

FOUNDATIONS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH
A Comprehensive & Readable Theology
by James Montgomery Boice

Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some are to be read in parts, others to be read but not curiously, and some few to be read wholly with diligence and attention

- Sir Francis Bacon

The 17th century English essayist was not thinking of the Bible as he penned this observation, though if any book should be “read wholly and with diligence and attention” it should be the Bible, so says Jim Boice, the author of a book about which one could rightly apply the entire quote... because Foundations of the Christian Faith can be tasted in small morsels, at times swallowed in big chunks, and because of its readable style even read wholly with diligence and attention.

Dr. Boice will be a familiar name to many, both inside and outside the Reformed tradition because of his many books still in print and because his radio program *The Bible Study Hour* can still be heard over many radio stations nationwide. Until his death in 2000, he was the long time pastor of historic Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

This book was originally published by InterVarsity Press in 1978 as a four book series, but not long before the author’s death was republished in a single volume of some 700 pages. Though it retains the structure of the original four books, the republication allowed Dr. Boice to re-edit the whole and update certain sections based on additional decades of his own study and rubbing shoulders with the best Christian thinkers of his own generation as well as those of previous centuries. But what is unique, or special, or noteworthy about this volume? What is the burning *raison d’etre*?

From the Preface, the author: “Not often do I, as an author, sense an area in which no book seems to exist and for which one should be written. But the area covered by this volume is an exception, in my judgment. For years I looked for a work that could be given to a person (particularly a New Christian) who is alert and questioning and who could profit from a comprehensive but readable overview of the Christian faith, a basic theology from A to Z. But I could not find anything that was quite what I had in mind and, thus, determined that I should attempt to write it myself.” Jim Boice was right on and he delivered.

This, then, is a *sorta*-Systematic Theology for the non-Seminarian. That’s most of us.

One of my personal *Shibboleths* when evaluating preachers, teachers, and authors is how they treat the Sovereignty of God. And Dr. Boice does not disappoint. The first of his four ‘books’ in this volume is THE SOVEREIGN GOD (the four major parts are: The Knowledge of God; The Word of God; The Attributes of God; God’s Creation) There are 18 total chapters in Book 1, so this is not some flat theological stone skipping over the surface – there is real depth here, yet captivating in a style so very conversational (albeit with numerous quotes, footnotes and Scripture passages).

Book 2 is: GOD THE REDEEMER – in which the author covers the Fall of the Race, Law and Grace, The Person of Christ, and The Work of Christ.

Book 3: AWAKENING TO GOD – The (Holy) Spirit of God, How God Saves Sinners, The Life of the Christian, The Work of God.

Book 4: GOD AND HISTORY (and here Boice includes topics within his four partitions I find so practical to my Christian walk, but topics rarely covered in any *important* way that is tied into a Systematic Theology) – the major divisions are: Time and History, The Church of God, A Tale of Two Cities, The End of History.

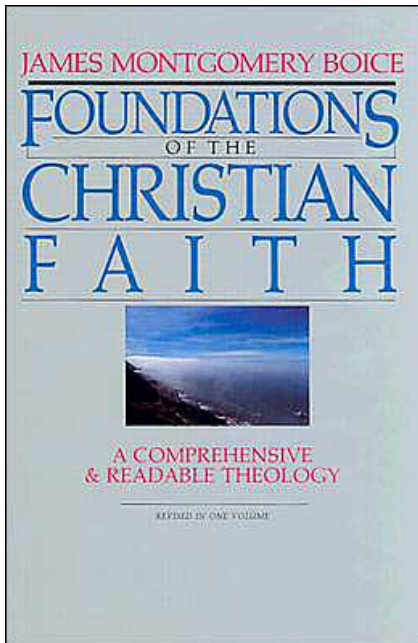
This is a book that is as deep and substantive as Calvin’s *Institutes* though more readable to the 21st century American... In fact, the four book organization and subject matter coverage is nearly identical to that of Calvin’s classic... and according to Boice that is no accident.

Foundations of the Christian Faith is timely because of the need of the Christian to understand not only his/her own Faith, but how to discern between it and false religions and religionists using the same terms but in wholly un-Biblical ways.

Truly a well-reasoned and coherent systematic theology. Boice brings his respected wisdom and insights together into a beautiful exposition of Christian doctrine, proving that a strong God begets strong people, people capable of continuing God's work in the world. Jesus told us to build our house on the rock, and Boice offers us a picture of God as the rock, the foundation, upon which all of history rests. His goal, in writing this book, was to help people know God better, and he succeeds, painting a vivid picture of the source of our strength. – says Christian Book Distributors

Highly Recommended – says Dallas Theological Seminary

And I agree. In this (now) single volume Dr. Boice gives us an in-depth, but very readable Christian Theology, not only of Essentials (the *esse*), but also the *bene-esse* (that which is beneficial for the Christian life and practice). And he does this with not only a scholar’s rigor, but a pastor’s heart since this great 20th century hero of the Faith was both.



Retail Price \$35.00

Best Price \$23.10

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