

B. S. Poh. *The Fundamentals of Our Faith: Studies on the 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith*. Petaling Jaya: Good News Enterprise, 2017. 147 pp. Paperback.

Poh is a noted Reformed Baptist pastor in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, who has written extensively on confessional Baptist ecclesiology. To his body of work there is now added this practical study guide, based on the Second London Baptist Confession of Faith (1689), which the author justly describes as “a short course in systematic theology” (xv).

The book begins with an introduction in which Poh briefly outlines the importance of confessional Christianity and provides a historical sketch of the 1689 Confession, describing it as “the most mature of the Confessions of Faith that came out of the Reformation” (xx). There then follows thirty-two brief chapters corresponding to the chapters within the confession, from “The Holy Scriptures” (Chapter 1) to “The Last Judgement” (Chapter 32). Each of these chapters follows the same format with (1) a brief exposition of the subject, (2) a series of review questions, (3) an assignment / discussion segment, and (4) a memory verse.

This book provides an engaging overview of the basic concepts of Reformed theology from a Particular Baptist perspective. Along the way, the author also offers occasional comments on and negative evaluations of more recent issues that have arisen in evangelicalism. For example, he warns against Barthianism and the “New Perspective on Paul” (43) as well as the “higher life” view of sanctification (51), decries the antinomian redefinition of perseverance as “once saved, always saved” (67), rejects “New Covenant Theology” (73), and cautions against a decisionistic “four spiritual laws” approach to evangelism (79).

At several points Poh offers firm directions on practical matters. For example, in his discussion of the elements in the Lord’s Supper, Poh notes the bread should be one loaf but it need not be unleavened bread, while suggesting that the cup should be “grape juice” and never wine (120). Regarding frequency, he suggests the Lord’s Supper “should not be celebrated so frequently that its special significance is lost” but “frequently enough to be a means of grace” (120). He recommends once or twice per month. In the chapter on church government, Poh unsurprisingly advocates for the “independent” model of church government, with qualified elders “making the decisions,

then getting the consent of the members” (104). On other matters, however, he offers discussion but is less prescriptive. He notes, for example, that he personally holds to a more “Westminster” view on divorce and remarriage but acknowledges that some churches hold absolutely to “no divorce, no remarriage” (102). With regard to eschatology, Poh describes the various views on the millennium without prescribing any one in particular, though he clearly rejects dispensationalism (131). On secondary matters, Poh is comfortable with diversity within prescribed orthodox boundaries.

There are some aspects of the discussion that obviously relate more readily to Christians living in non-Western contexts. Thus, the warnings against taking vows to become a monk or giving a child to be “adopted” by “a medium or a spirit” (92–93), or the rejection of the Taoist concept of departed spirits roaming the earth, and the rejection of the Buddhist teaching of reincarnation (126), may not be obviously relevant to the Western reader. There is, however, something refreshing about this aspect of the book, since it reminds us that the gospel must be applied in all cultural settings, and not just in Western ones.

This study guide will serve as a practical discipleship tool for individual Christians and churches. The format lends itself both to private reading and to group study and discussion. The author expresses a desire that this manual “will find a wider use among Christians of all denominations, to strengthen faith and to disciple new converts, leading to a deeper appreciation of God’s word” (xvi).

—Jeffrey T. Riddle

Robert Davis Smart, Michael A. G. Haykin, and Ian Hugh Clary, eds. *Pentecostal Outpourings: Revival and the Reformed Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2016. 280 pp. Paperback.

*Pentecostal Outpourings* is a historical investigation of multiple important Anglo-American Reformed theological revivals in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This multi-authored volume is divided into two parts distinguished by geographical scope. Part One of the book discusses historical revival within the Reformed tradition in the British Isles. Part Two discusses the history of Reformed revival in America. This work is a study of revivals within the Reformed theological