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FROM THE EDITORS

In this second issue of the *Puritan Reformed Journal*, we begin with David Murray's study of the extremely important subject of how the Old Testament prophets viewed their ministry: it pointed forward to Christ. This contribution is a timely reminder that Scripture is to be viewed through a Christocentric lens: ultimately all of it bears testimony to Him. A second hermeneutical theme is tackled by Gerald Bilkes as he presents a convincing case for the heart-reading of Holy Scripture. While the last two-hundred years of biblical studies have advanced enormously our understanding of much of the Bible, there is no doubt that much has been lost from earlier days when the Scriptures were read with an experiential dimension. Bilkes's article is a welcome reminder of what we have lost—and how we can recover this way of reading God's Word. Specific studies of Bible passages round out the biblical studies section of this issue: Brian Najapfour, a recent graduate of Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary, looks at the theme of suffering in First Peter, which he rightly identifies as pervasive throughout that epistle; and Michael Haykin examines the subject of love for the brethren in 1 John.

Reformed reflection on medieval theologians is a rarity. The first of a number of articles on historical theology in this issue is Jonathon Beeke's welcome study of the doctrine of the atonement in Abelard and Bernard—the latter one of the few medieval theologians favored by Calvinist divines. Given that this year is the quincentenary of the birth of John Calvin, it is good to have a piece on his perspective of God's promises by Pieter DeVries (there are three other important articles on Calvin in this issue as well). Two studies of Puritanism follow. In a substantial study, Joel Heflin reminds us of the oft-forgotten fact that the Puritans were major respondents to the errors of the Socinians, errors that had such a tragic impact in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Then William Van Doodewaard examines the historical background and origins of an important Puritan treatise, Edward Fisher's *The Marrow of Modern Divinity*, as well as something

of its massive impact on Scottish Calvinism in the eighteenth century. A comparative study of G.H. Kersten, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck by Pieter Rouwendal rounds out the second section of this current issue.

The third section of this issue contains three papers focused on experiential piety: “Calvin as an Experiential Preacher” (Joel Beeke), William Perkins on the subject of what it means to be blessed by God (Stephen Yuille), and an examination of the foundations of Jonathan Edwards’s early thoughts about what constitutes true religious experience (Karin Stetina). The subject of pastoral and missionary thought, the next section of this issue, is well represented by two essays on Calvin—the roots of the liturgy he drew up for the church in Geneva (Daniel Hyde) and his missionary passion (Derek Thomas)—and an overview of why God designed the Sabbath for corporate worship (Ryan McGraw).

One of the goals of this journal is to demonstrate that Reformed thought can provide the best of biblical answers for contemporary issues. Ray Pennings provides a vital reflection on the recent upsurge of interest about Calvinism among young North Americans (which he terms Neo-Puritanism) and how this can be related to the older Neo-Calvinist movement. And David Bissett presents a solid critique of Halloween, an utterly non-Christian celebration that is becoming increasingly sinister. A helpful interview with Joel Beeke about Reformed churches and theological education rounds out this final major section of the issue. As usual there are a number of book reviews, which we hope to increase substantially in future issues, as well as a number of longer review articles of important books.

Our hope is that the Lord of the church will bless this issue to the edification of all who read it and peruse it, and that it will be a means to the glorification of our great God and Savior, the Lord Jesus.