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Joel R. Beeke, *Editor*

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Please address all *PRJ* communication as follows:

Business, subscriptions: Mrs. Ann Dykema, *PRJ* Administrative Assistant, 2965 Leonard St., N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525; telephone 616-977-0599, x135; e-mail: ann.dykema@puritanseminary.org

Editorial, manuscripts: Dr. Joel R. Beeke, 2965 Leonard St., N.E., Grand Rapids, Michigan 49525; telephone 616-977-0599, x123; e-mail: jrbeeke@aol.com

Book reviews: Dr. Michael Haykin, 34 Thornton Trail, Dundas, Ont. L9H 6Y2, Canada; mhaykin@sbts.edu

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Table of Contents



Introduction 1

BIBLICAL STUDIES

The Jews' View of the Old Testament — DAVID MURRAY 5
An Everlasting House: An Exegesis of 2 Samuel 7
— MAARTEN KUIVENHOVEN 15
Applying Christ's Supremacy: Learning from Hebrews
GERALD M. BILKES 27

SYSTEMATIC AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY

"Hot Protestants": A Taxonomy of English Puritanism
IAN HUGH CLARY 41
John Bunyan and His Relevance for Today — PIETER DEVRIES. 67
Samuel Petto (c. 1624–1711): A Portrait of a Puritan Pastor
Theologian — MICHAEL G. BROWN 75
James Durham (1622–1658) and the Free Offer of the Gospel
DONALD JOHN MACLEAN. 92
The Ceremonial or Moral Law: Jonathan Edwards's
Old Perspective on an Old Error — CRAIG BIEHL. 120

EXPERIENTIAL THEOLOGY

The Theological Foundation and Goal of Piety in
Calvin and Erasmus — TIMOTHY J. GWIN 143
Thomas Watson: The Necessity of Meditation
JENNIFER C. NEIMEYER 166
Was Samuel Rutherford a Mystic? — ROBERT ARNOLD 182
The "Sense of the Heart": Edwards's Public Expression of
His Pietistic Understanding of Religious Experience
KARIN SPIECKER STETINA 197

PASTORAL THEOLOGY AND MISSIONS

John Owen and the Third Mark of the Church — STEPHEN YUILLE. 215
Jeremiah Burroughs on Worship — JAMES DAVISON 228
Samuel Davies: One of America's Greatest Revival Preachers
JOHN E. SKIDMORE 246

A Pastor's Analysis of Emphases in preaching: Two False Dichotomies and Three Conclusions — RYAN M. MCGRAW	266
“For God's Glory (and) for the Good of Precious Souls”: Calvinism and Missions in the Piety of Samuel Pearce (1766–1799) MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN	277

CONTEMPORARY AND CULTURAL ISSUES

Handling Error in the Church: Martin Downes Interviewing JOEL R. BEEKE	303
Interview with Geoff Thomas	313
Practical Lessons from the Life of Idelette Calvin — JOEL R. BEEKE	329
The “Little Church”: Raising a Spiritual Family with Jonathan Edwards — PETER BECK	342

BOOK REVIEWS

Mary Elizabeth Anderson, <i>Gustaf Wingren and the Swedish Luther Renaissance</i> — DAVID ROACH	357
David Berkley, <i>Travel Through Cambridge: City of Beauty, Reformation and Pioneering Research</i> — KENNETH MAGNUSON	358
Colin Duriez, <i>Francis Schaeffer: An Authentic Life</i> ALLEN R. MICKLE, JR.	360
Jonathan Edwards, <i>Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God</i> MICHAEL A. G. HAYKIN	362
Antony Flew, <i>There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind</i> — RANDALL J. PEDERSON	363
Barry G. Hankins, <i>Francis Schaeffer: Fundamentalist Warrior, Evangelical Prophet</i> — KEITH GOAD	365
Daniel R. Hyde, <i>God With Us: Knowing the Mystery of Who Jesus Is</i> — DAVID ROACH	367
Jeffery K. Jue, <i>Heaven Upon Earth: Joseph Mede (1586–1638) and the Legacy of Millenarianism</i> — MARK JONES	368
D. M. Lloyd-Jones, <i>Living Water</i> — RYAN M. MCGRAW	370
R. Albert Mohler Jr., <i>He is Not Silent: Preaching in a Postmodern World</i> — ALLEN R. MICKLE, JR.	371
Stephen J. Nichols, <i>For Us and For Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church</i> — ALLEN R. MICKLE, JR.	374
Morton H. Smith, <i>Systematic Theology</i> — RYAN MCGRAW	377
L. J. Van Valen, <i>Constrained By His Love</i> — CLINT HUMFREY	379

BOOK ENDORSEMENTS — JOEL R. BEEKE	380
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CONTRIBUTORS	395
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FROM THE EDITORS



Christian theology and piety is a Word-centered theology and piety, focused on the revelation of the Scriptures. But that revelation has been progressive and is divisible into two general periods, designated by the terms the Old and New Testaments or the old and new covenants. Critical for understanding these two blocks of revelation is the interpretation of the relationship between the two. In his article David Murray helpfully looks at the vital subject of this relationship and offers guidelines on how this relationship is best interpreted. Maarten Kuivenhoven then helps us think through the significance of one aspect of the old covenant, namely, David's resolve to build the Temple in 2 Samuel 7. The story of David's determination in this regard and God's response displays something that is also central to the new covenant experience, namely God's covenant faithfulness, His *hesed*. A key book in the New Testament for understanding this relationship between the covenants is the Epistle to the Hebrews. Gerald Bilkes explores why Hebrews is such a powerful aspect of the New Testament corpus, and in doing so, ably opens up the Christocentric riches of this book.

In the area of historical theology, Ian Clary seeks to answer a question that has been much discussed in the past seventy or so years, namely, "What is Puritanism?" He offers his own helpful definition and concludes that a wide chronological scope is the best that would see Puritanism as broader than an intra-Anglican movement. Three studies of individual Puritans follow—Pieter de Vries on John Bunyan, Michael Brown on Samuel Petto, Donald MacLean on James Durham—keeping up a fine tradition, already established in the first two issues of this journal, of exploring in rich detail our Puritan heritage. The final essay in the section on historical theology returns to the theme of the earlier biblical essays, that is, the relationship between the covenants. In this case, Craig Biehl helpfully discusses the view of Jonathan Edwards on the moral and ceremonial law.

The subject of experiential theology, or Christian piety, is one that is flourishing today, and in this issue we have a number of fine essays in this area. They range over a fairly wide spectrum: from Timothy Gwin's comparison of Calvin and Erasmus on the theological foundations for the goal of piety to Jennifer Neimeyer's treatment of the Puritan spiritual discipline of meditation—an area in which the Puritans excelled and have

much to teach this generation of Christians—in the thought of Thomas Watson; and from Robert Arnold’s investigation as to whether the term “mystic” is appropriate for the Scottish author Samuel Rutherford to Karin Stetina’s discussion of Jonathan Edwards’s public delineation of his understanding of religious experience.

A Puritan author is the subject of the first essay in the section dealing with pastoral ministry, namely, Stephen Yuille’s study of John Owen’s treatment of biblical discipline—yet another area where we can learn much from the Puritans. James Davison then looks at Jeremiah Burroughs, whose life and thought was the subject of his excellent Queen’s University Belfast doctoral dissertation. John Skidmore looks at Samuel Davies, whom D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said was the greatest preacher in eighteenth-century America. This is a welcome study, for, despite this remark by Lloyd-Jones, there is really very little by way of secondary sources on Davies. Preaching has ever been central to the Reformed and Puritan traditions—given their Word-centeredness mentioned above. Of late, though, various dichotomies foreign to these traditions of preaching have been introduced and urged, and Ryan McGraw helps us to think through why these dichotomies are not at all helpful ones. This section concludes with Michael Haykin’s helpful essay on Samuel Pearce, a Brainerd-like figure who, as a close friend of William Carey, stands at the head of the modern missionary movement.

The final section of this issue deals with contemporary issues. Here we have two illuminating interviews, the first with Joel Beeke on how best to deal with theological error, and the second, more general, with Geoffrey Thomas, dealing with his ministry, growth as a Christian, and his reflections on the state of Wales and Europe today, and what is needed by way of ministry in the light of this state of affairs. Interviews like this are always helpful, for they remind us of that indispensable personal side to Christian ministry and theological reflection. Joel Beeke’s study of the practical lessons that John and Idelette Calvin’s marriage offer for the contemporary scene and Peter Beck’s study of Jonathan Edwards’s nurture of his family are vital subjects for today, given the widespread ideological attack on both marriage and family by Western culture.

A new entry in this issue are the book endorsements following the book reviews. These are meant to be helpful pointers of good books that should be read, but, which, for one reason or another, are not the subject of a more extensive review. As always, we hope that this issue of our journal will not only instruct but also edify and give rise to adoration of our good God!