**2024 Pastor’s Reading List**

1. **CONSIDER JESUS or Thoughts for daily Duty, Service and Suffering** , by Octavius Winslow (1870, Monergism digital 2011). This is one of the earliest daily devotional/instructional books I have ever come across. It is both devotional and analytical…extremely stimulating a read. Winslow himself gives the best explanation as to why he wrote this book: *“****Consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest whom we confess." Hebrews 3:1*** *It is a great privilege of the believer to live by the day upon Jesus. He cannot properly or safely go beyond it, nor has he any especial promise to warrant his so doing. The promise is,* ***"as your days so shall your strength be."*** *And it is no little achievement of faith if, indeed, its strength lasts even to this limited period. Each day's need is enough to task all our energies, and exhaust all our supplies, without our* ***"taking thought for the morrow."*** *But what a mercy thus to live upon Christ! To feel that, when we exchange the morning's dreams for the day's stern and trying realities, that the prayer of faith may draw large supplies from Jesus; and, that thus replenished and equipped, we may safely reach its close unscathed by the fiery ordeal through which we have passed. To aid the Christian in this daily life, these pages have been written. The subjects selected are, for the most part, of a doctrinal and practical nature--subjects, indeed, upon which ponderous tomes have been written--and yet the plan pursued by the author has necessarily restricted his meditations to the smallest possible space, and to a mere fragmentary and elementary unfolding of each topic. But, unpretending as his work is, it may meet the needs of the weary, the suffering, and the sorrowing believer not having time or strength for a more elaborate volume; and thus be as a small casket of perfume, incensing some couch of languor, and filling some chamber of sickness with the fragrance of that Name which is above every name, and which, to those who know and love it, is as ointment poured forth--the divine, the precious, the ever-to-be-adored name of--JESUS!”* Again we are hit with the practice of meditations a practice that the author uses to aid our own meditations and to help us understand how deep we should be thinking about our God and savior Jesus Christ. He covers over 25 topics in our consider Jesus…the lowliness of His birth…the exercise of His influence…His obedience to the Divine Law…his popularity as well as His being hated…His temptation…affliction…being forsaken…his bereavement… to His second coming. Topics that many have questions about and topics for which he gives excellent answers. Highly recommended as a daily devotional guide. All of the “Consider Jesus” sections capture your heart.
2. **THE GLORY OF CHRIST In Modern English,** by John Owen (transcribed in 1684, originally published in 1691 [8 years after his death] edited by Jason Roth) 2019). Jason takes the original and makes it extremely readable without losing the author or his intent. Modern English helps the modern student to actually engage since most books written in the 20th and 21st Centuries do not come close I composition and grammar along with the fact that many of the words are so archaic that many would simply not read it. Jason does a needed service to the church to be sure. This book contains much of Owen’s heart as often stated by those who are more familiar with his works than myself (and I have read a lot). This book was perhaps his final book before his death and so a certain passion is seen and felt in this one over perhaps his other memorable works. Throughout his work it is clear that he has a passion for the glory of Christ…but in this book he seeks to communicate this passion as to get others passionate enough to undertake this duty and privilege of being a lifelong student of the glory of Christ for our edification and the edification of other…the blessing and glory to God. *“I will not, therefore, make any defense for the publishing of the ensuing meditations. These were first intended for the exercise of my own mind and then for the edification of a private congregation, which is likely to be the last service at which I will deliver them in that way. Some of you may, by the consideration of these meditations, be called to attend to the same duty with more diligence than before, as you receive directions for its discharge. Others may be motivated to communicate your greater light and knowledge for the benefit of many. My design in this preface is to give a brief account of the necessity and use, in both life and death, of the duty I exhort you to.”* The final words of such giants in the faith ought to be read by each successive generation of believers and this work certainly falls into that category. His work is so contemporary and in such need for we have found ourselves so focused on our feelings and seeking things that will not benefit our faith in anyway. He states this in no uncertain terms for his audience which could be us today; *“Therefore, everything we involve ourselves in has the root of trouble and sorrow in it. Some labor in want, poverty, and hardship all of their days, and others have very few hours free from pains and sickness. All of these trials, along with others of a similar nature, are heightened today by the season of calamity where we find ourselves. Nearly every facet of every nation is filled with confusion, disorder, danger, distress, and trouble. Wars and rumors of wars abound with tokens of further approaching judgments. Nations are distressed with perplexities, and men’s hearts fail for fear as they look at those things which are coming on the earth. In many places, there is no peace for those who go out, nor to those who come in; instead, great anxieties are on the inhabitants of the whole world. Nations and cities are destroyed, for God inflicts them with all adversity. And in the meantime, the ungodly deeds of wicked men further increase the vexation and troubles of life. There are also deplorable sufferings of many who follow their consciences, and all sorts of Christians abound in divisions and animosities.”* There are so many quotable sections in this book. Far too many to list…a must read.
3. **O LOVE THAT WILL NOT LET ME GO: Facing Death with Courageous Confidence in God**, edited byNancy Guthrie (2011). The Church doesn’t see these kinds of books any more…but she should. This is comprised of 22 short meditations from pastors and theologians from Martin Luther, to Richard Sibbes, to R.C. Sproul and John Piper. All of them deal with the way a believer should live and die…with emphasis on dying. Joseph Bayly challenges us with many statements but this one continues to resonate with me. *“Christians claim to believe that heaven…being present with Christ…is so wonderful, and yet act as if going there were the greatest tragedy.”* Another main point of these short meditations is the Christians need of daily letting go of the this world and the things we hold dear in this life. When our son was killed letting go made perfect sense…but as the years have accumulated I find myself too close once again to even the “good’ things of this life …so much so that I don’t long for the next enough. Calvin says, *“For we must hold that our mind never rises seriously to desire and aspire after the future until it has learned to despise this present life.”* Many of the Reformers and Puritans teach like this statement from Jonathan Edwards (it is not original to him) *“The day of the godly man’s death is better than the day of his birth.”* Also I have said many times when referring to heaven as my real home, someone that I truly love is there and I can’t wait to be where my heart is. Thomas Boston says something similar when he says, *“A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one…we are ready for heaven when our heart is there before us.”* Joni Eareckson Tada confirms this when she says*, “If your heart is with your loved ones and they are home with the Lord, then heaven is home for you, too. A broken heart leads to the true contentment of asking less of this life because more is coming in the next.”* This book and these meditations are written to prepare us to face the difficult reality of death so that even in death we can give glory to the Lord.
4. **THE CHRISTIAN WARRIOR: Wrestling with sin, Satan,, the world and the flesh,** by Rev. Isaac Ambrose(1604-1664) (printed originally approx.. 1661, “modernized and updated and abridged” in 1837 and has been printed continuously since…digitally by Monergism 2023). Ambrose has been characterized as a quiet fighter for the gospel…one that was very affable even to those who he opposed. But in typical Puritan fashion he as very clear when making his point and making it unapologetically, *“A man thinks to highly of himself, because the sun shines upon him, and the air breathes on him, as for a sinner to be proud of his grace. Yet not a few trust to their own righteousness for salvation. How little do such men resemble St. Paul?*” One might wonder why he speaks of combating sin and the flesh as if they are two different things. Well, they are… but they do intertwine and we are willing to compromise in both that is why he says, *“The flesh is a worse enemy than the devil himself.”* He writes very succinctly telling his readers of the schemes of sin, Satan, the world and the flesh in a way that is very understandable and relatable. But not stopping there , he goes on to give the necessary ammunition from the scriptures to not simply endure the onslaught of these but also to go on the offensive against them so that our flesh can be mortified and we can in Christ gain victory over Satan and the world. He breaks his logical approach down to 4 periods of our life: in childhood, at our first conversion, during the prime of life and at the time of death. He speaks to how these 4 seek to do us in before conversion and then afterwards to so weakened our testimony that we leave this earth the least assured of all creatures. *“When Satan fails to lead men to presumption, he will strive to send them to despondency and despair. This is the gulf that swallowed up many souls. If he prevails here, he gains his point, and makes sure of his prey; that he may prevail, he sets before them all the gross sins which they have ever committed, and all the judgments which those sins deserve. Oh the depth of Satan! He strives hard to keep the soul from believing; and when he fails in this, he shakes our faith, so that we may have neither peace nor joy in believing. See how he dealt with Simon Peter, and with Job. When he could not destroy their faith, he endeavored to destroy their comforts. So he deals with believers in general.”* An extremely worthwhile book in helping us to be able to navigate through this life with the 3 or 4 plaguing us constantly. That is why we must be on guard and use the defensive and offensive armor of God and fight against a foothold for these.
5. **THE SINFULNESS OF SIN AND THE FULLNESS OF Christ,** BY William Bridge (1600-1670, a member of the Westminster Divines preached in 1667 and transcribed word for word as was preached by Bridge. Digitalized by Monergism 2023 ). This publication is of two sermons that make perfect book ends for one another. One of the most well-known quotes from the sermon the *Sinfulness of Sin* is, *“On the contrary, as God is holy, all holy, only holy, altogether holy, and always holy, so sin is sinful, all sinful, only sinful, altogether sinful, and always sinful.”* (Gen. 6:5). There was so much good in both of these sermons…this one booklet I’m not sure where to begin. I found this string of statements to be extremely thought provoking…so much so that I had to re-read this a few times to make sure I got it; *“Consider what is a worse evil than Hell or the Devil. That must surely be a very great and exceedingly evil thing. Sin is worse than the Devil because the Devil is a creature made by God, but sin is not God's creation. It is worse than Hell because Hell is also created by God, but sin is not. It is worse to be given over to sin than to the Devil. If a person is given over to the Devil, it is so that their soul may be saved. However, if a person is given over to sin, it is for the destruction and not the salvation of their soul. Therefore, sin is worse than Hell or the Devil…The greater the obligations a person sins against, the worse and greater their sin. Through the Gospel, we are brought under great obligations. By sinning under the Gospel, what do we do? We make the mercy of God, our greatest friend, become our greatest adversary. We sin against Mercy and Grace, thereby engaging the very mercy of God to turn against us…The more capable a sin is of defending itself through knowledge, arguments, and distinctions, the worse and greater that sin is. A person living under the Gospel possesses knowledge and can defend their sin through various distinctions. Sins bred under the Gospel are capable of defending themselves with knowledge drawn from the Gospel, making them even worse.”* Just like Isaac Ambrose in **The Christian Warrior**, Bridge wants his audience to understand and know without a doubt of the depth of sinfulness and likewise He wants his audience to know and understand the fullness of Christ. *T*he most quoted quote from the sermon *The Fullness of Christ* is this one; *“The fullness of Christ is the Church actually being all that God intends it to be, the people of God together, fully alive and flourishing, fully like Christ.”* The simple answers are often the best answers. *“In Jesus Christ, there is the greatest excellence with utmost propriety. And this excellency is under the best ownership, to the extent that you can claim it with a double ‘my’.* ***‘My God, My God,’*** *says David* ***(Psalm 22:1).*** *‘****My Lord and my God’****, says Thomas* ***(John 20:28****). There is such ownership in this excellency that you can claim it with a double "my." And it is an ownership that can never be lost.* ***"And no one is able to snatch them out of My Father's hand" (John 10:28-29).*** A couple of sermons every Christian ought to read at some point throughout this journey.
6. **THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENJAMIN SISKO: The Life of Sarfleet’s Legendary Captain and Bajor’s Emissary,** by Jake Sisko and edited by Derek Tyler Attico and Benny Russell, along the way (2023…Stardate 55902.0). This book is based on interviews by Jake with many on Deep Space 9 after what is called the Sisko Event – Benjamiin Sisko sent a beam of light, energy, definitely information…a personal message to Jake so that he would know his father better so as to prepare him for a future of moving forward rather than one where Jake would stay hole up, reclusive, not knowing…but in the end it is hard to say beyond the message which would take Jake 2 years to sort through. This information was sent in the form of 50 hours of video informing them all Sisko family, Starfleet and the Bajorans that this is where he is and will stay for the time being. And this may be transcribed by Jake and edited by Derek but these are the words of Benjamin Lafayette Sisko. (Full disclosure, I know this is a fictional story with all fictional characters…but for anyone like myself that thoroughly enjoys Star Trek: Deep Space 9 this book is a gem and a wealth of knowledge about a beloved character that little was known about except his Starfleet career. LOL) Benjamin’s life began in New Orleans to a family who majored in hard work with as little of the Trek technology as possible. In the restaurant his dad cooked everything by hand…never a replicator…and in the hotel everything was cleaned and cared for by the hand of people…no robots. As Benjamin grew this was normal for him. He was even homeschooled until high school to keep him grounded in the basic of life…good work ethic and quality of life without too much technology. Then one day he stumbles on a transporter that his family used to transport goods and fresh food in on. It was a well-kept secret but one “ride” on the transporter and his life would never be the same again. He got the technology bug. Never gifted with cooking as another brother and his father we one day coming home from an outing he declared that he wanted to be an engineer for Starfleet. At that, *“Mama turned around in her seat, her eyes wide with excitement. She studied me, sizing up my declaration. When we Siskos made a statement, we learned to be responsible for our words, because words lead to actions, and actions have consequences. It was the first time I remember seeing in Mama’s eyes the acknowledgement that I was becoming an adult. Mama nodded in agreement, I think more with her own thoughts than me. She said, ‘Well alright then, it looks like we have some work to do, Mister Sisko! Looks like we’re going to have an engineer in the family, Joseph!’ My father stared at Mama for a moment, then turned his eyes back to the road. We drove the rest of the way home in silence.’”* One of the first gifts he received after making the grand announcement came in his anticipation. *“I tore off the paper to reveal my new best friend—****Mr. Scott’s Guide to the Fundamentals of Starships and Engineering****. As I thumbed through the book, it was clear this wasn’t for kids.”* (Mr Scott? Montgomery Scott- “Scotty” from the Enterprise 1701 with Captain James T. Kirk)He was hooked and on his way. There is a lot in this book concerning his life and I was pleased to read it. These authors who have written them sustain the “life” of the characters we loved on screen. But of course, this is only for those who are lovers of all things Star Trek!
7. **FORGOTTEN RUIN**, by Jason Anspach and Nick Cole (2021). This may be a new writing duo that I keep reading. In writing this book they had 3 actual Rangers and 1 Green Beret as advisors since this book is most a Special Forces with heavy emphasis on the Army Rangers. “Rangers Lead The Way”! The main character, PFC “Talker” (his Ranger nickname) is a linguist and a make shift Army historian and he tells the story like most histories talking about the men in his Task Force as they jell together in the most unusual assignment known to man. He begins the book this way, *“When I began to dream in Elvish, it was then I knew I could speak it. And it was when the orc horde overran one of the fighting positions along First Platoon’s sector on the east side of the island the Rangers were defending that I knew we weren’t in Kansas anymore.”* Yeah, so far out there that I almost sent it back to Kindle Unlimited ...but I didn’t. Well, here’s the skinny: the Earth is dying. There is a plague that is spreading that is altering the DNA of every person into what is classified as monster…and that term is classified so no one talks about what that looks like. Well, somewhere along the way they found a “stargate” of sorts (yeah that is what I said a Stargate like the one on TV.) and the big wigs think that sending the Task Force ahead a few years they will be on the other side of the plague figuring that it will work itself out like all plagues. Well…since there is no easy day in special forces they find themselves transported or “gated” nearly 10,000 years into the future where the plague has not gone its course and ceased to exist…it in fact changed everything…men and beast. The Rangers find themselves in what is best described as Lord of the Rings meets Dungeon and Dragons. They encounter orcs, goblins, elves, trolls, giants, minotaur’s, satyrs, witches, wizards, vampires, werewolves, ghouls, zombies and various other deep dark things that go bang in the night. When they come through the “stargate” they crash land on an island and the attacks begin almost immediately for they have something that those in charge of this horde of frightful creatures want. It is called the Forge…think big replicator that can make anything from bombs to coffee. I mention coffee because Talker loves it. Along the way an alliance is made with the elves (think Woodland Elves meets the Noldor elves except a lot fewer). And they strike out to get the Forge back. Interesting people and things keep occurring and we get to meet some great characters though for the longest time I wasn’t sure if I could hang in with this one…but by the end of the first book, I was hooked.
8. **COURAGE, COMMITMENT, FAITH: Tales from the Coalition Defense  Force; Terran Diaspora Anthologies  Book 2,**by Daniel Gibbs and Steve Rzasa, others (2024). These are a collection of stories helping us to keep up with side stories from the overall **Echos of War series**that includes many spinoffs at the point. These anthologies bring us up to speed on some of our favorite characters in this series but also like the first story in this book brings us to the end of a commitment to an dear friend of Admiral James Henry. *“Frisik replied. He met Henry’s eyes. “And it will be my honor to stand with my brother’s comrades in his name.” “Then we will all sign,” Drash said. For a moment, Henry considered encouraging them to let him take the heat, if the Empire was going to be offended. But he stopped himself from saying so. This is how they want to remember him. And given all he did for us, I’d be wrong not to accept it. He drew his tablet from his pocket and offered it to Frisik. “For Yanik,” he said. “For Yanik,” Frisik echoed.”* The next story is of Watt Jiro, a former CDF Warrant Officer, that has left behind the wars with the Leaguers and joined the Far Survey Corp for a quiet life of service…but there is no easy day and he and his team end up encountering an old enemy in the midst of a quiet survey on an earth-like planet. Next, in this short story array is a story of a futuristic Marshal that has come to acquire a desperado for transport to a hearing for his crimes. And of course, like the last story it does go as planned…or maybe it did…time will tell. Then the last tale at this time takes us to a crew of misfits put together by CIS (Colonial Intelligence Service) for covert work against the League and against piracy that is prevalent in the outer regions especially around Trinidad Station. Of course, the “easy” job of delivering cargo because an all-out fight for the lives of Captain Alves and his crew. His cargo is top-secret and is being shuttled around so that the CDF will have a moll within the League apparatus. But between a bounty- hunter and a self-proclaimed king of pirates on their tale will they be able to deliver their cargo for such an important mission. Daniel Gibbsis one of my favorite authors at this point…so thankful that everything is roughly G with a nod toward PG!
9. **5 THINGS TO PRAY FOR YOUR CHURCH,**by Rachel Jones (2017). This book came to me as a reference from **thegoodbook company**…an excellent source for books and other materials for personal devotion and church study. It is quite simple and helpful for those days when you can’t think of what to pray. It quite simply sets up the reader with 5 Things to pray for you church: **Pray that my church would**: remember what we are, grow in maturity, be devoted to one another, hold to the truth, give generously , and make known God’s glory; **Pray that I would:**use my gifts well, persevere when weary, be who my family needs me to be; **Pray for specific people in my church:**leaders, small group, children in church, youth in church, not-yet- Christians, the elderly, and mercy ministries; **Pray for the wider church:**another church near us, our missionaries, churches far away and the unreached. To each of these heading a particular verse is offered up and then a pray is offered for each 5 days of the week. A good tool especially for those trying to get “re-started” in prayer again or someone seeking to add specificity to their prayers.
10. **LESSONS FROM THE APOSTLE PAUL’S PRAYERS: Classic Sermons on Prayer** by Charles Spurgeon (from the Series: **Rich Theology Made Accessible** Published in 2018 by Cross-Points Publishers [www.cross-points.org/](http://www.cross-points.org/) ) Wow, yet another well compiled book by Crossway of excellent sermons by Spurgeon on prayer from Paul’s prayers. The editors purpose is this: *“And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."* Spurgeon himself illustrates why we want to pray according to God's priorities by using God’s word: *"A man might try to fill us and fail, but God, who made us, knows every corner and cranny of our nature, and can pour in joy and peace till every portion of our being is flooded, saturated, and overflowed with delight."* This book could be read straight through or devotionally daily or weekly for there are 8 chapters for each sermon dated 1860-1888. These sermon are extremely encouraging…you come away, if you haven’t ever read Spurgeon’s sermons with a sense that you can hear him speak directly to your heart. *“May the Lord direct our hearts into the patience of Christ in prayer! We long kept him waiting: we need not complain if he makes us tarry his leisure. Still believe; still hope; still wrestle, until the break of day. Pray for the patience of waiting his will, saying, ‘Let him do what seemeth him good.’ Though it be for months, for years, wait on. Christ is glorified by our patience. Depend on it, the best way in which certain of us can extol him is by letting him have his way with us. Even though he plunge me into seven boiling caldrons one after the other, I will say: Let him do what he wills with his own, and I am his own. I am sure that he does not make the furnace one degree too hot. If he means to give his servant ten troubles, let his heavy hand fall even to the tenth, if so he pleases.”*  The sermons are grand all by themselves all but the appendix, containing all of Paul’s prayers, is a gold mine to be sure. I will end with this quote from one of the central sermons in this book, “*God alone knows the heart, and God alone can rule it: for this ruling Paul makes request. ‘Domine dirige nos.’-The Lord direct your hearts.’ Let us borrow his prayer, and turn it to our own personal use.”*
11. **CHRIST CRUCIFIED: The once-for-all sacrifice,**by Stephen Charnock (1628-1680) (1st published in 1684. Copyright and digitalized by Monergism 2021) Many people find Charnock’s work stimulating but I do not. I find him to be extremely academic in nature which seems to be who he is writing to mostly. But I could be biased. Having said that the offering of this book seems to come from a genuine desire for the Church to know these truths like no other that we might know Christ and what He did and why he did what He did on the cross. He links the Old and New Testaments to classically explain how the sacrifice of Jesus fulfills the OT sacrifices and gives answer to the climax of the covenant of grace. *“The sacrifices thus instituted, were of them selves insufficient, and could not expiate sin; they must therefore receive their accomplishment in some other.”* He speaks to how the Passover reveals the difference to open up our understanding of the what and whys of Jesus’ sacrifice and death. He also makes it abundantly clear that Jesus was a willing participant and how this had been decided in council with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit before time. *“His soul was not wrung and torn from him, but he rendered his spirit into the hands of his Father, and cried with a loud voice before that last act; so that he died not by a defect of strength, but by an ardency of will. He was more delighted with his sufferings for us, than we can be with the greatest worldly pleasures and grandeur, and valued reproaches for us above the empire of the world.”* It has been said, that the Puritans were brought up on the Bible; for a Puritan mind a clear text of the Bible settled all controversies. It is this discipline and clear sightedness which makes this work and many like it so valuable to the strengthening of our doctrines on Christ Crucified. His handling of God’s mercy was both academic in scope but occasionally you would find gems like this:  *“Both Justice and Mercy join hands to help the fallen creature up. God is just in being merciful, and merciful in being just; so that we well may cry aloud with the psalmist, ‘Gracious is the Lord, and righteous,’ Psalm cxvi. 5. Justice struck the sacrifice, that the streams of mercy might have a fuller scope. His justice was not actually appeased till the death of Christ. As a merciful God, he pitied us; but as a holy God, he could not but hate our transgression; as a God of truth, he could not but fulfil his own threatening; as a God of justice, he must avenge himself for the offence against him. He gave Christ as a God of mercy, and required satisfaction as a God of justice ‘He set him forth as a propitiation, that he might be just,’ Rom. iii. 25, 26. His mercy rendered him placable, but his righteousness hindered the actual forgiveness.”* This book is comprised of 4 separate discourses wrapped around 3 particular verses **I Corinthians 2:2, 5:7and Ephesians 5:2.**A last take away that will be a quote I hope to remember, *“Christ was real in His sacrifice; God was real in the* *acceptation of it; we must be real in believing it.”*
12. **THE MORTIFIED Christian: A Treatise on Mortification,**by Christopher Love (1618-1651), a Welsh Presbyterian preacher who was executed, read martyred because he was a non-conformist Presbyterian and he was part of a plot to restore Charles II to the throne. On August 23, 1651 Christopher Love was executed for treason on Tower Hill in London. His execution was attended by Simeon Ashe and Edmund Calamy. On August 25th, Love was privately buried at St Lawrence Church. His funeral sermon was preached by Thomas Manton. His death was a reaction to keep the Presbyterian from gaining too much power in their efforts to supplant the Stuart court. The Puritans very much saw Love as a hero for the cause of Christ. In his short like (33 years) he gave many sermons and wrote many treatises like the one above which was edited and published by his friends listed above in 1654. (Republished digitally by Monergism Books, 2023) All of the are written with an understanding of his audience the regular church goer and he was known as a loving pastor. These sermons concern mortification, in which Love’s judgment is more to be valued because his heart and his experience were a seal to his doctrine. These sermons were taken by faithful note takers while the sermons were given. They are fresh and vibrant, filled with good counsel against the natures of men, of the corruption of men, which still lingers within the heart of the Christian even though he be converted. But now, how does the Christian deal with remaining sin? What does it mean to mortify the sins of the flesh? *“Mortification: It is a holy disposition in a regenerate man derived from the efficacy and virtue of Christ’s death whereby the strength of sin is weakened and the dominion of it destroyed, being utterly disabled from having a commanding power or rule over man anymore.* *Whereas mortifying grace wrought in us by the Spirit of God, reacteth so far as to a seizure upon inward sins as well as outward, as in Col. 3.5. says the Apostle, Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. not only fornication in the act, but uncleanness in the thoughts, concupiscence, and inordinate affections. Mortification by the Spirit, reacheth to the crucifying of the inward man, and therefore examine yourselves in this particular.”* How should a Christian arm himself against his own flesh? What should he look for? How may he know he is actually about the process of mortification? Christopher Love demonstrates the duty of the believer in a series of chapters on this topic. He covers such aspects as the *Necessity of Mortification*, *The Mistakes of Those who do not Recognize their Mortification*, *The Ground and Mistakes of Deluded Men* who may think they have mortified their flesh, and more. I especially enjoyed the aspects Love brought out concerning the “conscience” and how he dealt with the habitual, or as he called it “the bosom”, sin of the Christian. *“That sin which of all others most insinuateth itself into your heart when you are in the service of God and performing holy duties, that sin which can be so impudent as to intrude upon your heart when you are in the presence of God – that is your unmortified sin.”* He explains what this is, how to recognize it, and how to mortify it. He is very clear and straight forward holding no punches when he shows us that those sins which we are most likely to commit, those habitual sins, are those which we love to commit. This is difficult to hear, but very true. Those sins we delight in are the most deadly of sins since they hinder the sanctification we should be about. He speaks to this culture today so well and I have appreciated everything I have ever read by him.
13. **THAT FIRST SEASON: How Vince Lombardi Took the Worst Team in the NFL and Set It on the Path to Glory**, by John Eisenberg*.*This review is pretty simple on one hand…the title says it all. Coach Lombardi comes in never having been a head coach in the NFL and turns the Green Bay Packers into a powerhouse and a household word! He came in and from the very beginning it was obvious that things would never be the same again.  He pushed them to their breaking point to get the most out of them…He wanted it all, because he knew they each had it to give. One of my favorite quotes is this one, *“Gentlemen, he said, we’re going to relentlessly chase perfection, knowing full well we will not catch it, because perfection is unattainable. Bu we are going to relentlessly chase it because, in the process, we will catch excellence.”*The players complained but they kept pushing themselves toward perfection and reaching excellence as they went on to win 6 NFL titles in the 60’s and the first 2 Super Bowls.  Green Bay is called TitleTown because they have a total of 13 titles all told. The players themselves would reflect years later on how Lombardi was something special. *“Fuzzy Thurston, then a seventy-five-year-old Wisconsin legend, recalled the good feelings that swept through the Packer locker room toward the end of the 1959 season. ‘We realized that we were going to be good,’ he said. ‘We knew what was about to happen. Maybe we didn’t know that we would win as much as we did for as long as we did, but we knew we were going to be a very good team. Lombardi just wasn’t going to stand for anything less. We didn’t like him as a person. Damn, he was impossible. But we loved him as a coach. We hated the way he treated us, but we were glad we had him. He was going to make us special.’”*And then Hall of Famer Jerry Kramer said,*“He just kept pushing us,’ Jerry Kramer recalled. ‘I was having a good time, making All-Pro, winning titles, taking care of business, but I wasn’t working as hard as I could. And he just wouldn’t relent. One day in practice I jumped offside, and he got his nose about eight inches from mine and said, ‘Mista, the average college student can concentrate for five minutes, a high school student can last for three minutes, a child in kindergarten can go thirty seconds, and you don’t even have that, so where does that leave you?’ He just wouldn’t let me go, refused to let me slide. And he was that way with all of us. If you weren’t using any part of your talent, he wanted it. He wanted everything. It drove you crazy, and there were a lot of hurts and a lot of pain, but it was all worth it.’”*What a wonderful read about **The First Season**of Lombardi’s tenure for my beloved team the Green Bay Packers.
14. **FALLEN EARTH (First Colony Series Book 15),**by Ken Lozito (2023). After returning to Earth they have found a mess. Individual governments seeking to outdo the other with no centralized objective that would give some stability to the people as a whole. And then there are the Vemus Hybrids to deal with and the mistrust that comes with prejudice is infecting at the highest levels even in the CDF. Many are calling for some type of cure which could lead to forced vaccines to “cure” people whether they want it or not. But Gen. Connor Gates’ daughter, Lauren,  who is spearheading the research, is simply wanting to make it available for those who cannot adapt to the symbiotic condition. Which side is going to win out on this? Ethan, Gen. Gates’ son was Vemus infected to save his life but he prejudice within the CDF seems to be  stonewalling his career and getting back to his beloved 7th Flight wing looks more and more doubtful. But he is still in the CDF and the powers that be send him on another mission which seems destined to ruin his career for good when they find Vemus and Ethan’s hybrid nature is made clear as he saves his squad but they still didn’t trust him. Prejudice always runs deep. Taking some time off after the CDF order more medical evaluations he branches out with Cyd and others in search of what appears to be feral hybrid Vemus causing havoc in some remote areas. They are looking for the origins of the Vemus on earth. Did they find it the after nearly getting killed…first by a misguided CDF Lt. and then by hybrid Vemus themselves? At the same time someone has framed Lauren for murder and after Gen. Gates thinks about devastating the whole judicial system with CDF troops a trial that will determine unity or division among the people of earth begins with Lauren in the middle of it all. What will happen…with the find the Vemus’ origins?  Will Laurenbe convicted of these false claims? This book is filled with non-stop action from beginning to end…my one is that the next one is not ready to be read yet!
15. **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT THE DOCTRINES OF GRACE,**Monergism Copyright © 2024. Why do we need another book on this subject with so many in existence throughout the generations? Well the editors at Monergism had been dialoguing with fellow Christians who hold differing views on several key doctrines, namely the doctrines of grace, and it became evident that with the large amount of misunderstanding that they found they were compelled to anchor these doctrines in Scripture so as to make clear the truthfulness of these disputed doctrines even among sincere Christians. So the bulk of this book is a categorized list of scriptural references for each part of the doctrines of grace with the intent to highlight the undeniable fact that these are doctrines of God rooted in His Word and then to organize these truths for easy reference. Considering the Scripture enables us to see sequentially and fully how the bible confirms these truths. It is almost a workable outline that could be used to teach these doctrines with a clear foundation in the scriptures and obviously not opinion. Also, near the end the editors have added a brief appendix that provides and clear and succinct commentary on each of the 5 doctrines of grace.  All of this is to deepen our knowledge and assurance of the veracity of these truths so they can be easily taught with the hope that they will take in the hearers and in this case the readers. In the appendix there is also an interesting discussion on what about the 4 Point Calvinist and how a 4 pointer creates disharmony in the Trinity. *“The classical understanding of the Trinity is that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit work in perfect unity and harmony, not with divergent intentions or purposes. What about 4-point Calvinists? The stance of 4-point Calvinists, who accept all points of Calvinism except Limited Atonement, raises an intriguing theological discussion, especially when juxtaposed with the affirmation of Irresistible Grace. This situation indeed suggests a nuanced, if not implicit, acceptance of Limited Atonement, often not recognized.”*Another part of this appendix which is extremely helpful is their discussion on John 3:16.  Thought they leave out a text discussion on vs. 13-15 the rest of what they say is right on and easily understood. Lastly the short synopsis’ of each doctrine is also very helpful and I will leave you with this one, *“In conclusion, the Perseverance of the Saints is a testament to the faithfulness of God in preserving His people. It offers a blend of divine assurance and a call to diligent faith, encouraging believers to cling to the promises of God, abide in Christ, and be vigilant in faith and holiness. As we navigate the journey of faith, let the truth of God’s preserving grace be the wind in our sails and the anchor of our souls, empowering us to persevere until we see Christ face to face.”*
16. **LIGHT THE FIRE AGAIN: Eighteenth-Century Light for the Twenty-First-Century Darkness**, by James P. Williams (2021 WestBow Press). The author was able to secure a letter written by a mostly unknown mover and shaker during the Great Awakening and sought to make it known to the world. *“What makes evangelist William Robinson’s letter of 1741 significant is that it hits the trifecta of historical documents. You have very important persons, George Whitfield and William Robinson. They are describing significant events, the Great Awakening’s firepower. It occurs during extraordinary times: a smallpox epidemic and the terrible snows of 1720–1722. Even during these times of extremely severe weather, they didn’t fail to detour the Most High God. Jonathan Edwards has been credited by some as having started the uniting of the revivals in the colonies, prior to the Great Awakening, to his own congregation in Northampton, Massachusetts, and on July 8, 1741, in Enfield, Connecticut, he said, “Sinners in the hand of an angry God.”* William Robison who came to the preaching business a bit later in life, who would get smallpox and be blinded in one eye but God would use him mightily along with the Tennets and many others to spread the gospel among the colonies. *“The biography of an eighteenth-century spiritual light in no way makes a pretense of being an exhaustive chronological account of the American colonies’ Great Awakening. It is, rather, a very narrow focus on one of the unknown Great Awakening’s key associate itinerant evangelists, William Robinson. This biography is a thrilling unveiling of brand-new and long-lost excerpts of a letter from William Robinson written to a cousin in England.”*His telling the story…what there is of it…is good and helpful from a historical perspective but when he branches off into application for the 21st Century he shows himself not as aware of this century as he is of the 18th. But I do like this ending quote and how appropriate it is for us today, *“An old American evangelist once wondered aloud, ‘How can there be a deep revival in a shallow generation?’ The men and women in this book have something to teach us about that—and it is clear that their answer involved neither condescension to shallowness nor imitation of it. For them, mature Christian spirituality can only grow from a mature Christian mind, and such a mind can only come to be when it has first hid itself in the mind of Christ.”*
17. **LATENT PROWESS: Order of the Scion book 1,**by Toby Neighbors (2024).  Our heroes’ name is Mitch Murphy! What a great name…how many war movies have a “Murph” in it as the likeable and usually expendable character? Well, none so likeable is this Murphy who is part of the Colonial Marine Corps and he is very special and not the least expendable. But I am gettting ahead of myself. Mitch Murphy was just a less than normal “Joe” with a less than common life in real estate…with an even worse marriage…all things crumbling around him. He has found himself in massive debt, in a nowhere job, with a wife who is cheating on him (no pictures…mental or word… of anything other than the fact of the indiscretion).  Many had told him early in life that he had potential but he never sought to achieve that potential…until now. He has noticed the posters many times on his commute to and from work but he had also heard the stories…the horror stories. All he had to do was agree to receive a newly discovered formula for unlocking untapped abilities and sign up for the CMC leaving Earth behind forever. At the end of his rope, literally, and receiving the ability to pay off all his debts he signs up and begins a wild ride no one even the scientists expected. He comes out with so many “super-abilities” (think Captain America on steroids) that he is immediately made an officer…something never done before. He is taken to New Terra, the only colonized world outside of the Sol system and put in charge of veteran super soldiers to prove his mettle against an unrelenting enemy that no one saw coming. There are many other species “watching” the humans…but one in particular is always on the lookout for exceptional beings from every “race of aliens” to become part of their Scion Order. This is the first in this series, Toby’s 100th book, and it is set to be another best seller in the military sci-fi genre. I can’t wait to see what happens next.
18. **LIFE OF FAITH**, by Richard Sibbes (originally given and printed 1637-Monergism digitalized 2023). This is one of those books which have been put together to talk specifically about the life of Faith a 3 sermon series given in 1637 for a congregation that was struggling with how to live a life of faith in the dark times of the 17th century England from **Galatians 2:20-*“And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.****"*He is such an easy read even in this non-modernized version.With a wonderful blend of theological insight and pastoral wisdom, Sibbes examines the believer's union with the crucified Christ and experience of a life defined by His indwelling presence.In the first sermon/chapter, Sibbes explores the profound reality of being crucified with Christ. He articulates the concept of dying to self, highlighting the transformative nature of this spiritual crucifixion. Sibbes encourages readers to embrace the freedom that comes from relinquishing their old selves and embracing the life of faith, rooted in Christ's sacrificial work on the cross*.*The second sermon/chapter of the book considers the practical application of living by faith. Sibbes navigates the reader through the complexities of sanctification, highlighting the tension between human frailty and divine grace. He illustrates how the life of faith empowers believers to overcome the challenges of sin and temptation, relying on Christ's strength rather than their own efforts.And in the last sermon/chapter, he says that the Christian life is a communion of the believer's life with that of Christ. Sibbes explores the significance of Christ's love and His indwelling presence, asserting that this reality transforms the believer's desires and motivations. He says, *“No man can live a holy life by faith, but first he must know that God loves him and Christ loves him. Holy actions spring from love, and are directed by love to the right end, which only love moveth us to intend. 'The love of Christ,' saith Paul, 'constrains me, a holy violence moves me, who was a persecutor and a blasphemer,' 2 Cor. 5:14. So the sense of the love of Christ in pardoning of sins will constrain one to a holy violence in the performing of all duties. Why, if any base ends come into a man's mind, in that, is a Christian to regard himself, to seek his own ease, honour, pleasure? No; this consideration, if he have any assurance of the pardon of his sins, will move him to the contrary. Christ died for me; shall I not live to Christ, live to him that gave himself for me?”*His pastoral encouragement is timeless another reason why his works continue to speak to the Church generations later.
19. **THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS,** by William Bates, (1696, Monergism Copyright © 2020).  ***“But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.*” – PSALM 130:4**Bates exposits this passage with a brief introduction saying, *“THE Psalmist, in the first and second verses, addresses God with earnest desires for his saving mercies:****‘Out of the depths have I cried to thee, O Lord: Lord hear my voice: let thine ear be attentive to my supplication.’****He humbly deprecates the severe inquiry of divine justice; ver. 3.****"If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities: O Lord, who shall stand?"****If God should with an exact eye observe our sins, and call us to an account, who can stand in judgment? who can endure that fiery trial? The best saints, though never so innocent and unblamable in the sight of men, though never so vigilant and watchful over their hearts and ways, are not exempted from the spots of human frailty, which according to the rigour of the law, would expose them to a condemning sentence. He relieves and supports himself under this fearful apprehension with the hopes of mercy:****‘but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared.’****It is in thy power and thy will, to pardon repenting and returning sinners,****‘that thou mayest be feared.’***This treatise is built on two propositions that he will seek to prove: First, that forgiveness resides in God alone. And second, that the forgiving mercy of God is a powerful motive of adoration and obedience and fellowship as we forgive others by God’s command. There so many great quotes in this book, like, *“What is contained in forgiveness. This necessarily supposes sin, and sin a law that is violated by it: the law implies a sovereign Lawgiver, to whose declared will subjection is due, and who will exact an account in judgment of men's obedience or disobedience to his law, and dispense rewards and punishments accordingly. It is the high and peculiar prerogative of God to pardon sin. His authority made the law, and gives life and vigour to it, therefore he can remit the punishment of the offender…He forgives our sins as entirely as if they had never been committed, and is reconciled as if he had never been offended…The confession of our sins is indispensably requisite to qualify us for pardon. The promise is express and full,****"He that confesses and forsakes sin, shall find mercy." Prov. 28:13****. That we may not be deceived in the application of this promise, I will briefly consider what is preparatory to this duty, the properties of it, and the connection of pardon with it”*His going on and on about this is to encourage the Christian in their times of doubting and to aid them to encourage others in their true assurance of faith because of God’s eternal forgiveness for His own. Concerning forgiving others this stood out to me as something we all need to take to heart, *“Our pardoning the offences of others is an evangelical condition of our obtaining pardon: we are commanded, "When ye stand praying, forgive if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." Mark 11:25, 26. The command is peremptory and universal, frequently and severely urged upon us by our Saviour.”*One last quote among so many,*“Love to the benefactor, and joy in the benefit, are the incentives of thankfulness. They tune the heart and tongue in the music of praise.”*No one talks like that anymore!
20. **BATTLE ORDERS: Never Surrender Series Book 1**, by Toby Neighbors (2022). Another Military sci-fi series that bodes well with good character development and hardly any cussing and nothing else but hard action and loyalty beyond measure. This book also is heavy on marital commitment and protection of home. Of, course, many of these character traits would be expected from a committed battle Marine. Moss Lefer is among a group of battle veterans that get stuck with a less than capable Captain who sends them into harm’s way while he stays back…all of Moss’ squad is wiped out even his old crusty Master Sergeant. His captain is wounded and even though the man is a waste as a leader it is still Moss’ job to get him to safety and help from his wounds. The battle for Elon Station is going badly with an unrelenting enemy, the Sartans, seemingly in control and about to seize control of the whole planet. But Moss, of course, wants to live to serve out his enlistment get married to his Navy doctor girlfriend Hali, but it isn’t looking too good for those possibilities. But he doesn’t give up. While carrying His captain he finds a way to turn the battle and in dramatic fashion is able to fulfill his desires. Once married Moss and Hali find a goldilocks planet and begin to settle in but trouble has a tendency to always be around the corner so from defending his home and family to help defend the planet the action is somewhat continuous and engaging. Toby’s writing never ceases to draw one in…now on to the next book in this series **BASE OF FIRE.**
21. **LOMBARDI’S MEN: a Biography of Every Green Bay Packer from 1959-1967 and Their Lives After Football**, by Stanton Greene (2022 version with 21 extra pages and updates). This was an interesting read to be sure. It tells the story of many of the players that I grew up watching in the 60’s but also their interaction with other players on other teams.  As the NFL and the AFL came to life and then eventually came together…the back story of this is interesting seen through the eyes of this author and the many different players he highlights. But, I digress...for this is a book that also highlights a very special time and very special people that perhaps have not been duplicated since. I know I am biased toward the Packers, but Lombardi and his men had something special…so much so that it, at least, has not been duplicated in the Packers again for such a long period as the Lombardi years. There have been moments of brilliance but nothing so sustained as what was seen in the 9 years Lombardi was at the helm. It has been said by many sports historians that these players were merely the supporting cast of the real star…Lombardi…but as the Coach has said himself…these guys and their desire to win was the real star. Oh, Lombardi was the one who convinced them of their “greatness” but they are the ones who won and lost the games winning 5 championships during this time 2 of those being the first 2 Super Bowls. And they also kept on winning after they left Green Bay proving that they did have the right stuff in or outside of Lombardi’s oversight. These 108 men, in this book, who played for Lombardi each contributed to the success that build the legend of St. Vincent and the legend of the Green Bay Packers.
22. **AMIABLE PROFESSORS FALLING SHORT OF HEAVEN,**by Thomas Boston EDITED BY THE REV. SAMUEL M'MILLAN ABERDEEN: GEORGE AND ROBERT KING, ST. NICHOLAS STREET 1828. (Monergism digital Copyright © 2024). The good reverend wrote these 7 sermon around the text, Mark 10:21-22- *“And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, ‘You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.’ Disheartened by the saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions.”*Much like the parable of the weeds in Matthew 13 we know there are those who seek to attain to heaven by works…who genuinely believe that they have done enough.  They exist alongside the faithful mimicking them but never actually being them. Rev. Boston wants to expositorily reveal the fact that these people do in fact eist…give them the basic tools and understanding to see if this applies so that they may turn from their ways …which implies that even some of these are really just immature Christians for without a changed heart nothing he says will even get them to see their folly…much like the rich young ruler of these texts. He also goes so far as to mostly imply that those who are wealthy will not get into the kingdom of God in fact the entrance is sdo narrow that only a few will make it in at all.*“The heart also is carried away from God, when men trust in the world more than in God. "Soul, says the rich man, thou hast goods laid up for many years, take thine ease," (Luke 12:19 but then there is also  Mark 10:23, 24). From this we may see, that it is hard to have the world and not to trust in it.* *There is great need of grace to lift up the hearts of men who have full houses, to look to God for their daily bread. It is hard to have the world, and not to be secure because we have it: and we are ready to make gold our confidence.”* He goes on to make the point that no matter how good they look there is something that keeps them just outside of the faith, *“The most refined hypocrisy leaves still one thing that is lacking, one lust, one idol with which the heart cannot part; some lust from which the hypocrite was never weaned and which was never made bitter enough to him.”*But there may be hope for some to live differently, *“We must do all this, believing the promises suited to that case. The word of promise is excellent armour for victory over sin. The promise assures us of victory and so strengthens the battle. It brings in the bosom of it, ‘They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength, Is. 40. It puts God's faithfulness and the believer's victory in one bottom, so that if any fail, both fail together. God has made the promise, Micah 7:19. He will subdue our iniquities, and it is our duty to put him in remembrance of it. Say not the promises belong to you, if you be not willing to part with all sin and take Christ.”*A hard book to read for it almost lack of hope for these folks, but a worthy one, indeed.
23. **THE GREAT DUTY OF RESIGNATION TO THE DIVINE WILL IN AFFLICTION,** by William Bates,  (1st published 1684) Monergism  Copyright © 2020. This was definitely an interesting book. Resignation of ones will or just plain ol’ submission is not something talked about these days. His book is full of wonderful truths and advice for believers who are or will be suffering in affliction. He forms this whole treatise after the example of our Lord in **Matthew 26:39- *“And going a little farther he fell on his face rand prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’”*** First, he makes it clear God is the author of our affliction. Like a father he afflicts us so that we will grow stronger and stronger in the faith. *“His paternal love in sending afflictions, is a sufficient argument to win our compliance with his will. The blessed apostle applying lenitives (medicine like laxatives)  to the afflicted, propounds two divine truths, that if seriously thought of, and steadfastly believed, are powerful to mitigate the acerbity of all sufferings, and support the spirit in the greatest agony. The first is, "God scourgeth every son whom he receiveth:" Heb. 12:6. and the other that is joined with it is, "Whom the Lord loves, he chasteneth."*But he goers on with things like this, *“Now the more we magnify God, and exalt his authority in our judgments, the more our wills are prepared to yield to him: "His excellency will make us afraid to oppose his providence."*Also,*“The more we debase and vilify ourselves, the more easy it will be to bear what God inflicts; humility disposeth to submission.”*Yet, *“The righteousness of God in all his ways, if duly considered, will compose the afflicted spirit to quiet and humble submission. He is never injurious to us when he deprives us of our sweetest and most precious comforts, because we have incurred the forfeiture of all. He is not cruel in laying the heaviest punishments upon us, for we deserve them. If we were free from actual sins, yet our depraved nature, so repugnant to the pure law of God, involves us under an obligation to punishment. If we had not been attainted with the guilt of original sin, yet the sins committed in the course of our lives, make us deeply obnoxious to divine justice: how much more the concurrent guilt of original and actual sins? The acts of sin are transient and pass away; but the guilt and stain of sin, and the conscience of sin remain, and no less than eternal punishment is commensurate to the obliquity. From hence there is the clearest reason to justify God in all his proceedings.”* His conclusions are equally helpful but for the sake of space I will put one more quote that seems to sum up the whole book. *“The two principal parts of holiness, are ceasing from doing evil, and learning to do well. And afflictions are ordained and sent as profitable for both these effects. It is the perfection of holiness to do what God loves, and to love what God does.”*
24. **FORWARD COMMAND (Galaxy Bridge Book 1)** by Daniel Gibbs, Steve Rzasa (2024). An exciting new series by these two dealing with the “settling” of the Sexton “B” part of space that the Lion of Judah was thrust into and had to fight their way out of. Well, an alliance was formed based on the work of Gen. David Cohen and his character and a massive space station Joint Base Sagittarius Arch was built in honor of the new found relationships (think Star Trek Deep Space Nine with the intrigue, politics and humor). Col. Mateo Larra has been given command and from the very first day so many people are jostling for his favor or to simply try to figure what they might get away with under his command. Col. Larra is a committed Christian but has slipped a bit in his actions toward his faith something his scientist wife Esme continually reminds him of…but like a typical man; he will get to it when things slow down on the station.  But there is nothing typical about this time on the station…there are pirates to deal with and they haven’t even got their battle group here yet. There are station matters concerning fair trade. He is a soldier not a diplomat! Then there is the mysterious ship disappearances and then reappearing as if nothing is wrong yet no bodies can be found, in fact, no sign of a struggle though it is clear that work has been done. And on top of that the League Ambassador is kidnapped. Now how are these things connected?  Or are they? Do they have a new enemy that they have never encountered before or an old one in a new form?  *“Is anyone gonna talk about the really tiny elephant in the room? Dr. Pruitt crossed her arms. Because this all comes down to one salient point: the nanites are back. They are, or at least this offshoot is.”* What does this mean for Sexton “B”? Can they be defeated? This book like all the others of Gibbs are keep you on the edge of your seat great…that is, for sci-fi nuts like me. I am so looking forward to **FORWARD HUNT (GALAXY BRIDGE BOOK 2).**
25. **WAR INC(ACE EVANS SERIES BOOK 1,**by Toby Neighbors (2020). Alex is a teenager on a nowhere mining planet in the backwoods of the galaxy with no hope to get off and better himself…and he didn’t want to say that out loud because he respected his dad who worked these mines to provide for his mom and his sister and Alex (Ace). Coming home from another uneventful day at school with bad grades and equally bad attitude from his teachers the planet comes under attack and when he see a Defender Mech go down and its operator gets hurt he springs in to action with instincts he didn’t know he had. After safely pulling the operator to safety he jumps in the Mech without the necessary neural interface (INC) and yet still blows away the battle bots who were wreaking havoc on his planet…something he wasn’t supposed to do.  Well, that begins a story and a life that he could have only imagined especially after meeting the VP of security for the Ahzco’s corporation that own this planet. So after that meeting his life and the life of his family will never be the same again. Ace is then fast tracked much to some chagrin and others delight causing all kinds of typical relational headaches. But in the CDF (Corporate Defense Force) is where Ace feels like he fits. But there is s much subterfuge that Alex id uncertain who to trust until he has to make a choice.  Will he make the right one? Will his choice be beneficial for all involved? Is he a prodigy  with the Mechs as everyone says or is he extremely lucky. This is a great coming of age story that begs you to keep reading long after your eyes are telling you otherwise. Again I like Toby because there is limited foul language and a story line that nudges at your imagination.
26. **BASE OF FIRE: Never Surrender Series Book 2,**by Toby Neighbors (2022). As Moss and his little group clean up the first Sartan attack he seeks to get the city to plan for the next attack that many of his retractor with the government don’t believe will happen. But, just in case, not because Moss has recommended it they begin looking at weaponry that could defend their world.  Many of them are scrambling for power hence leaving the city un-protected and the planet by virtue of their sentiment rubbing off on the other cities on planet. Moss doesn’t want any part of it so he resigns his commission and head on vacation with his family and that is when THEY return…dozens of pods…hundreds of Sartan soldiers bent on one thing …mass destruction of all humans. Well, of course, the Marine in Moss kicks in and he begins killing Sartans and after making his way inside one of the pods his discovery could change the course of this incursion devastating the home he has come to love. But, of course, those who suppose him to be a rival won’t listen, so Moss and some of his friends take things into their own hands to seek to save the city. There is so much action with this one that the reader hardly gets a breather…just like Moss. The end comes but who is left standing among his rivals and the people of Lexton and Avalon…among his family and friends? Another great action packed book.  Looking forward to the last in this series… **HARD SITE: Never Surrender Series Book 3.**
27. **THE RADICAL DISCIPLE: Some Neglected Aspects of Our Calling** by John Stott (2012). I read this the first time the year after his death. John Stott and English Anglican (Reformed and biblical) priest was one of 20th and 21st century theologians that I could relate to along with R.C. Sproul and J.I. Packer. These men set a particular pace for truly biblical theologians that is being emulated today by men like Joel Beeke, Sinclair Ferguson and James White. To be a disciple of Christ is to be radical and Dr. Stott in his last book wanted to leave the Church today with 8 characteristics of Christian discipleship which have often been neglected and yet deserve to be taken seriously, from his experience. The 8 characteristics are these: Non- conformity, Christlikeness, Maturity, Creation –care, Simplicity, Balance, Dependence and Death. On non-conformity he says, *“The first characteristic of the radical disciple which I bring before you I will call ‘non-conformity’. Let me explain why. The church has a double responsibility in relation to the world around us. On the one hand we are to live, serve and witness in the world. On the other hand we are to avoid becoming contaminated by the world. So we are neither to seek to preserve our holiness by escaping from the world nor to sacrifice our holiness by conforming to the world. Escapism and conformism are thus both forbidden to us.”*On Christlikeness, he says, *“Christlikeness and the indwelling of the Spirit I have spoken much about Christlikeness, but how is it possible for us? In our own strength, it is clearly not, but God has given us his Holy Spirit to enable us to fulfil his purpose. William Temple used to illustrate the point from Shakespeare in this way: It is no good giving me a play like Hamlet or King Lear, and telling me to write a play like that. Shakespeare could do it; I can’t. And it is no good showing me a life like the life of Jesus and telling me to live a life like that. Jesus could do it; I can’t. But if the genius of Shakespeare could come and live in me, then I could write plays like his. And if the Spirit of Jesus could come and live in me, then I could live a life like his. God’s purpose is to make us like Christ, and God’s way is to fill us with his Holy Spirit.”*Six of the eight contain such helpful theological and practical insights as these. O don’t know if it was his age or the just the lifestyle that he chose to lead through the years…probably a combination of both (for he took simplicity to a monkish level). But His chapters on creation-care and simplicity leave much to be desired almost sounding wokeish before that term even existed. (He finished writing this in 2009.) Bu over all so much here for us NOT to forget. Even with the weakness in two of these chapters it is always worthwhile to read the “last” book or the “last” sermon of such men that God has called to lead his church. So I commend this book as well.
28. **HARD SITE: Never Surrender Series Book 3** by Toby Neighbors (2022). Marine Moss Lefer doesn’t know the meaning of give up? His family has settled on a beautiful planet and have begun to raise their family…and wife Hali is pregnant with child #3.  The Sartans have returned and they have come back with such force that the odds of survival diminish with each new day. But Moss has an overachievers will to win...but not at all cost unless of course, that is family in in danger and you have to pity the fool…ish Sartans that want his planet. This win at all cost had rubbed off on his pregnant wife as well, *“She remembered asking Moss one time how he managed his fear when he was going into combat. You don’t manage it, he had told her. You make friends with it, embrace it, let it motivate you to do what has to be done. She didn’t know if she could make friends with fear, but she refused to let it keep her from doing what she needed to do for her family. Loren was right about getting prepared. Whether Moss returned or not, she would have to make sure that her children had a chance to survive.”* This is the sentiment of many others on planet as well…and against all odds they finally push the Sartans out killing thousands and destroying their ships. It is a lot more complicated that the general overview I just gave.  And it is a fitting ending to the series **NEVER SURRENDER.**A series worthy of your time if you are a fan of Toby and his space Marine stories. Highly recommend this hero to your reading.
29. **THE WOMAN’S GLORY,**Samuel Torshell (1604 -1650) (1st published in 1645, Monergism 2024). Rev. Torshell writing in the time that he does gives us an interesting glimpse into the place of women in the 17th Century.  This work is dedicated to the second daughter the ill-fated King Charles I, Elizabeth, who would only live 5 years after this was published. But what he has to say here takes us back to the 1st Century and the “glory” unto which Jesus showed believing women in contrast to a culture that sought to enslave them in various ways. So this book is an interesting historical reflection as well as a deeply doctrinal book on the “glory” or dignity of women, especially believing women, and the accomplishments they should strive towards. He builds this treatise to the princess around a letter between a well-known woman Reformer and a Reformed professor of the day as an example to Elizabeth as she grows in stature and faith, Anna Maria Schurman, *“The Letters touching this argument between Andreas Rivet, and Anna Maria à Schurman. For the confirmation of the point in hand, and for the honor of that Maiden Pen, I will translate into our own tongue for the use of our English women, so much of that learned Letter as concerns this present argument, which that renowned Virgin, Anne Marie Schurman of Utrecht wrote in Latin, to the Reverend and famous French Divine, Andrew Rivet, then at Leyden, which Doctor Beverwick a learned Physician of Dort hath communicated together with a Dissertation upon the same subject by the same Lady.” Andre’ Rivet was a French Huguenot Theologian (Reformed/Calvinistic professor at the University of Utrect)*The letters he is translating for his “charge” 10 year old Princess Elizabeth, Charles I second daughter…were from Anna Maria van Schurman of Utrecht describing the kind of life in learning from a biblical perspective a woman could actually achieve. Anna Maria had been a child prodigy and Rev. Torshell is seeking to compare Elizabeth’s to Anna Maria who spoke 14 languages  wrote in 10 and she was the first woman to attend University in the Netherlands a staunch Reformer of the church. Rev. Torshell sought to make it plain to his charge that with diligence and commitment she could be an influence in her generation as well. Sadly, as was the case in those days she didn’t live to see the desires of Rev. Torshell lived out. (they both died the same year, 1650) One other interesting fact, the reason that she was this Reformed preachers charge is because that the whole family was essentially under house arrest by the British parliament during the English Civil War with Parliament demanded that Charles’ children be brought up Protestant. An interesting read for girls of the day and even ours. *“Let Ladies and great women; yea, all women have it in their thoughts, that they were made after the Image of God, which is truth. It will not become those smooth foreheads, to have rough, and shadowy, and clouded intentions. What saith St Paul? Lye not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the Image of him that created him.”*
30. **MERCIES MEMORIAL, or Israel’s thankful rememberance of God in their high estate, for His mercifull remembering of them in their low estatebased on Psalm 107:8- *“Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and His wonderful works to the children of men.”and Psa. 136:23- “Who remembered us in our low estate, for His mercy endurath forever.”***, by Ralph Venning(1621-1674) (1stprinted 1657, Monergism 2024). This was a lengthy sermon given before his congregation and the Lord Mayor of London along with many other dignitaries of the day. Even as a Puritan preacher (non-conformist) he was highly sought after for his preaching though he is someone most of us today have never heard of. He unfolds the theme of God’s divine mercy upon those who do not deserve it…if it was deserved it wouldn’t be mercy. He does this by exploring the manifestation of God’s mercy in the many faithful throughout history.  He draws from a wide variety of biblical examples…OT patriarchs to the experiences of the nation of Israel and even upon the trials and deliverances of early Christians. He does this to clearly and boldly illustrate how God’s merciful remembrance (memorial) of His people in our “low estate” has been a consistent thread throughout the fabric of God’s redemptive plan…His covenant of grace. *“Now then, you see what it is for God to remember a people in their low estate; it is to think upon them, in opposition to forgetfulness; it is to take notice of them, in opposition to neglect; it is to lay their case and estate to heart, to pity and compassionate them, and to be well pleased with them, to hear and to grant their requests, to help and succor, to redeem and deliver them from the hand of their enemies.”*One of this long sermons most memorable aspects is when he is talking to us about gratitude and thanksgiving framed as amoral and spiritual obligation for any and all who have experienced God’s grace. This is a sermon worth reading as a sermon but also as a spiritual guide for doing just that …cultivating a heart of gratitude and a life where mercy is seen clearly. *“His mercy is over all His works; He is good and does good to all, but there is a specialty to the household of faith. And God, who commands us to do good to all, especially to the household of faith, does but command us that which He patterns us.”*
31. **GRAVITY MASTERS: Order of the Scion book 2,**by Toby Neighbors (2024).  This one is just okay. I mean there is some good adventure in it and some conflict resolution with some interesting twist and turns…BUT…Mitch has become a Jedi with the Order and they are for the preservation of good defined by the creator…so a sort of Christianish Jedi order. It all gets a bit weird when in this book Mitch is taught how to control gravity to do everything from stop bullets to crushing and reforming planets. Mitch has ascended to the latter yet but he is a good fighter with his special saber (not a light saber…but just as tough and able to slice though anything). He is able to leap talk building with a single thought and he is able to control a space ship in space traveling beyond the speed of light. Mitch and his guides from the Order of Scion have traveled great distances and met many different types of aliens species…some good most bad…and then there’s the Fray…a “darkside order” of its own. The fray is the Orders enemy…sort of like Satan and Christ. Mitch has gone along and is growing stronger by the day. He has even become a member of the Order himself, the first human to achieve such a high standard. But now his training is taking him back to familiar ground…among his own people…to the planet that he left just before his own people tried to nuke it because it was overrun by Lymies. Will the meeting between Leo Squad and him work out? What will all this mean for the human race? How will things change?  Is it a change Mitch can navigate through? Now we will have to wait until the 3rd book comes out.
32. **CONSCRIPT: Book 1,**by Scott Bartlett (2024). This is a new series by an author who never lets his readers down. This one is about a young man seeking desperately to help his siblings have a better life physically and to help pay off the debt his parents have accrued to the “company store” on the planet Psyche…a faraway mining colony that most people have never heard of. Po Abbato thinks his plan is full proof to steal from the cartels that run the drug trade and black market on his planet. As you would expect everything goes array and he is caught and given a choice 25 years in a digital prison while your body rots away from no movement physically or join the Marines. Of course, the training sequences go on for chapters but the intrigue and the action internally and externally is quality writing. And then there is an invisible alien (who doesn’t like invisible alien friends, right?) that only Po can see that is helping him stay alive and get through basic. Just as everything seems to be moving in a direction that is positive the Marine training camp in dep space is attacked by an enemy that they have been at war with on and off through the years. Well, this leads Po and the other newly “minted” Marines to fight this war not fully trained. This is on the job training at the worse. Again, Scott places Christianity front and center through a priest that takes an interest in the uninterested Po to seek to bring him into the light so that life can make sense from the perspective of the only one that matters.  So again well worth reading.  And I look forward to the next instalment **RIFLEMAN** due out in April.
33. **CARTHAGE PRIME: (ACE EVANS SERIES BOOK 2),**by Toby Neighbors (2020). This one is so good that I was even reading the chapters for the next book that he tacks on as a tease to get you to want the next one, because I like these characters sooo much. Alex (Ace) Evans has come a long way since getting taken off his unnamed planet literally in the middle of nowhere in the galaxy. He has gone from recruit to a mech operator and pilot with the elite Titan Mechs and team leader on top of that. Of course, it doesn’t hurt that he keeps saving the VP of Security.  So they are called up to protect the peace on Carthage prime a new planet claimed by a couple of corporations… but it all starts off slow…because this is simply a over watch mission for the other Mechs…not the elite Titan Squad…to make sure no other corporations seek to infringe on their part of the planet. Waiting is the hardest part for a soldier and often it seems that waiting is what takes up a big part of their lives…until it doesn’t. But then they don’t have to wait long. A rival Corp. Zen Tech comes in with guns blazing and all of a sudden life is a nonstop strategic battle to win the ground game.  I will take everything Alex and Nyx have to maneuver his team into position to save the planet but then there is the battle is space what will Alex do with that especially when a corporate shuttle finds its way into the fray of battle with all communications down. Something amazing happens to Alex…not unlike the first time he handled a Mech without an INC devise in his head. What will happen and will Alex be able to control what happens next with Ahzco and with his feelings for Nyx?
34. **PREPARATIONS FOR SUFFERINGS: or the Best Work in the Worst times: Wherein the Necessity, Excellency and Means of Our Readiness for Sufferings are Evinced and Prescribed; Our Call to Suffering Cleared and the Great Unreadiness of Many Professors Bewailed,**by John Flavel (1628-1691). Reading this again it has encouraged me to be less concerned about this suffering and more concerned with what God is doing in my life and the life of the rest of us as we suffer to Hs glory. In his own words he tells us why such a treatise is important, *“Humiliation for our own sins and the due preparation to take up our own cross and follow Christ in a suffering path is the only mark and aim of this tract. The expectation of and preparation for suffering abates much of the dread and terror by accustoming our thoughts beforehand to it, that we may find it not so grievous, shocking, and intolerable when it comes. Reader, the cup of suffering is a very bitter cup, and it is but needful that we provide something to sweeten it so that we may be able to receive it with thanksgiving. Beloved, suffering is one of the choicest discoveries of your love to your master Christ—yea, it is such a testimony of love to Him as angels are not capable of. They show their love by their readiness to do His will in the execution of which they fly as with wings (Ezekiel 1:24) but you only have the happiness of testifying your love for Him by your readiness to suffer for Him. Is not this excellent? The shoe of preparation to follow Him through thorns and briers, and over rocks and mountains of difficulties and troubles, loves Him indeed.”*His works, especially this one needs to be read in this day and age as a reminder that first, we are not the only ones who suffer, second, our suffering is nothing compared to the actual suffering of those who are being persecuted, oppressed and killed for their faith, third, we should learn to give thanks in all circumstances, especially suffering because it one of the ways that God uses to keep us focused on Him and growing in the faith as individuals and as a church. And fourth, it is a sign of God’s grace as we work through the suffering in this life*. “Hence in like manner hath the soul as great an advantage for sufferings; for this new creature (grace) having such a natural tendency to God, will enable the soul in which it is, to break its way to God through all the interposing obstacles and discouragements. What are persecutions, what are reproaches, what are the fears and frowns of enemies, but so many blocks thrown into the soul's way to keep it from God and duty? And indeed where this principle of grace is wanting, they prove inaccessible mountains. Graceless hearts are stalled, and quite discouraged by them: but now this tendency of the soul to God enables the Christian to break his way through all. This is grace, and this is your advantage by it in the most difficult part of your work. It will carry you through all; make the hardest work easy and pleasant. And if great sufferings or temptations interpose betwixt you and your God, it will break through all, and enable you to withstand all; as it did Paul in the text, who forced his way not only through the fury of enemies, but also through the entreaties and tears of friends.”*This is not a long treatise (150 or so pages) but it is full of biblical insight to aid the Christian in the sufferings of this life giving them purpose…God’s glory!
35. **AGING WITH GRACE: Flourishing in an Anti-aging Culture,**by Sharon Betters and Susan Hunt (2021). I picked this book up again as the WOV have been reading through it this year and last. It is an excellent resource and challenge at any walk of life. From Leslie on this book; *“We’re going to study how to START TODAY to fully LIVE our lives … keeping the goal of LIVING FOR THE LORD in our vision at all times!  And we need to do this as EARLY in our lives as is possible! EVERYWHERE we look, our culture screams at us to  REACH constantly for ways to remain young… to value youthful beauty and spend LOTS of money to keep it… to be fearful of losing any of it…to make this a serious priority…Scripture shows us another way…to KEEP our eyes on the Lord and live TODAY in honor to Him with Biblical thinking and growing in Grace.*Another excellent book from two women who are ahead of me in the race yet have often taken the time to stop and pay attention to me and my family in service and support. Both of these women know what it is to be stretched by God’s severe providence and both have still come forth shining with the light of their Savior. These women are filled with the Spirit and with His wisdom that they “deserve” to be heard by any and all…not just the women to which they are writing. The exposition of Psalm 92 is alone worth the price of the book. And their grace points, called *Growing in Grace*, that run throughout the book are amazingly insightful, like this one, *“Our justification is an act of God’s free grace. The physical and mental decline of aging does not decrease the power of his grace to reverse the effects of the fall and to make us flourish spiritually. God has spoken, and he will do it.”*Or this one, *“As long as we live in this world, we are prone to look down. The rhythm of Sabbath and daily worship recalibrates our minds and hearts in the present moment to remember our destiny and destination while****‘waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ’ Titus 2:13****, when we will experience the ultimate change …glorification.”* Each chapter is its own jewel but my favorite is probably the last chapter on Naomi. Gospel hope just radiates from every page, so please pick this up and read…whether you are young or aging…male or female…there is much here for everyone.
36. **FORWARD HUNT (Galaxy Bridge Book 2),** by Daniel Gibbs, Steve Rzasa (2024). Here we have yet another greatly energetic and rip-roaring account of life in the new galaxy Sexton B.  Col. Larra may have assumed that this would be a quiet posting but it has been anything but. The trials have been many so fat with the incursion of the KIN, last time, bent on the total destruction of all biological lifeforms, to all the shenanigans on the station it seems to be a non-stop action packed assignment. The Kin have been beaten for now…or have they? They are ever vigilant looking for the Home of the Kin to take the fight to them rather than just waiting around for the next round. But…since things have quieted for the moment the top brass have given the green light to the holovid *War Patrol* to come on station and produce their new season from a new galaxy. Mateo abhors the holovid because of the crass way it portrays war and the warrior but it is his job to protect and allow them to do their thing…oh and his wayward son Damien is part of the production cast.  They have many things to work on as father and son that are interrupted by a new threat on station that is eating the Matrinid production workers and are targeting all the others on the station for a food source. If that is not enough they have a new species they are seeking diplomatic relationship with and Lex Gold is seeking a commercial relationship with (think Quark on Star Trek DS 9). *“Lex, who managed to put himself in every situation for his own benefit, blurring the lines between military and civilian affairs.”* But is all of this somehow related to the new arrivals, the Tarash, who come seeking to make a new “home” within the station. What is their story?  How is it going to affect the station and the Colonel’s ability to keep his people safe from a murderous rampage? The action hardly s ceases in this book so on to the next one that comes out on the 22nd, **FORWARD PACT.**
37. **CRONUS TEAM (ACE EVANS SERIES BOOK 3),**by Toby Neighbors (2020). Alex (Ace) Evan’s newly acquired skill (Alex’s INC [Implanter Neural Controller] is working in a way never imagined by the creators and keepers of the tech) is making people uncomfortable for a couple of reasons…that he might fall into the wrong hands and be misused or that it might stop at will before Loman can find out what is actually going on across the galaxy that may mean an empire of darkness creeping in. Well, the Team has been renamed Cronus Team for their continued heroism and hard work and they are sent to Arcadia the capital planet to celebrate and take a tour to beef up recruitment…well, that is the story at least. VP Loman is trying to get Alex next to the equipment that could get him his answers. Alex and his team seek to be good soldiers to protect and preserve but there are other forces bent on their destruction or at the least to use them for the subjugation and destruction of others. When they arrive in Arcadia they Alex undercovers what appears to be a major terrorist event that would certainly take down the corporation he works for. After too many deaths what they discover was not what they expected. And when they went on their tour to drum up recruits they are hit with protestors wanting their elimination as a power team. They barely make it off planet when they are whisked away to Skandia Seven , where Alex’s parents live only to get enmeshed in the politics there that are seeking to undermine the systems. The action never stops and Alex and his team are constantly in the middle of it whether they desire it or not. And now at this end of this book the ultimate disgrace.  How will they get through this? I have already begun the next in the five book series **SKANDIA SEVEN**since I can’t wait to find out.
38. **A BREATHING AFTER GOD: OR A CHRISTIANS DESIRE FOR GOD’S PRESENCE,**by Richard Sibbes, (Monergism 2019). This treatise captures for the Christian a clear understanding of what David felt and what God was saying through him for the future generations concerning the text from **Psalm 27:4*, “One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in His temple.”***He is said to have used the word “Breathing” in the title because it meant then *“a passionate longing for or a desperate cry to the Lord”.*And then he goes on to describe how it is that this can be true and should be true for all Christians. He breaks this passage down into three main points…the desire itself, the house of the LORD and the beauty/majesty/glory of Lord. He says, *“Now, in the words of the text that I have read, there is contained the holy prophet's care and desire, set down first in general,****'One thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek after.'****And then a specification of that desire he specifies. What is that one thing he desired? That****'I may dwell in the house of the Lord,'****with the circumstance of time,****'all the days of my life.'****Now, after the desire in general, set out here by the object in general, the transcendent object,****'One thing have I desired of the Lord,'****and likewise by the frequency and fervency of the desire,****'I will seek after it still.'****I have desired it, and I will not cease. So my desire, it shall not be a flash soon kindled, and soon put out. No; but****'one thing have I desired of the Lord, and that I will seek still.'****I will not be quiet till my desire be accomplished…One thing have I desired, and that will I seek after,' not by prayer only, but in the use of all means; as, indeed, he was never quiet till he was settled again in Sion, nor then neither till he had gotten materials for the temple, and a place for God's honour 'to dwell in,' Deut. 12:11. If desires be not the desires of the sluggard, there will be endeavour; as we see in the desire of David here, 'One thing have I desired, and that will I seek.' He used all means to enjoy communion with God sweetly.”*He asks many questions of the reader, because he wishes his readers to think through some of the questions that he has had brought to him like, *“But to come nearer, to make an use of trial, how shall we know whether we have benefit by, and whether we be truly in love with, the beauty of God's house or no, because many come hither? As in Noah's ark there were beasts that were clean and unclean, so there are many that come to the visible congregations; they are in the church****(as excrements are in the body),****but they are not of it.”* Or, *“If we find that we have little comfort and strength by the word of God, that we have not seen the beauty of it, what shall we do, what course shall we take?  Wait still. Wait still at the pool for the angel's stirring, John 5:4; for God at length will discover his power by his Spirit; he will discover his goodness, if not at the first, yet at length. Therefore let us use all sanctified means. And know this for a rule, that God's Spirit is an excellent worker. He will only work by his own instruments.”*He is clear and concise so that his readers don’t miss the crucial points.
39. **THE EVERLASTING REST OF THE SAINTS IN HEAVEN**, by William Bates, an English Presbyterian 1625-1699. This book was 1st printed after his death in the year 1701.  (digitally by Monergism 2020).Given the reality of death that surrounded the people of  their day we see a lot of books about the everlasting rest of believers in heaven…not expecting much “rest” this side of it. One of my favorite books on this subject if Richard Baxter’s **THE SAINT’S EVERLASTING REST**, who wrote himself from extreme and long-suffering illness…which seemed in most cases to be anxiety related depression… possibly a type of a bi-polar condition. He bases this whole book which like so many other Puritans in chocked full of scripture passages, on **Heb. 4:9- *“There remainth therefore a rest to the people of God.”***From this premise he goes on to exhaustively cover every aspect of this subject from describing heaven as our real rest…our real home along witht eh excellency of this rest that God has planned for His own whom he has called before the foundations of the earth. *“It is said of heaven, it is the saints' rest; they have a sweet and calm repose in the enjoyment of God. There a believer can say, ‘return to thy rest, O my soul.’ But in hell they rest neither night nor day, but they are under continual tormenting reflections on their own wickedness and the extremity of God's wrath. They have no interval nor space of ease. They are always upon the rack; torn and miserable in their own sense for ever. The scriptures set forth the possitive torments of hell thus; and all this shall be forever; the door is sealed upon them and their state is unchangeable, and they are continually restless, not only under the impressions of their present torment, but by the foresight that this shall never have an end. SINCE there is a divine and blessed rest hereafter for the saints of God, it should fortify us against all those afflictions and calamities that befal us in this present world; First, against all those afflictions that befal us as chastisements from God, those which are designed for preparing us for this blessed rest, and these are most usual. And Secondly, those afflictions which we suffer for righteousness sake.”*Given the fallen nature of this life and how things …all things are imprinted with sin, I was very encouraged by this quote as well, *“Repentance should accompany the soul to the gates of heaven, but it shall never enter there.”*He reminds us that this is an eternal rest…not a cessation of all activity as sleep but an on-going rest in the service of the LORD. This book is extremely helpful for us to focus on day to day on the gift of rest that comes only through belief in Christ Jesus our Lord.
40. **SKANDIA SEVEN** **(ACE EVANS SERIES BOOK 4),**by Toby Neighbors (2020). Things are not looking good for Ace as he and his team have seen captured and charged with terrorist acts against the Skandia System when they were just there to protect the interests on their company and benefactor… Ahzco Corporation. The media has been spinning a particular tale that has the human peoples across the galaxy split between the para-militaries like the CDF, and the mega –corporations they all serve. The message is one of insurrection but it is the para-militaries that are being branded as the “bad guys” and are squarely in the crosshairs of someone rich and powerful. We see once again one of the problems with people…absolutely power corrupts absolutely because enough is never enough for those who have so much. From the lowliest coward of a Captain to a med-tech there is money that can be made and that is what the plan is…involving Ace and his “special abilities”.  Lynn Fawk is cruising around the galaxy with her cronies spinning this web of deceit that is unraveling every institution and every company so that she can rule the galaxy. I know another extremely bad guy scenario but the story is tld so well you don’t want to put it down even if you think you know the outcome. Will our hero get out of the clutches of this megalomaniac who seeks the destruction of every known institution so she can rebuild the galaxy in her image? Will Cronus team survive the separation of Alex from them?  And what about the relationship between Alex and Nyx? And then there is Loman Haley …is he really on the up and up or is he yet another power hungry player seeking his own place in history? We will know the answer to these and more as I finish the series with book 5, **MECURIAL.**
41. **MECURIAL (ACE EVANS SERIES BOOK 5),**by Toby Neighbors (2020). A great conclusion to a great series. Mercurial certainly fits this book and the character of Ace Evans to a tee. Mercurial describes someone whose mood or behavior is changeable and unpredictable or…someone who is clever, lively and quick, which as we have seen over the course of this 5 book series fully defines Alex “Ace” Evans. In this last installment we find our hero on a grat superliner spaceship having been kidnapped and pushed into service for the one and only Lynn Faulk.  Alex’s friend rush to save him and at just the right time they are reunited but the villain Faulk slicks away with her General puppet in tow to live another day. Once back on the old CDF shp they head to where the action is to try and stop the massacre Faulk had engineered to weaken all the fighting forces of the other mega-corporations.  Upon arriving it becomes clear that VP Haley had been left high and dry and becomes of the tension in the system their ship gets damaged beyond repair until parts can be acquired. But that means they are sitting ducks with the other para-militaries seeing them as the enemy…so Alex…who iis prone to changes in behavior, is a little bit unpredictable…and very clever and quick takes things into his own hands as His power become more and more advanced destroying 12 or 12 enemy flotilla’s single handed.  The writing in this is so captivating I stayed up longer than I should have to get through the fight.  Well, things aren’t always as they seem…and while Alex is gifted and talented he can’t get a break. Faulk shows up again. As the old adage says, “the future of the galaxy hangs in balance” all based on what Alex does next. Everything comes down to the decision of a single man and his power. Has he gone mad? Will the evil aspiring empress get her due? Will Alex and Nyx get their happy ever after? All of this and more is answered in this last amazing book. Again like most of Toby’s book they are G to PG with only occasionally language out of that realm. But nothing else.
42. **THE BLOOD OF CHRIST,**by Horatius Bonar.  This is a great book with a look to the atoning work of Jesus and how each Christian needs to know the power of the blood to understand fully the extent of our salvation.  He answers the question…what did Jesus actually accomplish on the cross? And his simple answer that he gleans from the scriptures: The perfect pardon for all those who believe in Him. This treatise is based on I Peter 1:19,*“…the precious blood of Christ, like that of ua lamb vwithout blemish or spot.”*Bonar exposits for us the power and the value of the blood of Christ. Bonar begins with the mindset of the Jews who demanded that Pilate crucify Christ to show how the same attitude exists in all of us who are separated from Jesus through unbelief or immature belief. *“The arrow went deep and rankled sore in the wound. The anger of the priests arose. They denied the charge. They treated it as a slander upon their good name, and reviled the apostles as calumniators. The charge of blood they resented and repelled. But the fear, the anger, the remorse which awoke within them, betrayed the consciousness of guilt in a way which could not be mistaken. If they were not the actual murderers, they were at least accomplices in the deed of murder; and as such they were self-convicted and self-condemned. True children of Cain! Both in their crime, and in their evasive denial of it! This does seem strange. For, but a short time before, they had come forward voluntarily to take upon them the guilt and the consequences of this bloodshedding. How eagerly they shouted, “His blood be upon us and on our children!” Then they made light of this blood. They valued it at thirty pieces of silver. They rushed forward to shed it, as if they could not rest till they had poured it out.”* He then tells us why God the Father is holding the world guilty and its need for redemption. And then he mines deeper into the inestimable value of Christ’s blood itself. His way of communicating this truth is clear. *“This blood of the cross is that by which we are brought nigh to God (Eph 2:13); and to this blessed nearness we are invited. This blood of the cross is that by which “we have redemption” (Eph 1:7; Col 1:14), even the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace; and this redemption, this forgiveness, is freely set before us. It is by this blood that we have liberty of entrance into the holiest (Heb 10:19); and God’s voice to each sinner is to “enter in.” It is by this blood that we are cleansed and washed (1Jo 1:7; Rev 1:5) and this fountain is free, free as any of earth’s flowing streams, free as the mighty ocean itself, in which all may wash and be clean. Through it he is set apart for God. By it he has been bought, and by it he has been separated from a present evil world.”*It is this self-same blood that we must contemplate today to keep us on a footing of repentance and blessing.
43. **RIFLEMAN: (CONSCRIPT Book 2),**by Scott Bartlett (2024). After surviving a sneak attack to Cycler 3, Po and all his “buddies” find themselves on the moon to complete their training as “boots”. But that is not the only reason. They are there searching for whomever trained and funded the ones who attacked them.  There truly is no easy day for Po or anyone around him. The Emplor continues to show up ay opportune and inopportune times helping Po and the reader to remember that PO has a higher calling a bigger task than the one he is currently doing though Po can’t remember a time of being more capable and pleased with himself. Things have gotten worse at home on Psyche as older brother has been arrested and placed in to simjail leaving the rest of the family unsupported and on top on that his sister has struck up a relationship with the one man Po hates above all other humans…his father. While the intrigue and fighting is good on the moon this is quickly resolved stopping a horrible terrorist attack to Earth and they move on to bigger fish…attacking the Planet of Nibiru, the bane of their existence at this point; the point of where all the fighting needs to be brought to a head.  It is here on Nibiru that these Marines will grow from “boots” to men…if they survive this particular push. The fighting in intense and the campaign is just getting started. The satellites have all been destroyed losing for them their air superiority…so what awaits these heroes?  I am looking forward to the 3rd book LANCE, in the series, when it comes out in October…oh, too long to wait.  But alas…!
44. **A TREATISE ON THE LAW AND THE GOSPEL,** by John Colquhoun (1748-1827, minister in the Church of Scotland for 46 years originally published 1819, hard copy and digitally in 2023 by Reformation Heritage Books).  This copy has been modernized for today’s audience but is still an academic text that should be read by all seeking to understand the Law and the Gospel. Joel Beeke and Paul Smalley bring this book back to the church and have done an wonderful grace for the church. This is an author who had much influence in his day but one very few would recognize today. Another one of his master works is entitled **EVANGELICAL REPENTANCE** (reviewed in another year). Although Colquhoun states in the introduction that he is prone to repeat himself, I found him doing so very purposefully. This serves the reader in that Colquhoun expresses the same thought in a variety of ways before a chapter is over. This displays Colquhoun's mastery of the topic and serves to make one consider this book as a masterpiece on the law and gospel. He simply defines the law this way, *““The natural law of God, or the law of nature, is that necessary and unchangeable rule of duty which is founded in the infinitely holy and righteous nature of God, to obey which all men, as the reasonable creatures of God, are and cannot but be indispensably bound.”*The gospel is defined broadly by Colquhoun as the whole of divine truth, which consists of both law and gospel and is thus gospel in a full sense. Yet, Colquhoun is quick to provide the more narrow definition of the gospel as *‘good news, glad tidings, or a joyful message.’* Strictly speaking, the gospel in its narrow definition is, as Dr. J. Gresham Machen put it so well, *‘a piece of good news.’* Colquhoun then takes pains to show that the gospel is not just *‘repent and believe,’* which is rather the law in subservience to the gospel. Rather, the gospel is comprised of external promises. The gospel then commands nothing, says Colquhoun, *‘but it declares to us what God in Christ as a God of grace has done, and what He promises to do for us and in us and by us."* He puts thing quite simply, *“The law as a rule of life to believers, especially in this view of it, is very different from the law as a covenant of works. The precept of the law as a covenant is ‘Do and live,’ but the command of the law as a rule is ‘Live and do’; the law of works says, ‘Do or you shall be condemned to die,’ but the law in the hand of Christ says, ‘You are delivered from condemnation; therefore do.’ The command of the former is ‘Do perfectly that you may have a right to eternal life,’ but that of the latter is, ‘You already have begun possession of eternal life, as well as the promise of the complete possession of it, therefore do in such a manner as to advance daily toward perfection.’ By the former, a man is commanded to do in his own strength, but by the latter he is required to do in the strength that is in Christ Jesus. The Lord Jesus says to every believer,****‘My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness’ (2 Cor. 12:9)****; therefore, do.”*An excellent read one to which the Christian would do well in slowly making their way through.
45. **PARENTING WITH HOPE: Raising Teens for Christ in a Secular Age,**by Melissa Kruger (2024).  This book could be an amazing help for parents with teens…but it can also be a tremendous help to parents with young children trying to get their kids to a great place to become teenagers. She writes, *“Centuries ago, Puritan pastor John James encouraged, “Let your warmest affection, your greatest cheerfulness, your most engaging smiles, be put on when you teach Scriptural truths to your children.” 2 He understood that how we teach our children matters in their receptivity toward what we are teaching them. Modern research agrees. According to a recent study, parents with warm and nurturing relationships were more likely to pass on their faith and religious practices to their children.* *Diligence in our conversations with them doesn’t mean we are the ones doing all the talking. It means that we are always thinking about ways to allow the Word to saturate our conversations and the advice we offer.”*She speaks of consistency not just in their training but how important it is that our children see our consistency as they grow to reinforce that our faith is real and this is what faith looks like…long before they become teenagers. She says, *“Here’s the reality: Our kids need us to be clinging to Jesus, looking to him for grace, setting aside our idols, fighting our sin, and walking daily with God. They need to see that our words match our lives. They need to witness a real faith lived before them, one that accepts responsibility for mistakes and apologizes when necessary.”*The first part of the book deals with the early years and what is important to the family as it grows. Then parts 2 and 3 deal specifically with the needs during the teenage years and helping the parent and the teen to not just cope with the struggles in the world but actually gives helpful advice as to how the family can excel through this time. At the end you can find a study guide that can help shore up our weaknesses (parent and child) an to enable us as a family to look more and more to Jesus rather than our circumstances to overcome and flourish.
46. **FORWARD PACT(Galaxy Bridge book 3),**by Danial Gibbs and Steve Rzasa (2024). Wow, what a ride this book is. The Leaguer Ambassador is being controlled by the Kin the new offspring of the progenitors that the Lion of Judah had dealt to extinction, or so they thought. This infiltration is wreaking havoc on the station without anyone realizing the instigator. In the meantime a new species ahs emerged on the radar as the CDF is out looking for the Kin. They encounter the Qhix-na, a rag tag group of dissenters from the larger group that fought alongside of the ARCH against the Kin…the Qhix-Uh. Well, the Qhix-na want to have political asylum within the ARCH SATO agreement treaty. After a failed attempt on Ambassador McCreedy’s life, while she is in the medical facility, Col. Larra is called upon to negotiate the new treaty. But as an Ambassador for the CDF his abilities will be pushed to the ‘nth degree before any pact is signed. The verbal battles rage on especially when the Qhix-Un show up and want their people back.  And then the Kin show up at the exact location of the negotiation and a real battle begins and at the same time the Kin show up at the ARCH.  Fighting 2 fronts with limited assets… Why does the CDF always begin a conflict with the odds stacked against them? Well, as usual, God is on their side which bolsters everyone’s resolve to do the right thing…but will their faith even be enough this time. Will God intervene as He has in the past? What about the Kin on the station will they find them all? Stayed tuned for the next installment **FORWARD CRISIS** due out in June.
47. **GRAVITY STORM (Order of the Scion book 3),**by Toby Neighbors (2024). As much as I like Toby as an author and as much as I have found his other series’ captivating and fun…this one is getting to me. The whole Jedi meets the Dark Side theme has been done and done better. The Order of Scion (the Jedi in this story series), as I have said before are the good guys sent ( in this case by the Creator- God) to restore “order’ to the universe surrounding many of biblical virtues of appreciation of all image-bearers of God (even though many of them are quite fantastic and do not even resemble humans)…to ensure freedom for all to live without fear of other cultures seeking to oppress or annihilate them…while the Fray (Dark Side) hate the Order and everything it stands for since the Fray stand with the same power but as evil towards all other life forms set on not conversion but coercion by any way possible…even death for not bowing to them. The characters, Lt. Murphy who has been drafted among the Order is a strong character...very likeable but predictable.  And his old squad Leo Squad has been kidnapped by the Fray and they are learning the Power as well to be used against the order and other worlds. All of this is predictable…that the Fray would imitate the actions of the Order for evil gains…the Fray would seek the destruction of the order…killing many (younglings included) at a sacred training ground and at a sacred assembly to figure out what to do with the Fray attack.  (I hope this is sounding familiar to you.) If the characters weren’t so compelling I probably would be seeking something else by now but…alas I will await the next book…(no announcement yet.)…to see if I continue with the series or not.
48. **THE ARMCHAIR THEOLOGIANS GUIDE TO THE WESTMINSTER CONFESSION OF FAITH,**by Timothy J. Mulder  (copywriter 2024). **NEW BOOK ALERT THAT EVERY REFORMED BELIEVER NEEDS TO PURCHASE AND READ AND THEN TEACH TO THEIR CHILDREN!**I cannot stress this enough.  This book comes as a result of a class he taught on the WCF at African Bible University in Kampala, Uganda. This is perhaps the best written and most helpful tool on the WCF written in my lifetime. I always referred to Sproul’s, **Truth’s We Confess**and G.I. Williamson’s, **The Westminster Confession of Faith for Study Classes.** I have always thought of these two along with Alexander’s Confession to be the go-to books…but this one is the one I will keep on my shelf and maybe give away the rest. He gives us a full but short explanation of the history of the time and the history of the Confession itself, which is extremely good…not many books do that anymore. History…like context…is important. His explanation of WHY creeds and confession is fairly simple and clear …nothing new here unless you are new to these. But it is the genius of how he approaches the chapters and sections of the Confession even giving “HERESY ALERTS” along the way… (and they aren’t all about the RC Church).  There is no fear here in this writing of people being offended, which is good as well. There are many quotable sections and many great quotes from people throughout the ages but I have to say my favorite is this one from George Hegel just before the chapter entitled History of the Confession, *“What experience and history teach is that nations and governments have never learned anything from history or acted upon any lessons they might have drawn from it.”*When thinking of the Confession of Faith I am of the persuasion that it must be taught from the beginning of our children’s life to our deaths so that we can stay grounded and continue to exhibit a life that glorifies the Lord.  The Westminster Confession of Faith is the one document made by man that I seek to know and understand better with each passing year. This book will aid in our growth and may inspire others to want to study it as well. This will be standard reading for all future officers training classes.
49. **A FIELD GUIDE TO GENDER AND SEXUALITY ,**from Ligonier Editorial, (2024). This “field guide” goes along with the other “field guide” on **False Teachings** (2020). This is a question answer format to aid the reader in being able to think through the most common questions concerning the current discussions on sex, gender and identity.  While it focuses mainly on the current discussion around LGBTQ+ stuff, it also speaks to age old questions about attending non-Christian marriages and what to do concerning non-biblical re-marriage and cohabitation. All along the emphasis is on people of all types being made in the image of God asserting God’s Word to define His created design. This small booklet (120 pages) doesn’t waver in the least on God’s Word but does speak to how we are to approach these folks like all sinners speaking the truth in love. On the back it tries to make the case that we live in an ever-changing time where the Bible’s teaching is being rejected as if this is new. I think back to the Fall...or to the Israelites wandering in the desert or all that led up to the exile to say that if it is changing it is staying the same in its sinfulness. The Judges capture our times extremely well, as well. But all in all Ligonier has given the Church a great tool to help navigate these times so that we can be assured of God’s position and then be able to articulate that to those God puts in our path.
50. **THE PASTOR AS LEADER: Principles and Practices for Connecting Preaching and Leadership,**John Currie (2024). Because of the grind that is often called pastoral ministry this book seeks to support and encourage those who may be struggling with their identity, their purpose, their focus, and zeal. Grind because many pastors seem torn beween preaching and leading. He does this by from the beginning establishing a clear definition of pastoral leadership that he will use throughout the book. He says, *“This is why we have begun by defining pastoral leadership as ‘the process where, for the glory of God, a man of God, appointed by the Son of God and empowered by the Spirit of God, proclaims the word of God so that the people of God are equipped to move forward into the purposes of God together.’”*And that purpose?*“To be clear, the kingdom mission of the church, which a man of God has been set apart and sent to lead, is this: to extend the rule of God for God’s glory, by proclaiming Christ in his death and resurrection for sinners from all of Scripture, so that multitudes of disciples are made from all nations, through repentance and faith, who submit all of their lives to the rule of Christ and his commands****(Matt. 28: 18–20; Luke 24: 46–48).****It is nothing less than extending the redeeming righteous rule of God, through Christ the King, to the hearts and lives of multitudes, to the end of the earth until the end of the age.* *R. B. Kuiper described the Great Commission, in light of Christ’s rule over the whole universe, as commanding all men to “recognize him as king and observe whatsoever things he has commanded.”*He is not encouraging pastors *“to be like”*but to take our role and calling seriously. Trying to be like anyone else leads to burnout and despair. We are to be leaders based on his definition who prayer, lead, communicate a biblical vision with a biblical strategy and this is to be done from the pulpit as the pastor preaches through the Scriptures expositorily.  And since we are preaching God’s message we will not lose heart as Paul says when we seek to be a servant. *“But what distinguished the herald was that he was always under and represented the authority of his sender and that he announced his message with a loud clear voice. In the biblical period the term used for this kind of servant was kēryx. This is significant for our topic because, even though the noun kēryx is used sparingly in the New Testament, Paul chooses it in 1Timothy 2: 7 and 2 Timothy 1: 11 to describe his appointment as a preacher. He then chooses the verb (kēryssō), which the New Testament uses much more frequently, in 2 Timothy 4: 2 when he charges Timothy to preach the word. In the New Testament the preacher is a herald (kēryx), and to preach (kēryssō) is to herald God’s word. The preacher serves as an ambassador appointed to announce the word of his Master clearly and with his authority. Pastors, as preachers, are Christ’s sent servants who proclaim his will with his authority and summon others to respond to it.”* It is hard to burnout when we recognize who we are and who we have been called to represent before God’s people. This book is thoroughly Reformed but would be helpful to those churches that are congregational as well to help the pastor focus on his main purpose which is NOT heading up all the programs and making sure the finances are secure…but rather to focus on what the Bible declares we are to be focused on… ***“But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.”*(Acts 6:4)**He makes the point that we need to be in prayer first then the ministry of the Word. After being the example of prayer then expositional preaching is the main vehicle to communicate vision and purpose to the people of God so they can be equipped to move forward into the purposes of God together. This is a long review but this is such a tremendous book that ought to be read by pastors and elders in whatever stage of ministry they are in.
51. **GROWNG IN CHRIST, by**J.I. Packer (1994).  This is sort of a companion book to **KNOWING GOD.**This was written to provide a resource book for study groups seeking to get a handle on The Apostle’s Creed, the doctrines of Baptism and Conversion. Learning how to pray the Lord’s Prayer and lastly, considering our blueprint for life in the 10 Commandments*. “Because Scripture calls God’s Ten Commandments “law” we assume they are like the law of the land, a formal code of dos and don’ts, restricting personal freedom for the sake of public order. But the comparison is wrong. Torah (Hebrew for “law”) means the sort of instruction a good parent gives his child. Proverbs 1: 8 and 6: 20 actually use “torah” for parental teaching.”* He makes it clear throughout that his desire to be helpful in Christians growing spiritually by learning and living out the will of God in Christ. In his introduction he begins with an interesting couple of paragraphs…read it slowly…*“Christianity is not instinctive to anyone, nor is it picked up casually without effort. It is a faith that has to be learned (once granted), and therefore taught, and so some sort of systematic instruction (catechumenate) is an essential part of a church’s life. Catechism simply comes from a Greek word meaning “make to hear” and so “instruct.” From this word comes the English words of catechism (the form of instruction), catechumen (the person under instruction), catechumenate (the organized set-up for giving instruction), and catechize (a verb which originally meant “instruct,” though today it refers especially to a question-and-answer method of teaching).”* Packer’s style in this book makes for easy study… and the questions at the end do in fact call us to reflect and meditate on what he has said so that it can be integrated into our lives thus enabling us to use it for the glory of Christ. They are short chapters but they are concise summing up the necessary information for the serious learner and pushing them to look further. So this book is for new believers trying to get a handle on what they believe and how to live that out. I love the simple but picturesque way he speaks of the sacraments: *“When you look at the two gospel sacraments (or ordinances, as some prefer to say) which Jesus left us, you realize that they are just slices of ordinary home life—a meal, with a wash preceding. Jesus’ choice of these two everyday events to be signs of saving grace shows us that as without washing and eating our physical health suffers, so without their evangelical counterparts spiritual health is not found.”* But this book is also for “older” believers reminding us of our purpose, our identity and the work that still lies ahead of us. Packer was the quintessential teacher.  THE Church was blessed to have him to be sure. They have recently printed this in a very attractive hardback but the content inside hasn’t changed. I say this to recommend that everyone would get this book and put it alongside **Knowing God** and refer to them often.
52. **COVENANTAL THEONOMY: A Response to T. David Gordon and Klinean Covenantalism,**by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. THD (2005). This work does exactly what the author set out to do and that was to refute a refutation of Greg Bahnsen position on theonomy and to punch holes in Klinean Covenantalism. At the time discussion was up close and personal for many within the PCA and the wider Reformed community. Gentry makes it clear that if Gordon has ever read Bahnsen he certainly doesn’t show it in his refutation. But this book is 20 years old and I would doubt that much of what is said in this book much matters to the greater church. Now, I am a fan of Kenneth Gentry, Jr. but having said that it is interesting to me that this refutation of a work that most don’t read anymore continues to be printed. The church has moved on because the Church doesn’t actually disagree with Bahnsen Reformed/ covenantal understanding of the Law…one wonders if they ever did really.  The Church reacted to the legalism that came from many of his follower’s years later. His positon on theonomy is a typical Reformed position hence, I suppose, the reason for the title **Covenantal Theonomy.**After reading this book I was taken back to the struggles we had within our own presbytery during this time with legalist/patriarchal theonomists who were seeking to resurrect the Law to bind the hands and hearts of Christians. The Law of God does not bind us as the Word of God …it sets us, who believe, free from the curse to live as God requires under God’s oversight and love within the boundaries He established for our good and His glory. Mu only critique of this book is that the author doesn’t define covenantal theonomy at the beginning giving the readers a baseline to compare with.  It’s in there…like Prego…but you have to mine it out among all the arguments against the positions of those for which the paper …now a book was originally written for. Books like this have their place in time and they can give vital historical information but does it really aid the argument today…with so many “new” players…I think not.
53. **THE FOREVER SHIP (Starship Omega Book 1)** by Scott Bartlett and Joshua James (2024). Scott is one of my favorite military sci-fi authors and his co-authoring with Joshua James makes for a good story and good content and great characters. Humanity is oppressed by the Ornu a serpentine race whose only reason to exist to conquer races making them vassals to serve them in their trek towards galaxy rule…and they have done a pretty good job of that so far. With their other vassals they are extremely strong and they strike without notice and then install “kill switches” in their vassals to keep them in line. Well, humans, being human… they can go along to get along only so long. Now there has been one family that has been a thorn in the side of the Ornu for years…the Hendersons. They have killed and imprisoned the men to keep the family in line sending the lone son Bill Henderson to re-education camps rather than waste his potential…and he has been the best Captain they have in the Armada to date. But bill and some on his grew are only biding their time looking for an opportunity.  Has that opportunity arrived in the form of Omega…a Primeval ship lost to time recently discovered. Could this ship be the catalyst to throw off the oppressors or is there another purpose for it and the fact that it has shown up now? What will it cost Henderson and his crew to utilize Omega appropriately? All of that and more will be disclosed in **ETERNITY’S BATTLESHIP** that doesn’t come out until next April.
54. **RESURGENCE (First Colony book 16) ,**by Ken Lozito (2024).  Thiis is yet another of my favorite series that Ken keeps producing from time to time. As the New Earther expand they keep looking for the Vemus that almost exterminated their race. Is this a good idea?  That is the question before them.  On one hand, if they find the origin of the Vemus they could strike a blow that the Vemus could not recover from. One the other hand, can they afford to expend the resources and time in the search when humanity needs to re-populate? All the regular crew is back some with major changes others not so much. The story starts off with normal routines. Relationships are growing …Cynergy and Ethan are talking about a family… Lauren IS pregnant … and Lenora is wanting more children… but there I one last simple mission before going home… famous last words*…“Major, we’ve got a situation here. Contact with a Vemus contagion is highly likely. We need to follow alpha-quarantine protocols,’ Connor said.”*After a “simple” survey team mission gets attacked by an alien and new form of Vemus everything changes. Ethan and Cynergy are swept along with fighting the Alpha or be lost forever. Now they must set their sights on finding the right way to deal with the infected and at the same time rescue the other teams captured by the Alpha Vemus before they turn completely away. The risk of space travel and exploration…true! But along the way Gen. Gates meets a curious alien who is one the Phantoms that they are convinced has been helping them along the way to fight the Vemus and the General finds himself at a crossroads on what to do going forward. Not sure when the next one will come out, but these are like old friends you simply pick up where you left off no matter how much time transpires in between.
55. **WEEKDAY RELIGION: How to live a Beautiful Christian Life,**by J. R. Miller (originally published 1880 and republished digitally by Monergism 2020). Again, as with all his works this is an extremely profitable book even after all this time. His writing style is not as contemporary as many would want but he is easy to read and extremely thoughtful in seeking to fetter out every possible argument and/or abjection for his positions without boring his readers, in the least. He states the purpose for this “little book” (over 300 pages!) this way, *“It may be that this little book will be accepted of the Master and sent by him on a mission of helpfulness to some struggling lives. It is now laid humbly at his feet with this simple hope. Its aim is to help young Christians especially, to take the religion of Christ out of closet and sanctuary and creed—and get it into their daily lives of toil, temptation and care! Perhaps none of us get the best that we might get from our relation to Christ. Perhaps none of us, if any, live as well as we believe. The moralities that we know—we do not follow. The helps that are put into our hands—we do not use when we are climbing the hard, steep paths, or staggering under the burdens of life. The comforts that religion gives—do not comfort us in sorrow.”*In this medium sized book he covers many topics beginning with the question of What is our life? This sets the stage for where he goes throughout the rest of the book for if we can’t answer this then there is no way to have a beautiful Christian life. He talks about how we are to use or Bibles, our relationships, specifically the marriage alter and afterwards. He speaks of our religion in the home, humility, hospitality, giving encouragement, manly men, amusements, old age and dying, and this isn’t even everything he covers. Each chapter is well thought out and executed and helpful in our meditations in God’s Word to the end in which he seeks for us. Look at what we have to look forward to which is the basis for our beautiful Christian life, *“It is in the light of such facts as these—that we must regard the life that is given to each of us. It is indeed a sacred burden! It is no light and easy thing so to live—as to fulfill the end for which we were made and redeemed. Life is no mere child's play! Every moment of it is intensely important, and charged with eternal responsibility. It is when we look at life in this way—that we see our need of Christ. Apart from him—there can be only failure and ruin. But if we give ourselves to him, he takes up our poor perishing fragment of being, cleanses it, puts his own life into it—and nurtures it for a glorious immortality! We have a saying that, ‘What cannot be cured—must be endured.’  But the very phrasing tells of an unyielding heart!”*I have yet to read one of Miller’s books that I have not recommended to someone in particular this one was no different. Great stuff for even the young in heart…like me.