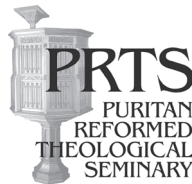


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Cover artwork by Cuffy Whitney and design by Amy Zevenbergen: John Calvin (1509–1564)—the premier exegete and theologian of the Reformation, top right; William Perkins (1558–1602), “the father of English Puritanism,” bottom left.

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From the Editors



It was exactly three hundred years ago last year that a number of figures were born who would play key roles in the revitalization of the churches in the transatlantic British Empire—a revitalization that is still bearing fruit in our day. Though their names are not well-known today—Samuel Walker (1714–1761), James Hervey (1714–1758), William Romaine (1714–1795), and Howel Harris (1714–1773)—in their day they were giants of the faith. One of those born in that remarkable year, though, has been remembered throughout 2014, and rightly so: the Calvinistic evangelist George Whitefield (1714–1770). His tremendous preaching was used by God throughout the English-speaking world as a catalyst for what is called the Great Awakening in which thousands experienced the new birth. To help us properly remember Whitefield, we have several popular essays in this issue of the journal: Jean-Marc Alter and Robert Oliver remind us why it is important to remember the life and ministry of this eighteenth-century evangelist; Michael Haykin discusses the preaching of Whitefield and the way his ministry was a source of revival for the Calvinistic Baptists of his native land, England; and John J. Murray and Terry Johnson delve into the way that God used Whitefield in Scotland and the American colonies respectively.

We also have our usual sections in this issue. Our biblical studies look at in turn: God the holy warrior who fought at the battle of Jericho (Michael Barrett); Jesus as the divine Son of God in the Gospel of Mark (Anthony Rogers)—Mark’s gospel “clearly teaches the deity of Christ”; the purpose of the death of believers (Maarten Kuivenhoven)—originally a sermon on John 17:24; and Pieter de Vries’s discussion of the unity of the Bible and the need for a method of interpretation that builds upon this fact.

Half a dozen essays comprise this issue’s “Systematic and Historical Theology” section. There is a study of the doctrine of natural revelation by Jared Lovell—an issue that has proven to be quite controversial in Reformed circles, with some even denying its importance to the church. Daniel Gomes Silveira examines the doctrine of sin and demonstrates that while every sin “goes about to ungod God”

(Ralph Venning), it is important to recognize gradations of sin. In an essay on the Heidelberg Catechism, Michael Brown argues against the view of John Murray that this important Reformation text did not utilize both a covenant of works and covenant of grace. The origins of the English Sabbath in early Puritanism are the subject of the next article by Jon English Lee. The final two essays in this section of the journal look at two prominent eighteenth-century theologians: Jonathan Edwards and his emphasis on the glory of God as revealed in the Lord Jesus (Brandon Crawford) and Andrew Fuller's understanding of the free offer of the gospel (Simon Green).

The first article dealing with "Pastoral Theology and Missions" is by Todd Hardin and seeks to help readers become more adept at the art of biblical counseling. He rightly stresses the necessity of utilizing the riches of Scripture in counseling. David Murray then outlines a biblical understanding of the nature of a good marriage with the husband and wife having different but fully complementary roles. Our third essay in this section is by Daniel Silveira, in which he examines the perennial necessity of striking a balance between word and deed in ministry, missions, and evangelism. Finally, Ian Macleod discusses the rise of what has been called "the New Atheism," and how to answer this militant movement.

The final major section of the journal looks at three "Contemporary and Cultural Issues": the matter of spiritual warfare as practiced by Pentecostals and charismatics and how Reformed believers should respond to their practice (an essay by Peter Aiken); eight reasons why the doctrine of creation in the Westminster Confession cannot be reconciled with theistic evolution (in an article by William Schweitzer); and an essay by our president on how best to battle "hostility and secularism." A review essay by Cornelis Pronk of Marvin Kamps's recent book, *1834: Hendrik De Cock's Return to the True Church* (2014), a significant examination of the spiritual roots of many Dutch Reformed churches in Holland and North America in the life and witness of Hendrik De Cock, completes the rich bounty of essays in this volume.

It is the editors' delight to be able to offer our readers another excellent cross-section of biblical, historic-theological, and practical essays that will build up their knowledge of our glorious faith and also provide guidance on how best to live out this faith in distinctly practical ways. May our readers profit in this way and our great God be glorified as a result is thus our prayer.