

*Faith Made Perfect: Commentary on James*. Herman Hanko. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2015. Hardcover. 304 pages. \$28.95  
Reviewed by Matthew De Boer

How are we to live as those who are justified before God in Christ? In his commentary on the book of James, *Faith Made Perfect*, Prof. Herman Hanko answers this question by explaining the practical instruction the epistle of James gives to God's children. The converted Jews, whom James addresses in this epistle, received instruction concerning the same things that we need to be instructed about today. As God's people who are united to Christ by faith, we are taught in the book of James how to deal with trials and temptations, how to be wise, how to use our tongues, how to handle unfair treatment by those in authority over us, and how to deal with spiritual struggles. In exegeting these passages filled with practical demands in a verse-by-verse commentary, Professor Hanko provides excellent applications for all the members of God's church today, including the elderly and the young people. He shows how we are to live to God's glory in all of life and to manifest that we have genuine faith.

Understanding that we often fall short of obeying God's commands and doing good works, even as those who are his children and united to Christ, Professor Hanko always makes sure to lead the reader to the cross of Christ. In interpreting the admonitions of James to the converted Jews of that day concerning their walk of life, Hanko shows that we also often do not follow God's commands in this epistle and that we often do not live out of the bond of faith we have with Christ. Yet, Hanko always emphasizes that there is hope for us in Christ. For instance, concerning James 4:7, which calls us to "resist the devil," Hanko writes, "When we fall into sin, as so often we do, we have the victory of the cross to which we flee in humble confession" (207). This book is truly Christ-centered.

In his discussion of the practical instruction and commands we are given in the book of James, Hanko explains the teaching of the book concerning the relationship between faith and works. He exegetes key passages in the book of James that deal with our justification in the sight of God. The Roman Catholic Church as well as the proponents of the federal vision use passages in James to teach that we are justified by faith *and* works. They appeal to texts such as James 2:21, which states, "Was not Abraham justified by works?" to attempt to prove their position. Hanko examines James 2:21 and other passages like it that are so often falsely interpreted and proves that James teaches the same truth of justification by faith alone as Paul did in Romans and in Galatians by the inspiration of the Spirit. In his explanation Hanko shows that there are indeed no contradictions in scripture.

After reading this book the child of God most definitely will have a greater knowledge of the book of James and will surely be spiritually edified. Professor Hanko spends much time explaining the connections between the verses that can sometimes be difficult to find. In describing the connections, he gives the reader a richer understanding of each individual passage. Also, his explanation of many of the key words used in the original language help the believer better understand the important concepts of this epistle. In reading this careful work on the book of James, the believer will certainly grow in knowledge of his God and will develop in his understanding of how he is to live his everyday life as one who is one with Jesus Christ.