

THE DAVENANT *dispatch*

Letter from the President

By Bradford Littlejohn

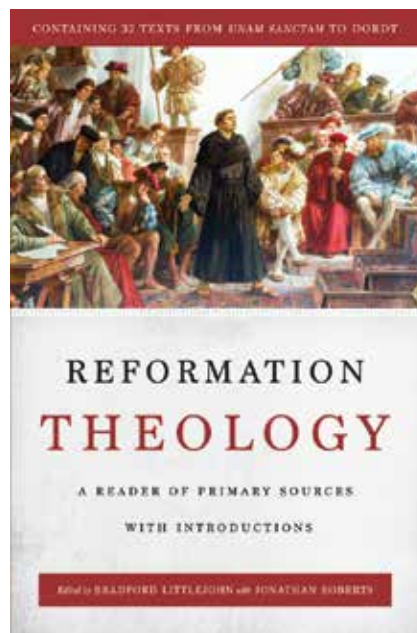
Four and a half years ago, a group of friends founded The Davenant Institute with a worry and a hunch.

Our worry was that the final crumbling of evangelical influence on American public life would be ugly. The loss of power would expose the shaky intellectual foundations of modern evangelicalism, and the resulting insecurity would incite tribalism, pragmatism, capitulation, and flight to alternative Christian traditions. Our hunch was that the resources for building a much firmer foundation, restoring the strength of our churches and the clarity of our witness and service to the world, were near at hand. Not chronologically near at hand, to be sure, but the interface of technology and scholarship had made the riches of our Reformation past remarkably accessible. We had but to lay hold of them confidently and take them to the streets.

As we look back on the year 2017, both worry and hunch seem increasingly confirmed. Our political discourse, already hardly worthy of the name “discourse,” has taken a turn for the farcical. Our society’s social tension and moral confusion have been magnified. And through it all, Christians’ witness has become more fragmented and compromised. Yet 2017 also saw Protestants around the

continued on page 8

Davenant Publishes Groundbreaking Reader in Reformation Theology



On October 31st, The Davenant Institute published *Reformation Theology: A Reader of Primary Sources with Introductions*.

Edited by Bradford Littlejohn and Jonathan Roberts, this work reflects the clarion call of the Protestant Reformers, “*Ad fontes!*—Back to the sources!” for our own generation. Just as they recognized that renewal of the church in their era depended upon a clearer understanding of the church’s past through the writings of its greatest early theologians, so renewal of the church in our era depends on

grasping anew what the Reformation was all about, why it happened, and why it still matters. The best way to achieve that, we believe, is through reading the primary sources.

Surprisingly, no good resource exists in English to this end, providing a broad and deep primary source anthology of Reformation theology to enable the student easy access into this rich garden of texts. Our volume aims to fill that gap.

Beginning with the first rumblings of conflict in the late medieval period and continuing until the solidification of Protestant confessions in the early 17th century, this collection

of thirty-two texts brings the modern reader face-to-face with the key men whose convictions helped shape the course of history. Concise historical introductions accompanying each text bring these writings to life by recounting the stories and conflicts that gave birth to these texts, and highlighting the enduring themes that we can glean from them.

KEY TOPICS INCLUDE

The doctrine of the church, and its relation to the state; the doctrine of the eucharist, and transubstantiation in particular; the doctrine of justification

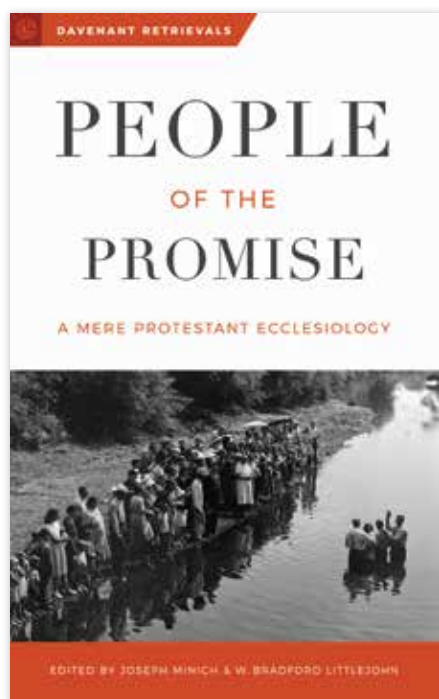
sola fide and the place of works; the meaning of the Protestant commitment to *sola Scriptura*; and others.

KEY AUTHORS INCLUDE

Marsilius of Padua, John Wycliffe, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Martin Luther, Thomas More, John Calvin, The Council of Trent, Thomas Cranmer, Richard Hooker, Robert Bellarmine, and *many more*.

Learn more at www.davenantinstitute.org/reformation-theology

NEW PUBLICATIONS FROM THE DAVENANT PRESS



People of the Promise: A Mere Protestant Ecclesiology

Edited by JOSEPH MINICH *and* BRADFORD LITTLEJOHN

Featuring essays by STEVEN WEDGEWORTH, ERIC HUTCHINSON,
ALASTAIR ROBERTS, BRADFORD LITTLEJOHN, JORDAN
BALLOR, JAKE MEADOR *and more*.

In September, the Davenant Institute published the first volume in a new series, Davenant Retrievals, which seek to exemplify the Davenant Institute's mission of recovering the riches of the Reformation for the contemporary church, offering clear, concise, and collaborative expositions of a doctrinal topic key to the Protestant heritage and defending its relevance today. This first offering, *People of the Promise: A Mere Protestant Ecclesiology* was an exploration of the Protestant doctrine of the church, which, though often maligned as the weakest link in Protestant theology, is actually, our authors contend, one of the Reformation's greatest treasures. Not only is "mere Protestant" ecclesiology firmly in concert with the multifaceted biblical witness, but it is also manifestly in accord with natural reason and the lived experience of Christians throughout the ages. This volume seeks to honor the Protestant heritage and encourage Protes-

tant Christians today by remembering, reclaiming, and critically reflecting upon the relationship between the gospel promise and the community which it calls into being.

The book has been reviewed positively already in *Christianity Today* and received warm praise from leading evangelical theologians. Kevin Vanhoozer of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School said of the book,

"I welcome this first installment of Davenant Retrievals for its fresh and often illuminating presentation of the magisterial Protestant position to these questions, particularly their insistence that the church is a people assembled by God's Word and Spirit. The authors use exegesis, church history, and systematic theology to make a compelling case that the church is the people who trust the

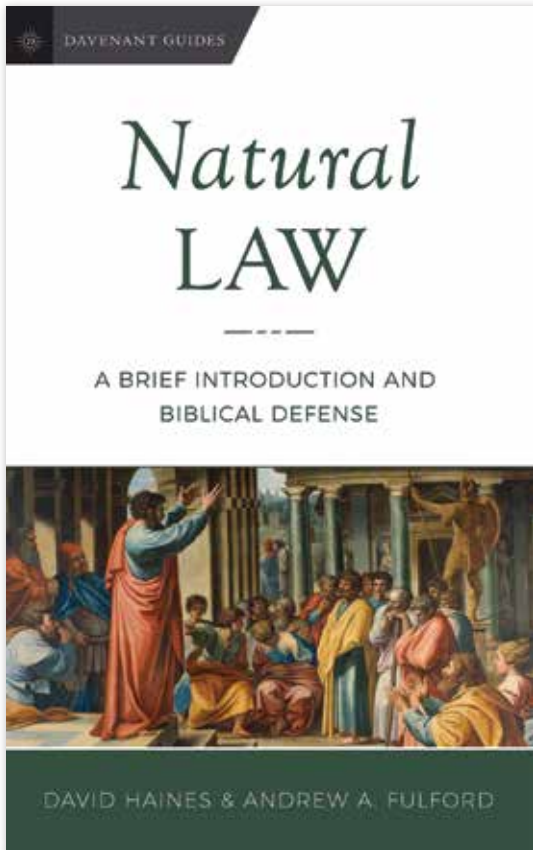
promise of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of all who, through the Spirit, live out their “in Christ” reality together.”

And Fred Sanders of Biola University praised it, saying,

“Conventional wisdom holds that just as Protestantism supposedly fractured the church into churches, so it fractured ecclesiology into ecclesiologies. This spirited volume argues the opposite: that the magisterial reformers in fact advanced a single, powerful, coherent, and biblical account of the essence of the church focused

on the gospel. With remarkable restraint, the authors of People of the Promise decline to be distracted as they retrieve Protestantism’s core ecclesiology. Readers may experience the shock of recognition to find that not only have they seen this ecclesiology before, they are inhabiting it. This retrieval should strengthen us to inhabit it more amply.”

We are already hard at work on next year’s Davenant Retrievals volume, tentatively titled *Philosophy and the Christian*, which is appearing serially in the longer quarterly issues of this year’s volume of *Ad Fontes*.



Natural Law: A Brief Introduction and Biblical Defense

By DAVID HAINES & ANDREW FULFORD

On December 5th, 2017, The Davenant Institute published its third Davenant Guide: Natural Law.

As Christians, we affirm that Scripture is our supreme guide to truth and righteousness. Some wish to go further and assert that it is our only guide. But how then can we account for the remarkable insight and moral integrity that many unbelievers seem to display? Indeed, how to account for the myriad ways in which believers themselves navigate the world based on knowledge and intuition not always derived from Scripture?

Enter the doctrine of natural law. Frequently misrepresented as an assertion of the autonomous power of human reason or as a uniquely Roman Catholic doctrine, natural law has actually been an integral part of orthodox Christian theology since the beginning, and is even clearly asserted in Scripture itself.

In this brief guide, David Haines and Andrew Fulford explain the philosophical foundations of natural law, clear up common misunderstandings about the term, and demonstrate the robust biblical basis for natural law reasoning.

Here’s what people are already saying about *Natural Law*:

“...I am excited about this book! And I thank God for Fulford and Haines who took great effort and much time to serve the church with this resource.”
—JP Moreland, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, Talbot School of Theology, Biola University

“This is a Guide that has considerable depth, indeed two distinct dimensions. The reader is first guided to the philosophical roots of natural law thinking in ancient and scholastic philosophy; then secondly to the Biblical evidence for natural law. The result makes for a first-rate, thought-provoking introduction.”
— Paul Helm, Professor Emeritus, King’s College, London.

“...The authors and the Davenant Institute deserve our deepest thanks for making these issues accessible to a wide readership in such a clear and thoughtful book.”
—Manfred Svensson, Professor of Philosophy, University of the Andes, co-editor, *Aquinas Among the Protestants*



Announcing the Acquisition of the Peter Martyr Library

On November 29, 2017, The Davenant Institute concluded a contract with Truman State University Press to take full possession of the Peter Martyr Library. Effective Jan. 1, 2018, TSUP will transfer all rights,

Over the past couple years, we have sought opportunities for closer involvement with Vermigli scholarship, adopting the Peter Martyr Society in early 2016 and beginning a collaborative project to re-translate Vermigli's *Common Places* earlier this year. We are thus immensely excited at the opportunity that this acquisition offers us to begin enabling the writings of this great Reformer to finally reach the wide audience they deserve.

electronic files, and hard copies of the ten volumes of the **Peter Martyr Library** (including its accompanying *Peter Martyr Reader*) to Davenant, and Davenant will assume responsibility for their continued distribution as well as the publication of the final volume, Vermigli's *Commentary on Genesis*, edited by John Patrick Donnelly, S.J. As part of this extraordinary gift, Davenant will gain possession of over 1,000 copies of the published volumes of the series, which we plan to make available to scholars, students, and libraries at significantly reduced prices beginning early next year. We will also be able to make widely available digital editions of these volumes, reissue them in inexpensive paperback editions, and excerpt from them for anthologies.

Prof. Torrance Kirby and Gary Jenkins, the President and Secretary of the Peter Martyr Society and longtime contributors to the Peter Martyr Library project, had this to say about the acquisition:

"This transfer has been the culmination of efforts by several parties for the future of the Peter Martyr Library and the Society. It grew out of a mutual concern by both the Davenant Trust and the Peter Martyr Society that an established center devoted to the vital importance the Reformation, its thought and heritage, should be found to help nurture the scholarship of Vermigli and insure his rightful place in the continuing historical and theological pursuits of our own day. Placed now fully in the hands of those who not only care about such pursuits as part of an academic life, but value them as proper and virtuous ends in themselves, this can only harbinger good things for research and publishing in all things Vermigliana. We are happy indeed."

Although largely unknown today outside the circle of Reformation scholars, Peter Martyr Vermigli was a true giant of the 16th-century Reformation, a man who left an indelible influence on the churches of Italy, Switzerland, Germany, and England where he spent his pilgrim life, and who through his writings left an even wider legacy. Standing as he does at the intersection of humanism and scholasticism, with a profound concern for Biblical exegesis and the renewal of preaching, but also for linguistic study, educational revival, Christian philosophy, ethics, and political thought, Vermigli sums up the broad and bold mission of the Davenant Institute to renew Christian wisdom through resourcement.

Stay tuned early in the new year for opportunities to purchase heavily discounted copies of the PML volumes, and for other developments on the Vermigli front.

TEACHING FELLOW UPDATE



Colin Redemer

Davenant Teaching Fellow

Colin Redemer has been hard at work spreading the Davenant message in the Bay Area. This fall, he has given lectures on:

- "What Sappho Can Teach Modern Christians" at San Jose State University on September 21.
- "A Defense of the Great Books Tradition" at Santa Monica College, on September 23.
- "Beyond Sublime Waterfalls: Nietzsche & Lewis on Objectivity & Ethics" at First Presbyterian Church Berkeley on November 3.



Building Networks of Friendship: Coeur d'Alene Convivium

By Gayle Doornbos

From August 17-19, the Davenant Institute hosted its first National Convivium Irenicum West in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. The theme of the gathering was the same as the National Convivium East held earlier this summer: "To All Generations: Teaching the Doctrine of God in the Life of the Church."

As with all Convivia hosted by the Davenant Institute, the Western national Convivium situated academic discussion and dialogue within a weekend of fellowship and community building punctuated by morning and evening worship, preparing and eating meals together, and having fun on Lake Coeur d'Alene.

After the opening barbeque on Thursday, Dr. Brad Littlejohn opened the Convivium with a short introduction to this year's theme and connecting it to the mission of the Davenant Institute. Situating the weekend's topic within contemporary debates concerning the relationship between biblical exegesis and systematic theology and overly pragmatic, emotive, and anti-historical approaches to theology, Dr. Littlejohn encouraged robust discussion attentive to how these trends and debates affect current discussions on the doctrine of God. Furthermore, he encouraged constructive dialogue concerning how to retrieve, renew, and teach classical Christian insights for the sake of the church.

Following Dr. Littlejohn's introduction, plenary speaker Dr. Steven Duby, of Grand Canyon University, gave the first paper of the weekend, "Divine Action and the Meaning of Eternity." In his paper, Dr. Duby argued against current critics of divine timelessness who render the concept incoherent given the doctrines of creation and providence and

suggest some type of temporal succession in the divine life. In response, Dr. Duby advocated for a retrieval of classical conceptions of divine actuality, which affirm God's full and complete life in himself, as vital to our understanding of eternity and God's relationship to time in his work of creation. Consequently, far from driving a wedge between God and creation, Dr. Duby suggested that classical articulations of divine action and eternity are the foundation from which to constructively engage with questions concerning God's relationship to the world and develop conceptions of divine timelessness.

After some stimulating discussion on divine action and eternity, Dr. Eric Hutchinson, of Hillsdale College, lead two sessions based on his paper, "Philip Melanchthon and the Case of the Missing Doctrine of God," wherein he analyzed contemporary interpretations and misunderstandings of the absence of the *locus de Deo* in Melanchthon's first edition of the *Loci Communes*. Arguing against interpretations like those found in Schleiermacher, Baur, and Barth that take Melanchthon's remission as representing the need to rework the entire doctrine of God according to Protestant principles, the first session focused primarily on Schleiermacher and his conceptualization of the task of dogmatics and reformulation of the doctrine of the Trinity. The second session argued that Melanchthon did not seek to overthrow or rework the doctrine of God but rather carry forward the classical definitions and distinctions while restoring an emphasis on Christ and the gospel.

The first day finished with a time of communal worship, after which discussions on Schleiermacher, Melanchthon, and other theological and non-theological topics carried on late into the night.

The second day opened as the first day closed: with worship. Matthew Owen, a doctoral student at the University of Birmingham, gave the first paper of the day, "The Trinity and the Meaning of Is." In his paper,

2018 Portland and Carolinas Convivia Irenica



On January 5th and 6th, The Davenant Institute will hold two simultaneous Convivia, one in Portland, OR, and our first Regional Convivium in the Carolinas. Bradford Littlejohn will be the plenary speaker at the Portland Convivium, hosted at Western Seminary, and D. Blair Smith of RTS-Charlotte will be the plenary speaker for the Carolinas Convivium, held at Davenant House.

Convivia Irenica are opportunities for ecclesially-minded scholars, academically-minded pastors, and theologically-concerned laypeople to come together and build bonds of friendship and collaboration for the advancement of Protestant wisdom.

OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

Regional Convivia are planned for Spring 2018 in:

WASHINGTON, DC

MINNEAPOLIS, MN

LINCOLN, NE

DENVER, CO

Our Fifth Annual National Convivium (East) will be held at Davenant House in SC, May 30-June 2. The theme will be “Exploring Reformed Catholicity” and our plenary speaker will be Dr. Michael Allen of Reformed Theological Seminary.

Owen identified a common objection to classical Trinitarianism in analytic philosophy based on the “is” of numeric identity and offered an alternative definition to the word “is,” an “is” of predication in a strong sense, as a way to offer a logical defense and articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity in analytic philosophy. The paper produced some of the most vigorous discussion of the weekend, grappling with topics ranging from the analogical nature of human language for the divine to differences between the continental and analytical traditions.

Following Owen’s paper, the other two papers given on Friday examined the relationship between the Doctrine of God and other theological loci. I (Gayle Doornbos), gave a paper entitled, “In the Beginning: The Cosmological Significance of the Doctrine of the Trinity in Herman Bavinck.” The paper utilized Bavinck as a model for retrieving and revitalizing the Reformed tradition, examined the close relationship between Bavinck’s doctrine of God and creation, and used Bavinck’s insights to pose questions to contemporary theological articulations of the *missio Dei*. Timothy Harmon, of the University of Bristol, gave a paper examining the relationship between the doctrine of God and Scripture and its inspiration. Focusing his paper primarily on John Webster, “The Doctrine of God and the Confession, *Sacra Scriptura est Verbum Dei*,” Harmon contented that in Webster’s later development it was God’s perfect life in himself that informed and normed his doctrine of inspiration. Fittingly, Dr. Duby also led an afternoon discussion on the usefulness and challenges concerning the distinction between the immanent and economic Trinity. During the discussion, we considered the distinction’s origin, the distinction in light of Rahner’s rule, and how the immanent-economic schema relates to the older processions-missions distinction.

Conversation on these topics, along with others about life, academic projects, teaching, church, etc. easily spilled over into the evening on Friday, which included dinner out in Coeur d’Alene and concluded once again with evening worship.

The final morning of the Convivium opened with our last communal worship together. After worship, Dr. Alastair Roberts presented a paper using the current debate on the eternal subordination of the Son (ESS) as a lens to examine the necessary relationship between biblical exegetes and theologians. Too often, Dr. Roberts pointed out, they are antagonistic rather than mutually enriching, and the ESS debate is an example of the need for better dialogue. The Convivium closed with a panel discussion led by Dr. Roberts, Dr. Littlejohn, and Mr. Peter Escalante on how to revive, renew, and teach the doctrine of God in contemporary ecclesial and academic settings.

As a first-time Convivium attendee, I can attest to a wonderful weekend filled with stimulating papers and discussions within a community of scholars, pastors, and laypeople that seeks to challenge and encourage one another.

Gayle Doornbos is a Th.D student in Systematic Theology at Wycliffe College/University of Toronto. She is also an adjunct distance professor at Calvin Theological Seminary. She and her husband live in Lynden, WA.

Alastair Roberts Leads Summer Program in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

By Alastair Roberts

Over the course of five days in August, eight students gathered together on the shores of the beautiful Lake Coeur D'Alene to explore the wisdom of the Protestant tradition on philosophical, ethical, and political issues. During this period of intense conversation, study, and fellowship, we delved deeply into the riches of writers such as John Calvin, Zacharias Ursinus, Richard Hooker, C.S. Lewis, and Oliver O'Donovan, discovering in their voices compelling and powerful resources to bring to bear upon the challenges and possibilities that face us in the twenty-first century. Each day of study began and ended with prayer and was punctuated by lengthy mealtimes, where conversations spilled over from the four hours of lecture and discussion and further stimulat-

ing discussions arose. We also made the most of the opportunity to enjoy the remarkable surroundings, canoeing, swimming, and paddleboarding on the lake together. The value of the Primer on Protestant Philosophy, Ethics, and Politics is found, not merely in an introduction and exposure to the treasures of the Protestant tradition, but also in the opportunity to spend a spiritually refreshing and intellectually stimulating few days with others who share a passion for deepening their knowledge and engagement with it. Anyone who attends should grow, not only in their understanding and appreciation of the tradition, but also in friendships that will encourage, support, and equip them in their further studies.

DAVENANT LAUNCHES LECTURE SERIES, "REFORMATION THEN AND NOW"

500 Years Later, does the Protestant Reformation still matter to our lives as Christians today? Or is it just of historical interest, for scholars and theologians? The Davenant Institute has launched a lecture series this winter in Moscow, Idaho, to answer these questions, seeking to bring the Reformation and its legacy to life for ordinary Christians on the Palouse.

To facilitate maximal community engagement, each lecture evening will feature an extended time of casual further discussion at a local home after the formal Q&A concludes. We will also seek to make the lectures widely available through video and audio.

The first lecture in this series (Dec. 8) features Dr. Josh Malone from Moody Bible Institute, Spokane, speaking on, "The Spirit of Reformation Theology: The Doctrine of the Trinity in Action."

FUTURE LECTURES WILL FEATURE:

- 1/19/18: Dr. Mitch Stokes (*New Saint Andrews College*)
- 2/23/18: Dr. Christopher Schlect (*New Saint Andrews College*)
- Dr. Bradford Littlejohn (*The Davenant Institute*)
- Mr. Eric Parker (*McGill University*)
- Dr. Aaron Denlinger (*Westminster Theological Seminary*)

Davenant Latin Institute Expands Its Reach

AS OUR DAVENANT LATIN INSTITUTE program has continued to grow and mature, we were able to partner with BibleMesh this year to offer our first self-paced online Latin reading course, Beza's Latin Romans. Developed by our longtime instructor, Ryan Handermann, to serve as a "digital textbook" for the first module of our year-long Intermediate Theological Latin Reading course, this course also stands on its own for use by individual students at the college level or above who want to read the churches' texts in the language of the church's past.

Using as it does the familiar Epistle to the Romans as the text, this course offers a great stepping stone from learning the rudiments of Latin in a textbook to reading it in the wild, so to speak. However, this is not the Vulgate translation that will be familiar to beginning students of ecclesiasti-

cal Latin, but the 16th-century translation of Genevan reformer Theodore Beza. Incorporating as it does a much more diverse range of vocabulary and constructions, this version of the Latin Bible will give students a flavor of both classical and ecclesiastical Latin, as well as a taste of the sixteenth-century Reformation.

This fall, as Mr. Handermann moved on to pastoral work, the Davenant Latin Institute hired another experienced Latin instructor, Jonathan Roberts, to take over his Intro and Intermediate teaching responsibilities, as well as running an Advanced Patristic Latin course by Dr. Aaron Denlinger. In Spring 2018, DLI will be offering Intro to Latin Pt. I, Intro to Latin Pt. II, and Intermediate Latin Pt. II courses.

Letter from the President, *continued*

world unite in remembering the legacy of the Reformation 500 years ago, although few were bold enough to claim it as a resource for today, many feeling that it would be unseemly to celebrate—or even that the Reformation must be blamed as the source of modern ills. Yet those who have had the courage to celebrate it have found in it a bracing and inexhaustibly rich resource for renewing Christian theological discernment, moral reasoning, and the bonds of life together.

Accordingly, we at Davenant have plunged ourselves further into the work of mining the wisdom of the past, refining it in the present, and disseminating it to equip Christ's disciples for the future. As we have done so, we have found that what we lack is not the resources, but—so far has our forgetfulness gone—the language and concepts to read and understand them.

This is why the Davenant Institute is engaged in a great project of translation, finding those who have immersed themselves in this older wisdom and helping them to speak it afresh in a form that Christian students, pastors, and leaders can understand and apply today. The gap we seek to bridge is sometimes dizzyingly wide, and widened still further by the mutual suspicion that pastors and scholars can have for one another.

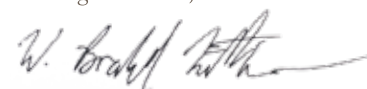
But it is not unbridgeable. On the contrary, I have the pleasure of seeing over and over again that lighting up of the face, that “aha!” moment, when someone finds in the seasoned wisdom from the past the simple answer to the thorny cluster of questions that had long bedevilled them. And then, inspired to put these answers to work in their own callings, they bring their own experiences back to us to broaden our perspectives on the fruitful potential of the heritage we have been called to steward.

What I find most exciting about our work, though, is how we do it. We don't have a big budget—or even a medium-sized budget. We don't have a bunch of staff or buildings. What we have, like the Reformers in fact, is a network of friends, friends deeply committed to pooling their intellectual resources and using them to build up the church. We believe that the most lasting transformation can be achieved by establishing communities of conversation in which those dedicated to this task can compare notes and encourage one another, and we've been amazed to see what God has done through such humble enterprises.

Through our growing network of friends and generous supporters like you, we have been able, just this past year, to publish six groundbreaking new books and a monthly magazine, teach dozens of students in our residential and online courses, organize conferences, retreats, and lectures across the country, fund promising young scholars, produce videos, and start work on a range of online courses and study guides for ordinary parishioners, all while establishing ourselves at the forefront of certain areas of Reformation research, like the legacy of the great Italian Reformer Peter Martyr Vermigli.

Our continued success on all these fronts depends on God's goodness and your continued generosity. As we come to the end of 2017, we ask you to consider contributing to our end-of-year funding drive, or signing up as a regular monthly donor, so that we can reach more students and leaders with this renewal of Christian wisdom.

Blessings in Christ,



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If you want to learn more about the Davenant Institute, check out our website:

WWW.DAVENANTINSTITUTE.ORG

We rely on donations small and large to continue our important work and take on new projects; please consider supporting us by visiting the Support Us page there. Or, you can subscribe to receive regular updates about our work at the Subscribe page.

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