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Book Review (September) : Luther's Small Catechism & War is a Racket

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For The King - Rocky Ramsey

"When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments." - 2 Timothy 4:13

Books are instrumental to the Christian faith. Here are a few that I think are good reads. Thanks for listening!

Luther's Small Catechism : https://www.amazon.com/Luthers-Small-Catechism-Martin-Luther/dp/B08F6X4JDB/ref=sr_1_4?crid=1ZBSXU82DXB6U&dchild=1&keywords=luthers+small+catechism&qid=1633123751&srefix=luthers+small+ca%2Caps%2C330&sr=8-4

War is a Racket : https://www.amazon.com/War-Racket-Original-Smedley-Butler/dp/1939438586/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=War+is+a+racket&qid=1633123887&sr=8-1

Definite Atonement episode we did:

* <https://open.spotify.com/episode/4Bsna8vsp6zgmAI8qbKAPB?si=0744388246604e14>

* <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/definite-atonement-tulip-part-3/id1552816269?i=1000513848966>

* <https://anchor.fm/rocky-ramsey/episodes/Definite-Atonement-TULIP-part-3-et5iop/a-a50lk78>

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Transcript

Don't think I will even ask you to make Jesus the Lord of your life. That's the most preposterous thing I could ever tell you to do. Jesus Christ is Lord of your life.

Whether you serve him or not, whether you bless him, curse him, hate him, or love him, he is the Lord of your life. Welcome everyone to the For The King podcast. In 2 Timothy 4, verse 13, Paul was talking to Timothy and various other people he is including in this text.

This is what he says. This is the monthly installation of the book review that we do here on the For The King podcast. I read that verse and I like to include that in these book reviews because I would like to remind everybody how important books are to the Christian faith.

How important reading is to the Christian faith. Ultimately, God has revealed himself through words in a compilation of books called the Bible. 66 books, 40 different authors into one book.

All about the story of redemption of what God is doing with his people. Ultimately, how he is glorifying himself and making his name famous on the earth, even though we rebelled against him. Books are very important to the Christian faith.

I do this monthly book review to share with you guys some of the things I am reading. Some of the books that I think are interesting and are important and worth reading. Hopefully, maybe I can advise you guys to pick up a copy yourself.

I imagine Paul, when he says also the books, I bet he had a bunch of different kinds of books. I bet he had poetry, ancient Greek poetry, the book of Enoch, he probably had Plato's Republic, he probably had all sorts of these different writings. He found them valuable, but what he found of utmost importance, and I want to always emphasize this, is God's word, the Bible.

I always read these things in addition to my scripture reading. I am never reading these things in isolation. The first and the best book of this go around is Luther's Small Catechism.

Martin Luther's Small Catechism. It was a good read. I have a really old copy.

I don't exactly have a copyright, so I don't know how old this copy is, but it was on an old book shelf at a bookstore I was at. I thought it looked cool. I like Martin Luther and his writings, and I thought it was useful.

It was really refreshing to go through a catechism. I know some people have different thoughts about catechisms. It is your brainwashing your kids.

A catechism is basically just a question and answer format of a bunch of different parts of the Christian faith. The Catholics have a catechism. I actually have that upstairs.

I am eventually going to read it. But the Catholic Catechism is much, much longer than Luther's Small Catechism here. His actual full blown catechism is much larger.

I don't even know if this has a corresponding large catechism. I know there are larger catechisms such as the Catholic Catechism. They are just question and answer format, really, really helpful and refreshing, honestly.

It is not an extremely articulate read. It is not very hard to understand. It is very simple questions that are answered immediately after with his thoughts based on scripture.

He will add a bunch of different scriptures that will answer the question that is being asked. Here is an example. What do the scriptures teach of Christ sitting on the right hand of God the Father? Then he answers.

The scriptures teach that Christ, also according to his human nature, rules and fills all things with divine power and majesty. He quotes Ephesians 1, 20-23. God sent him Christ at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and all that.

He is going to put all things under his feet. That is how this goes. It is really refreshing just to have the scriptures really present and easy to follow right after a profound question is asked with a real quick simple answer.

It is very helpful. He goes through the Ten Commandments and interacts with and gives answers to each part of the two tables. Then he goes through the Apostles Creed and what is important about the Apostles Creed.

He goes through all of the sacraments and how we ought to deal with baptism and the Eucharist and the Office of the Keys of the Church, the power and authority of the Church, all these things. He goes through the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is helpful and perfect way to pray.

Good book. Worth picking up. Worth reading Luther's Small Catechism.

Two things that I disagreed with. On page 97 of the copy I have, which in Luther's Small Catechism contains question 114. Does man still bear the image of God? This is his answer.

I think Martin Luther wrote in German, Latin, a bunch of different languages and this English translation we have is probably not what he originally wrote in. I don't think it is. This could be a translation error.

I want to keep people alive to that. Ultimately I think that this is wrong the way it is worded here. Man lost the image of God when he fell into sin.

In believers a beginning of its renewal is made. Only in heaven, however, will this image be fully restored. He quotes Genesis 5.3, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness after his image." I don't think we lost the image of God.

That's what I disagree with him. I wrote in a little post-it note up in here. Man did not lose the image of God.

He marred and distorted it almost to the point of unrecognizability but still never completely lost it. That's what I put. I put Luther's quite wrong.

Genesis 9.6 and James 3.9. Genesis 9.6, well after the fall of man, we still see that the capital punishment is instituted in Genesis 9.6 because man is made in God's image. He says, "If man spills blood, by his blood is it required of him because man is made in God's own image." We see even after the fall God saying that we did not lose his image. We distorted it and marred it.

That would be the distinction to me. Also James 3.9, it's talking about Bartow in the tongue. He says, "With our tongue, we both curse other people who are made in the image of God and hate our neighbors and do all these other things." He has a real quick aside there.

He says, "That are made in the likeness of God." I think we do still retain the image of God and it was just marred. Let me search for the other. Here it is.

On my page 115, we have the question, "Has Christ redeemed, purchased, and won only you? Christ has redeemed me and all lost and condemned mankind." He quotes 1 Timothy 1.15, this is faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, exception that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief. Matthew 18.11, "The Son of Man is come to save that which is lost." John 1.29, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." 1 John 2.2, "He is the propitiation for our sins and not only for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world." 2 Corinthians 5.15, "He died for all." I think he is applying these texts wrong. Bryce and I have an episode on limited atonement, or definite atonement is what we name the episode.

So go back in the episode archives and check out that and I'll probably link it down below. But I do want to expose you guys to an alternative view on that. Martin Luther was a reformer, but Calvin developed limited atonement well after Luther came along.

Again, this could be a translation issue, but if it really was worded like this in Luther's small catechism that he wrote himself, his first copy, if this really is what he meant, then I do think he was wrong in this. I wrote, "Christ has redeemed only the elect. Christ's death is efficacious for the whole world, but he did not die for all people.

He dies for his sheep, not the goats and the sheep. He wants the whole world to repent, but not all will be saved." And then I put John 10.7-18 where Jesus is talking about, he doesn't come down to lay down his life for the goats. He comes to lay down his life for the sheep.

And if you are not a sheep, Christ has redeemed me and all lost and condemned mankind. No, he's only redeemed me and all of the sheep. That's what I would say.

So those are the things I disagree with, but besides that, everything in here is really good. Obviously, he has a different view of baptism than me because I'm a reformed Baptist, credo Baptist. He practices infant baptism, so I thought that was helpful.

He has an interesting view of confession. The Lutherans still have the priests. You'll come before a priest in an act of confession.

I also think that's kind of an odd practice. Confessing, not to say confessing our sins is wrong, but confessing our sins to other humans is good. We're supposed to bear each other's burdens.

Galatians 5, I think. So we ought to bear each other's burdens, but also we don't have to confess before a priest and then a priest to remind us. Our brothers and sisters can do this as well.

And what he may mean by that is just that it's best for a priest to do it, that kind of thing. So yeah, I thought it was good overall. Worth buying, worth picking up.

I think you guys would be edified and encouraged by that. The second book was not theological in nature. It is a book written, I think, like 100-ish years ago.

By two-time Congressional Medal of Honor recipient, Major General Smedley D. Butler, USMC retired. And it's called War is a Racket. Pretty popular book.

I thought I'd pick it up just because it's a short read and I was interested in it. I've had it recommended to me a few times. In this book, when he's talking about the Great War, he's talking about World War I, he fought in World War I. And he basically just in this book walks through.

World War II had not happened yet. That's why they called World War I the Great War because that's the first great, great war they had seen up until World War II at an even larger scale with even more death. But World War I, I think some people forget how terrific it still was.

The trench warfare was insane. I mean, the French did a lot better in World War I than World War II. They were actually very brave and heroic and they were actually taking the brunt of the German forces as they marched through Belgium and they came down to France.

I mean, there was a stalemate for a long time at the trenches and it was pretty crazy. And there was a British expeditionary force that came down there and helped. But yeah, totally different war, but very brutal trench warfare.

And basically what he walks through in this book is the manipulation of the elites to get the populace to buy into a war for their own benefit. So he just basically walks through how much money a lot of these manufacturers made. So in the second chapter, chapter two, who makes the profits, he just walks through how they basically played on the person's national power.

The person's nationalism or patriotism to have them buy things like Liberty bonds and the bankers would basically devalue the Liberty bond and then buy it back from the populace when it would decrease in value. And then lo and behold, all of a sudden the value goes up and these bankers make a lot of money. You could just talk that up to, oh, that was just kind of a random thing that happened.

They weren't trying to do that. They really needed the populace to buy into this war, to buy these Liberty bonds, to fund the war, that kind of thing. I would just say people usually have alternative motives in terms of making money.

And I would say, I would probably side more with there are people that are definitely trying to make a dollar off of war and do not care about the soldier on the front line. So yeah, he has a few interesting quotes in here on page 13 of my copy. Does war pay? It paid them, but they aren't the only ones.

There are still others. Let's take leather. So then he talks about how much leather they made for the war and how the leather companies profited.

A 1400% increase in the valuation of these companies, international nickel company, sugar refining, copper, steel, so many different companies made a killing off of war. I mean, war does produce a lot of money. So basically he just critiques this whole the war industrial complex thought process that we need to be in a perpetual war to fund military equipment.

You know, military costs a lot to keep up with the latest technology to train the men, to outfit the men, that kind of thing. But basically he says who should be the ones that are getting us into war? Should it be a bunch of old dudes that are just going to lay back and not actually fight the war? It should be the young men that vote if we're going to go to war or not, the ones that will fight the battle. Interesting thought.

I don't know how that plays out exactly. I don't necessarily have a strong opinion. But I do think there's some more to what he's saying.

So I think there's a balanced view to interact with what he's getting at here about how war people can have. Basically his point is the people that are declaring war are the ones that are going to benefit from the war. They're going to make millions of dollars.

Therefore, why would the people that are declaring war be the ones that are going to incentivize from it? Because wouldn't that make them more prone to say, "Hey, let's go to war. We need to go fight these people for, I don't know, what will the populace buy? What's going to be a good reason for them? I don't buy a reason. My reason is to make money." That's basically his critique.

So yeah, I guess I would say those are the main points. Interesting read. Pick it up.

Check it out. Let me know what you think. "War is a racket" by Major General Smedley D. Butler, who fought in the Great War, which is

World War I. So those are the books I read this time around.

Hopefully that was encouraging and helpful. "Luther, small catechism, war is a racket." Pick it up. I'll put the links in the description below for the podcast and the notes.

And yeah, I think it's worth your guys's while. "War is a racket" is a very quick read. "Luther, small catechism." You can get to that quickly if you don't want to go tediously, you know, referencing all the Bible verses he puts in there.

But really good reads. Thanks for listening, guys. You can always go leave a rating and review.

Yeah, thanks so much for listening. To God alone be the glory. I'm Sully Dale Gloria.