

***For Us And For Our Salvation: The Doctrine of Christ in the Early Church*** by Stephen J. Nichols. Crossway Books, Wheaton, Illinois. 2007. Paper 172 pp.

Prior to the book and film, *The Da Vinci Code*, which are revivals of ancient errors, few people ever heard of or discussed the Nicene Creed. We are not the first ones who need to respond to heretical ideas about the Lord of the Scriptures. Nichols, a professor at Lancaster Bible College and Graduate School, shows how the Nicene Creed and Chalcedonian Creeds provide the Church with an orthodox understanding of the person of Christ. These creeds were not the result of ivory-tower theological subtleties. They grew out of the rough and tumble controversies and even persecution that plagued the early church. Nichols argues that the Church today will find that the early century church fathers had the tools, the expression, the arguments and the boundaries for the biblical and orthodox view of Christ. He says, "We just need to take the time to look." He took a good look indeed! With clarity and brevity, he presents the development of the doctrine of Christ. He includes sections from primary sources, a helpful glossary of key terms and notes in making this vitally important period in the history of the church more understandable.

We need historical awareness. We must have a conversation with the past to prevent infatuation with theological fads and fashions. It is sheer hubris to regard our times as the centre of all spiritual activity and to consider what has gone on in the churches throughout the centuries as irrelevant. Spiritual and theological renewal cannot bypass the great historic landmarks of the church. We do well to reflect upon what our spiritual forebears bequeathed at the cost of blood, sweat and tears. The church must preserve the bond which unites her with the faithful of previous generations. She has a rich heritage of spiritual goods which we in turn can transmit to our children.

Many of the church fathers have lapsed from the collective memory of today's church. How many have heard of the work of the bishops at Chalcedon? In a world where the Biblical depiction of Christ is often distorted or denied, Nichols' book serves as an excellent apologetic for the orthodox Christian faith. Highly recommended reading for pastors and catechism teachers.

Johan D. Tangelder