



The Trinitarian Devotion of

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# John Owen

SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON



A Long Line of Godly Men Profile

## ENDORSEMENTS

“Some of us who fell in love with John Owen’s writings did so, to some significant measure, because of the enthusiastic endorsement given by Sinclair Ferguson. For me, after more than thirty-five years of gospel ministry, it would be difficult to exaggerate the importance of Owen’s theological and pastoral insights. But we have long been in need of an updated biography—not simply one that narrates the significant details of his life, but one that analyzes the contours of his theological insights and how they shaped and defined him. And no one is better placed to do that than Sinclair Ferguson. I suspect that many of us, when engaging in word-association, provide the name ‘Ferguson’ when ‘John Owen’ is mentioned.

“I cannot overstate the importance of this volume. I fully expect it to become a best-seller among those who appreciate Owen—and deservedly so.”

—DR. DEREK W.H. THOMAS

Senior minister, First Presbyterian Church, Columbia, S.C.  
Chancellor’s Professor of Systematic and Pastoral Theology  
Reformed Theological Seminary

“This is now the prime book I will be recommending on John Owen. I am very impressed, but not surprised: Sinclair Ferguson has so imbibed the spirit of Owen that he conveys the thought and heart of the great man with limpid clarity. This means that this book is far more than an introduction to Owen; it is at the same time a rich and deeply affecting meditation on communion with our glorious, triune God. Here is a feast of angel’s food.”

—DR. MICHAEL REEVES

President and professor of theology  
Union School of Theology, Bridgend, Wales

“Let me begin by echoing Sinclair Ferguson’s own story: John Owen, more than any other theologian of the past, has profoundly shaped my vision of the triune God and what it means to live in the wonder of the gospel. In this delightful little book, Ferguson offers a sort of expert paraphrase and appreciation of Owen’s classic volume *Communion with God*. Along the way, he gives us a great gift: in your hands is now a beautifully accessible tour of Owen’s approach to the spiritual life, by which he means a life secure in the love of the Father, the grace of the Son, and the strong fellowship of the Spirit. Read, savor, and be refreshed, for neither Owen nor Ferguson will disappoint.”

—DR. KELLY M. KAPIC  
Professor of theological studies  
Covenant College, Lookout Mountain, Ga.

“Reading this book is like listening in on a conversation between one of the most trusted voices from the past and one of the most trusted voices in the present. In fact, that’s exactly what this book is. And as you listen in, you will hear the arc of the conversation bend in one constant direction. You will hear these two voices remind you of the glorious truth that the Christian life is communion with the Triune God.”

—DR. STEPHEN J. NICHOLS  
President, Reformation Bible College, Sanford, Fla.  
Chief academic officer, Ligonier Ministries



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LIGONIER MINISTRIES



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To  
Alistair Begg

ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφὸς  
καὶ πιστὸς διάκονος  
καὶ σύνδουλος ἐν κυρίῳ

—Colossians 4:7



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# Followers Worthy to be Followed

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**D**own through the centuries, God has raised up a long line of godly men whom He has mightily used at strategic moments in church history. These valiant individuals have come from all walks of life, from the ivy-covered halls of elite schools to the dusty back rooms of tradesmen's shops. They have arisen from all points of this world, from highly visible venues in densely populated cities to obscure hamlets in remote places. Yet despite these differences, these pivotal figures have had much in common.

Each man possessed an unwavering faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but more than that, each of these stalwarts of the faith held deep convictions in the God-exalting truths known as the doctrines of grace. Though they differed in secondary matters of theology, they nevertheless stood shoulder to shoulder in championing these biblical teachings that magnify the



sovereign grace of God in salvation. These spiritual leaders upheld the foundational truth that “salvation is of the Lord.”<sup>1</sup>

Any survey of church history reveals that those who have embraced these Reformed truths have been granted extraordinary confidence in their God. Far from paralyzing these spiritual giants, the doctrines of grace kindled within their hearts a reverential awe for God that humbled their souls before His throne. The truths of divine sovereignty emboldened these men to rise up and advance the cause of Christ on the earth. With an enlarged vision for the expansion of His kingdom upon the earth, they stepped forward boldly to accomplish the work of ten, even twenty men. They arose with wings like eagles and soared over their times. The doctrines of grace empowered them to serve God in their divinely appointed hour of history, leaving a godly inheritance for future generations.

This Long Line of Godly Men Profiles series highlights key figures in the age-long procession of these sovereign-grace men. The purpose of this series is to explore how these figures used their God-given gifts and abilities to impact their times and further the kingdom of heaven. Because they were wholly devoted followers of Christ, their examples are worthy of emulation today.

This volume, written by my good friend Sinclair Ferguson, focuses upon the man regarded as the greatest of the English Puritan theologians, John Owen. The monumental

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1 Ps. 3:8; Jonah 2:9.

life of Owen was marked by his superior intellectual achievement. He became a pastor, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell, and vice-chancellor of the University of Oxford. His most influential work, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (1647), written when Owen was only thirty-one years old, is an extended reflection on the intra-Trinitarian life of God in the incarnation and atonement of Jesus Christ. This seminal volume launched Owen on a path of Trinitarian meditation and reflection. He left behind rich treatises and sermons on the Trinitarian communion that a Christian can enjoy with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Perhaps no other English theologian has spent more time in contemplation of the eternal Godhead, and Owen's study translated into a zealous passion for the gospel and devotion to Christ. John Owen stands as a towering figure, eminently worthy to be profiled in this series.

May the Lord use this book to raise up a new generation of believers who will bring the gospel message to bear upon this world. Through this profile, may you be strengthened to walk in a manner worthy of your calling. May you be zealous in your devotion to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, for the glory of His name and advance of His kingdom.

*Soli Deo gloria!*

—Steven J. Lawson  
Series editor

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