

***The Belgic Confession: A Commentary, (Volume 2)*, by David J. Engelsma. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2019. 400 pages. Hardcover. [Reviewed by Rev. Allen J. Brummel]**

With thankfulness to God we receive the second volume of Professor Engelsma's commentary on the Belgic Confession. This second volume contains the continued solid instruction and practical counsel that we have come to expect and love from the pen of Engelsma. Those who appreciated the first volume will eagerly embrace this second volume as its companion to complete the treatment of the Belgic Confession.

Although you may have some commentaries on the Belgic Confession already on your shelves, including the helpful and appreciated work by P. Y. De Jong, *The Church's Witness to the World*, you will be well served by adding this commentary set to your library. This commentary is distinctively Reformed, thorough, and interacts throughout with the text of the confession. Engelsma carefully explains the text of the confession, sets it in its historical context, explains its contemporary relevance, and brings in a plethora of texts and exegesis to explain and elaborate on the doctrines. The pastoral warmth of the confession shines through this volume and is enhanced by the author's own experience as a pastor and seminary professor for over forty years.

This reviewer found the commentary to be a valuable aid to his preparation for a Bible study which treated the Belgic Confession article by article.

There are chapters and passages that thrill the soul and move the Reformed believer to deep joy and thankfulness. A defense of justification by faith alone (Articles 22, 23) precedes an extensive treatment of sanctification and the place of the law in the life of the believer (Articles 24, 25). Engelsma's stirring explanation of Articles 27–29 and the calling of the believer with regards to membership in the instituted church are chapters that we and our children and grandchildren need to hear in our day and age. The believer must not only love Jesus, but must love the church as the body of Christ.

Disappointing to me were the comments on Article 36 regarding the need to change the wording of the confession. While I agree with the suggested change, Engelsma knows that the way to accomplish a change in the creeds is not to write a book suggesting a gravamen, but to formulate the carefully worded gravamen oneself and submit it to the broader assemblies. I believe Engelsma is best qualified to heed his own call and I hope that he takes up this important matter soon.

It is not enough merely to subscribe to the confessions, but we must know and love the confessions to which we subscribe as Reformed believers. Our families and children need to be familiar with the content of the confessions. Officebearers must know and love the content of the confessions. Engelsma provides believers and the church of Christ with a great service and I pray this two-volume commentary will promote renewed study and zeal for the Reformed truth as together we: "earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 1:3).