

comfortably reconciled, and some places where it is not *easily* reconciled, Phillips argues that where the Jerusalem Council fits into Galatians is a central issue in understanding the relationship between Paul and Acts, and then in understanding the purpose of Acts. From this, he argues that Acts is designed to rehabilitate Paul, particularly in the eastern Mediterranean.

Phillips acknowledges that not everyone will agree with his conclusions, but this book is stimulating throughout, and provides a thorough investigation of the material, from an interesting perspective. It would be a profitable read for any serious student of Paul.

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WHAT MATTERS IN REFORMING THE CHURCH? Puritan Grievances under Elizabeth I

Andrew Cinnamond

London: Latimer Trust, 2011 61pp £4pb ISBN: 9781906327033

What Matters in Reforming the Church? is the publication of the 2011 St Antholin's Lecture. Its primary objective is to provide an account of the Admonition controversy in the 1570s, which was highly significant in the shaping of early puritanism. The puritan and conformist cases were executed by Thomas Cartwright and John Whitgift respectively and this book outlines the interchange between them. It also highlights the key issues at stake including the authority of Scripture and tradition, the place of the Old Testament and Mosaic Law as well as many aspects of Church order.

At first impression then, this book may appear to be of interest merely to those with a penchant for sixteenth century history and theology, however this would be a serious misjudgement. As this is an interaction between two visions of reformed protestant theology, it touches on numerous issues that are still debated today. As you enter into the sixteenth century debate you are challenged to think carefully about exegetical issues and the resulting doctrinal consequences. The perennial issues of Church order are argued from both the Presbyterian and Episcopalian sides which makes for very interesting reading. As well as this, the formative seeds are displayed of a movement which, in time, would have a radical impact, not only on British ecclesiology, but even more profoundly on that of the New World.

On the negative side, the presentation of this book as an argument between a puritan and a conformist on range of issues can feel a little like a written tennis match. Cartwright's serve is returned by Whitgift's

forehand followed by Cartwright's backhand etc...But on the whole, I found this a very enjoyable little book.

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BE STILL, MY SOUL: Embracing God's Purpose and Provision in Suffering

Nancy Guthrie

Nottingham: Inter-Varsity Press, 2010 176pp £7.99pb

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A few weeks ago, as I sat watching my two-year old asleep in his hospital bed, with a high fever and drips in his arm, I wondered whether there was a book out there that would do the hard job of pastoring me with biblical comfort. Not long afterwards I was handed this book and I want to praise God for it.

Nancy Guthrie has suffered the loss of two children and this book holds out the hope that she has found, 'the living person of Jesus Christ.' The book is a collection of twenty-five short excerpts from essays, sermons, and books by respected authors from Luther to Keller, Calvin to Carson.

The book lacks any meaningful structure, and this is its one true weakness. Nominally it is divided into three sections on God's Perspective, Purpose, and Provision in suffering, but the divisions between these three are rarely held to. What, in fact, Guthrie gives us is essentially 25 reflections on the Scriptures that follow no fixed pattern and, whilst the logician in me finds this frustrating, it is in fact no bad thing.

The great strength of this book is the way that every single chapter comes back to Jesus Christ. The impatient, struggling-to-believer asks 'why me, why now?' but Guthrie and her selected authors are not baited by the question. The great pastoral strength of the book is in moving our focus from the problems we face (or certainly will face) to the certain, constant, and comforting truths of the gospel.

This book is deeply challenging. We are asked time and again to rejoice in our sufferings, to find comfort in the sovereign purposes of God and to remember that God refines his people in the furnace of affliction for our own good.

At every point we are told that our sufferings will hurt, that it is OK to ask our deepest questions and to cry out for the suffering to be taken away. But we are also told that God will give us strength to endure, that God will be with us in the fight.

Here, then, is the great challenge of the book, summed up in the words of Augustine, 'so material a difference does it make, not what ills