

2019 Pastor's Reading List

1. THE PREACHER'S CATECHISM, by Lewis Allen (2018). This is an excellent tool that I will use, I hope yearly, written specifically to pastors. There is some typical "Reformed" Baptist thinking in this book but nothing that takes away from the powerful message and help this book can be for pastors especially of the Reformed persuasion. He seeks to help do away with what is called today as "pastoral burnout"...with his conclusion that this might happen when we pastors take our eyes off the prize and our preaching and teaching becomes a "job"...so he seeks to give aid to pastors for as he says the church needs pastors who will last and who can thrive. He seeks to give us "our" own catechism...hence the name. Fashioned after the Westminster Shorter Catechism he re-works 43 questions and answers that are meant to keep the pastor focused on his own spiritual development in the midst of seeking to do that for God's children. Reading through this I thought I was reading the work of a contemporary pastor...but Lewis Allen lived preached and wrote from 1890-1954. This book will be at the top of my kindle list every year going forward when I assess my call.

2. THE GREATEST FIGHT: Spurgeon's Urgent Message for Pastors, Teachers and Evangelists, (1892 and then re-compiled and annotated in 2018). Towards the end of his life, Spurgeon was set on making sure that the Church had sound and healthy pastors. It seems that given the timing of both of these books being published that there was a need then just like there is now for pastor to re-assess themselves and be challenged to re-think what they are doing and why they are doing it. In true Spurgeon fashion he breaks this speech turned book into a 3 point message concerning his the pastor, teacher and evangelist can Fight the Good Fight ahead of them. First, he speaks about our armor which is the Word of God, next he speaks about our army...the Church of the living God which we are to lead effectively for God's glory, and then thirdly, our strength, which is found in wearing the armor and wielding the sword. It is a short book at this point but it is one that must be read slowly just to be able to take in and comprehend the totality of his message which is not a hard message to follow but an extremely important one not to rush through. He says concerning the armor and our strength; *"Whoever may have been the person who said it, or whatever may have been the book in which you read it, it was not man's word, nor man's thoughts upon God's Word, but the Word itself, which made you know salvation in the Lord Jesus. It was neither human reasoning, nor the power of eloquent speech, nor the power of moral persuasion, but the omnipotence –the all-powerful authority –of the Spirit, applying the Word itself, that gave you rest and peace and joy through believing. We are ourselves trophies of the power of the sword of the Spirit; He leads us in triumph in every place, the willing captives of His grace. No one should be surprised that we stay close to it."* One last thought from him concerning our army, *"Our mission, like our Lord's, is to gather out the chosen of God from among men, so they may live to the glory of God. Every saved man should be –under God –a savior, and the church is not in a right state until she has reached that concept of herself. The elect church is saved so she may save, cleansed so she may cleanse, blessed so she may bless. All the world is the field, and all the members of the church should work there for the great farmer. Wastelands are to be reclaimed, and forests broken up by the plow, until the barren place begins to*

blossom as the rose. We must not be content with holding our own; we must invade the territories of the Prince of Darkness." Good and timely stuff to be sure.

3. PRECIOUS REMEDIES AGAINST SATAN'S DEVISES, by Thomas Brooks (1652, 1968, digitally 2018). The amazing thing about this book is the sheer number of ways he lists that Satan seeks to cause the Christian to stumble with the intent purpose of our eternal fall (because he knows no better, or he still fashions himself stronger than God since his own evilness blinds him of his limitedness). But then if that wasn't enough information, there are an amazing number of "remedies" (for every devise of Satan upwards to at least 7 remedies are given) against Satan's wiles that are afforded to the Christian in this life because of the power of the Spirit within us. There is filled with amazingly helpful information for the Christian even of today. There are so many books out there today that have spoken to this (think spiritual warfare) but none speak to Satan's ultimate and absolute defeat and our ability in Christ for sustainable victory in this life. It is not about our ability to withstand Satan...but the Spirit within us that withstands Satan. Brooks shines the light of scripture forth so that we can all understand the power in the word and the Spirit. One quote on one of the remedies for when Satan seeks to convince us of a nefarious reason for affliction in the life of the Christian: *"Afflictions serve to revive and recover decayed graces; they inflame that love that is cold, and they quicken that faith that is decaying, and they put life into those hopes that are withering, and spirits into those joys and comforts that are languishing. Most men are like a top, which will not go unless you whip it, and the more you whip it the better it goes. You know how to apply it. Those who are in adversity, says Luther, do better to understand Scriptures."* This is a free read through Monergism for those who wish to wade into this wealth of edifying information from a pastor/scholar who lived over 400 years ago.

4. THIS KIND OF WAR: The Classic Military History of the Korean War, by T.R. Fehrenbach (1963 and re-published 2014). This book on the Korean War has way too much philosophy and biased opinion to even be consider a history of the Korean War...oh, it tells the story of the War but with way too much personal bias for me. He spends way too much time trying to give answer for why our politicians did what they did and what our fighting force did with not nearly enough sourced information. There is simply too much of this in this long work; *"The far frontier is not defended with citizens, for citizens have better things to do than to die on some forsaken hill, in some forsaken country, for what seems to be the sake of that country."* I sought to wade through this book but to no avail. After getting about half the way through and he still hadn't gotten past December 1950 -because of too much extra material- I gave up...and I don't "give up" on books unless they simply seem like a waste of time. It is interesting to me that here is a soldier (served in WWII and in Korea) who speaks more like someone aloof from what went on. There is a fine commentary on the work in the Kindle library but this is one I simply don't agree with. Gen. James Mattis recommended this book, which is why I picked it up...but I have put it down now, never to be picked up again.

5. THE POINT OF IT ALL: A lifetime of great loves and endeavors ... essays and speeches by Charles Krauthammer, edited by Daniel Krauthammer (2018). William

Buckley, Charles Colson and Charles Krauthammer...3 very different men, but 3 men with a passion for people and helping people see the truth about the world and themselves. All three wrote stirring articles, essays and speeches that influenced a generation of thinkers. The world was a better place with these men in it. Now this book was compiled by Charles Krauthammer's son, Daniel, while he was still alive so that many more people would actually be influenced by His father. I was not of a mind to actually read this book when I first saw it, even though it was published just after Mr. Krauthammer's death. I had listened to Charles a few times on Fox News and found that while we might agree on somethings his style and his positions just didn't move me. But then I received his book as a gift and picked it up and I couldn't put it down. This book is a real tribute to one of America's great minds and columnist. The articles and essays dating all the way back into the 1980's were compelling and caused me to think through subjects differently. I fashion myself... rather arrogantly I now see... as someone who seeks to keep up with stuff in my world and the world around me...but once again just like when I read James Rosen's compilation of William Buckley's thoughts on people of the 20th century entitled **A Torch Kept Lit** (see review in pastor's reading list 2017) and Charles Colson's **My Final Word**, (see review in pastor's reading list 2018), I found myself finishing up this book realizing that there is so many meaningful things that I miss. So, I am grateful for men like this that seek to help us out who really don't know much. A great read.

6. THINK:THE LIFE OF THE MIND AND THE LOVE OF GOD, by John Piper (2010). I don't know how I missed this book when it first came out. During that period I was reading virtually everything that Piper came out with...especially when he was talking about Jonathan Edwards as he does in this work as well. Anyway, I saw it last week on the church "library" shelf, picked it up and was delighted and moved by this work. It reminded me of a more scholarly work that was done in 1972 by John R.W. Stott entitled **YOUR MIND MATTER: The Place of the Mind in the Christian Life**. Both books written decades apart focused on the fact that it is a good thing for Christians to think...properly with God's Word as our standard for truth. Thinking can be used for many good things, but as both men observe unless this thinking's purpose is to first of all glorify the LORD than it won't in the end get God's approval. Piper's aim is to encourage serious, faithful, and humble thinking that leads God's people to the true knowledge of God Himself which will lead as he says to a greater loving, honoring and glorifying of God on our part, but also will lead to us loving others as God has commanded. For the first 11 chapters, he presses the immorality of rationalism and even the anti-intellectualism within the Church. The latter part of the book he supports biblically and rationally the point that objective, absolute truth does exist and it can be known by the power of the Holy Spirit. Education, learning, thinking does not exist as a means unto itself...its God given purpose is to aid us in our loving God and others as God prescribes. Short of doing this, it is useless and it puffs up our own ego according to the Word of God. It is longer than Stott's Book. Stott's book was roughly 90 pages (depending upon formatting) and Piper's book is 222 in its hardback form...but there is more biblical referencing and more up to date examples which makes this book worthy of reading for the believer ...thinker or non-thinker. (Which he lovingly defines in this book as well...see where you fall.) Maybe read both!

7. WORDS OF COUNSEL (Updated, Annotated): For All Leaders, Teachers, and Evangelists" by Charles H. Spurgeon (this annotated form of **Counsel for Christian Workers** was digitally published 2018). I read this years ago from the non-annotated version called **Counsel for Christian Workers** which was originally written sometime in the late 1800's probably after he left the 4 Metropolitan Tabernacle. Spurgeon had a real heart for the lost and in this volume he speaks to Christian Workers...those in full-time vocational ministry as well as the members of the Body of Christ. He was convinced if everyone carried out their role in sharing the gospel wherever God placed them that so many would be saved to turn the world upside down for Christ. This book as I remembered it speak long and a lot about the virtues of Sunday School, Sunday School teachers and the children in which we are given charge...the precious little ones that God has entrusted to us to save! His language sounds Arminian in many cases ...as if we can save anyone...but his Calvinistic zeal is such that that is how we should approach our calling. It is an encouraging book and a call to arms for the Christian worker reminding us we have nothing to lose and everything to gain! ***"Whether we are servants or masters, whether we are poor or rich, let's take this as our rallying cry: as to the Lord and not to men (Ephesians 6: 7). May this be the engraving of our seal and the motto of our coat of arms from this point forward –the constant rule of our life and the sum of our motives. In advocating this gracious goal for our lives, let me say that if we are enabled to adopt this motto, it will first influence our work itself, and secondly, it will elevate our spirit concerning that work."*** This annotated version is just a little over 128 pages depending upon which format you find to download. And it is free from Monergism.

8. 1942: THE YEAR THAT TRIED MEN SOULS by Winston Groom (2005). This is an interesting work...one that was written by a child of a War World II vet who was never too curious until later in life when he began to see the significant ways this war impacted the culture and the people. He said many times throughout this book, *"For years, even until they were aged, they spoke passionately, as my parents' generation did, in terms of "before the war," "during the war," and "after the war," as they began to forge their own brave new world."* I have to use his words to explain the reason for this book as he brought the book to a close, *"It is almost a military axiom that wars are generally fought in unpleasant places, and this certainly went for the year 1942: scorching deserts, pestilent jungles, endless mud fields, freezing mountain terrain, or the brutal cold landscapes of Russia, and in those days most of the men who died were buried near to where they'd fallen. Today on both sides of the oceans remain the military cemeteries with their neat white "crosses, row on row" that mark the places, cared for in perpetuity by the Allies' graves commissions. The great admirals and generals are all gone now, and the youthful soldiers, sailors, and marines who fought this long-ago war are going fast themselves. It had taken a full seven years of war to corner Hitler, who shot himself, and Mussolini, who was finally killed by his own people and strung up on a meat hook, and Tojo, who swung at the end of an American rope. But the world at last became rid of these misguided creatures and their cronies and henchmen, and this was accomplished, in some fine measure, because of the extraordinary sacrifices of those raw, untried, and wondering men who served and fought, and died, in 1942."* He speaks of their sacrifices, hardships and unwavering commitment to push back the invading

hordes to make the world a safe place from people of only evil intent. He talks of unusual but necessary alliances like with Russia and parts of the Vichy government to turn out Hitler and his armies from Europe. He clearly communicates the cost that we might have liberty and freedom...what would have been lost if the Axis had prevailed. This book is right up there with Ray Bradbury's **FLYBOYS** and Hampton Sides **GHOST SOLDIERS**, Laura Hillenbrand's **UNBROKEN** and E.B.Sledge's **WITH THE OLD BREED**.

9. THE MYSTERY OF PROVIDENCE, by John Flavel (republished many time since the mid-1600's but in this free digital form 2018 from Monergism Books) this is superb collection of sermons on God's providence, in which he speaks exclusively to Christians who are living like pagans...in that they are not sure if God is there or if there even is such a thing as Providence. This is a book that I will need to re-read in the near future, for each section needs thorough study...not that they are hard to understand for they are not but because they are so full of encouragement for the believer in this world who struggles with the realities of a God who is personal and active today! This was written over 300 years ago but these sermons are so pertinent today. I love this reminder; *"Be well satisfied in that station and employment in which Providence has placed you, and do not so much as wish yourself in another. 'Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called' (1 Cor. 7. 20). Providence is wiser than you, and you may be confident it has suited all things better to your eternal good than you could do had you been left to your own option."* He also gives as an evidence for Providence our salvation but also the more involved ways God gets involved as well. *"The scattering of ministers and Christians by persecution from cities and towns into the ignorant and barbarous parts of the country, has been the way of Providence to find out and bring home some lost sheep that were found there to Jesus Christ (Acts 8. 1, 4). The like signal event has since followed upon the like scattering of godly ministers, of which there are many outstanding instances at this day."* When he talks about the work of Providence for the Saints he says this...classic...and very timely; *"Walk therefore suitably to this obligation of Providence also. And see that you thankfully own it. Do not impute your escapes from sin to accidents, or to your own watchfulness or wisdom."* Again taking the time to read these "old guys" enable us to see the Church across time and how we have faltered in our time...and yet we realize that people have struggled pretty much the same way in every time. Interesting comment from about ¾ of the way through the book; *"I beseech you consider what an effectual means the due observation of Providence will be to overpower and suppress the natural atheism that is in your hearts."* This is free from Monergism as well.

10. THE HEART OF EVERYTHING, by (Samantha) Lynn Wallace (2018). This was a fun and rambunctious read. It was hard to put down because the dialogue was so compelling you just wanted to stay in the room on the run or in most interesting places with these "people". It continual references to pop culture (movies, books and sayings) kept you looking for these as if they were little nuggets of gold that added to the humor and intrigue of this wonderfully written and engaging story. It was a bit Twilight-esk for my liking (though I never actually watched the movies or read the books) but the characters were so much fun I had a hard time putting it down and as a pastor I loved

these last lines...*"Jesse had been wrong all along. The salvation of his soul could never have been accomplished by magic. Salvation wasn't something that could be earned or achieved—it was given. Years of a front row seat in the pews hadn't prepared me to witness this firsthand. I suddenly felt very, very small in the face of such power, such planning—as well as very, very grateful. I reviewed Jesse's words inside my mind: "God went through a hell of a lot of trouble, just for the likes of me." Maybe that's the whole point, I told myself. It didn't matter how lost you were or how many sins you committed. Christ had died for our sins so that anyone could be saved, regardless of what you thought you deserved. Because deserving had nothing to do with it."* I am thankful for this book and hope Lynn (Samantha) keeps writing.

11. THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING, by T.H. White (1958). This book brings together 4 books into one...books published between 1938-4, concerning the Arthurian lore. The 4 books within this one are **The Sword and the Stone**, **The Queen of Air and Darkness**, **The Ill-Made Knight** and **The Candle in the Wind**. Much of the book seems to use as its main source of "research" and "basis in fact" the work of Sir Thomas Malory's **Le Morte d'Arthur** (The Death of Arthur) which was itself a reworking of tales concerning the Arthurian lore of the time (1485...and a work much loved and discussed by C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien who were huge fans of the Arthurian lore). In the books first form it was titled **The Whole Book of King Arthur and His Noble Knights of the Round Table**. I was a fan of **The Sword and the Stone** as a child...and later on had read Sir Thomas' tome on Arthur but had never read the rest of the book published by White before this reading. **The Sword and the Stone** would be a "prequel" to Sir Thomas' work today giving us a look at the early life of Arthur/Wart just before he pulls the sword from the stone. However, from the beginning it seems that this was meant as a fantasy tragedy concerning the Arthur of myth and legend. While **The Sword and the Stone** is mostly whimsical there are glimpses of what is coming that are detailed well in the following books up to the death of Arthur. Now there is another book by White that supposedly wraps the story up that was published posthumously (**The Book of Merlyn** written in 1941 but not published until 1977), but it is said that most of the details are found in the first couple of these books. This is an amazingly well written tale...moving far better than even the updated versions of Sir Thomas' work. I enjoyed reliving my youth with this medieval tale of Arthur and even the points of Christian doctrine that finds its way in the work... I especially liked this little quote, *"Do you know, I shall be talking about God a great deal, and this is a word which offends unholy people just as badly as words like 'damn' and so on offend the holy ones."* And one more, *"Funny," said Lancelot, "how the people who can't pray say that prayers are not answered, however much the people who can pray say they are."* Faith is actually highlighted a lot in White's rendition of this tale...Bors, Galahad, and even the faith of Lancelot and his on-going and continual struggle with God and Arthur and Guinevere. Also, the books are filled with excellent metaphor and irony...like the image of an ugly Lancelot. This is a good classical read that every person young and old should read...this is much more than a story of love and tragedy or a story of a man name Arthur...it is a story of King David, and it is a story of each and every man who thoughtfully struggles with the darkness in which we live seeking answers with God and without God and the consequences and blessings for both. (Just as an aside: I hold to a more ancient view

of “Arthur”. *The more contemporary view is about a 6th Century warrior who would become a sort of king that defeated the Saxon’s on Baden Hill. Artorius which means the Bear may have simply been a title or a nickname of an actual man who ended up ruling in a region historians think Camelot may have existed for over 50 years. There are many books which have come out in the last 2 decades that look to this man as being the Arthur of lore and legend.*) (Approx. 650 pages)

12. ON THE EDGE OF THE DARK SEA OF DARKNESS, by Andrew Peterson (2008). This is the first book in the Wingfeather saga (a group of 4 books all told). It is well written. One can see the influence of two of the Oxford Inklings (C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien...probably more so Lewis... thinking of the Chronicles of Narnia) to be sure. As I said, this is well written...but literally it took till the last third of the book to get interesting enough to keep reading (thankfully they are short chapters). My son says that the rest of the books are better since the entire back story is out of the way now...but I wonder. My favorite character, Peet the Sock Man runs throughout the book, and right when I thought we were going to learn even more about the man the book ends. And, the toothy cows are said to be feared, but I have no idea why. I have to say that in the beginning of the book I found the description of animals and other things to be amusing, but they distracted me from the story completely. The side notes that pop up was an interesting idea, but once again they ended up distracting me, and didn't really add to the book, so I just stopped reading the side notes after a while which leaves you wondering later if you have missed something. So, to re-cap this 300 plus page book: Slow story at the beginning followed by a quick paced story in the end. Danger in the shadows versus shadows that come out and grab you. Will I read the next 3 books...jury is still out...(at \$9.99 for the kindle editions, probably not for a while.)

13. THE RETURN OF PRAYERS: A Treatise, Wherein This Case: How To Discern Gods Answers To Our Prayers Is Briefly Resolved: With Other Observations Upon Psalm 85.8 Concerning Gods Speaking Peace, by Thomas Goodwin (1600-1679). This is this well-known and loved Puritan pastor’s attempt in this treatise to convince believers of the grand importance of this duty, which is so full of gain: to discover the causes of neglect of prayer, and to remove temptations and discouragements in the practice of it. In his epistle’s dedicatory, he describes prayer as a *“thriving trade of intercourse with God. The returns are better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. It is the praying Christian that alone employs the riches of the promises, which we usually let lie by us, like dead stock, unimproved.”* But just to be clear this treatise is not some much about how to pray as it a book about what to make of God’s answers to prayer and how we, believers, know God answers prayer. It truly is an easy read...though some of the language may cause some to slow down...but if you read the Puritans regularly it will be of little concern. What ii found most helpful is his rather lengthy sections on what we are to do when it is clear that God hasn’t answered our prayers and what we as Christians should discern from that. He is almost exhaustive in discussing God’s reasons for both how we can know God has answered prayer and what to discern from Him not answering prayer... and He does all of this in less than 250 pages. As usual Rev. Goodwin lives up to his reputation of having a

wonderful ability to shed light on some of the obscure passages of Scripture making them crystal clear for his readers no matter the generation.

14. THE GLORY OF THE GOSPEL: A Discourse on Colossians 1:26-27, by Thomas Goodwin (digitally remastered in 2019 from Monergism Books). This is a wonderfully written treatise for the Christian struggling with assurance of faith, which Christians are prone to do in all generations. As we seek to have the assurance that he talks about in this treatise, he emphasizes the use of scripture and how without it we will be tossed to and fro like the waves...but, along with the Scriptures he makes a great claim in our faith journey: *"Therefore if God have revealed this mystery unto his saints, we must acquaint ourselves with saints, not only with saints living, but dead; and we may have a great deal of knowledge from their writings, for it is the ordinance of God that the body in all ages fitly joined together should increase by that which every part supplies. We have had a great deal of knowledge from the age before, and that which is coming shall have much knowledge from us; and so one age being fitly joined to another, doth cause the body to grow to the fullness of the stature of Christ."* This is an excellent work revealing the center piece of the Gospel in us...Christ! It has been said that one needs patience to read Goodwin but I find his style of intertwining the scriptures and proving his point over and over again to be refreshing. He truly is a pastor to his readers trying not to give any room to nonsensical questions that might lead back to a lack of assurance in the Scriptures and in the Christ he so loved and knew very well.

15. THE OXFORD INKLINGS: Lewis, Tolkien and their circle, by Colin Duriez (2014). There has been so much written about these men through the years and how they changed the flow of discussion on literature in the early to mid 20th Century. This book winds us through the relationships of these men in such a way to leave the reader thinking on many occasions that we were there at the Kilns (Lewis's home) or in one of the many pubs having discussions concerning the culture and the literature of the day. The times of honing each other's craft with their readings of each other's work was a moment (or two) that caused me to wish I actually was there. To hear the early drafts of **The Hobbit** and **The Lord of the Rings** and C.S. Lewis' early poems and **Out of the Silent Planet** would have been extremely stimulating to be sure. The trust between these men through two World Wars and beyond is an amazing testimony to their love for one another. Their Christianity was yet another aspect of their connection which probably was the root of their ability to trust one another. There are many quotable sections but I believe this is the authors whole point for writing this book, *"So were the Inklings simply a circle of C.S. Lewis's friends? They were a circle of Lewis's friends, but not simply that. For Lewis and his friends, friendship itself was a rich and complex relationship, with roots in an older world, and with the power to enable what is best in our humanity, if not misused. How ought friendships to be lived? That question was at the heart of the work and concerns of the Inklings, however imperfectly they practiced and embodied friendship."* The influence of Charles Williams upon Lewis was a component that I found rather interesting and look forward to reading one of his works (**The Place of the Lion**) that is often discussed among the group as well. What would the world have done without such "dinosaurs"? Praise be to God for the gift of these men and the author's book.

16. THE PLACE OF THE LION: A NOVEL, by Charles Williams (1931, this edition 2015). Charles Williams was the longtime editor of the Oxford University Press and one of the founding members of the Oxford Inklings along with C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, with Owen Barfield and others including Christopher Tolkien later on. This book was a riveting read and at the same time a confusing read...but all in all very satisfying even if I didn't catch all the references to philosophy, pagan religion and the Bible. Oh, there is also a very interesting love story that runs throughout with an exceedingly pleasant end to that as well. It was the precursor to the science fiction novels of C. S. Lewis's Space Trilogy and Tolkien's tome which contains The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings. T.S. Eliot praised the author's "profound insight into the heights of Heaven and the depths of Hell." Time magazine would write of this author that he was "one of the most gifted and influential Christian writers England has produced this century." So, after reading the Oxford Inklings I felt that I needed to take a look at what all the fuss was about. Just like with Lewis and Tolkien this author makes you think so he cannot be read fast....and given the vast amount of narrative within the story line you want to read carefully to get every morsel. The author takes his readers into the head of his main characters so that we "know" them extremely well...like a friend. The struggle between heaven and earth which takes place will remind the contemporary reader of the struggle to rule the nine realms in the marvel universe. But this is a rather profound tale of the struggles we all have and how hell wins some battles and heaven the rest.

17. THE LONGEST WINTER: The Battle of the Bulge and the Epic Story of World War II's Most Decorated Platoon, by Alex Kershaw (2004). This is an epic story of courage, commitment, loyalty and survival of the I&R Platoon of the 394th Regiment, 99th Infantry Division. 18 men who had been trained as an Intelligence and Reconnaissance group are placed on the front line of what would become the biggest counterattack of the Third Reich in WW II known as the Battle of the Bulge. Most WW II buffs are familiar with this battle and the heroism of divisions like Patton's 4th Armored and the 101st and 82nd Airborne divisions being surrounded at Bastogne but this little 18 man platoon led by the youngest Lieutenant in WW II, Lyle Bouck, exhibit the best of the best of US soldiers during this harrowing experience...Hitler's last ditch effort to reclaim his Third Reich. As with all of Kershaw's book we find ourselves on the battlefield, in the Oflag or the Stalag alongside the actual people who were there. As readers, we actually relive these acts of heroism and acts of personal struggle as these men recount exactly what was going through their minds. We see the leadership of various men on display and it teaches us how to persevere and how to enable others to persevere through some of the toughest times of life. I was also moved by the description and work of the US Army chaplain, Father Cavanaugh and his great work in keeping up morale at a time where just giving in and dying made the most sense. Also, the work of the Army doctors in the German Stalags performing miracles with little to no medicines to work with and yet helping these men to hold on till the Allies could arrive to rescue them. The title tells us that these men were the most decorated platoon in WW II but that recognition didn't come until 1981 just before President Carter left office. But it wasn't about the medals for these young men...it was about doing their duty to the end if that is what it took...a real testimony to us today!

18. JOSIAH'S REFORMATION: AN EXPOSITION OF II Chronicles 34:22-28, by Richard Sibbes (first published 1637, republished in paperback 2011). "Sibbes never wastes the student's time," wrote Spurgeon, "he scatters pearls and diamonds with both hands." I would add that he scatters all of these treasures out in the open...for as I have said before, to me, he is the easiest to understand and comprehend even with the archaic language (archaic to us) that he uses. This book was originally a four-part sermon series on 2 Chronicles 34:22-28, where the Lord is said to have heard Josiah because his heart was tender, because he was humble and because he mourned his sin. The sermons are titled The Tender Heart, The Art of Self-humbling, The Art of Mourning, and The Saints Refreshing. Each of these get to the "heart" of the matter...which was always Sibbes point. To exposit the Scripture so that his hearers and his reader's hearts would be moved from where they are now to where they should be. He says point blank, "Sin is the bane of all comfort. That which we love more than our souls undoes us. It embitters every comfort, and makes that we cannot perform duties with spiritual life. Our very prayers are abominable to God so long as we live in known sin. What makes the hour of death and the day of judgment terrible but this?" The "good" doctor seeks reformation of soul and hence reformation of Church and he does it with the simplest of fashion...pray, humble yourself before God live in His forgiveness and rejoice in being refreshed. Here towards the end of the book in the midst of many uplifting pieces is yet another gem, "Here we learn again that it is the sight of misery which works the deepest impression. It is not the hearing of a thing, but the sight of it, which affecteth most deeply; as in the sacrament, the seeing of the bread broken, and the wine poured out, works a deep impression; and because God knew Josiah's heart would break at the sight of the misery, therefore he tells him, 'Thine eyes shall not see the evil that I will bring upon this place.' The sight is a most working sense, to make the deepest impression upon the soul. What shall be our great joy and happiness in heaven, but that we shall see God for evermore." This book like so many other great reads can be downloaded for free from Monergism.com.

19. OUR VIETNAM WARS: AS TOLD BY 100 VETERANS WHO SERVED Vol.1, by William F. Brown (2018 to Kindle). I got these (volume 1&2) for free from Kindle because they sounded like this would be a good way to hear the stories of Vets from this war...a war in which my father fought. He was there for the Tet Offensive and some of the other major events between 1966-1968. But I won't be reading the second Volume as I have perused it and it is just the same story over and over again. While each short 1-2 page accounts are told from their perspective...their own Vietnam war...each one has obviously been edited down and they have been formatted to fit a particular form which means they all sound alike. I am only half way through the first volume and every story has sound. What I am saying is that the editing process seems to take away from the stories being told. So, while I will finish this volume I will not be reading the second...which is a shame since the men of this war need to be heard as they are now the generation of warriors that are dying off.

20. THE PERSON OF JESUS: RADIO ADDRESSES ON THE DIETY OF THE SAVIOR, by Jesus J. Gresham Machen (newly printed by Westminster Seminary Press 2017). Back in the early 1920's J. Gresham Machen began to see the way the

theological community was headed and it wasn't good. The discussions were beginning to be against things biblically that had been considered biblical and "untouchable" since the 1st and 2nd centuries produced its first "theologians". Seeing this, he wrote about it in his then very controversial book entitled, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923). This book was touted as doing something that no other book had done up to that time and that was to clearly delineate the difference between supernatural, historic and biblical Christianity and the liberalism that was finding its way into the theological seminaries of the day. Shortly after this book came out so did the Auburn Affirmation which stated that scripture was NOT inerrant, the General Assembly has no right to dictate doctrine to the presbyteries, liberty in thought and teaching is necessary, unity and freedom at all cost, and denial of all the 5 essentials that everyone seeking ordination in the PCUSA must declare...Inerrancy of scripture, the virgin birth of Jesus, substitutionary atonement, the bodily resurrection and the authenticity of the miracles of Christ. This book has put together radio messages that Dr. Machen gave in 1935 to help believers and others who might be paying attention to understand the truth behind the true divinity of Jesus. Without reading his *Christianity and Liberalism* (which really is only 100 pages longer) the reader comes away with one of the best "apologies" for the person and work of Christ. This is an early quote from the book about how the Christian should be conscience about God in their life to stand out from the liberal; "I do not mean to say that the Christian in his communion with God is always rehearsing consciously the things that God has told us about Himself. But underlying that sweet and blessed communion of the Christian with his God there is a true knowledge of God. A communion with God which is independent of that knowledge of God is communion with some other god and not with the living and true God whom the Bible reveals. "This also reveals his desire to be understood by all not just those in academia. This is a great little book and it can be had as a free download from multiple places.

21. IN THE YEAR OF OUR LORD: REFLECTIONS ON TWENTY CENTURIES OF CHURCH HISTORY, by Sinclair Ferguson (2018). When Dr. Ferguson was asked about

this book he said, "This is not a history of the church it is a book about the Church IN history." As He navigates through the first 20 centuries of the Church as we think of it he clearly has a grasp on how men have not changed throughout time. Our toys and other devices change but our nature doesn't. But also, the Scriptures and their effect don't change either. Jesus said that He would grow His church...he said that he would be with His people...more importantly that He would be with us till the end of the age. In the midst of Jesus' promises that He has kept, Dr. Ferguson gives us a glimpse into just how Jesus did that in every century since Christ ascension. It didn't happen easily but it has and is happening. "As we read about the Christian centuries and live in the contemporary world, we need to learn this: gospel advance always evokes opposition. That is as true in our personal lives as it is in the life of the church." Interestingly enough we see things that we thought we discovered in the 20th and 21st centuries like small groups and church planting all the way back to the 5th and 6th century. Celtic monks rather than being "monastic" were community and church builders like church planting today that actually takes place in a neighborhood seeking to reach the neighborhood. "We do not share the perspective of the monastery. But one of the heartbeats of the Reformation message (especially in Calvin's teaching)

was that it is possible to live out the aspirations of monasticism in the day-to-day world, to serve Christ in the power of the Spirit and in the fellowship of the church—that is, to live a life totally given over to the service of God in everything we do. Throughout the history of the church, it has always been those who have given themselves to the simplicities of day-by-day devotion to Jesus Christ who have made the deepest and most enduring impression for Him in the world. "This is an excellent little book for us to see how God has kept His promises since the since the Scriptures were given to us. In them we see how He did it to the end of the first century but this book helps us glimpse Him working for the next 20.

22. BEYOND THE CALL: THE STORY OF ONE WORLD WAR II PILOT'S COVERT MISSION TO RESCUE POWS ON THE EASTERN FRONT, by Lee Trimble with Jeremy

Dronfield (2015). This book began in 2006 with the fall of the author's dad at the age of 87. The family was always aware of his dad's war service as a bomber pilot with the Army Air Forces 493rd Bombardment Group, but what they weren't aware of was this story that Capt. Robert Trimble kept secret for 61 years. As the title says...this desire to know more about his dad's war service developed into a book about his father's covert missions that sought out and rescued hundreds of POW's and downed pilots on the eastern front which was between Berlin/Germany and the USSR (Russia). This decorated Army Air Corps pilot had just finished his 35 combat missions successfully (which was a miracle in and of itself...and would have been worthy of a book) but instead of going home on leave only to be shipped out again he was offered a "cush" job to fly broken down and crashed planes back to a US service base from the eastern front. Well, as always with the military the "cush" job was more than they had told him which would lead to a covert operation that placed him in direct opposition with our "ally" the USSR nearly getting himself killed on more than one occasion. This is a fantastic tale of doing your duty to the fullest extent possible with the hope of seeing his wife and family again always pushing him forward. This is a book that shows the extremely courage of the men of that generation who are leaving us more and more every day. They are "The Greatest Generation" in so many ways...the loyalty of country and duty almost seems unparalleled in our own day though there are many similar stories of those who have gone and fought and returned as well today. Pearl Harbor, D-Day, the Battle of the Bulge and other major events often get the headlines as they should but work such as this needs to be told as well. We talk about the ruthlessness of the Nazis as we should but the ruthlessness of the Russians was equal to or maybe worse in some cases. This book reveals all of that and more...a great read and a necessary read for all about an ordinary Air men who ended up being anything but.

23. BAPTISM: Answer to Common Questions, by Guy M. Richard (2019 from Reformation Trust). Sometimes you have to ask yourself why we need one more book on such an elementary subject. And, of course, the answer is because while it is elementary on one hand, we have been taught things that muddy the waters on this subject of covenant baptism. And, the waters are often muddied because we are not versed on what the Bible actually says about such matters concerning baptism and its purpose. The first Century people understood what was going on and they did not seek to change what had always been...but over the past few centuries we have changed the

meaning of baptism to fit our own sloppy understanding of theology. Biblical theology requires us to think of the Scriptures through the eyes of the Covenant of grace...the Abrahamic Covenant, if we are going to see the connections with every area of life and doctrine not just this one. There is not much “new” in this book since this doctrine...this issue is an old one...founded in Genesis 17 going forward. I do like the way he couches the discussion. He says that this is a family disagreement between us and the Baptist for sure...and that whatever position we hold we must remember first and foremost we are brothers and sisters in Christ. And while he does make the point that this ...in and of itself ..is not salvific, he quickly moves on after defining their position to shredding the validity of their position. One of the most useful parts of this book for me was the last chapter where he explores the implications this position has on 4 groups of people; parents of young children, the children themselves, believing adults who have already been baptized, and unbelieving adults who were baptized as young children and he answers the question of why parents in our churches ought to consider embracing this practice wholeheartedly. This chapter alone is worth the purchasing and reading of this entire book.

24. THE TRIAL OF A CHRISTIAN’S GROWTH, by Thomas Goodwin (1643, digitally 2018). The good pastor is seeking to deal with an issue that arises constantly in the church and that is, if we are seeking God we often find ourselves wondering...are we in fact growing in grace? This is a common concern for all believers, both today and in centuries past. In Thomas Goodwin’s time, it was so common that he decided to write this short case of conscience (145 pages or so) about it, based on **John 15:1-2** where Jesus says, ***“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.”*** Goodwin wrote for those who had *“doubts and troubles about their estate”* . . . and so call into question the work begun, because not carried on so sensibly unto perfection as they expect and desire. To help them evaluate their growth in holiness accurately and keep growing, Goodwin compared and contrasted false signs of growth with true signs of growth. Overall, he teaches us that growing in grace is not just looking holy on the outside due to the use of gifts, opportunities, special spiritual experiences, and professions. Rather, it is continually producing all of the fruits of the Spirit in your soul even in difficult circumstances out of sincere love for God and in reliance on his righteousness rather than your own, though using wisdom to do it to the best of your ability. Goodwin warns that some make grand professions of faith but that this does not really reflect what is happening in their souls. Here, Goodwin makes his main point about growth in godliness very clear: *“True growth begins at the vitals; the heart, the liver, the blood gets soundness and vigor, and so the whole man outwardly; this heart-godliness is the thing you must judge by.”* This is one of his harder treatises to follow but very much worthwhile. (Free from monergism.com)

25. EFFICACIOUS GRACE, by John Gill (mid 1700’s reformatted 2011). This most reputable of Calvinistic Baptists (he followed Spurgeon to the pulpit at Metropolitan Tabernacle) has filled up above twenty pages in stating the question about the grace of God in conversion since this was such a topic of contention within the church then...and since it still is today-especially between Baptists and others-many need to read this

small treatise (plus or minus 100 pages depending upon the formatting). His desire in the 16 sections (16 or so passages of Scripture) was to prove, "... *that the work of grace or conversion, is an internal one, wholly owing to the efficacious grace of God, and wrought in the soul by a supernatural, irresistible, and insuperable power, in the production of which man is purely passive; and to vindicate the passages of scripture made use of in proof of this doctrine, which are objected to.*" (And he does!) Throughout each section he deals with a particular passage the "proves" his point and at the same time answering the objection of his time from his more Arminian brothers. "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God. - **2 Corinthians 3:5** The argument from hence, proving the insufficiency of man's free will, and the necessity of the grace of God to the doing of that which is spiritually good, stands thus: If men are insufficient of themselves to, or cannot by the strength of free will, think anything that is spiritually good, much less can they will, and still less perform, that which is so." And one more from among so many, "**No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. - John 6:44**' This passage of Scripture is no inconsiderate proof of the doctrine of the powerful and efficacious grace of God in the work of faith and conversion. To come to Christ, is to believe in him. This is not to be attributed to the free will and power of man, but is owing to the Father's drawing; which is to be understood not of moral suasion, but of the internal and powerful influence of his grace. This act of drawing, is an act of power, even almighty power; as appears from its being something distinct from and superior to both doctrines and miracles." You gotta love **these** Baptists!

26. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: WHAT THEY MEAN, WHY THEY MATTER, AND WHY WE SHOULD OBEY THEM. by Kevin De Young (2018). Another book on the 10 Commandments? Yeah, that was what I thought as well until I read it. It is not that there is much or anything new here but Kevin's style is very engaging and being reminded of old truths is not a bad thing even in this day and age. He looks at these Commandments with the "fresh" eye of a father of young children, a relatively "young" pastor, and an obviously zealous scholar and biblical linguist...and it works. I had a hard time putting this book down. This is a great pastoral book because he walks his reader through to understanding the commandments place in the lives of the people then and us today. He says at the beginning, "*The church has historically put the Ten Commandments at the center of its teaching ministry, especially for children and new believers. For centuries, catechetical instruction was based on three things: the Apostles' Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments. In other words, when people asked, "How do we do discipleship? How do we teach our kids about the Bible? What do new Christians need to know about Christianity?" their answers always included an emphasis on the Ten Commandments. In the Heidelberg Catechism, for example, eleven of the fifty-two Lord's Days focus on the Ten Commandments. The same is true in forty-two of the 107 questions in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, in more than half of the Lutheran Large Catechism, and in 120 out of 750 pages of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Across various traditions, there has been a historic emphasis on the Ten Commandments.*" And he ends with this, "*We still need the Ten Words handed down at Sinai. Have they been changed in some respects by the coming*

of Christ? For sure—transformed but not trashed. We can no longer keep the Ten Commandments rightly unless we keep them in Christ, through Christ, and with a view to the all-surpassing greatness of Christ. As new creations in Christ, the law is not only our duty but also our delight. If we want to love Christ as he deserves and as he desires, we will keep his commandments (John 14: 15). And that means as we keep in step with the Spirit (not to mention, keep in step with most of church history), we would do well to remember the Ten Commandments, which are foundational for all the others." This is a very timely book for Christians to read today.

27. Radical Depravity-(issue 247- 2017). This is a free quarterly digest of Christ-centered sermons and sometimes condensed articles, treatises and books. They do an excellent job of editing down the material so the reader can mine the material in question. This booklet is concerning the **Radical Depravity of man...** from the perspective of Presbyterians, Anglicans, particular Baptist, and Congregational pastors comprising such names as A.W. Pink, John Owen, Joel Beeke, Loraine Boettner, Spurgeon, Flavel and J.C. Ryle. All of these come to the same conclusion ... oh that we could get this many people together today from such diverse backgrounds and find so much agreement. These articles cover the gambit concerning non-believers and believers. John Owen writes, *"There are three things that arise from the natural futility of the mind in its depraved condition found among believers. Firstly, it makes the believer waver and to be unstable and fickle in the holy duties of meditation, prayer, and hearing the Word. The mind wanders and is distracted by many worldly thoughts. Secondly, this instability is the cause of backsliding in believers, leading them to conform to the world and its habits and customs, which are vain and foolish. And thirdly, this futility of the mind deceives believers into providing for the flesh and the lusts of the flesh. It can and often does lead to self-indulgence"* Loraine Boettner perhaps sums it up best, *"A corpse cannot act in any way whatever, and that man would be reckoned to have taken leave of his senses who asserted that it could. If a man is dead spiritually, therefore, it is surely equally as evident that he is unable to perform any spiritual actions, and thus the doctrine of man's moral inability rests upon strong scriptural evidence."* Not trying to give the content away...but then we already know what it's about...right!?! These booklets are free from Chapel Library resources. There is something for everyone here.

28. WHY & WHAT: A Brief Introduction to Christianity, by Douglas Jones (1996). This man whom many of y'all may not have heard of is a senior editor for Credenda/Agenda (a Christian cultural and theological journal with Doug Wilson as editor) and a well-tuned apologist for Christianity. This small book does what others have not...places the most profound truths of the Scriptures into a treatise of faith that anyone could understand if the Spirit is even tweaking them to pay attention. This is a well written overview of the main doctrines of Scripture from a Reformed perspective being proven along the way with many biblical texts that support the positions. If I had any negative critique of this book it would be the section entitled *The Jewishness of Christianity*. He almost reads as though we are going to end with a dispensational view of Judaism but he recovers in later chapters with a clear and concise view of "a covenantal" people...a view of the children of the promise...not a view of us all being "like" the Jews of the Old Testament. Why another book of the basics of Christianity?

Because we forget...and because with so many maybe one of them will help us actually see the beauty of what the Bible has been saying all along. This comes as a free offering from Monergism and I didn't realize at the time that it had been written "so long" ago until after I had read it...but then these trues are timeless.

29. MAKE YOUR BED: Little Things That Can Change Your Life...and Maybe the World, by Adm. William H. McRaven (U.S.N. Retired) (2017). This little booklet speaks clearly to a generation of people who are actually seeking to make a difference but aren't sure how. Adm. McRaven uses lessons from his SEAL training days to set 10 sure fired methods for "success" in place. This book developed out of a commencement speech he gave at The University of Texas in May of 2014. **First** he says, *"If you want to change the world, start off by making your bed."* **Second**, *"If you want to change the world, find someone to help you paddle."* **Third**, *"If you want to change the world, measure a person by the size of his heart, not their flippers."* **Fourth**, *"If you want to change the world, get over being a sugar cookie and keep moving forward."* **Fifth**, *"If you want to change the world, don't be afraid of the Circuses."* **Sixth**, *"If you want to change the world, sometimes you have to slide down the obstacle headfirst."* **Seventh**, *"If you want to change the world, don't back down from the sharks."* **Eighth**, *"If you want to change the world, you must be your very best in the darkest moment."* **Ninth**, *"If you want to change the world, start singing when you are up to your neck in mud."* And **tenth**, *"If you want to change the world, don't ever, ever ring the bell."* This book is not a theological treatise but there is biblical truth throughout. Frances Schaeffer as well as others often said where ever you find truth it is God's truth. There is God's truth in these stories and principles that we should all strive to live by. The very last principle, *"If you want to change the world, don't ever, ever ring the bell"* is familiar to any who know anything about SEAL training from books or personal experience. Ringing the bell is the sign that you have quit. The instructors tell you that they will do everything in their power to get you to ring that bell...and of 150 people who began SEAL training with McRaven only 33 survived to receive their Tridents. Never quit sounds a lot like, Stand Firm" from the scriptures. The world and our fallen nature seek to get us to quit... in fact the world and our fallen nature makes it feel like it is the most rational thing to do because they will present us with situations where quitting seems so much easier than continuing on. But we must never ever ring the bell. I read this after reading **The 10 Commandments** by Kevin DeYoung... interesting companions. I whole hardily recommend this book.

30. TALK THE WALK: HOW TO BE RIGHT WITHOUT BEING INSUFFERABLE, by Steve Brown (2019). This book is very similar to another book Steve wrote years ago entitled, **HOW TO TALK SO PEOPLE WILL LISTEN** (2014). Interestingly, there is not much "new" here. He does make it clear that we are right when we speak what the Bible has to say and everyone else is wrong. Then he says that it matters how our attitude is when we are right, since WE are not the ones who are right but God is. Very clear statements throughout along this line and yet in fashion he seems he is willing to hedge his bets on some of the topics effecting the church today like abortion, gender dysphoria, marriage...saying that as Christians, we need to listen to one another...neglecting the scriptural injunction that clearly says you aren't a Christian if you don't even seek to keep Jesus' commands. The weakness in this book is seen in

countless statements like this one; *"The issue is not how Christians define truth, itemize what true Christians believe, or set theological or doctrinal walls around faith. On occasion, those are things that Christians ought to do. But above all, the issue is Jesus, whom he hugs. Frankly, Jesus hugs a lot of weird people I would not hug. He has hugged all believers, and it is reasonable to expect that he will hug others who aren't now a part of our family. He hugged me, and I am not even sure why."* He does know why God hugged him...because God chose him before the foundations of the world. And if he was honest he would also say he knows that Christians don't place theological walls (I mean we do from our ignorance) but that the Bible itself has constructed theological walls around what true faith looks like and is. So I was disappointed with a book by Steve Brown for the first time. I guess that means I am getting old and cranky perhaps...but we live in a day and age where we must be clear and we must stand on what is. right...not what we define as right but what God says is right...and I am convinced that that is pretty clear.

31. CAN SCIENCE EXPLAIN EVERYTHING?, by Dr. John Lennox(2019). Dr. John Lennox is a world renowned mathematician, philosopher of science and a Christian apologist seeking in this book, as with all his books to to dispel the myth that science is supreme on everything. Long story short...the answer to the question he poses in the title of this book is ...NO...science can't explain everything...much to many people's surprise...among them being some of the smartest people in the world in their field - which is not theology. He says in the preface that the reason he wrote this book was in response to many young people and adults wanting him to deal specifically with the relationship between Christianity and science concerning particularly the evidence for God. While he stays in this lane he is amazing and the information is extremely helpful. He shows throughout the first 2/3rds of this book the absurdity of scientist breaking into the theological and philosophical realm. He refutes science's "divinity" with many "facts" that actually supports Christianity while at the same time tells many antidotes like this one: *"Einstein once said that scientists make poor philosophers. I am sorry to have to say that Hawking, brilliant scientist though he was, certainly demonstrated that weakness. The British Astronomer Royal, Baron Rees of Ludlow, who was a friend of Stephen Hawking, was asked by the Guardian newspaper what he thought of Hawking's pronouncement that the creation of the universe did not require a God. Rees replied, 'I know Stephen Hawking well enough to know that he has read little philosophy and less theology, so I don't think his views should be taken with any special weight.' He made the same point in Hawking's obituary."* Another eye opening part of this book is the number of noted scientists that he quotes from that are Christians...Faraday, Kepler just to name two. Great stuff for the first 2/3rds of the book but then he begins to speak about salvation in the God that he has just "proved" exists and this is where his argument actually breaks down...there are quite a few statements like this one towards the end of this book; *"It is worth emphasizing once more: according to Christianity, "salvation" means exactly that—action on the part of God to rescue those who could not help themselves. At its heart is the magnificent doctrine of the grace of God. It says that, if they will, anyone can be forgiven and find a new life and friendship with God—whatever they are; whatever they have done."* On one hand it is by grace, but on the other "if they will, anyone can be forgiven..."..if we want salvation we can get it. I was so

disappointed by the end because everything seemed to add up to a belief in the absolute sovereignty of God, but according to him we must still choose. A disappointing end to an otherwise great read.

32. PRESBYTERION: Covenant Seminary Review, Volume XLV, Spring 2019. This journal is a publication of Covenant Theological seminary. It features a variety of voices from scholars across denominations and academic disciplines who affirm the journal's mission which seeks to contribute to better understanding of the Christian Scriptures, theology, church history and related fields and topics for the health of the church and its leaders, the spread of the gospel and Christ's kingdom, and the promotion of God's glory. This journal features articles on "*George Washington Carver*", By Dr. David Calhoun...where Dr. Calhoun explains the conversion and theology of George Washington Carver to the delight of his readers. Dr. C. John (Jack) Collins contributes an article entitled, "*How Does the Hebrew Bible Speak About God's Actions in the World?*" He makes a great historical case to just take the text at its bare meaning and yet still end with concluding that the text can still allow for "progression of time in the creation narrative...helpful historically but not very much otherwise. The next article was written by Dr. Michael D. Williams entitled, "*Story Summaries: Key Points for Understanding the Bible's Big Story and Our Place Within It*"...is a great article that enables its readers to see beyond themselves...since we are such a myopic people. 3 articles on inerrancy that capture a full argument when read in succession from Dr. Michael A.G. Haykin, Dr. J.V. Fesko, and Dr. M. Sydney Park. The next article, "*Analysis and Conclusions Regarding 1 Timothy 2:9-3:1a*", by Dr. Marjorie J. Cooper is a interesting article that I think goes too far to prove an unnecessary point but there is some fine scholarship and helpful side conclusions within. Next there is an interesting article on The Spirit speaking in the letter to the Hebrews by Dana M. Harris. But the best article of the bunch and probably the longest was an article from an Assistant Pastor who is pursuing his ThM., entitled, "*Privilege, Oppression, and the Gospel: A Biblical Response to Intersectionality*", by Mike Moses. After these articles there are included 12 reviews of books and essays from throughout the Church. Extremely helpful material in most ways but the printing is so light and so small (for these old eyes) that I will not be extending my subscription beyond one year (190 pages in all).

33. CO-LABORERS, CO-HEIRS: A FAMILY CONVERSATION, by Brittany Smith, Doug Serven, Scott Sauls, Paige Britton, Greg Perry, Jessica Ribera, Wendy Alsup, Maria Garriott, Rondi Lauterbach, Sean Lucas and others. (2019) This book was written to perhaps re-start the conversation concerning men and women serving in the kingdom of God. I say, perhaps, because it also seems to have the distinction of letting many discontented women have an outlet to share their discontent and anger. Now I have struggled reading this book for a couple of reasons. One, when I read that women need titles just like the men who have been called and ordained to the biblical offices that are clearly laid out in Scripture I want to stop reading. I continued because I want to hear what is at the bottom of their angst. Some of it is legitimate when talking about how the Church has viewed women and their gifts through the ages, so there is much for us to repent of as men in leadership, but then to knee jerk to seek to pressure the church for specific positions...that goes to the other extreme for me. Extremes are never

helpful...balance...is necessary for unity. That is where the articles by Alsup, Sean Lucas, and Webster seem to go...giving helpful information and helpful solutions rather than just talking about the problem. I was told once unless you have a credible solution to offer with your criticism...keep your criticism to yourself. And second, most of these articles simply wish to criticize and call for new offices to be formed...forgetting that this is not a biblical practice. We are all called to serve one another with the gifts that God has given us...the elders are called, among other things, to help us discover our gifts and to help us implement them when and where we can and depending upon the size of the church that may be easier said than done. Also, one thing that is missed in all of these articles is the discussion about the culture we live in that makes it particularly hard to care for our women individually given the highly suspicion and litigious nature of things. This is where some of our more spiritual; women can step up as long as we, elders, don't get the wrap for not seeing them alone. However, even saying this tells us that this is a challenge for us as elders but it should not stop us from shepherding...it just means it will look differently than if we are ministering to a man. (340 plus or minus pages)

34. MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS, by Thomas Boston, (edited and printed by his son Thomas Boston, the younger a few years after his father's death, printed first 1753 and then reformatted digitally in 2019). The "advertisement to the First Edition is almost worth picking this book up all on its own as He eulogizes his father as only an adoring son can with complete understanding of who his father was and the impact his father had on the flock to which God had assign and empowered to preach and teach. But you have to wonder, how many books could get away with this title today...probably none! And yet, having said that we have many treatises that seek to answer particular questions that arise from time to time...just like this one. This particular addition seeks to answer 6 of perhaps the most asked questions of the mid to late 18th century, and doing such a good job, Thomas Boston's son believed this Q and A needed to be preserved for all posterity. The 6 questions that this publication deals with are: 1) Whether or not the sins of believers, while unrepented of, make them liable to eternal punishment? (Can a believer lose their salvation?); 2) Whether or not all sins, past, present, and to come, are pardoned together and at once?; 3) Whether or not repentance be necessary to the obtaining of the pardon of sin?; 4) Where hath sin its lodging-place in the regenerate?; 5) Why the Lord suffereth sin to remain in the regenerate?; 6) Who have the right to baptism, and are to be baptized? His answer comes from the years of Church doctrine on these issues that were not seriously challenged until the 20th Century. Answers like the short answer to this first question, *"Believers, even in their worst case, have a perfect righteousness, and so are perfectly righteous: therefore they can never be liable to eternal wrath. The reason is, because to be perfectly righteous, is to be conformed to the law,; but to be perfectly conformed to the law, and yet to be liable to the condemnation of the law, is a flat contradiction. It is true, that the righteousness is not originally and inherently theirs; but it is derivatively theirs, and imputed to them; which, with respect to Adam's sin, was sufficient to make us actually liable to eternal flames: and why shall not the imputed righteousness of Christ be sufficient to make us free from that actual liableness to the revenging wrath of God."* His answers are "short" in some cases and extremely long as

in the case of the last question concerning baptism, because he wishes that His audience thoroughly understand what they mean when they answer these question. This roughly a 300 plus paged book but it is easily read and digested to affirm what the church has always taught as doctrinal truths.

35. THE GOSPEL CENTERED WOMAN, by Wendy Alsup (2012). I discovered this author when reading **CO-LABORERS, CO-HEIRS: A FAMILY CONVERSATION**, (see above for critique). I found what she had to say in that book to be of great help in the on-going conversation that we should be having in the Church about women in the Church. Given that in most churches the largest percentage of people attending is women we must be clear on the Bible's positions. The problem that this author sees and one that I have witnessed for years is that very few elders in the Church actually read the materials that are written by our women for our women...just blindly trusting that whatever they get from the PCA bookstore is good or just not wanting to wade into the "murky" waters concerning women in the church. This first half of this book would be a good companion read to Susan Hunt and Ligon Duncan's book **Women's Ministry in the Local Church** and Susan Hunt's book **By Design** where she so well deals with the biblical view of women even though some of her illustrations are perhaps a bit out of date for today's women. At least the first half of this book could easily be a replacement for this book for the "modern" woman to be sure. This book surely shows us her "worth" as an author that we ought to be reading today. Here is one of many of the quotes that I found insightful, *"Godliness simply means you are devoted to God. You are aligned with Him. You keep a posture toward Him. You love Him. It is the Greatest Command. Most of us reading a Christian book on how the gospel informs womanhood probably generally consider ourselves devoted to God. In an honest assessment of ourselves, we love Him, which is why we care about this topic. But you can be godly—you can show reverence, piety, and devotion to God and His things, loving Him from a sincere, pure heart—without being content. The one does not imply the other. There are godly people, devoted to God, who are not content, and that is not particularly great gain according to Paul. The gain of devotion to God is severely compromised without contentment. It makes sense to me that godliness and contentment are distinct from each other. My problem is not that they are separate, but that they seem mutually exclusive."* The last half or section 3 was a bit weak but overall this was a good book. Now this book was written in 2012 as I said before and this many years later with much heart ache and struggle some of the views she states here are not as absolute as they once were. She also includes some thoughtful study questions at the end of the book.

36. TIGER TRACKS: THE CLASSIC PANZER MEMOIR, by Wolfgang Faust (reprinted 2016 by the estate of Wolfgang Faust). **TIGER TRACKS The Classic Panzer Memoir** was originally serialized in the German Federal Republic as '**Panzerdämmerung**' (**Panzer Twilight**). Here in this account of a retreat by the mighty Tigers from the Russian Red Army we have a riveting account from inside the tank. He saw so much death and destruction and graphically writes about it so that all will know of the "heroics accomplished on behalf of the Fatherland and all Europe", he says to a female prisoner, *"We are defending Europe," I said to her. 'Like this?' She laughed bitterly—then, seeing the radio man look at her again, she sank back to her crouching*

position under the turret. My reply to her had been instinctive, a slogan but a genuinely felt one, the reason that we had come to this country and unleashed the slaughter we brought." But he also had another reason...as a form of healing. He insightfully says, "Throughout history, I believe, every man who has been in combat has felt the need to discuss it afterwards, to reflect and share its memories, to rejoice, to commiserate and perhaps to learn the lessons from it. It is a primitive male instinct, as strong as the sexual urge. To deny soldiers this shared memory would be like an imprisonment, like the amputation of his tongue." Just like in the books **D DAY THROUGH GERMAN EYES**, these German officers and non-commissioned personnel were convinced that they were there to save Germany and all Europe from the onslaught of the Bolsheviks. When you think about it this commentator would wonder which of these 2 armies were more evil? The Germans hated and feared the Russians all at the same time and with the entrance of the IS tanks from Russia...the Joseph Stalin's of this account...the Tigers were put on the run by the sheer number of them. At this time in the war Germany's resources were almost depleted, and their air force almost gone and so reading these accounts of the last minute desires of these men to save their land now from the eastern invaders just adds to one's knowledge and understanding of the Eastern Front warfare but also to the mindset of the German military mind that was unwilling to give up to what they were assured were an inferior race of people. Tiger Tracks gives us literally an insider view of one of the toughest tanks ever built and the amount of destruction it could cause and this "driver" lived to tell about it.

37. I COUNT ALL THINGS BUT LOSS, by Thomas Boston (sermons given 1712, lifted out of His selected works, reformatted and digitized by Monergism Books 2019). These are a wonder to be sure. They are 8 sermons given, it appears in the Fall of 1712 on **Philippians 3:8-9 (ESV)**- ***"Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God that depends on faith."*** From the very beginning to the end this faithful preacher/teacher declares what every Christian needs to know from what it means to actually count all things but loss... (6 sermons alone on verse) so that his readers can understand the depth of what Paul is giving up and we by extension, in Christ, must give up. The answer to these first 6 can be summed up with this statement by him, ***"All things beside Christ cannot make a man happy; but the enjoyment of Christ alone can do it. There are two things wanting in all the creatures that are to be found in him. These are, First, sufficiency; nothing can make one happy, but what is completely satisfactory; for if there be the least want, it mars happiness; now nothing besides Christ is such. In the most prosperous condition there is something wanting, as in paradise. Christ alone is completely satisfactory, **Psalm. 73:25. "He is all in all;"** virtually all things. Secondly, certainty; what is liable to change cannot make men happy; but all things beside Christ are so, **Prov. 23:5**; but he is unchangeable, **"the same yesterday, to-day, and forever."** All fullness dwells in him; they that enjoy him need fear no change; not in this life."*** The last 2 chapters deal with verse 9. In sermon 7 he highlights

what it means to be found in Him...in Christ...but it is sermon 8 that is the absolute gem of all these sermons: Not having mine own righteousness but Christ's. This is perhaps the one of the best if not the best explanation about imputation and why there is nothing in us that can be considered righteous. This is not really adequate to capture its depth and clarity but let this one quote suffice, *"Christ's righteousness, received by faith, is the sinner's only security to be depended upon before God. It is the sinner's only shield, shelter and defense, from the wrath of God."* As he wraps these sermons up given all that he has said he takes time to explain why this true of Christ righteousness imputed to us is good news...and among many things he offered I leave you with this... *"Never entertain low thoughts of pardon. Every pardon is the price of blood, more precious than a thousand worlds. Pardoning sin is one of the greatest letters of God's name, one of the greatest of his works, greater than to make a world. When God said, let such a thing be, it was. But when sin is to be pardoned, justice stands up for satisfaction; the truth of God for the honour of a broken law. Wisdom is set to work to find out a way, the Son pays down the price of his blood, Num. 14:17–19)."*

38. THE CHARACTER OF THE UPRIGHT MAN, by Thomas Watson (reprinted 2015). Thomas Watson (c.1620—1686) was an English, non-conformist, Puritan preacher and author. In this exposition of **Psalms 37:37**, Thomas Watson gives 15 characteristics of a godly and upright man, along with their motive and end. I love reading the Puritans as I read them quite often...but this short treatise is one that I will seek to print out and re-read yearly just to evaluate how I am doing as a child of God and as a pastor of God's Church. This is an excellent freebie from Monergism.com one that all men and women ought to read...for the "upright man" is the righteous person...child of God. Throughout this treatise he is highlighting these characteristics of the upright but, of course, all along he is also contrasting the upright with the hypocrite...something we would have a hard time doing publically in this day and age. He says of the reason for writing this; *"I will delineate who this upright man is. I shall show you the innocency of Christ's dove. We live in an age wherein most pretend to saintship, but it is to be feared they are not upright saints; but, like the woman in the gospel, whom "Satan has bent over," Luke 13:11, I shall give you several characteristic signs of an upright Christian."* He spends most of his time with these 15 characteristics but towards the end he also takes a moment to describe how it is possible for God to make such a claim as, ***"Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright..."*** given that we are still sinners in this life and then ends with a great exposition concerning the uprights crown of peace that comes from our justification. All and all well worth an hour or so reading.

39. TALES FROM THE PERILOUS REALM, by J.R.R. Tolkien (compiled and edited by Christopher Tolkien 2008, reprint 2017). Wow, what a hodge-podge of work in this over 400 page compilation and finishing of some of Tolkien's much beloved works. *"Faerie is a perilous land"*, he writes, *"and in it are pitfalls for the unwary and dungeons for the overbold...The realm of the fairy-story is wide and deep and high and filled with many things..."* In this edition of these works we have **ROVERANDOM**, first written around 1925 as a story for his son Michael about the adventures of a dog who was turned into a toy and was lost till the he was found by the man in the Moon and

eventually returned. This story was originally submitted for printing in 1937 but it wasn't actually printed until 1998. Next we have the story of **FARMER GILES OF HAM** published in 1949, tells the tale of Farmer Giles and how he is able to become a local hero in battles against a giant, a dragon and eventually the king of the land. It is set in Britain in what we would call the dark Ages offered up as a medieval myth. Next is **THE ADVENTURES OF TOM BOMBADIL AND OTHER VERSES FROM THE RED BOOK**, (this book was first published in 1968) which is a collection of poetry by Tolkien with even a couple attributed to Samwise Gamgee. Three of the poems find their way into **The Lord of Rings** unabridged version and they often are filled with information about Middle-earth that is not found anywhere else. Next, there is **THE SMITH OF WOOTEN MAJOR**, this book was suppose to actually be an introduction to a George MacDonald's book entitled **THE GOLDEN KEY** where he was going to define the meaning of Faery and it ended up being a book of its own in 1967. The people of Wooten major, not to be confused with Wooten Minor, loved to feast and they were well known for the culinary prowess. But as it seems they were also known to people from other lands...namely Faery, who sends an emissary which begins generations of connections and joy between these two lands with very special people chosen for this honor as children. Next we have the **LEAF OF NIGGLE**, a very peculiar painter that was thoroughly under appreciated. This is an interesting story which seems to be somewhat autobiographical...or at least how Tolkien saw himself in relation to all the other artists of the world save a few like his good friend C.S. Lewis. And lastly we have in this book, **ON FAIRY-STORIES AND RELATED EXPLANATIONS**. I found this somewhere, *"The essay is significant because it contains Tolkien's explanation of his philosophy on fantasy and thoughts on mythopoiesis."* It was extremely insightful when I first read these years ago. He himself says after much reflection on the subject, *"It is the mark of a good fairy-story, of the higher or more complete kind, that however wild its events, however fantastic or terrible the adventures, it can give to child or man that hears it, when the 'turn' comes, a catch of the breath, a beat and lifting of the heart, near to (or indeed accompanied by) tears, as keen as that given by any form of literary art, and having a peculiar quality. The peculiar quality of the 'joy' in successful Fantasy can thus be explained as a sudden glimpse of the underlying reality or truth. It is not only a 'consolation' for the sorrow of this world, but a satisfaction, and an answer to that question, 'Is it true?' The answer to this question that I gave at first was (quite rightly): 'If you have built your little world well, yes: it is true in that world.'"* At the very end Tolkien gives us a great glimpse into his understand of the Bible and His faith...well worth the reader's time.

40. THE FALL OF ARTHUR, by J.R.R. Tolkien (edited and commentary by Christopher Tolkien 2014). This is an interesting book for the peopm that makes up the Fall of Arthur is only 41 pages long but the commentary by Christopher Tolkien makes up the rest of the 280 page book. This 41 page poem has 120 pages of notes and scribblings written by Tolkien through the years as his mind came back to this poem over a 40 year period of time. In his commentary he painstakingly seeks to show the connections that can be made between his father's work on King Arthur and the leading classical "experts" on the subject like Sir Thomas Malory's **Tale of King Arthur**, Geoffrey of Monmouth **Historia Regum Brianniae** (12th Century), **Morte Arthure** (a 4000 line

poem of the 14th Century) and many others that his father thought “authoritative”...in that they have something of merit to bring to the discussion. He compares and contrasts his father’s poem with these worked as well as compares this work with other works that his father wrote in the early 1920’s and abandoned as his middle-earth writings took over his thinking. He comments on many things where his father did not leave notes...and while some complain about his interjections the reality is who better to do this work than Christopher since he was even one of the Inklings at one point and knew his father best outside of maybe C.S. Lewis...and into his 90’s now his mind still seems to be as sharp as ever. Christopher Tolkien is a real gem. This is an interesting look into the mind of J.R.R. Tolkien and also a good look into literature at the time. It is books like these that anyone interested in writing need to consider for beyond the insight into an amazing author’s mind there is the practical help in story telling whether in poetry or prose. As Christopher comments towards the end of the book; *“I have no more time to give to Old English verse methods. But you will see that it has some interest. And the attempt to translate it is not a bad exercise for training in the full appreciation of words—a thing already all people are perilously slack in nowadays: though it is really impossible.”* Oh and it was free on Prime Reading last month.

41. AN ATLAS OF TOLKIEN, by David Day (2015). Whenever navigating Tolkien’s Middle-earth it is good to have a map and a glossary handy just so you don’t get lost in all the details of Tolkien’s glorious portrayals. This is not to be confused with the scholarly work by Karen Fonstad entitled, **THE ATLAS OF MIDDLE-EARTH. AN ATLAS OF TOLKIEN** is a shorter ...dare I say...easier book to use for a quick reference guide. It has great maps and wonderful illustrations throughout in its attempts to engage as many of the reader’s senses as possible. It is also filled with specifically commissioned and created art works that depict the various events dating from the creation of Arda forward to the beginning of the Fourth Age- the Age of Men... so there are copies of paintings, of charts and of maps that are new to this work that are extremely engaging and helpful in gaining a fuller understanding to Tolkien’s thinking and this “new world” order that he created. It is a delight in and of itself to read alone. This, truly, is an excellent guide to any and all who are “fans” of Tolkien’s seminal works on Middle-Earth lore. As an “atlas” it serves as a *“geographic and chronological guide for those who wish to navigate the waters of The Silmarillion, The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings (with constant reference to lesser works on the same lore- MS) but does not serve as a substitute for reading the books themselves.”* (David Day)

42. THE SILMARILLION, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien (this edition 2004). *“Fantasy at its absolute best”*...is how the sum of all the works concerning Middle-earth by Tolkien has been defined. And it is true. I have been reading and re-reading these stories every couple of years now and I find in them such delight and comfort...but also struggle...a good struggle, that is. Unlike most books written today, it takes discipline to read and capture Tolkien’s works...especially, this one titled **The Silmarillion**, which is actually the edited version of 4 other books (*Ainulindale, Valaquenta, Quenta Silmarillion, and Akallabeth*) with a teaser, if you will, concerning the Rings of Power that are dealt with more in **The Hobbit** and **The Lord of the Rings** book series. It takes discipline to read these books because they are not sequential/

chronological...the names of people and places are extremely foreign, and our minds work overtime trying to make comparison to history and mythology so we must be disciplined to balance all this and more. There are many mythologies, and beginnings of the world tales in the history of literature and world religions, but none in my knowledge are as detailed and “complete” as Tolkien’s Middle-Earth works. It all begins with the book of origins and the founding and formulating of the world and its peoples and how the forces of evil and good constantly do battle...with evil being banished in the end. Sound familiar!?! This book is a must for any who loves **The Hobbit** and **The Lord of the Rings** movies or books. This version also has much material added back that had been lost or was recovered later after the 1977 and 1993 version went to print. This is the “extended” version, if you will.

43. The Necessity of Repentance, by Thomas Boston (sermons preached around 1717, Thomas Boston, the younger, printed these after his death, formatted by Monergism Books, 2019). This is a series of sermon and talking points around the passage from **Luke 13:5, “I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”** This is a condensed version of his masterful work entitled **Repentance: Turning from Sin to God.** In this longer version Thomas Boston’s son did not include roughly 2 more sermons that dealt with the sentence of Condemnation and Execution. But before us is the meat of the original book (roughly 200 pages as it is). From the introduction we see the urgency on his heart to get this teaching before the people: *“WHEN we consider the abounding sin and hardness of heart prevailing under a preached gospel, it must needs let us see, that the doctrine of repentance is both necessary and seasonable, to pluck the brands out of the burning; or if that will not do, to leave men without excuse. Sinners stave off repentance, as if they were resolved to persist in sin come what will, or at least as halting betwixt two opinions: But here is a peremptory decision of the case in this text, “I tell you, Nay: but except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”* Point by point he makes it clear based extensively in the scriptures why we need to repent and how we can repent if we are God’s child who are meant to repent. One of the best sections I believe in this work is the last couple of sermons that were re-tooled but titled, *The Case of the Thief on the Cross No Argument for Delaying Repentance*. Masterfully he lets us see why it is “not a good argument” to say we can wait... *“just like the thief on the cross”*. There is so much in this version for us as believers to make us realize that repentance is a lifestyle for the Christian this side of heaven and his case is well made for us to continue in this lifestyle throughout our lifetime for the glory of God.

44. BEREN AND LUTHIEN, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien (2017). This is one of Tolkien’s oldest and most beloved foundational stories on his Middle-Earth saga. A writing of stories and pieces of stories which spans literally decades of writing and re-writing along with delight in reading by his many through the years around the world. In his preface to an earlier compilation and book entitled **THE CHILDREN OF HURIN** (which I also just read from 2007), he states, *“It is undeniable that there are a great many readers of THE LORD OF THE RINGS for whom the legends of the Elder Days are altogether unknown, unless by their repute as strange and inaccessible in mode and manner.”* He states this as one reason for why he decided to bring this story

into book form for the enjoyment of his father's devoted readers. The story before is foundational to another book as well produced by Christopher after his father's death: **THE SILMARILLION**, which J.R.R. Tolkien had tried to get published years before. This story as well as 2 other books Christopher has written are what we would perhaps call the expanded versions or if they were movies...the extended versions....for he pulls exclusively from his father's notes that have never been published before...literally hundreds of pages of re-writes and thoughts for each story. So what we have here is not the "short" form as found in **The Silmarillion**, but the "whole" story as "intended" by his father, J.R.R. Tolkien. In fact, it is more than that, for it gives us the "original" never before printed story which is a "bit" different than the original as well as they later versions as fully developed and the shorter form from other publications. As with the other 2 that I will be talking about, Christopher then spends much time talking about the notes, commentaries and poems his father wrote like *The Lay of Leithian* found in an earlier form *The Lays of Beleriand* from the book **The History of Middle-Earth** (1985). Almost 300 pages of prose, poetry and commentary and the related works to this one story alone.

45. THE CHILDREN OF HURIN, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien (2007). It is a must to read the introduction of this book and the others noted especially if you have not read **The Silmarillion** because Christopher prepares the reader well for what is ahead. Christopher determined to edit this story in an extended version from the one found in **THE SILMARILLION** so that the his father's most devoted readers could understand many of the references to Turin and to Beren in **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**. Through this story (**THE CHILDREN OF HURIN**), as well as the stories of **BEREN AND LUTHIEN** (discussed above) and then **THE FALL OF GONDOLIN** he wished to open a "*window onto a scene and a story set in unknown Middle-earth that are vivid and immediate, yet conceived as handed down from remotes ages...*" J.R.R. Tolkien himself wished to have completed these works because he knew how integral to the history of the Elves and of Men in the Elder days these were. Of course, because of so many re-writes...never being satisfied...it was left up to his son Christopher along with Christopher's son Adam to bring these to a finished form using Tolkien's notes exclusively. It was all there just never completely compiled by his father. This book is a literary tragedy in the full sense of the word. Hurin is a great hero among Men during the Second Age of Middle-earth. A leader of leaders given his kingdom by the Elves as a descendant of the great Beren. Turin, son of Beren And Luthien was so full of hope and promise and giftedness but also filled with pride and self-centeredness going from one place after another seeking contentment only to have it dashed at every "port". At different times in his life he achieves great success and power only to lose it because of his own pridefulness as well as a curse placed on his family by Morgoth. As with all men sin is a tragedy that cannot be shaken by our will or word. Sins such as pridefulness can look very valiant and good in their applications but they will show themselves for what they are if they are never tempered with true godly wisdom. And around Turin, the son of Hurin, much devastation lived...to the point that Turin marries his own sister Nienor, unaware, and the curse is brought to its fullness when Turin and Nienor learn the truth.. Also, included are maps and names that are associated with this story and most of the rest.

46. THE FALL OF GONDOLIN, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien (2018). When Christopher edited **BEREN AND LUTHIEN** in 2017, he said then that that would be his last book in his father's series, but then he knew he would have to finish this one as well if his health would hold out at 92 years of age. So according to the preface of this book **THE FALL OF GONDOLIN** is to be the final work of his father's that he will complete... at the age of 94, then, he figures he has accomplished enough to continue his father's legacy well. This is not a long story as it relates to the other two but he spends much time giving us "all" his father's versions of this even from the earliest writing, which was begun sometime in his late youth (circa 1912 or so) and completed in a WW I field hospital...all the way to the later revisions in the 50's... so many revisions ... so many changes through the years to this story that truly began his lifelong pursuit of Middle-earth. In fact, this is where it all began...the fascination with Middle-earth began with this story a story that was told to Christopher as a child from his father's memory at night before going to bed. The story of the founding of Gondolin is worthy of this read alone. This was one of the hidden cities of the Elves, the others being Doriath and Nargothrond , but this was the last one to withstand the onslaught of Morgoth. With the normal amount of celebration, pridefulness and treachery that goes with the Elves...and Men for that matter...events roll pretty much as were prophesied...from the coming of Tuor, with an unheeded message from one of the "god's Ulmo, to the downfall of the city and the escape to the seashore this tale has everything to keep you sitting on the edge of your seat. Also, this being an extended version along with every other version ever written by Tolkien, the reader will see things that are not in any other source including **THE SILMARILLION**. In the earliest version the reader will see names of people that we don't see again until **THE LORD OF THE RINGS**, ...can you say Legolas Greenleaf, anyone? (spoiler alert). Also, (maybe as a tease for the next book, though he says not), he includes the extended version of ***Tale of Earendil the Mariner***, the son of Tuor and the father of Elrond and Elros. He alone among men sailed into the bay of Eldamar which is in the land of the immortal, because he bore a Silmaril upon his brow. There is so much to this story here and the downfall of Morgoth the Valar than what is found in **THE SILMARILLION**. Like all of these books, we find the poetry of Tolkien...maps pertaining to the story and a glossary of names and terms important for navigating the stories as we have them.

47. THE SILMARILLION, by J.R.R. Tolkien, edited by Christopher Tolkien 1977 and then this edition of 2004). Just like all the rest, this is a book put together by Christopher after his father's death...a work that had been begun by his father back in the 30's and a work that He sought to be published alongside the publishing of **THE HOBBIT**. In fact, originally he would not allow **THE HOBBIT** to be published unless it included this work as well. Christopher found all his father's notes and commentary on notes and compiled and ready the "final" product for publication of **THE SILMARILLION** only after **THE HOBBIT** and **THE LORD OF THE RINGS** found such worldwide critical acclaim. I picked this book up to re-read because my family purchased for me the hardback versions of the above critiqued books **BEREN AND LUTHIEN, CHILDREN OF HURIN and THE FALL OF GONDOLIN** and so before I began to read those I picked up **THE SILMARILLION** again to read the beginning then the extended versions and original versions of the 3 above before finishing it. It is always interesting how in this

book it is always evident who is in charge. While evil may seemingly be in charge of the hearts of men, Elves and Dwarves, there is One who has a plan and that plan unfolds just as it is supposed to; never leaving Middle-earth without a presence of his. Iluvatar, the god of this story by Tolkien, imitates His take on the One true God. Iluvatar has a plan to redeem Middle-earth and that plan continues through the ages, unhindered by any other power though through the eyes of men, elves and dwarves. It seems so long that all creation forgets. But when the King returns it is only then that there is peace in the lands of Middle-earth after the last great battle when evil is vanquished. Even into the 3rd age, Iluvatar raises up Wizards that come from him to aid his creation against the foes that would seek to undue his work and his plan.

48. KILLING THE SS: THE HUNT FOR THE WORST WAR CRIMINALS IN HISTORY,

by Bill O'Reilly and Martin Dugard (2018). Yet another historical thriller to come from this pair. Most people today do not know or have long forgot such names as Martin Bormann, (Adolf Hitler's personal secretary and confidant), Adolf Eichmann (organizer and facilitator of the ghettos and concentration camps, Klaus Barbie (known as the Butcher of Lyon for the numbers of people he killed) and Josef Mengele (the Angel of Death, because as a medical doctor he performed hundreds, thousands of horrible experiments on humans, most of whom dies or forever were mutilated. The books speaks of others as well even less known but equally as guilty for their treachery and murderous ways that the Israeli Mossad (self-styled Nazi Hunters...not bounty hunters, for they were not It for any money or acclaim but for justice for the Jewish people killed during WW II)sought to bring to justice. As I said along the way the book speaks of other Nazis hunted down and turned over for trial but it mostly focuses on the first 4 that I mentioned and the secrecy and hard work that went into tracking them down and bringing them to justice when they could. This book shows this group of committed Jews from weeks after the war ends all the way up through the early 2000's still committed to hunting down any and all who are still alive. There wasn't much information here that I hadn't read before, but within these pages I came across a group of Nazis that I had read hinted of in other works but here they are and their work in the concentration camps, which has largely been ignored, is fully displayed. As with the other books the postscript contains the summary information about all the important people talked about in the book. A great book for WW II buffs.

49. THE ADVENTURES OF BIG-FOOT WALLACE THE TEXAS RANGER AND HUNTER,

by John c. Duval (first printed in 1871, reprinted this edition 2019). This is one of those rare pieces of historical literature where there is a bounty of scholars that say that this work needs to be preserved just as it is, because it tells the story in a way that communicates to the American spirit. A legend comes alive in this book from Wallace's own journal writings which the author shares with us given to him with permission to use...and the authors first-hand accounts of traveling and Rangering with Wallace. He got his name while imprisoned in Mexico City after the Meir Expedition. The story goes like this...the people of the town where he and others were being held saw that the American prisoners had no shoes...so they got money together to buy shoes for them but here is where they noticed something different concerning Wallace...Wallace needed a size 12 and no one in town had feet that big.. and no one

had ever made shoes that large. They were astonished at the size of his feet and took to calling him “Big-Foot” and “*it stuck like Texas mud ever since.*” There is so much to be commended here especially for those who are familiar with Big-Foot from other Ranger journals and stories, and from anyone who loves Texas history and lore. Throughout the main body of the book, Big-foot tells us the story of an author that tags along with a party going after Lipan Indians...old friends of Wallace’s that decide to turn on him and steal his horses, because it is in their nature...any way he is “GOING” to get his horses back and make them pay for this act of war on their part. I love the on-going banter between Big Foot and the tenderfoot author over many things “frontier” as they pursue the Indians... but it is the authors disgust with the inequity with how James Fenimore Cooper portrays the frontier and how the author actually finds it to be in the “real world” that causes much humor. The author exclaims at one point, “*I’m losing my confidence in Mr. Cooper rapidly.*” This is one of many statements where he had become convinced that Mr. Cooper never really experienced anything he had written about. All in all it is a fun and informative read by another well-known man in the state of Texas. John C. Duval is known as the Father of Texas Literature was also a survivor of the Fannin massacre at Goliad.

50. SCALIA SPEAKS: Reflections on Law, Faith and a Life Well Lived, edited by Christopher J. Scalia and Edward Whelan(2017). Say what you will about Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg...and there is a lot that can be said about her...she writes a moving account of her friendship with her favorite Justice Antonin Scalia...and this foreword is worth the price of the book...almost. For those who have never read his speeches or his articles or his judgments in support and in dissent this is the book to renew your faith in the Supreme Court. Justice Scalia was an intellect, a man of great faith and a man of wonderful humor...and a man that many said exemplified biblical humility. Justice Scalia was a much sought after speaker and of course, he loved to talk...to proclaim the truth of our founding fathers, the truth about the Law, the truth about faith and the truth about how to live life well...to its fullest. If you want a peek into the mind of this great jurist this is the book to pick up. Each of the stories and speeches repeated here are easily relatable to readers across the social and economic strata. He truly was a man of the people which made him perfect for where God placed him. This is a book that you want to “listen” to as much as read over and over again...to that end it might be best on Audible for many. Great read about a great MAN OF OUR TIME!

51. GUADALCANAL DIARY, by Richard Tregaskis (1943 and then for digital formatting 2016). A reporters first-hand account of the assault on Guadalcanal in 1942 as we began to win back all that was lost in the Pacific to the Empire of Japan. He walks us through the days on ship preparing for the sea and land assault of this little atoll that has a strategic airfield upon it, until the last battle where almost 30 Japanese ships and countless planes were lost trying to wrench the island from the hands of the Marines, the Army and the Navy in a losing battle. He took his copious notes put them into readable English as the book says and sent them off to his publisher where they became an instant best seller. But by the time of that, this war correspondent was winging his way back to that island in the middle of the Pacific where it all began as well as then on to Europe in 1943 for the invasion of Italy. All along this account we see

people and events that were written to be timely so that they American public could be encouraged that after Pearl Harbor, America is not a force to be bargained with - we are a force who overcomes adversity - and this book "diary" did just that...encouraged the folks back home, even maybe seeing their loved one mentioned in his book...and encouraging the men in battle as he was right there with them experiencing the pain and the glory together. Although it was made into a docu-movie a few years later, it was not critically acclaimed, but this book as well as other he has written as a war correspondent up through the Vietnam War have all been received well. I wonder what he would think of the media today for he said once, "In 1973, Marquis' 'Who's Who in America' asked for a quote; Dick Tregaskis sent these words: *"Reverence for truth, thank God, continues to be a great American ideal. Beauty makes life most pleasant, and humor cushions the worst moments. But courage remains the most valuable of all. My life in many wars has shown me that America has ample stores of all of these values in the face of the most severe mortal dangers."* I think most would find his words concerning our military encouraging but would he be able to say that about the media who seemingly are not concerned with the truth.

52. THE ART OF MAN-FISHING, by Thomas Boston (originally published 1773 [40years after his death by his son], but has been re-published and recently converted to digital form by Monergism 2019). These were originally just simple reflections from Rev. Boston but later became a clear and concise exhortation read by many who have sought the calling of the pastorate and those who are already in it. J.I. Packer said this about this work, *"The 'scribble,' [as Boston called it] was published in 1773. Since then it has been hailed by evangelicals as a masterpiece on ministry... The idea of a beginning preacher of 22 producing a spiritual masterpiece is startling, no doubt, but Boston was an unusual man."* Taking his lead from **Matthew 4:19, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."** we see how, even at an early age, that he felt about his call to the ministry and how he thought others ought to look at their call. This was a time in Church History where the Church in the British Isles was not being bold for Christ so as he reflects these end up challenging generations of pastors after him to continually assess and re-assess our call. He served a small church, so I am sure that many of the reflections were due to his own frustrations with his sins as the possible reason that more people were not coming to the Lord under the ministry. But at the same time, he makes it clear how important it is for the minister to see fruit in the church members as well...so while this is a book heralded for its Puritan position on evangelism it is also very holistic concerning all of the ministry of the minister and how he is to seek to be and continue to be faithful in that calling that has been given him by God just as with the Apostle Paul. In the chapter *'wherein is Christ to be followed'* Boston considers *'The Call To The Ministry'*. He gives 4 things that evidence an ordinary external call.1) An uncommon knowledge of the Christian religion above the average(ordinary)believer. 2) Aptness to teach, which presupposes an ability to communicate truth with some degree of dexterity.3) A desire and willingness to do the work of the ministry. 4) *"The call of the Church"*. The Church recognizes and confirms a man's call to *'The Gospel Ministry'*. The Church needs to re-affirm these and require each candidate for ministry to read this work. He makes some very bold, and uncomfortable statements, but then we serve in a position before God that requires continual action!

53. HALSEY'S TYPHOON; The True Story of a Fighting Admiral, an Epic Storm, and an Untold Rescue, by Bob Drury and Tom Clavin (2007). This is a book about one of the largest sea battles of WWII. A battle by and large that was covered up because of the love and loyalty his men had for him and a Navy that needed him to win the sea battles in the Pacific. This book is about the battle between Adm. William "Bull" Halsey and "his" Typhoon dubbed Typhoon Cobra. For 3 days in December 1944, Adm. Halsey's fleet waged an unwinnable battle against an superior force and while the Fifth Fleet lost this battle there were many stories of heroism, loyalty, tragedy and survival told by the people involved - but not until many years later - as was customary for WWII vets. Nearly 800 men died with 3 destroyers capsized and another dozen ships rendered inoperable by this storm that many - including the Admirale - thought was just a small blow. Their mission was to support MacArthur's invasion into the Philippines and come hell or high water, Halsey was going to meet that requirement...and he got both that stopped him in his tracks. Of the nearly 900 men on the 3 capsized destroyers, only 93 officers and enlisted men were recovered with one extremely busted up small destroyer escort ship, the USS Tabberer, rescuing 55 of them herself for which she received the Navy Unit Commendation medal. The authors make the claim close to the end of the book that this was the first time this had been given out in the Pacific, but a little further study would have shown them that in fact the USS Holland, a submarine tender actually received the first one in 1941 off the coast of the Philippines for service performed after the attack on Pearl Harbor and the Philippines. The authors seem to get wrong many different aspects of seamanship as later pointed out by the men who actually served on these ships but as a human interest story and a story concerning the storm, rescues, the subsequent trial, its conclusions and the secrecy surrounding this event...this is a wonderful read...a riveting read...one that every WWII history buff should read. (This book is just over 350 pages depending upon the format in which you choose to read.)

54. EMASCULATING WARRIORS: A NATION AT WAR WITH ITS WARRIOR, by Chaplain, Captain, (USN) Dwight Horn, (a PCA TE)(2018). This is perhaps the hardest book I have read. Chaplain Horn give tons and tons of medical and psychological data to support what he is saying and at the same time stories from the frontlines to illustrate it all from personal experiences. Many of his stories are firsthand account from his time being fully imbedded with his Marines of the 3/5 as they took Fallujah. The descriptions of battles and aftermath of battles and the aftermath of lives returning home remind me of such books as **FLYBOYS** , **THE OLD BREED** and **UNBROKEN**. Now to get into the meat of this book; there seems to be 3 main reasons that the author wrote this book. First, to define for us the Warrior. He gives 6 traits that do now and have since time began characterized the true warrior. A warrior sees themselves as **elite**...just ask a Marine or a SEAL or a Delta, a Green Beret or wait for it...an Army Ranger! Next a warrior sees himself as **invincible**...he has a mission to complete and he will die doing just that or die enabling others to complete the mission...but he really doesn't enter into the fight believing he will die. To verify this, just read any Special Forces or Marine account of any battle in time. Next, a warrior has a certain **hardness** about them which prevents them from quitting no matter what, sometimes in spite of the circumstances. Along with these is the quality of **self-sacrifice** they take seriously the injunction to save

others before themselves even to the point of making sure that no one is left behind even if they have been killed in the line of duty. They are naturally **gusto-seekers**...a real scientific name for those who seek a thrill no matter what...drive fast cars, fly fast planes...run into battle with a smile on their faces. And lastly they have a **rigid moral code** when it comes to justice. This is just what you want from your warriors and this is what you get. A second point of this book seems to be as he says in many places and in different ways, “... *we see readily how failing just to recognize war-types leads to ineffectiveness in carrying out the mission.*” And so he does just that by giving us 4 categories to watch out for. It was interesting to me that people could be broken down into so few categories until I had finished reading and realized that I have known all of these (maybe not the psychopath...though I have known some with similar tendencies toward the pastorate) and that they fit so well...Protector, Patriot, Pacifist and Psychopath. These distinction are important according to the author, so that we can be effective not only in training but also in treatment upon return from a war zone...or as in the case of the last one...keeping them out of a war zone all together. These first two lead us to the third point of understanding how to care for the war-fighter. If we do not understand the types and the characteristics he speaks of we are spitting in the wind to try to help those who return from war. If we throw them altogether into one basket then we are definitely emasculating our warriors as a nation leaving them to self-medicate which more often than not leads to tragedy.

55. WARNINGS TO THE CHURCHES, by J.C. Ryle, (2015). Just so we know who we are talking about; J. C. RYLE (1816–1900) was a prominent writer, preacher, and Anglican clergyman in nineteenth-century Britain. Rev. Ryle was a bold voice for the Gospel of Christ. He was a man of both strong convictions and clarity of expression. These characteristics always mark Ryle’s writings and it has been said that nowhere is this more evident than in the addresses and articles brought together as **Warnings to the Churches**. In this work, he shares with us 8 “papers”/ treatises on the subjects he felt most important to his day and age but are also important for the Church to consider in every age. He begins by talking about *The True Church* from Matt. 16:18 so that we know what God’s Church is to be. Then his next message is entitled *Not Corrupting the Word* from II Cor. 2:17 so that we might discern truth from falseness. Next, he speaks to ministers specifically but believers in general in the article entitled *Give Yourself Wholly to Them* from I Tim. 4:15...as a man (or woman) of God we are not to give into the ways of the world but we are to give ourselves wholly to that which will glorify God. Then he speaks to falseness again with the article entitled simply *Pharisees and Sadducees* from Matthew 16:6, so we can discern truth and falseness from those who set themselves up as teachers of the law. A little later on he even has an article entitled *The Fallibility of Ministers* from Gal. 2:11-16, because ministers need accountability or they might become like the Pharisees and Sadducees. The next two articles deal with false teaching as well *All Kinds of Things* and *Apostolic Fears* from Hebrews 13:9 and II Cor. 11:3 respectively. The last article is simple titled *Idolatry* from I Cor. 10:14. These articles reflect his day and the troubles that were plaguing the Anglican Church at the time. There were 2 exits going on, one to the Protestant church and the other to the Roman Catholic Church. While he was opposed to both schisms he was harder on the ones leaving for the RCC because of the idolatry that he more than highlights in the last

article. So he writes these articles to persuade these people of the errors and to return or at the very least stand opposed to all false teaching wherever one may find it. These articles are well worth the time of any reader in faith but especially those who seek to lead the Church of God. As he says toward the end of the last article, *“But let your eyes look onward to the day of Christ's second advent. That is the only day when every abuse shall be rectified, and every corruption and source of sorrow completely purged away. Waiting for that day, let us each work on and serve our generation; not idle, as if nothing could be done to check evil, but not disheartened because we do not yet see all things put under our Lord. After all, the night is far spent, and the day is at hand. Let us wait, I say, on the Lord.”* (approx. 185 pages free from Monergism.com)

56. THE LOST HERO, by Rick Riordan (2010). This is the first book in a series called **The Heroes of Olympus**. These are written for Jr. High age and up (much like Harry Potter series) but I found them to be extremely delightful. They bring back to mind my earlier readings in Greek/Roman Mythology. These books while adventure/ fantasy books are all based in a sort of historical fiction format as well. It is not that Greek/Roman Mythology is real but the author maintains the “truths” of what is historically has been taught of the Greek/ Roman gods. Jason, Piper and Leo discover themselves to be demi-gods and so much literally almost goes off the rails from there as they are sent on a quest...because you know every Greek hero and demi-gods needs a quest to prove their worthiness. Their quest...well...is a real-life changer (and the writing of it is excellent as well). Anyway, it is one that causes them to wonder if they want to fulfill it like I suppose all quests do if I remember right. For like all quests there is the built in impossibility factor that seems to doom the quest from the beginning. Well, all the intrigue and excitement is in there. I am looking forward to reading the rest of the series for they are highly entertaining and engaging. I would recommend them to anyone seeking to either teach Greek/Roman mythology to their children or anyone who simply wants to re-capture their youth.

57. THE RED PYRAMID, THE KANE CHRONICLES, BOOK 1, by Rick Riordan (2010). This is interesting...this is done by the same author as above but I am so thoroughly unimpressed with this story line...so unimpressed that I didn't bother to finish this first book. Why? Well, to be honest, I know these are technically written for youth, but this one had way too much sibling bickering going on and too much political correctness. I don't know what happened in the writing of this one and I don't know (and won't know) if the other 2 about Egyptian mythology and adventure have the same weakness. The kids involved in this one are powerful Egyptian magicians instead of being demigods but the story is too juvenile for me this time to go on. Having said they may be, as before, helpful for pre-teens and early teens to learn about this part of world history.

58. THE COVENANT LIFE: APPRECIATING THE BEAUTY OF THEOLOGY AND COMMUNITY, by Sarah Ivill (2018). This is a good book to stimulate discussion as she speaks clearly concerning real issues...issues that she has had to deal with personally or those close to her have...and how covenant theology has helped her/them through these rough patches in this messy life we have been given by God. She speaks with authority and compassion as a true saint and sister in the Lord. Her desire is like that of the New

Testament writers to make sure we clearly grasp and come to love covenant theology, which tells us of His one plan, one purpose and one people...the covenant community to which she speaks. By having a greater understanding of the covenants, she is hoping that this will enable us to see our place in the covenant community. Now she has some difficulty in communicating just how many covenants there are which can be a problem since both the Bible and the Westminster Confession affirm just 2 covenants...the covenant of works and the covenant of grace. There were many administrations of the covenant of grace as God's people grew and matured and it was re-constituted with different leaders through time...but nevertheless there are only 2 covenants given to the covenant community. Outside of this problem I found the rest of the book to be well written and to be a read well worth the time of women who need a refresher on covenant community or those just coming into to this idea...probably I would lean toward those who are well versed in covenant theology over those who are learning it for the first time given her lack of clarity on how many covenants there are in Scripture. (Susan Hunt's book, **HEIRS OF THE COVENANT** would be a much better book for the first timer coming to covenant theology) Having said that there is much to be commended, like this quote, *"Life-giving helpers must be gospel-centered women. We must live out the truth that God's power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness. All things. The next time someone tells you there is no hope for change, remember that is a message devoid of the gospel of grace. There is hope for change precisely because there is Someone changing us. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead is at work in you and me to conform us more and more to the image of Christ."* And this from the beginning of the book, *"We are living in a day when many of us have lost our appreciation for the beauty of covenant theology. This has had dire consequences. Much of the church has traded in a God-centered theology for a self-centered one. Many believers have exchanged Bible studies for book studies. They have exalted heroes of the faith more than the Hero of the faith, Jesus Christ. They have exchanged God's promises and freedom for the world's promises and enslavement. And they have forgotten the doctrines of grace, thinking they are pretty good people who can earn God's favor, that there are many ways to heaven, that God's grace is license to sin, and that they are capable of preserving their destinies. We are also living in a day when many of us have lost our appreciation for the beauty of covenant community. And this too has had dire consequences. Many believers have traded in interdependence in the community of grace for individualism and isolationism. They have exchanged biblical womanhood for feminism. They have taken liberty to speak whatever is on their mind instead of speaking the truth in love. They have forgotten their mission, thinking their life plans and dreams are for their own choosing and glory. And they have forgotten their destination, failing to live with an eternal perspective. It is my conviction that a key solution to this problem is a return to a robust knowledge of Reformed theology, which, rightly understood, is covenant theology. Such a robust understanding of covenant theology should in turn lead to a rich engagement with the covenant community. Covenant theology is not a system of doctrine imposed on Scripture; rather, it is God's own way of speaking about the gospel in all the Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. Therefore, knowledge of covenant theology deepens our knowledge and appreciation of the only true God and Jesus Christ, whom*

He sent, and our relationship to one another” Read with your heart open to be taught by the Spirit.

59. A GLIMPSE OF HEAVEN: OR A PRECIOUS TASTE OF A GLORIOUS FEAST, by Richard Sibbes (1638 reformatted by Monergism 2019) It is said to be the rarest of his works...but I assume that that means his earliest and perhaps one of one on this subject. This treatise is the compilation of 4 sermons on I Corinthians 2:9- ***“But, as it is written, ‘What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him’”***—with this passage and these messages he encourages us take a glimpse into heaven and consider the joys that await us there that should focus what we do here in this life to God’s glory. He reminds us, *“Whatsoever is excellent in the world, God borrows it to set out the excellency of the things that he hath provided for his children in grace and glory. A feast is a comfortable thing. They are called a feast. A kingdom is a glorious thing. They are called a kingdom. Marriage is a sweet thing. They are set forth by that; by an inheritance; and adoption of children, and such like. So that all these things are taken to be shadows of those things. And indeed they are but shadows; the reality is the heavenly kingdom of grace and glory, the heavenly riches, the heavenly inheritance, the heavenly sonship. When all these things vanish and come to nothing, then comes in the true kingdom, sonship, and inheritance.”* But all throughout these sermons he is challenging us to look to heaven...glimpse at the it through the Words of God, so that we may consider, *“The points we propounded were these: 1. That God hath a people in the world, whom he favours in a special manner. Then, secondly, for these that he accounts his friends, he hath prepared great matters. Kings prepare great matters for those they mean to advance; what shall we think then God will do for his friends? Now, these things prepared, they are great matters indeed; for, in the third place, they are such as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c. And then, in the fourth place, the disposition and qualification of those for whom God hath prepared such great matters. It is for those ‘that love him;’ not for his enemies, or for all men indifferently, but for those that love him.”* Because of God’s great love for us when we consider this we consider that which enables us to lift our eyes heavenward as he says toward the end of this book, *“Taste and see how gracious the Lord is,” Ps. 34:8. The taste of the love and favour of God in the blessing is better than the thing itself, for it is but a dead thing. And so from us back again to God. What are the things we perform to him? They are dead. But when they are sweetened with the affection of love, done to him as a father in Christ, he tastes our performances as sweet. Love makes all we do to have a relish, and all that he doth to us. Therefore we should labour for this sweet affection.”* This is yet another gem given to us freely through the hard work at Monergism so that we might be encouraged from the true voices of the past.

60. BETWEEN US GUYS: LIFE-CHANGING CONVERSATIONS FOR DADS AND SONS, by Joel Fitzpatrick (2019). This is a book to encourage communication between fathers and sons so that we are able to produce men that will bring God glory. He begins by clearly saying that the Bible is clear on how we teach our sons...by talking to them. With that in mind he gives us the top 14 topics to talk to our sons about: Friends, school work and identity, family, play, love, generosity, failure and perfection (one of my favorite

chapters), disappointment, strength, money, girls, sex, defending others and heaven. In each of these chapters he focuses in on a conversation that he had with his son or one that he should have had...even giving questions for dads that aren't sure how to get started or even where to have such talks. At the end of the book he gives a few other pointers on... what is the gospel, to how do I share the gospel with me son, to how do I lead in family worship. These appendices are probably worth the price of the book all by itself. There was so much of this book to commend but I will leave this critique with a quote on what a man is, *"The biblical view of manhood doesn't have to do with how a man talks, dresses, or his affinity for facial hair. A man is a broken, sinful person who looks to Christ for salvation, points others to Christ, and lays down his life so that others can live. A man understands that he cannot be good enough to earn God's love, and because of that he doesn't expect others to earn his. This manliness is put on display so beautifully in the image of God the Father, and it is lived out in families as dads try to live this way, and look to their good Father for acceptance and forgiveness. You get the opportunity to teach, train and instill this sort of lifestyle in your son. You get the cool responsibility of raising up your son to be a man who loves God and loves his neighbors—all through the vehicle of being a dad who has conversations about life with your son."* This is so true whether you have sons, sons-in-laws or grandsons...and by the way it is written well enough that dads with daughters might even learn something as well.

61. DUEL IN THE DARK (BLOOD ON THE STARS SERIES), by Jay Allen (2016). This is a non-stop action thriller science fiction novel. The author is either former military or he is well versed in a fighter's spirit because he captures the warrior spirit well from the Marine grunts to the upper echelon of the Space Navy Brass on all sides of this conflict and the conflict to come. The story opens with us aware of 2 peoples who are adversaries, but for the moment all is quiet...Oh, there is yet a third party...But, the Union (think Cardassians/Romulans with the military might of the galaxy) opposes everything that the republic style Confederation stands for. The Union is the enemy that has sought the takeover of the Confederation multiple times and has failed in each attempt...however, an attack comes from another source...the third party... a relatively unknown source...a warrior race (think Klingon) bent on conquering and subjugating and in this matchup which will come at a most obscure place in Confederation space many will prove their muster long before the war with the Union begins, and this battle will be fought at a high cost. The isolated battle that comes is one of the most complete space battles I have read in print in a long time. I am sure the author would not appreciate my Star Trek analogies but I have found through the years most space themed sci-fi seems to follow after either the Star Trek universe or the Star Wars universe...this one obviously follows the Star Trek universe and he does it very well. This book is approx. 370 pages of not wanting to put down, page turning action and character construction. It is a delightful read to be sure...so far there are 14 books in all so I am not sure yet if I will continue to read ...that's a lot of books in a series. (series of 3-5 are closer to my style and wallet).

62. THE PRINCESS BRIDE, by William Goldman (or was it S. Morgenstern) (1973 for Goldman's "abridgement"). Actually, the full title is **THE PRINCESS BRIDE:**

S.MORGENSTERN'S CLASSIC TALE OF TRUE LOVE AND HIGH ADVENTURE;

The "good parts" version abridged by William Goldman, (2003 reprint). Full disclosure: this movie...yes the movie *The Princess Bride* is one of my favorite stupid comedies...right up there with *Blazing Saddles*, but I had never read the book until now...it came out for free on Amazon Prime so I thought why not. In this version (30th Anniversary Edition) he graces us with an explanation of how he came to want to "abridge" this classic book by S. Morgenstern (Of course, no one really knows who S. Morgenstern is except for his classics of course. This one first and then **Buttercup's Baby**, the sequel to **The Princess Bride**.) He speaks at length about how when he was sick his father who had a very bad accent would read this book to him (or was it his grandfather like in the movie by the same name) and how he got so excited because of all the action..of course, only the action...not the love parts. But when he grew he discovered that Morgenstern's version (if there really was a Morgenstern) was very much longer. There was so much narrative because of Morgenstern's disgust for royalty and his dislike of dialogue. Anyway, it appears that his father skipped all the longer parts...so with few exceptions that is how Goldman "adapted" it eons and years after the original. The stories of his own family that he weaves throughout the book ... (did I tell you this was the 30th Anniversary Edition?) certainly adds to the intrigue... (well maybe not...but it could, if you let it)...however, please don't look up his true life...just let tru wuv have its day. Anyway, I am glad I read it...the movie for which he also wrote the screen adaptation is funny and actually more interesting...(I guess, I just don't appreciate adaptations as much as the next guy...a weakness, I admit). However some of the back story on the characters (Fezzik, Inigo and Buttercup...what little he says Morgenstern gave) was helpful information. And of course it is "inconceivable" to think as some have suggested that there never was a S. Morgenstern and that this "mediocre" writer made this all up... "all" being the operative word. Oh, I almost forgot **Buttercup's Baby** is also adapted at the end.

63. APPLES OF GOLD; THE YOUNG MAN'S WORK AND THE OLD MAN'S REWARD, by Thomas Brooks (copy write 1660, reformatted by Monergism 2019). This is a great read. The Rev. Brooks would say that he "threw" together a few word of biblical advice for the young man who comes to faith early and how that will be beneficial to him in his old age. The title in many ways does sum up the purpose for this book. In roughly 200 pages of sermons and thoughts he goes through the Bible commenting on just about every text concerning what a godly man looks like and how much easier it is to deal with the temptations of this world if one begins in the faith early. His main text is from **Proverbs 16:31- "Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life."** In the original there is a progression to being grey headed/ wise that passes through the way of righteousness and his point again is if we have had the great privileged to be made righteous in our young age the grey hair will actually reflect the blessing of God's glory. He says early on, *"It is a commendable thing for young men to be really godly early. It was Obadiah's honor that he feared the Lord from his youth, 1 Kings 18:3; and Timothy's crown that he knew the Scripture from a child, 2 Tim. 1:1, 5, 15; and John's joy that he found children walking in the truth, 2 John 4-5; this revived his good old heart, and made it dance for joy in his bosom. To spend further time in the proving of this truth, would be but to light candles to see the sun at noon. The grounds and*

reasons of this point, namely, that it is a very desirable and commendable thing for young men to be really godly early, are what follows: Because the Lord commands it; and divine commands are not to be disputed—but obeyed. In the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the first verse, **"Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come and the years approach when you will say, I find no pleasure in them."** Remember now! I say, now! Now is an atom which will puzzle the wisdom of a philosopher, the skill of an angel, to divide. It is a very sad and dangerous thing to trifle and dally with God, his word, his offers, our own souls, and eternity. Therefore, let all young people labor to be godly early, and not to let Him who is goodness itself alone—until he has made them godly, until he has given them those hopes of eternity that will both make them godly and keep them godly; that will make them happy, and keep them happy—and that forever." All throughout the book he points to young man (and woman) pursuing righteousness early so they do not fall into the temptations of those who came to faith later in life. A great book for our youth or for a father to read with his son.

64. HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE, by J. K. Rowling (1997 and digitally in 2015 by Pottermore Limited). I love reading this series for fun. This will be my second time through these. It is not the literary masterpiece in the same vain as **The Lord of the Rings** but it is masterfully written to draw a person in and keep them wanting more. It is a story of great courage, strength, loyalty, and sacrifice. Harry and his cohorts Hermione, Ron and Neville (in this one) at great sacrifice to themselves are seeking to keep Hogwarts safe from unknown forces when they discover that Lord Voldemort a dark wizard/spirit is behind the mischief and danger leading towards an unknown nefarious purpose. I am a fan of the movies so it seemed fun to pick up these books. I have found out some things that were left hanging in the movies that may answer the whole question as to why things proceed as they do...specifically that Voldemort cannot be killed until or unless he takes on human form...and encountering him even in a less than powerful state isn't pleasant...but that is enough for now. Fun stuff and only 333 pages or so.

65. HARRY POTTER AND CHAMBER OF SECRETS, by J.K. Rowling (1999 then digitally by Pottermore 2015). Young Mr. Potter is growing into his own, however... still struggling in his person, with Ron and Hermione teaching him about such things as Mudbloods and Squibs. Through all of this he is also trying to discover where the voices are coming from and when he finds out he comes face to face with his arch rival, again, but in a different form one that he didn't know he had... but in the end saving the day once again. One of my favorite quotes so far, *"It only put me in Gryffindor," said Harry in a defeated voice, "because I asked not to go in Slytherin...Exactly, said Dumbledore, beaming once more. Which makes you very different from Tom Riddle. It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities. Harry sat motionless in his chair, stunned."* This book was a slow read the first time through because I was expecting more...but the character development that I noticed the second time through is wonderful. All in all with great anticipation even the second time through I push on to the Prisoner of Azkaban.

66. HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN, by J.K. Rowling (2001). I love how this book opens, *"Harry Potter was a highly unusual boy in many ways. For one thing, he hated the summer holidays more than any other time of year. For another, he really wanted to do his homework but was forced to do it in secret, in the dead of night. And he also happened to be a wizard."* Harry is learning a lot...the hard way...through extreme difficulty and trial...which is how most of us learn the lessons that matter...the ones that stay with us forever. Harry comes face to face with his past in this book and comes out wiser and stronger than ever before...and happier I might add. This book takes many twists and turns and keeps your attention from start to finish and your heart is warmed by its outcome. Dumbledore says to Harry near the end, *"You think the dead we have loved ever truly leave us? You think that we don't recall them more clearly than ever in times of great trouble? Your father is alive in you, Harry, and shows himself most plainly when you have need of him. How else could you produce that particular Patronus? Prongs rode again last night."* As we end the book it sounds like it will be a pretty good holiday after all...but dark clouds are rising on the horizon.

67. HARRY POTTER: THE GOBLET OF FIRE, by J.K. Rowling (2002). Another turbulent but "fun" account of the on-going life of the young and maturing wizard Harry Potter. The antics of Ron, Hermione and he continue to explore the wizarding world revealing that there is a nefarious force alive and well in their midst. And then there is the Tri-wizard Tournament...aka the Quad-wizard Tournament. In the midst of this event is the lot of them getting thrown out of the kitchen by the house-elves taking offense to them trying to "free" them from their lot. And the Christmas Ball...of the learning that goes on there for these young teenagers in a more "innocent" time. What fun...what intrigue...what sadness and along the way from beginning to the end life lessons abound from this book for Potter and his entourage, such as, *"If you want to know what a man's like, take a good look at how he treats his inferiors, not his equals."*, along with revelations that will shake, sharpen and solidify the wizarding world at its core. Professor Dumbledore says *"I say to you all, once again—in the light of Lord Voldemort's return, we are only as strong as we are united, as weak as we are divided. Lord Voldemort's gift for spreading discord and enmity is very great. We can fight it only by showing an equally strong bond of friendship and trust. Differences of habit and language are nothing at all if our aims are identical and our hearts are open."* Not to over spiritualize, but Christians would do well to remember this same thought concerning our fallen nature and the influence of Satan in these last days.