of us have not resisted sin to the point of shedding our blood (Heb. 12:4)...yet.

This is not to say that contemporary believers do not suffer. What Paul says is true—"All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Tim. 3:12)—because believers at all times and places have to tread the same ground in which "the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour" (1 Peter 5:8). As we resist the devil we do well to remember that "the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by [our] brotherhood throughout the world" (1 Peter 5:9); indeed, throughout the history of the world. This is why books like "Marie Durand" are immensely valuable. Her life provides an imperfect but badly needed tutorial on how to suffer well as a child of God.

The author's tribute to Marie is applicable to believers today: We must simply continue to do what God calls us to do every day, keeping our eyes on the future triumph of glory (p. 53). Because our God is a faithful father and not a false-kissing enemy (Prov. 27:6) our everyday walk will be as hard as necessary in order that we might be conformed to the image of our suffering Savior. Perhaps Marie had read the Puritan Thomas Watson who, like her, exhorted his friends to learn to kiss the rod that strikes us. If God disciplines those he loves (Heb. 12:6), he seemed to especially cherish Marie. We might find it hard to imagine being locked in a cold, drafty, unsanitary tower for thirty-eight years, and emerge as a mature, loving, sober-minded Christian! But during those hard years, in which everything else was stripped from her, Marie learned to say to her God, "There is nothing on earth that I desire

besides you” (Ps. 73:25).

What will it take for modern Christians to be able to say the same? The answer will differ for each of us. But Simonetta Carr’s “Marie Durand” might just help us and our children toward the goal.

Marie Durand – Christian Renewal

Wrongful incarceration is a hot topic of current interest, but few people realize how many Christians have been imprisoned (often without even the pretense of a trial) for their faith. Arrested as a young woman, Marie Durand remained in prison for 58 years.

This remarkable woman, who kept the faith through decades of imprisonment and difficulties beyond, is the subject of the latest Christian Biographies for Young Readers book by Simonetta Carr.

Marie Durand was born in 1711 into a family who secretly taught their children the Protestant faith. When she was seven, her mother was arrested, and her father was arrested when she was 17. Marie’s own arrest curtailed her plans to marry. Imprisoned in a tower that allowed snow or rain and disease---bearing mosquitoes free entry, she and the other women and children suffered greatly.

Marie became a leader and encourager, despite her frequent bouts of what may have been malaria. When Marie finally was released, she discovered her home had been plundered and she had to pay her cousins to reclaim her property. She died less than ten years later.

As always, Simonetta skillfully distills complex history into an understandable narrative. The beautiful illustrations add visual interest to Simonetta’s engaging story about a faithful woman who lived for her Lord during a lifetime of wrongful incarceration.

Marie Durand – Cross Focused Reviews

“As a historian, I love these books for how they draw young people in to history and make it come alive! As a homeschooling mom, I love using these because they point out the sources they come from and encourage the kids that are reading them to delve in more to the time by giving them a brief bit of information on either side of the time they feature. As a reader myself, I enjoy being able to sit down for an hour or less and dig in myself and learn something new!”

Reviewer: [Wendi Bevitt](#)

Rating: 5 Stars

“Aesthetically her books are lovely. The craftsmanship is beautiful. They are a pleasure to hold and gaze upon for young and old alike as the story unfolds... The story of Marie Durand is one that girds the Christian soul as

hostility and persecution eclipse our days.”

Reviewer: Lesley Eischen

Rating: 5 Stars

“I’ve read and reviewed several children’s biographies by Simonetta Carr, but Marie Durand is my favorite thus far. The story of this ordinary believer’s perseverance is very powerful. I’m thankful it is being told.”

Reviewer: Persis Lorenti

Rating: 5 Stars

“Overall this is high caliber quality in a children’s book... Marie’s story was inspiring and encouraging to me personally as I read her book. It is beneficial for other believers to be encouraged to stand strong for their faith, even in the midst of difficult circumstances.”

Reviewer: Angela Parsley

Rating: 5 Stars

“This is one of those books that is a pleasure to read aloud with someone else... History tied to a person is much more memorable than straight facts. For this reason this makes an excellent book for teaching history to young children.”

Reviewer: William Perkins

Rating: 5 Stars

“It is written in a way that children can understand, and is still interesting for adults as well! I found myself wanting to read more about the life of Marie Durand!”

Reviewer: Heidi Smith

Rating: 5 Stars

Meet the Puritans – Free Church Witness

(Rev. Gavin Beers)

This book is a treasure. It is an encyclopedia of short biographical accounts of the lives of many of the English, Scots and North American Puritans, together with a review of each man’s printed works.

It begins with ‘A Brief History of English Puritanism’. This traces its origins to the introduction of the theology of Luther and Calvin into the Church of England in the 16th century and its development through many struggles over the next two hundred years. Following this historical preface, the main section of the book (consisting of 613 pages) introduces alphabetically English and American Puritans from Thomas Adams to John Winthrop. You will meet many names you have heard of like Richard Baxter and John Owen along with lesser known Puritans such as Christopher Ness and Michael Wigglesworth. A guide to published collections of Puritan works is supplied in an appendix.

From England, via North America, we arrive in Scotland. Approximately 100 pages are devoted to some key Scots divines and their writings. Again many of the names will be familiar Samuel Rutherford, George Gillespie and the Erskine brothers. One criticism of this section is its title ‘Appendix 2’. While the Puritan movement was more strictly an English phenomenon, Puritanism doctrinally was much broader. One would therefore think Scotland warranted more than appendix and it is hoped in the future this could be developed and the title updated.

Puritanism's breadth is also demonstrated in Appendix 3 which consists of 80 pages treating divines from the Dutch Further Reformation (these men were contemporaries of the English Puritans). This section will be of particular benefit to British Reformed Churches and those following the tradition of the Westminster Standards because historically we have not been too familiar with the names and works of our Dutch brethren.

Meet the Puritans is an extremely useful publication. It has a reference use to assist historical study. It serves as an index to many Puritan writings, often identifying key books on particular subjects that would be the most beneficial to read, even the most profitable sections of books. Another use is devotional. Readers will find the lives of many of the men recorded here to be a challenge to Christianity today, and be stimulated to greater love for Christ and zeal for His service. It also has an introductory use and this will be apparent to the reader. Here, as the title suggests, you only meet the Puritans, but this initial acquaintance will fuel a desire to get to know the men, their writings, and most importantly their God much better.

There are some books that we would recommend specifically to pastors, other books may be of more use to congregations; this book has a use for every Christian and all should determine to own a copy.

The Mysteries of God – William Macleod

Rev. Maurice Roberts is a born teacher who delights in making difficult things plain. The title, 'The Mysteries of God', might put some people off, thinking that this will be a very deep work of theology. Actually it is a very readable little book which presents to us the great teachings of the Bible in a way which we can all understand. In his first chapter Mr. Roberts explains what a mystery is in the New Testament – 'a truth that God has revealed to us in the Bible and that could not be known by the unaided mind of man'. In subsequent chapters he deals with the actual mysteries: the Trinity, God's covenant, the incarnation, the gospel, the new birth, Christ's indwelling, the Gospel offer, the Gentiles incorporated into the church, the conversion of the Jews etc.

The chapters are short, six or seven pages with large print. They could be read as a daily devotional over the period of a fortnight. The chapter on the Trinity is the deepest, the one on the conversion of the Jews the most encouraging. The chapter on the mystery of iniquity (the pope and the Roman Catholic Church) is necessary in this day of ecumenical confusion. The prospect of heaven when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly gives the hope to press on. Highly recommended!