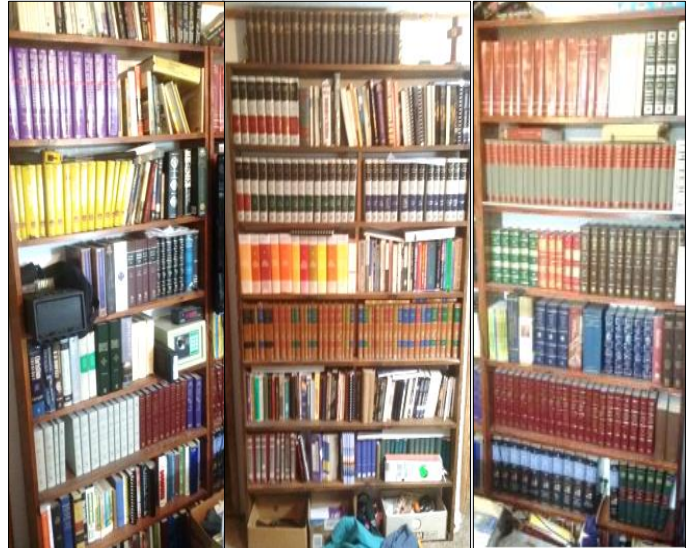


Salvation by Grace Resources

This is a list of over 75 books (and book sets) that were read, studied, and utilized over the past seven years as the basis for all that has been presented in this booklet.

The following sources (over 75 books and book sets) were read, studied, and utilized over the past seven years as the basis for all that has been presented in this booklet. Some were used extensively and in depth, and some were more informative and inspirational. I have commented on each book to provide an explanation of how it was of help to me. Each book title is an active link to Amazon so that you can get more information.

You are encouraged to look into all of these resources (and any others you can find) in order to do your own study and verification of what is true about God, salvation, life and death. It seems to me that there is no more important subject ... than our eternal destiny!



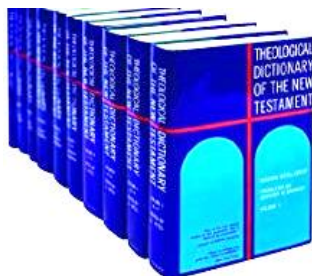
Here are the categories of book resources below:

- Books on Word Studies
- Books on Church History
- Books on the Atonement of Jesus
- Books Supporting Restoration
- Books with Multiple Views, Moderate Views, or Questioning Views
- Books Supporting Eternal Punishment
- Books on the history and origin of hell
- Books on Justification
- Other Helpful Books



God Is Love Fellowship
www.godislovefellowship.com
carl@godislovefellowship.com
530-263-8050

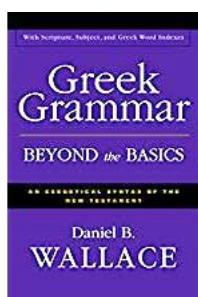
Books on word studies



Theological Dictionary of the New Testament 10-vol set

by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich

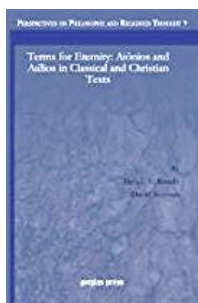
This is of my primary tools for serious study. Kittel is a 10-volume set that covers all Greek words in the New Testament. It is not only a thorough study of each word, but the background of each word in the ancient Greek world is provided. The use of each word in the Septuagint and in the New Testament makes this resource indispensable. I have spent hundreds of hours in it over the past two decades.



Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics

by [Daniel B. Wallace](#)

I took must first year of Greek at Dallas Seminary in 1982. I did a refresher course using Bill Mounce's excellent on-line video course. The for my second-year Greek I did a self-study of Wallace's book. It is often used as a second-year Greek text in many seminaries. I refer to it often. Wallace provides a lot of examples from the New Testament and the book is very well organized.



Terms for Eternity: Aiōnios and Aīdios in Classical and Christian Texts

by Ilaria Ramelli; David Konstan

This book is, without a doubt, the best study on the Greek words *Aiōnios* and *Aīdios* that are used in the NT for "age" and "eternal." Like Kittel (except in much greater detail), Dr. Ramelli spends a lot of time giving the history in ancient Greek of these two important words. She also chronicles how these words are used by Early Christians in their writings. Understanding the meaning and use of these words explains a lot about what is meant by the NT writers who use them in phrases like "eternal life", "eternal fire", "eternal punishment", etc., that have become the basis of the belief in hell and damnation by the Western Christian Church over the past 1500 years. I learned of this book after studying he monumental work on Restoration in the Early Church, which is described under the *Books on Church History* section.

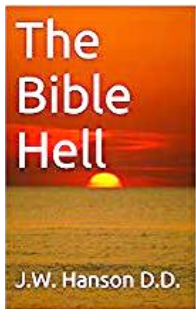


The Greek Word Aion-aionios

by J. W. (John Wesley) Hanson

This book is a layman version of Ramelli's book, Hansen covers the term *aionios*, provides background, meaning and use – but in a more limited way. He also compares it with *aidios* (eternal) and makes his argument why modern-day translations of *aionios* should not be "eternal." Hanson was a 19th century theologian and writer. This is but one of several very good works done by Hansen. This particular presentation goes into great detail about the meaning of the Greek words used for "eternity" and "age" in the NT. This has turned out to be key in understanding many NT passages that use these words (or sometimes misuses and mistranslates them) and thus "imposes" a theology on an unsuspecting reader. Hansen goes into the meanings of these words in the Greek, including how they were used outside the New

Testament (something I spent a lot of time verifying in Kittle and other standard Greek language reference works). He also explains how adjective forms of the word for age are used in the New Testament – something unknown or ignored by many people who study the Bible. It really comes down to whether or not we want to know what is actually true and verifiable, or whether we are satisfied with whatever is commonly presented to us (without any real proof) and is just claimed to be true! Hansen really helped me here!



The Bible Hell

by J.W. Hanson D.D. and Richard Dean

This book goes through all the words in the New Testament that are commonly translated as “hell”: Gehenna, Hades, and Tartarus. Hanson gives the background and meaning of each and why none of these Greek words are legitimately translated as “hell” which is defined as “a place of never-ending torment.”

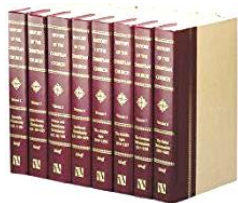
Books on Church History



The Early Church Fathers (38 Vols.)

by [Alexander Roberts](#) (Editor)

The first ten volumes in this set are called the Apostolic Fathers, covering the two centuries after the time of Jesus and his apostles, from about AD 100 to 300. These followers of Jesus were those who learned under the apostles of Jesus and remarked about this in their writings. And they were the succeeding generations after the apostles who remained faithful to what they believed in the midst of great persecution, suffering, and martyrdom. They consistently express in their writings a heart for God and an unwavering faith in Jesus as both their lord and savior. They are remarkably inspiring, in spite of their flaws. Reading this set (not all, but much of it) gave me groundwork for all other readings I have done in church history that followed this period. These Apostolic Fathers were mostly Greek (eastern) as opposed to Latin (western) in their language, culture, and thinking. Their commitment to the idea that God would fully reconcile all people to himself in eternity is clear in the writing of the most prominent of them from that era – namely Clement of Alexandria, Origen, and Gregory. In my reading through this set, when I got to Tertullian I sensed that the tone of writing had changed to harshness of heart. I did not know it at the time, but through later study I discovered that he (Tertullian) was one of the few Latin Fathers of that early era, and was also one of the few committed in his thinking to the idea of eternal punishment on the part of God. Augustine in the 5th century was the next great Latin Father to take up this theme and popularize it.



History of the Christian Church, 8 vols.

by [Philip Schaff](#)

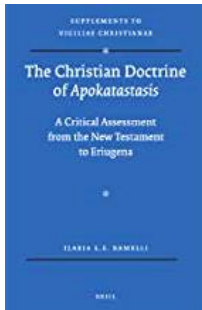
This may very well be the best history of the Christian Church in print. Schaff is a master at history. Enjoyable and easy reading (which is not always the case). It is not, however, without bias since Schaff is a Protestant. Yet, he is a true historian that did a very fair and complete job of covering all periods of church history. In eight volumes and over 7000 pages, Schaff provides a complete and helpful view of where Christians came from, where they are today ... and why!.



History of Dogma

by Neil Buchanan and Adolph Harnack

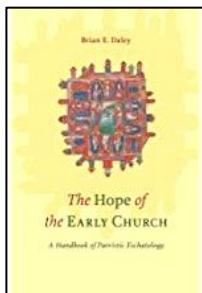
Anyone wanting to understand how and why doctrine in Christianity developed, must read this massive work. Harnack is amazing. He answers so many questions that church history never address. This is because he is focused on doctrine, how it came about, and why. I got into this work because by Gustaf Aulen (see Christus Victor below in the section titled Books on the Atonement) based his thesis that Luther held to a pre-Augustine view of the atonement of Jesus. I spent a lot of time reading his volume on Luther and the Reformation. Someday I hope to read massive amounts of the rest of his work.



The Christian Doctrine of Apokatastasis : A Critical Assessment

by [Ilaria Ramelli](#)

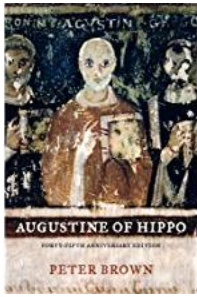
This book has turned out to be absolutely fantastic to read. It is a 900-page chronicle of all the Church Fathers, many of whom held to the full and complete restoration by God of all people in eternity. This was known to them as Apokatastasis, which is the Greek word for restoration. It occurs in the New Testament writings in Luke's account of the Acts of the Apostles (mostly the acts of Peter and Paul). This book was written by a lady scholar at Catholic University named Ilaria Ramelli. It took her a decade to complete this work and she has over 2000 footnotes in it, so it is very well documented! As I read through this work (and I am still working on it), I was compelled to check up on her and see if what she was claiming was really true. This is where the ten-volume set of the Apostolic Fathers (described above) came in handy. (I also have the earlier several volumes in that set in the original Greek, which allows me to check even more carefully when needed). Ms. Ramelli proved to always be accurate when I checked her references. She neither read into any writings of the early fathers, nor did she take them out of context (as far as I could tell). She was also very fair minded about evidence that did not support her thesis – and some of it did not. Her book is clearly an honest effort to present the truth about what the early Church Fathers believed concerning the reconciliation of all things eternally. Overall, this book convinced me, without a doubt, that her thesis is correct. This was in spite of all the empty and ungrounded claims commonly made against Restoration, usually done by quoting other people who have made many assumptions based on very little real information about the early Church Fathers who are usually neglected sadly. This is a book worth spending time in, for anyone who really wants to know what the early Church Fathers believed based on an exhaustive study of all of their writings.



The Hope of the Early Church: A Handbook of Patristic Eschatology

by Brian E. Daley

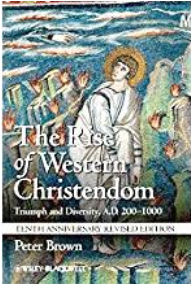
In *The Devil's Redemption* (see the section below titled *Books Supporting Eternal Punishment*) this book is presented as a good resource for concluding that Early Christians predominately held to eternal punishment. I bought it to verify this claim. But it turned out that this was not at all the case. True, this book cites some 60 early Christians and many did hold to eternal punishment. But many also were Annihilationists and Recreationists. A much better and more complete resource for how many Early Christians believed in Full Restoration is Dr. Ilaria Ramelli's book titled *Apokatastasis*. (See the description of her book above). But this book by Daley is an excellent and rather complete source of all Early Christians and all of their views.



Augustine of Hippo: A Biography

by Peter Brown

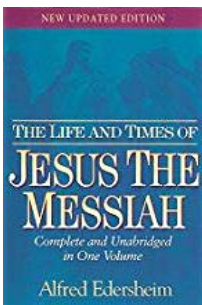
This book was a great help in my research on Augustine. Brown goes into detail about Augustine's early years spent in wayward pleasures and his experiences in Manancianism. This helped explain to my why Augustine formed some beliefs as he did in his later years. Some beliefs were *because* of his background, and other were a *reaction* to those same background experiences. This seems a bit contradictory, but I guess this is true for all of us. It also helped to explain why Augustine moved so severely away from the majority of early Christians in his view on eternal destiny ... from an agreement with (or, at least tolerance) of the Full Restoration view to the one he so adamantly championed (eternal punishment) in City of God near the end of his life.



The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, A.D. 200-1000

by Peter Brown

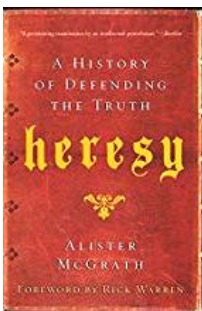
This is yet another great historical work by Peter Brown, but more general in focus (than his book on Augustine described above) on the development of Western Christianity. This book was very helpful in discovering the ways in which Western Christianity turned after the mighty influence of Augustine and the emergence of more and more powerful Popes.



The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah

by [Alfred Edersheim](#)

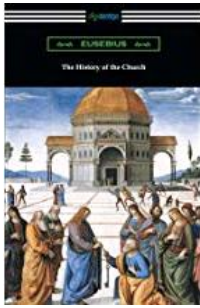
This has got to be one of the greatest historical works of the modern era. It is huge and focuses exclusively on the life of Jesus and the Jewish, Roman, and Greek cultures in which he lived. Edersheim spent nearly a decade researching and writing this book. It is an extremely valuable resource for anyone studying the New Testament and the life of Jesus who is the main focus. This book includes a very interesting appendix on Eternal Punishment. Though Edersheim held to the eternal punishment view, he clearly hesitated and gave a shadow of a doubt about it and even warned about mis understanding the goodness of God when holding this view.



Heresy: A History of Defending the Truth

by Alister McGrath

Most people think a *heretic* is someone who believes different than they do. And, I suppose, to them such people are heretics! But heresy has more to do with how and why someone presents what they believe. The Greek word has to do with causing division. This is true in the New Testament and in Church History. Honest differences of opinions by fellow believers should be respected and celebrated. This is healthy and is in line with Paul's exhortation that we are to determine truth by examining everything carefully (in addition to prayer and seeking the Holy Spirits leading). This book explains what heresy is, chronicles its emergence in church history (Recreationists and Annihilationists were never identified as heretics!), and then discusses the results and effects of heresy. Well worth reading *before* you call fellow believers heretics!

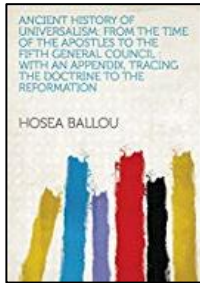


The History of the Church

by [Eusebius](#)

One of the earliest and best historians in the Christian church. What is so great about it is that Eusebius is not a modern-day historian trying to piece together church history. Instead, he is someone who was a part of it and chronicled what he witness and researched. It is not a huge work, at over 300 pages, but it is not skimpy either. Eusebius covers history from the time of Jesus up into his own time-period, in the beginning of the 4th century AD – about 300 years total.

This was a very important time in church history since all foundational beliefs and practices were hammered out before the RC (Western) church emerged into dominance in the middle ages. If you read any church history, you *must* include this one!

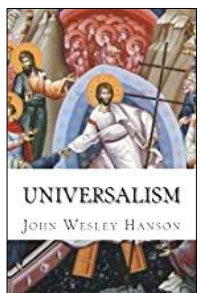


Ancient History of Universalism

by Hosea Ballou

Ballou and Hanson were two of the first Universalists that I came across when I started really looking into this subject after reading Karl Barth. Though neither of these two theologians (from the 19th century) are quite on the high level of notoriety as NT Wright or Barth, still they are solid investigators of church history, and what they have written was very helpful to me. Through reading Ballou (as well as some others) I learned to not too quickly dismiss writers just because

they are not in my “camp” or because they do not hold advanced degrees in education. I found that any written presentation really needs to be evaluated based on what is offered, and how well it can be verified ... not just whether or not I like it, agree with it, or if it makes me feel good. Ballou, like Hansen, after checking into the validity of what he wrote, proved himself to be very reliable! And when people write about history, it is pretty easy to verify or expose what is claimed.

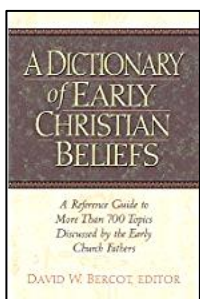


Universalism: The Prevailing Doctrine During the 500 Hundred Years

by John Wesley Hanson

Hanson, like Ballou (above), is not a big name in the history of the Christian church. He wrote after Ballou though his subject matter was similar. Both wrote on the history of universalism in the Christian church. Hansen, a few times, takes some liberties in his conclusions, but I did not find him to do this anymore than other writers of that day, or even today. All authors have some bias and it usually is related to their motive in writing. Hansen clearly wanted to prove that the Christian

church primarily held the belief of full and complete restoration of all humanity by God in eternity. But in checking up on him (as I do all authors that I read) he proved himself to be much more accurate about early church history (in the first 500 years) than anything I ever got from church, seminary, or my personal study in the past thirty years! I am convinced that these early church fathers are ignored, and sometimes even distorted, to justify some the theology that we have inherited from Roman Catholicism over the past 1400 years.



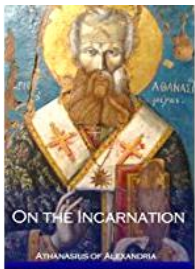
A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs

by [David W Bercot](#)

This is one of many books by David Bercot. Most of his books are about the Early Christians. Bercot is not a trained theologian... which has advantages and disadvantages. Many years ago I quit evaluating books by their cover. In other words, I learned to look beyond (but not ignore) the publisher, background of the writer (what school or seminary attended, if any), what “camp” he or she is in, etc. I started allowing books to speak for themselves. If they bring good solid, well

researched and objective information, then I am interested. Certainly there are many kooky works out there by unqualified people. But, sadly, there is some pretty shabby, unsupported, and terribly biased work by formally trained people who should know better. I learned the hard way to test each writer and book! But often regular (but diligent) people write some good and helpful books. David Bercot is one and Julie Ferwerda is another (Author of *Raising Hell*, described in the section below titled *Books Supporting Restoration*). This particular book by Bercot lists tons of quotes by Early Christians on over 700 topics. At about 700 pages this is a great resource for what the Early Christians believed and wrote.

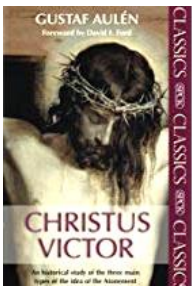
Books on the Atonement of Jesus



On the Incarnation

by Athanasius of Alexandria

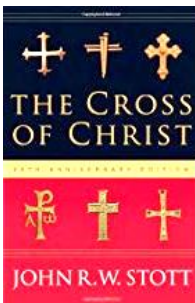
This is not a long book, but it says a lot. And it says a lot about something really important – the *incarnation* (God becoming human). Athanasius lays this out beautifully. And he makes the argument, convincingly, why the incarnation of Jesus is just as much “salvation” as is his death and resurrection. These three work together. It is not a matter of one leading to the other so that the resurrection alone saves. And it is very clear that Athanasius viewed the atonement of Jesus for all humanity, as did most early Christians before Augustine and the rise of the RC church. In some publications of this book (like the one I have) CS Lewis wrote a preface. If you buy this book, look for one with this preface. The link provided above is to such a publication.



Christus Victor

by Gustaf Aulen

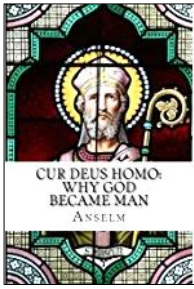
This book was so good and helpful, I read it twice. Aulen caused quite a stir with this book in the first half of the twentieth century. In it he presents several views of the atonement of Jesus. But the view he holds is opposed to Penal Substitutionary Atonement (see the section above titled *Anselm's View of the Atonement* for more information about PSA). His view is that Jesus died to take away the punishment that sin brings on us, not that God brings. This is a very important distinction. Sin is our enemy, not God. God, through Jesus, is our savior. In this book I discovered *The History of Dogma* multi-volume set by Harnack. Aulen argues that Luther held to the view of the atonement that was held by the early church before influence Augustine and Anselm. He uses Harnack's work as his main reference.



The Cross of Christ

by John Stott

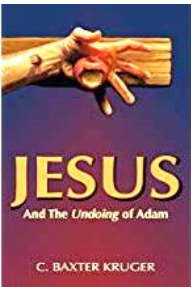
This book is probably the most widely read and accepted modern-day work on the Penal Substitutionary view of the atonement of Jesus. It is very well written and organized (as would be expected from John Stott) and he makes the most convincing presentation in favor of PSA that I have ever read. It is very Biblical and logical.



Cur Deus Homo: Why God Became Man

by Anselm

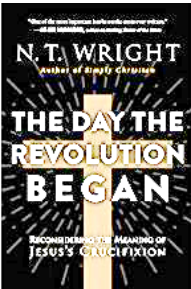
This is probably the best known work by Anselm. To the best of my research and understanding, he is the “father” of Penal Substitutionary Atonement. The Roman Catholic church, the Reformers, and therefore most modern-day protestants and evangelical hold their PSA beliefs based on what Anselm wrote (though most people do not realize this). There is a complete chapter in this booklet dedicated to Anselm and his huge influence on most modern-day views of the atonement. See the section in this booklet titled *Anselm's View of the Atonement* for more detail).



Jesus and the Undoing of Adam

by [C. Baxter Kruger](#)

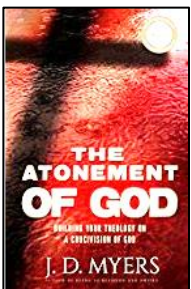
This is yet another fabulous book by Baxter Kruger. (See the section below titled *Books Supporting Restoration* for more books by, and information about, Baxter Kruger). This book focuses on what Jesus accomplished in his atonement for all humanity. It is a great book to read in order to better understand the transcripts of the broadcasts at the beginning of this booklet, which deal with the old and new persons that we were and now are.



The Day the Revolution Began: Reconsidering the Meaning of Jesus's Crucifixion

by [N. T. Wright](#)

NT Wright has so many good books, it is amazing. He writes on the highest scholarly level, yet his layman level books are very readable. This one is all about what happened at 3 PM on the Friday of the crucifixion of Jesus. At the time, on that day ... everything changed because of what Jesus did. He, in a very real sense, started a revolution. And this revolution is based on the beginning of the re-creation of everything by the death of Jesus. Plenty of in-context biblical support in this book. This book will encourage the socks off of you. The optimism that comes from reading this book and understanding it will change your life.



The Atonement of God: Building Your Theology on a Crucifixion of God

by [J. D. Myers](#)

This is a terrific book on the atonement of Jesus. JD holds to the classic view (pre-Augustine) that was predominately held by Early Christians and the Eastern Christian Church. His basic premise is that Jesus came to save humanity from sin and its punishment... not God's. The latter is known as Penal Substitutionary Atonement, which came into full development after Anselm, and is very popular today in Catholic and Protestant churches. But if you want to read an easy to understand presentation of the classic and “non-violent” view of the atonement of Jesus ... this book is for you.

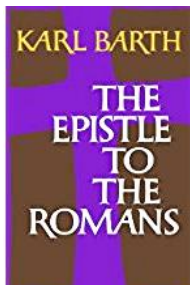
Books Supporting Restoration



Church Dogmatics

by [Karl Barth](#)

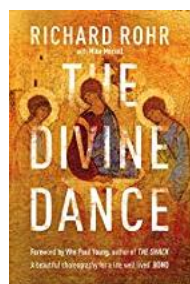
I spent about seven months reading a large amount (about a fourth) of this massive work by Karl Barth. This 12 volume set of over four million words presents the grace of God like no other I have ever read (including Lewis Sperry Chafer). In it Barth always centers everything in Jesus as the elected man by God to be the savior of all mankind. Few resources that I have read in life have been as inspiring and informative as Barth. It is not easy to wade through at times, but it becomes more appreciated over time as you learn to understand all he is saying. Barth, of all the thirteen Systematic Theologies that I have read over the past 40 years, has answered my questions about who God is, and how the redemption of mankind works in light of his mercy and justice, better than anyone. It is no surprise that he has been acclaimed by many, worldwide, as the most influential theologian of the twentieth century. Pope Pius XII described him as “the most important theologian since Thomas Aquinas.” Wow



The Epistle to the Romans

by [Karl Barth](#)

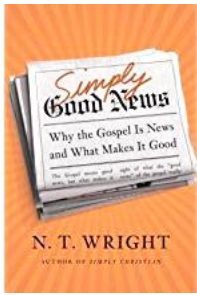
This commentary on Romans was actually one of Barth's earliest works. It had a huge impact on the theological world of the first half of the 20th century. As I recall, it went through many editions and Barth honed-in his somewhat new perspective of Romans through these many editions while keeping his main theme. He clearly teaches the universality of the death and resurrection of Jesus for all humanity. There is no clearer presentation of this as what he wrote concerning Romans chapter 5, about how all humanity fell into condemnation in Adam, and that in the same way the same humanity was represented by Jesus as the new and final Adam, bringing all into righteousness completely by God's grace as a free gift of salvation for all.



The Divine Dance: The Trinity and Your Transformation

by [Richard Rohr](#)

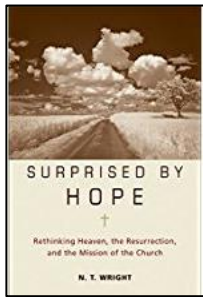
If you have never read Richard Rohr, you are in for a big treat. Rohr is a clever and entertaining writer ... but not that alone. He has amazingly important and deep things to say about God, mankind, and the relationship between the two. Rohr is Catholic, but not a typical one (much like Kung and Balthasar). He clearly believes and presents the full restoration of all things and people with God as the only possible outcome for a God who is love. It was this book that introduced me to a book by Catherine Mowry LaCugna titled, *God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life* (described in the *Other Helpful Books* section below). In Rohr's book he described how he was on a retreat, saw the LaCugna book, started reading it, and could not put it down. The passionate way he described his experience caused me to buy and read this book. And he was right – what a wonderful view of who God is as a Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – and not just some “up there” God!



Why the Gospel Is News and What Makes It Good Simply Good News

by [N. T. Wright](#)

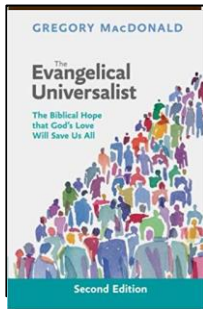
This is another terrific and readable book by NT Wright. This has got to be one of the best presentations of what the true “Gospel of the Grace of God” is, that has ever been published. This became the basis for my teaching through the Gospel of Mark, whereby Mark (according to NT Wright) was not presenting the “good news” as an offer of what God will do for you if (and only if) you do something to earn God’s favor (be it actions of belief). Instead, the Good News according to Mark is the announcement that the victory has already been won by Jesus against death and separation from God. And, what Mark presents in his Gospel is just the beginning of what God will do in eternity as he draws all people to himself to be reconciled to him and live resurrected in a newly created world. All of the miracles Jesus did were a statement that that what he did in healing and restoring is just the beginning of all that He will someday do when all people are raised from the dead.



Surprised by Hope

by [N. T. Wright](#)

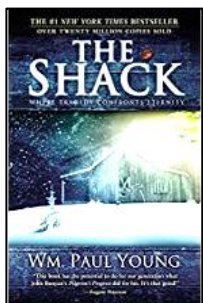
NT Wright not only writes the very top scholarly material, respected by friend a foe alike, but he also writes for the common reader. In this book he challenges traditional thinking concerning the limits (in quantity and quality) that have been placed on the hope we have as humans because of Jesus.



The Evangelical Universalist

by [Gregory MacDonald](#) (Author)

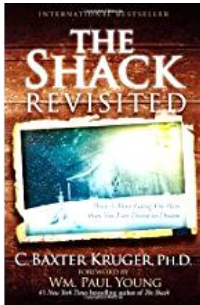
“Gregory MacDonald” (taken from Gregory of the 3rd century AD, and George MacDonald – C.S. Lewis’ mentor) is a name used by Robin Parry to remain anonymous when first releasing this book. “Evangelical Universalism” (God saving all humanity by grace alone through the finished work of Jesus on the cross) is viewed by Roman Catholicism and most churches that emerged from it (Protestant, Reformed, and Evangelical) as heresy and false teaching. I have been labeled a “heretic” and “false teacher”, by long-time and loved fellow-believers, just for holding the position (as a mere opinion) that such love, mercy, grace, and success in salvation by God is *possible!* Amazing! But this is a very good and well thought through book on this subject. I highly recommend it.



The Shack: Where Tragedy Confronts Eternity

by William P. Young

The Shack. What can I say. This is the most amazing book I have ever read. It will make you laugh and make you cry. It was a huge Christian best seller, even though many in Evangelical circles it was proclaimed as heresy. This book was a manuscript Paul Young wrote for his family to read, to communicate what he knew to be true about God who is a wonderful “Father and Daddy”, who loves his creation beyond anything they can think or imagine. It is a story that tells about how God who meets us in the “shack” of our lives – in the most difficult moments and situations -- and shows us who we are and who he is and that he will never ever leave us or forsake us. What a great and wonderful story ... if you can get through the traumatic story that it is. But the lessons are well worth it.

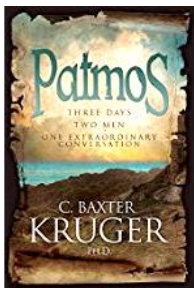


The Shack Revisited

by [C. Baxter Kruger](#)

Baxter Kruger is an acquaintance that I consider a friend. I met him a few years back. It was when I was first looking into Salvation by Grace alone after reading Karl Barth and doing massive studies in the NT on all aspects of salvation. When I met him, I got to hear his story first hand. He had graduated from Reformed Seminary in Jackson, MS. This is the most *reformed* of all reformed seminaries! He told me how in his last year he began to question what he was being told about God, his love, and retribution of unbelievers. He said he took of one semester and spent time in the library (long before the internet) researching the beliefs of the early church fathers. He had come to many of the same conclusions that I had recently come to, independently. Wow! When I heard this I remember saying to him (without thinking), "You are my new best friend!" I realized I had said this because I was hungry for a friend in this matter of who God is. I had recently been declared a heretic and false teacher at my church, for just simply holding this belief as a differing opinion from those in leadership. How sad. But here in Baxter I found a friend who had, independent of me, many years ago, discovered the same wonderful things about God that I had recently discovered.

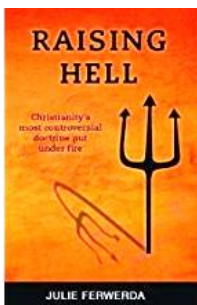
This book explains the theology behind the story in The Shack. It is the theology of the early Christians prior to Augustine and the rise of Roman Catholicism. It is the theology of the Triune God (Father Son and Holy Spirit) that invites all humanity to come into fellowship with these three. It is about not only their love for each other, but their love for humanity ... to the point that they, all together, came into this world in the person of Jesus to save it, restore it, and bring it safely into eternal fellowship with their Creator, forever.



Patmos: Three Days, Two Men, One Extraordinary Conversation

by Kruger PhD, C. Baxter

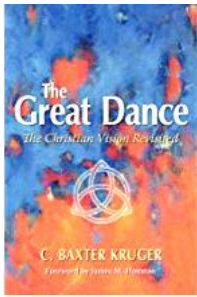
I highly recommend this book. It is a delightful, fictional journey of a modern-day man who is transported in time and location from his own front door to a cave on the island Patmos where the Apostle John was exiled. There he had a three-day conversation with John, while dazed and confused as to how he could possibly be there with John at all. The way Baxter weaves in some great theology and church history into the conversation is masterful. I was both fully entertained, but also (and more importantly) fully informed on so many things about the work of Jesus on the cross, why he came, and what it all means. It was this book that first introduced me to the idea that Jesus came and fully joined humanity, forever, when God became a man on this earth 2000 years ago.



Raising Hell: Christianity's Most Controversial Doctrine Put Under Fire

by [Julie Ferwerda](#)

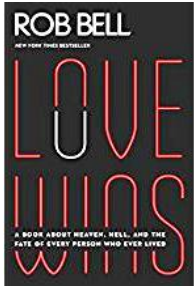
This book is written by a younger woman who travels and lectures. She is neither a theologian or a scholar, and is really just a regular person. But she is a lady who has done her homework! I looked into all that she wrote and she is very solid. She has laid out a great case against the doctrine of hell and done so on a solid Biblical basis. This, like several other books, taught me to evaluate books by their content and the verifiable evidence behind them. Julie passes with flying colors in my estimation. I strongly recommend this book.



The Great Dance: The Christian Vision Revisited

by C. Baxter Kruger

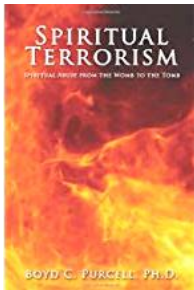
This is an excellent book by Baxter Kruger. It is a heart-felt and accurate description of our “Dance” with God in life. Gotta read it! You will not be disappointed! You can find out a lot more about Baxter and his ministry by visiting: <http://perichoresis.org/>. You can also see many of his very good videos on YouTube. One series worth watching is his “Three Chairs.” Search for it on YouTube and you will find it. I will not tell you what the three chairs are all about, but I promise you will like it!



Love Wins

by [Rob Bell](#)

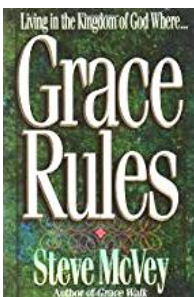
Rob Bell was one of the first in modern times to emerge in the public eye as a Universalist. I remember reading an article in Time Magazine about him while on vacation in Half Moon Bay, California. When I first read it, I knew he was wrong because I had been very well trained in theology and Biblical things. Yet, something in me also knew (as I look back now) that there was something correct in what he was teaching about God being a universal savior. When I finally read Bell’s book, many years later, I began to see the truth in some of what he was saying. However, I remember thinking that he was really hostile toward evangelical Christianity. This is, in my opinion, not a necessary response and so I try to avoid it and be as united with all believers as I can possibly be. It is usually others who restrict unity... not me. I really want to be unified with other believers in our common faith, and not allow differences to divide us. But many will not allow this. Still ... I strive for it!



Spiritual Terrorism: Spiritual Abuse From The Womb To The Tomb

by Boyd C. Purcell Ph.D.

At one point in time, well into my research on Universalism, I remember thinking that in so many ways what has come down to us from 6th century Roman Catholicism (in the form of dogmatic eternal torment on the part of God) is “spiritual terrorism” for so many people ... especially children! And then, there it was ... a book titled Spiritual Terrorism! Wow! I bought and read it. It is written by a pastor/counsellor kind of a guy with a lot of experience. He chronicles not only the biblical evidence in favor of Universalism, but more importantly, he tells of what a spiritual terrorizing impact he has seen on people, especially children, who have been indoctrinated in the teaching that God will, in eternity inflict never ending pain and agony upon unbelievers as pure retribution with no restoring purpose for them whatsoever! This is the horror of billions of people, perhaps most of humanity, kept in existence, for the sole purpose of never ending punishment from which there can never be a break or an exit! It is the worst possible thing imaginable by the human mind, and it is ascribed to the God of the universe who presents himself as what love itself is!

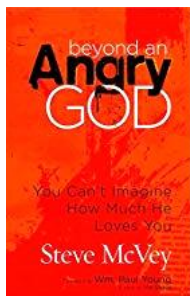


Grace Rules

by [Steve McVey](#)

Steve McVey is a pastor who began looking into Universalism as a result of his realization (like many others) that something in what he was taught (and was teaching) about God was just not right. Many pastors in America have come to doubt what they were taught about eternal punishment by God. However, they cannot admit it publicly (sometimes not even privately, or in their own heart) because their reputation, and therefore their livelihood, depends on them not going “off track” doctrinally. In other words, they really cannot afford to look at the facts objectively. In the case of Steve McVey, he did and it made life as a pastor very difficult for him. But his books and his

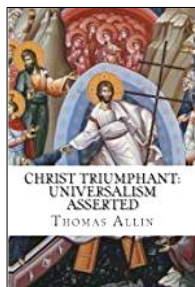
understanding of Grace, and all that it really means, shines through in all that he writes. This is one of many books he has written on Grace. Grace Rules is one of my favorites and is very easy for anyone to read!



Beyond an Angry God

by [Steve McVey](#)

This is Steve McVey's excellent treatment of the subject of God's Wrath. The wrath of God has been misrepresented by many religious people today and over the centuries of church history. Steve reveals the misconceptions and mistranslations concerning God's wrath and anger, and shows clearly how all this fits into the fact that God IS love!



Christ Triumphant: Universalism Asserted

by Thomas Allin

This is a sweet and positive book by the same guy (Thayer) that chronicled the history of Eternal Punishment. This chronicles the overwhelming victory Jesus accomplished on the cross for the whole world ... all humanity ... that he loves so very much.

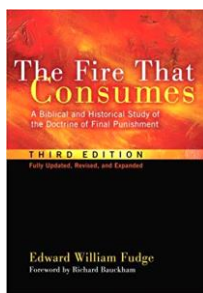
Books with Multiple Views, Moderate Views, or Questioning Views



Hell: Three Christian Views

by [Steve Gregg](#)

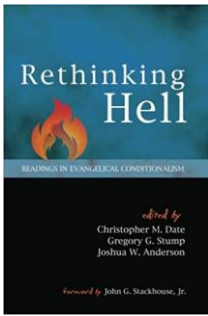
This is a "Three Views" book about hell. In it author and Christian radio talk show host, Steve Greg, does a super job of presenting all three major views of eternal destiny of unbelievers. He does such a good job that I honestly could not tell which view he personally holds. It was one of the first books I read on this subject, long before I even read Barth. But I think I read this book after I read the Time Magazine article on Rob Bell (see the next book). This book was given to me by a friend and asked for my "take" on it. It took me a while to get around to reading it because I already knew what I believed and why. But when I did finally read it I was amazed at how little I really knew. This book was my first exposure to the reconciliation views of early Christians. I remember reading and thinking that I had better look into this and see if there was any truth to it all. Turns out there was a lot to it! More than I ever imagined.



The Fire That Consumes

by [Edward Fudge](#)

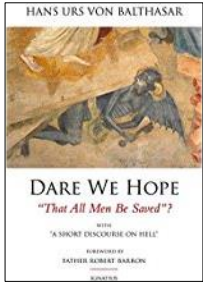
This is one of the best books on Annihilationist. I bought it because I kept finding it referenced in many other books. I was particularly struck by Fudge's complete and accurate section of Early Christians. Since Fudge does not hold to eternal punishment, he is less biased in favor of it. He also deals with what Jesus meant by "fire."



Rethinking Hell

by [Christopher M. Date](#) (Editor), [Gregory G. Stump](#) (Editor)

Like Fudge's book (above) this is an excellent book presenting Annihilationism. But unlike Fudge's book, this book is a collection of essays by modern-day theologians including: Fudge, John Stott, Pinnock, and Phillip Hughes – about a dozen in all. No slouches on this list! This book was recommended by a pastor friend of mine. He recommended well. It is a treasure of good information on this view!

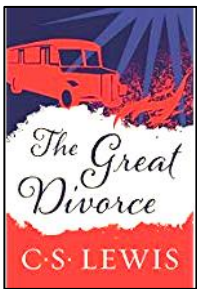


Dare We Hope That All Men Be Saved?

by [Hans Urs von Balthasar](#)

This book caused a stir in the RC church when it came out in the mid 80's. In it Balthasar goes about as far as the RC church will allow by claiming that it is *possible* that God will eventually save all humanity. He makes so many good arguments that it is hard to not conclude that he believed in *Restoration*, but did not want to admit it publicly to avoid worse criticism than he got. In *The Devil's Redemption* (see the section below titled *Books Supporting Eternal Punishment*)

McClymond devotes over half of his sixty-page chapter on "Eternal Hope" to Balthasar. Mc Clymond and Balthasar, both being Roman Catholic, I can see (after reading this book) why Mc Clymond shows such concern and spends so much more time analyzing Balthasar than all others in his chapter combined!

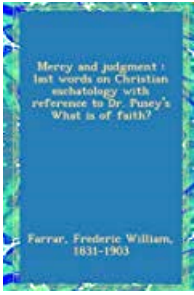


The Great Divorce

by [C. S. Lewis](#)

There is considerable controversy about whether or not CS Lewis believed in eternal punishment. But this book seems to make it clear that he did not. But Lewis was not a universalist either, nor was he an Annihilationist. So where do we place CS Lewis in the spectrum of views on eternal destiny? In a previously produced booklet titled *Full Restoration of All Humanity as a Free Gift of God's Love and Grace* (see the GILF Resources section near the end of this booklet) I placed him in a category all his own that I called "Abandonment." In that booklet I wrote:

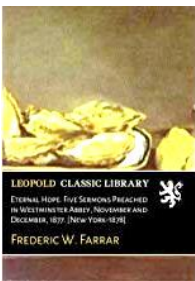
C.S. Lewis seemed to hold this Abandonment view and wrote a book about it called The Great Divorce. In his book he describes a bus ride from hell to heaven. This is, of course, just fiction; but Lewis wrote many fiction books in order to teach spiritual principles – just as he did with The Chronicles of Narnia. In this bus ride to heaven from hell, people can visit and even stay there if they want to, but most choose not to stay because they prefer hell over heaven. As a result, they get back on the bus and go back to hell. The book 10 ends with people getting farther and farther away from each other because they can't stand each other and they end up in outer darkness and isolation. But the idea here for Lewis is that God is not the direct cause of their torment and invites all to come to heaven, any time they want even after death, because God is always there for them. However, God "abandons" these people to their own choice of hell over heaven. Well-known theologian F.F. Bruce also aligned himself with this view.



Mercy and judgment : last words on Christian eschatology with reference to Dr. Pusey's What is of faith?

by Frederic William Farrar

Farrar's work is a pillar in the defense of Universalism among writers of the 19th century. I kept coming across his name in other works that I was reading and eventually got around to this book. Much of my research progressed from one classical work to another by means of reference in some previous work. It is like a chain of resources that fans out, each new one yielding yet another source to examine. At nearly 500 pages, Farrar's work on Mercy and Judgment is very thorough. He focuses his work on both history and examination of New Testament writings. He does a great job of demonstrating how mercy (and especially judgment) have been terribly misunderstood, and sometimes misrepresented, in light of both the Bible and early church history. However, Farrar is careful to not claim to be a universalist. This is why I have placed this book in this *Moderate Views* category. But this also demonstrated to me that he is a very fair-minded source on this subject of mercy, judgment, and eternal punishment on the part of God.

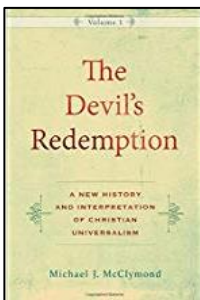


Eternal Hope

by [Frederic William Farrar](#) (Author)

Farrar's book on Mercy and Judgment led me to his book on Eternal Hope. This is a very positive (and rightly so) presentation of the hope all humanity has in both the eternal and infinite love of God, and the expression of that love in the life and death of Jesus as the representative of the entire human race.

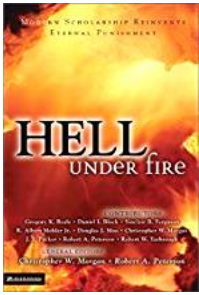
Books Supporting Eternal Punishment



The Devil's Redemption: A New History and Interpretation of Christian Universalism

by Michael J. McClymond

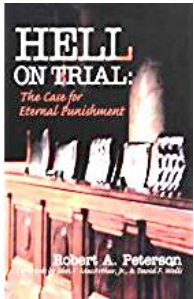
My Jesuit-trained evangelical friend (who I mention in the description of Hans Kung's book on *Justification* below) told me about this book. It is the latest, biggest, most complete, and best presentation *against* all forms of universalism. It is a massive two-volume set and it covers every aspect and position of universalism from the beginning of the church into the modern age. However, most of the book covers universalism from the Enlightenment onward. The presentation from the Early Church period is a bit lacking. But considering the scope and purpose of this book it is not an unreasonable balance. For a more complete and accurate presentation of what the Early Church believed, see Dr. Ilaria Ramelli's massive work titled *Apokatastasis* (the restoration of all things) in *Books on Church History*, above.



Hell Under Fire: Modern Scholarship Reinvents Eternal Punishment

by Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson

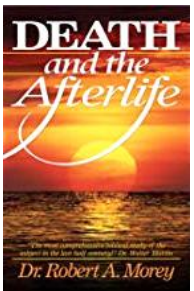
This is a terrific book to read if you want essays written by current theologians presenting the case against universalism. J I Packer, Douglas Moo, and Sinclair Ferguson and just three of the nine contributors to this collection of essays.



Hell on Trial: The Case for Eternal Punishment

by [Robert A. Peterson](#)

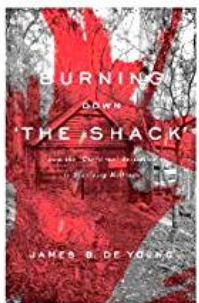
This is a layman's level presentation against universal salvation. Peterson lists all the major passages from the New Testament that are commonly used to argue *against* the idea that God saves all humanity. I used his very complete list in this book to double-check that I had included all New Testament passages that deal with *judgement* in my section (in this booklet) titled *The Judgment of God ... Love in Action*.



Death and the Afterlife

by [Robert A. Morey](#)

This is, perhaps, the best known modern-day classic that defends eternal punishment. Morey does a good job, uses reason and scripture to make his arguments. However, I found him to be weak on the Early Church evidence. In his appendix on quotes from early Christians, he quotes primarily Justin Martyr and a couple of others. But there are so many other Early Christians that clearly held to Restoration. These are revealed clearly in Dr. Ilaria Ramelli's massive work titled *Apokatastasis* (the restoration of all things) in *Books on Church History*, above. Additionally, see the section in this booklet titled *Early Church Writers on Restoration* where is list quotes from early Christians based on Dr. Ramelli's book.



Burning Down 'The Shack'

by [James B. De Young](#)

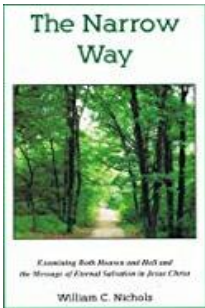
This book is a *must read* if you have read *The Shack* (by Paul Young) and want the other side against it. De Young is a professor at Western Seminary and is well acquainted with this subject. He uses reason, the Bible, and his vast knowledge of theology to attempt to discredit the theology of the Shack. However, there were two things that I observed when reading this book. First, as a long-time friend of Paul Young, Prof De Young seemed to take undue advantage of personal knowledge about Paul Young in previous church situations that he deemed negative. I thought such arguments were not needed in order to present a view contrary to the Shack and would have preferred that he stayed away from the personal divulging of information. It was on no real help and actually detracted from his otherwise reasonable objections about The Shack. But also, it occurred to me that DeYong's book, good as it is, and will relate to a few thousand pastors and laymen readers, it pales in comparison to how the Shack has connected in a very special way with some 25 million readers who saw something of the heart and grace of God in a very special way.



Erasing Hell: What God Said About Eternity, and the Things We've Made Up

by [Francis Chan](#) and Preston Sprinkle

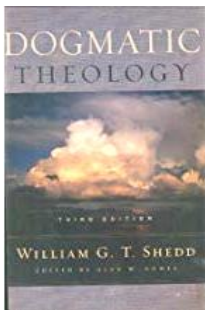
A good friend of mine had bought this book as a result of their concern for all the study and reading I was doing in *salvation by grace alone that results in the restoration of all humanity*. I borrowed the book and found it so interesting I bought my own copy so I could mark it up (as I do all my books!). What interested me early on in the book was Chan's lament that his dying grandmother was destined to eternal punishment as a result of her unbelief in Jesus. He said it made him sick and made him hate this doctrine that was horrible beyond anything else he knew of. Yet ... he continued on and wrote a book to defend what he so greatly abhorred about God. It became an early insight to the dilemma most Christians face, not only about eternal punishment of loved ones, but their own struggle trusting a God of Love who can do such terrible things.



The Narrow Way

by William Nichols

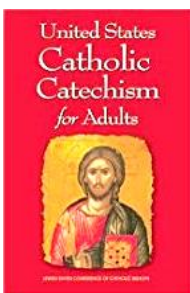
This is a harsh book. Nothing fun or enjoyable about it whatsoever. But I gotta hand it to Nichols for giving the eternal punishment view "straight as hell" to his readers! He pulls no punches and does not soft peddle it any way.



Dogmatic Theology

by William G.T. Shedd

Though I have read and carefully studied a dozen Systematic Theologies over the past forty years, I am including this one in my list of resources because of Dr. Shedd's lengthy and intense presentation in his chapter titled "Hell." This chapter is about 60 pages and contains three main parts: Historical, Biblical, and Rational arguments supporting eternal punishment. There is also a lengthy section of supplements. The *Rational Arguments* section was of most interest to me. In it Dr. Shedd describes in detail the nature of punishment and retribution. He also lists five specific rational arguments in support of eternal punishment. I found Dr. Shedd's chapter on *Hell* to be one of the best and most thorough descriptions of the commonly held view of eternal punishment that I have encountered.

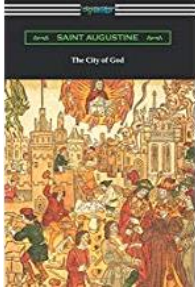


United States Catholic Catechism

by US Conference of Catholic Bishops

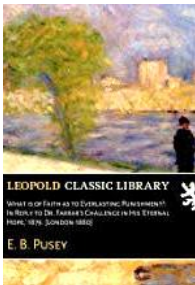
A friend of mine, who was once an evangelical and became a Catholic after looking into everything carefully and praying sincerely, gave me this book. He was down-sizing to a smaller home and was cleaning things out. He told me he thought it might help me in my historical research on eternal destinies. This is the official and definitive source of doctrine for the Roman Catholic Church. It includes updated improvements produced in the 1990's under Pope John Paul II. It is a huge work of more than 700 pages. As I browsed through it I found two kinds of information. There was the solid, historic and Biblical information that comes out of good objective, sincere, and honest scholarship. The RC church has many such scholars. But I also found a great deal of added doctrines that the RC Church would claim to be true due to its belief that the teachings added but tradition over the past 1500 years (not 2000) are authoritative. And, I am sure, such additions are indeed authoritative for the RC Church. But Protestants, the Eastern Church (which has co-existed with the Western Church from the very beginning of Christianity), and many modern-day Christians who

claim the Early Church before Augustine to be their authority --- all of these groups do not accept such “additions of tradition” to be authoritative. So, I read with great interest the areas in this Catechism that deal directly with Biblical theology and ancient church history (before all the RC additions). I found these to be quite good and helpful to my study of eternal destiny. Many RC scholars (today and in history) have certainly done their homework and have articulated most of the fundamental truths of Christianity with a great deal of accuracy and clarity. This realization was confirmed by my reading of Hans Kung’s book on justification (see the description of this book in the section above titled Books on Justification).



The City of God by Saint Augustine

This book is probably the most influential book in the history of Western Christianity (which includes Roman Catholicism, Protestants, Reformers, and modern-day evangelicals). Not only is it a very large work that took Augustine over a decade to produce near the end of his life, it is also extremely detailed, historical and philosophical. It showcases not only the sheer genius of Augustine but the breadth and depth of his knowledge in some many areas of thinking (secular and religious). Interestingly, Augustine had a pretty good idea of what kind of book this would be and what kind of impact it would probably have on the Christian world. He was so aware he voiced his concern that his work would be overly accepted and overly applied equal to or in place of Scripture. And, to a great degree his fears came about, but decades and centuries after his death. Augustine was a man with gifts of oratory and articulation clearly above his peers. He wrote extensively. His other great and heavily influential work was his autobiography titled *Confessions*. But it is in *City of God* that Augustine devotes two large chapters (XX and XXI) to the subject of eternal punishment. And he does so dogmatically and in great detail. This sent the Western Church of into a direction away from the less severe views of Restoration and Annihilation that were so widely held before Augustine. In fact, he once complained at how few Christians share his belief in eternal punishment when he was writing *City of God*. (For more detailed information on Eternal Punishment in *The City of God*, see the section above titled *Augustine’s View of Hell*.)

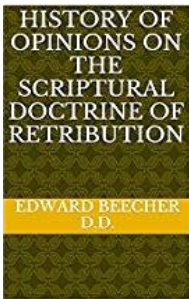


What is of Faith as to Everlasting Punishment?: (In Reply to Dr. Farrar) by E. B. Pusey

I read this book because it was a direct response to Farrar’s book on *Mercy and Judgment*. (see Farrar’s two books in the section above titled *Books with Multiple Views, Moderate Views, or Questioning Views*.) In this book Pusey attempts to refute Farrar’s “hopeful universalism” position that he so eloquently and thoroughly presented. After reading both, Pusey seemed to be no match for Farrar.

Books on the history and origin of hell

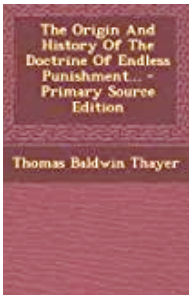
When I first began looking into the subject of hell, after I did a complete study on the meanings of the biblical words translated as hell and the usage of them in the Bible (see the section in this book titled *Stubborn Facts About Hell*), I naturally wanted to know where the belief in eternal punishment came from and when. The following books were essential in answering these questions.



[History of Opinions on the Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution](#)

by Edward Beecher D.D.

Beecher was an unexpected surprise discovery. I am not sure exactly how I came across it. But once I started reading it I found it contained a great deal of good information on the history of eternal punishment, much like that found in Thayer's book described below.

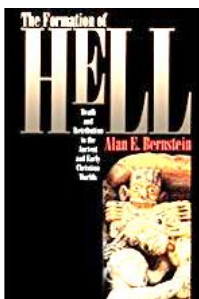


[The Origin And History Of The Doctrine Of Endless Punishment](#)

by Thomas Baldwin Thayer

I forgot how I came across this book, but I am really glad I did. It chronicles the long history of the doctrine of retribution (punishment with no redemptive purpose). Thayer clearly demonstrates how retribution originated in Egyptian paganism, was totally missing from the OT writings, then emerged in the Apocryphal writings of the Maccabean period (in the Book of Enoch and the Apocalypse of Ezra). I have verified these claims by doing my own research based on what he wrote. He also shows how retribution is missing from the New Testament and from early church history until the

rise of the RC church in the 6th century.



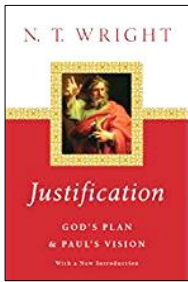
[The Formation of Hell: Death and Retribution in the Ancient and Early Christian Worlds](#)

by [Alan E. Bernstein](#)

I discovered this book only recently. It is a little hard to read but Bernstein has done his homework. He goes through Egypt, Babylonia, Greece and Rome before dealing with ancient Judaism, the New Testament Christianity, and then the Early church (after Jesus and the Apostles). He covers it all and exposes clearly the history of how hell and eternal punishment originated and developed.

Books on Justification

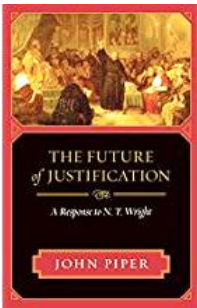
A few years ago I dedicated a whole year to studying the subject of Justification. Man oh man, I had no idea what I was getting into. I began with NT Wright's book titled Justification. This let me down an unexpected path through many books. (The descriptions below tell this journey). The variety of opinions and views from true scholars (like Piper and NT Wright), along with a variety of views held throughout church history makes this subject extra challenging. It got confusing and even discouraging at times. But I plowed on through and did not give up. Though it was one of the most difficult studies I have ever done, it was also the most interesting and helpful too! But when all was said and done, I had two huge "take-aways." First, justification is not the same as salvation. Salvation delivers us from something. Justification makes us into something. Big difference. One (justification) involved us to some degree, by faith. The other (salvation) is by grace alone and is a free gift from God totally unearned by us. And this leads to my second "take-away." Our faith has no merit with God, whatsoever, even though faith is important and without it we miss out on almost everything as to fellowship with God.



Justification: God's Plan & Paul's Vision

by [N. T. Wright](#)

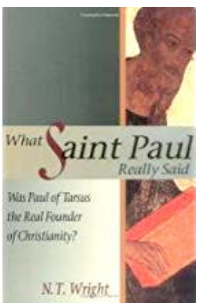
This is one of many great books I have read by NT Wright. NT Wright is a top notch contemporary scholar. He is well-known and greatly respected throughout the world of Biblical scholarship. More NT Wright books are presented below. This book on Justification is excellent. John Piper wrote a book to refute Wright's work in about 2003 (see below), but Wright responded to Piper in his mammoth set on Christianity (described further below). It was fun to read the on-going "debate" between these two very well respected Bible scholars.



The Future of Justification: A Response to N. T. Wright

by [John Piper](#)

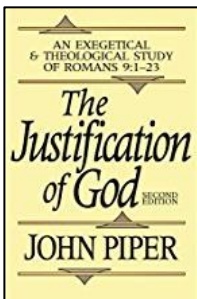
Having started with NT Wright's book on Justification, and realizing that he was answering Piper in this book, I ordered and read this book. Piper is a plenty able scholar and writer and he does a great job of presenting the modern Evangelical view of Justification (which is quite different from the view held by NT Wright). But in reading this book, I could tell that Piper was responding to a book NT Wright had previously written in 1997, so I ordered and read it (see below).



What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?

by [N. T. Wright](#)

This is a book NT Wright wrote in about 1997 about what Paul had in mind when he wrote about Justification in his many letters. But like the above books, I could tell that he was responding to something Piper wrote previously on the subject of Justification. So I ordered and read Piper's book. (see below)



The Justification of God: An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:1-23

by [John Piper](#)

This book on Justification by Piper in about 1993 seems to have started a debate in books with NT Wright that carried on into the 2000-teens. As I read this book I was surprised that Piper would base justification on Romans 9 where the word itself never appears! Why would he not base it on Roman 3 where the subject is more clearly and directly addressed? However, he did, later in his book, present justification in Romans 3. But still, it was curious that he would present first and foremost Romans 9 in his book at 220 pages of about 250 total! (Only 30 pages dedicated to Romans 3!). Then it came to me. Of course. Piper, being a very dedicated Calvinist, bases all of his theology on the *Sovereignty of God* and Romans 9 is the key passage for this. But this is OK. It is certainly his prerogative to select such a basis. It is indeed a good one! But it is also a very different basis than what NT Wright has chosen as his basis for his theology. And this is what makes for such an interesting and helpful debate!



Christian Origins and the Question of God (4 Book Series)

by [N. T. Wright](#)

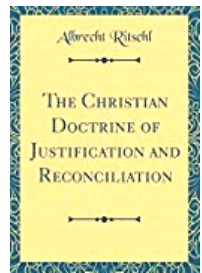
This is NT Wright's massive four-volume set on Christianity. It has caused quite a stir in scholarly circles and seminaries -- a lot like Karl Barth did with his writings in the early part of the last century. I am only part way through this set, but has been amazing so far. In volume 1 he lays important groundwork. Volume 2 is on the person of Jesus. Volume 3 focuses on the Resurrection (just as Paul and all of the NT does). His massive volume 4 is on Paul and his theology -- too big to get into one bound book. It is Wright's somewhat unique perspective on Paul that has caused a stir. In it he answers Piper in enormous detail (though his sole purpose was not to answer Piper). He has been working on this set for some twenty years! Worth reading if you have the time and patience. But I can tell you that you have to read slowly though this stuff. Wright packs a lot into everything he writes. I am always amazed. And organized? Oh ya!



Iustitia Dei: A History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification

by [Alister E. McGrath](#)

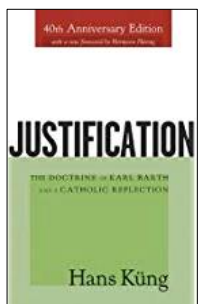
In NT Wright's book on Justification (see above) he makes many references to McGrath's very complete history of Justification (*Iustitia Dei* -- Latin for "Righteousness of God"). So, it was a no-brainer to order it and read it. But what a task! He covers the topic of Justification from the Early Church all the way into the modern era. However, this two-volume set (shown here in one volume) is absolutely essential for an understanding of this very difficult subject.



The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation

by [Albrecht Ritschl](#)

Until Mc Grath's book on Justification (see above) Ritschl's book was the best thing available on the history of Justification. Ritschl is a 19th century writer and it is a large and very complete volume. But it only covered they history of justification from the Reformation onward. McGrath (thankfully) covers all of the history of the church.

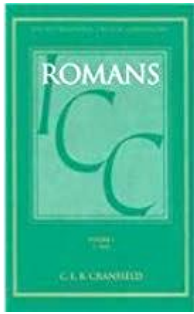


Justification: The Doctrine of Karl Barth and a Catholic Reflection

by Hans Küng

This book was recommended to me by a friend that knew I had just finished my year-long study of justification. My friend is a Jesuit-trained evangelical. Go figure -- but he came out of Catholicism and he maintained his knowledge and mindset of a Jesuit. And I am so thankful for him. He has been both a wonderful discussion buddy, but also a great source of good books that I may never have come across on my own. This Hans Kung book was one of his best recommendations. It was so good ... I read it twice. The second time through underlined and outlined the whole book.

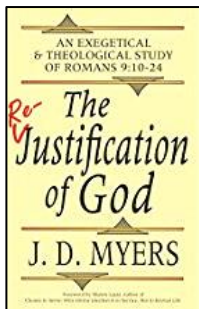
In it Kung compares Karl Barth's view of justification with that of Catholicism as found in the Council of Trent. Man oh man, what an education! I discovered that RC scholars (not the parishioners or priests) hold a lot of common ideas with Reformed theologians! Certainly not in every way, but much more that I would have ever guessed. And some of the difference that do exist are other just a difference if definition of terms. I affectionately call it my "Rosetta Stone" that translates between Catholic and Protestant views of justification. And, indeed, it is! But even more importantly, Kung stated the views of Barth so well, that even Barth wrote and told him that he said many things better than Barth himself felt that he did. So it ends up being a great commentary on Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics, which is no easy read. I very much recommend this book.



A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans

By C. E. B. Cranfield

I own and used many commentaries in my study of this subject of eternal destiny, but in doing so one name kept popping up. It was Cranfield and his critical work on Romans. As a result, I spent a lot of time in his sections where he deals with justification – especially in chapter three. But his exposition of Romans 9 was also helpful in sorting through John Piper's position presented in his book titled *Justification*. But one big disappointment for me was that even the great Cranfield did not have final answers on this subject of justification and often “hedged his bets” as he expressed many times what he had to admit was only his opinion. It is not that I did not realize that this is the case for all scholars (that they are not really very far above us in knowledge), but like many people I seek to find real answers that I can count on. It was great reminder that we all must set our favorite books aside, turn to our Lord in prayer and humility, and ask Him to show us what the truth is on any matter we are trying to resolve in our personal life or our study!

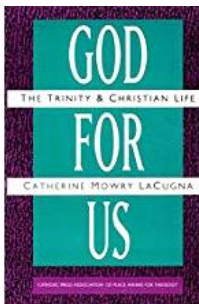


The Re-Justification of God

by [J. D. Myers](#) and Shawn Lazar

One other book on justification worth noting. I came across this book because its cover resembles Piper's book on *Justification* (described above). JD Myers is working on a huge book to answer Piper in detail. This short booklet just presents his argument for the meaning of Romans 9. In it he proposes that it is about “election to serve” rather than “election to save.” This is a conclusion I came to quite some time ago after reading Karl Barth's volume on *Election* in his huge *Church Dogmatics* set (described previously). So if you want a quick explanation as to why Romans 9 is not really about salvation (as is so commonly assumed) take a look at this book.

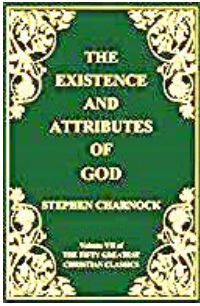
Other helpful books



God for Us: The Trinity and Christian Life

by [Catherine Mowry LaCugna](#)

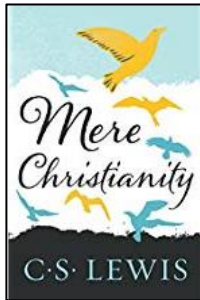
This book was brought to my attention by reading Richard Rohr's book titled *The Divine Dance*. Early in his book he tells of a retreat he attended and happened to pick up this book to read. As he described his experience in reading it and his renewed view of God as a triune God who not only loves His world, but desires to have fellowship with His creation in the most intimate and personal way, I was intrigued enough to purchase this book and read it myself. What a gem! LaCugna has not only done her historical homework but has expressed very clearly how the church lost its way as to the personal aspect of who God is, rendering Him a cold, “up there” being that is to be worshiped rather than enjoyed. This is a somewhat academic book with a lot of defining terms (which is badly needed), but when taken in and understood it is a refreshing and personal view of the God who is also our very personal and intimate savior!



The Existence and Attributes of God

by Stephen Charnock

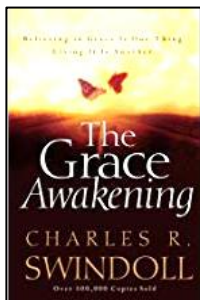
When my children were still at home, I told them, several times, to make sure they keep these “purple books.” What I was referring to was my two volume set of Charnock’s Attributes of God. I read through this set some 30 years ago having discovered it to be the very best and most complete presentation of who God is from a solid Biblical perspective. Charnock is an old 19th century writer and the longevity and popularity of his work proves how special it is. I found it to be something I could not read in a hurry. Charnock is not only Biblical but presents God so deeply and passionately one has to pause and think a lot when reading his in-depth descriptions of Who God is in all His perfections. He has a chapter on Worship early on in his work that sets the tone for all that follows. This set, if you have time and discipline to wade through it over a long period of time, is well worth your effort!



Mere Christianity

by [C. S. Lewis](#)

This has got to be one of the greatest, all-around best presentation of Christianity ever produced. Lewis demonstrates his genius, insight, and balance (avoiding petty extremes) in this fine classic work. I have given away this book more than all others. Believers and unbelievers alike can learn from and appreciate what true and historic Christianity is.

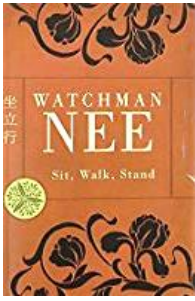


The Grace Awakening

by Charles Swindoll

Though Chuck Swindoll is not a Universalist (in the sense that all people will eventually be fully reconciled to God), he is a big advocate of Grace and how essential an understanding of it is in order to defeat the ill-effects of legalism in the lives of so many Christians. Here is a great quote from Swindoll’s book:

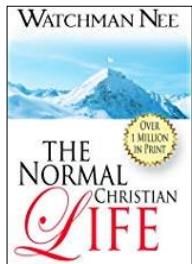
There are killers on the loose today. A lot of them carry Bibles and appear to be clean-living, nice-looking, law-abiding citizens. They kill freedom, spontaneity, and creativity; they kill joy as well as productivity. They kill with their words and their pens and their looks. They kill with their attitudes far more often than with their behavior. Their intolerance is tolerated. Their judgmental spirits remain unjudged. Their bullying tactics continue unchecked. And their narrow-mindedness is either explained away or quickly defended. The bondage that results would be criminal ... were it not so subtle and wrapped in such spiritual-sounding garb. Millions are living their lives in shame, fear, and intimidation who, instead, should be free, productive individuals. The tragedy is they think this is the way they should be. They have never known the truth that will set them free. Millions are living their lives in shame, fear, and intimidation who, instead, should be free, productive individuals. To show grace is to extend favor or kindness to one who doesn't deserve it and can never earn it. Receiving God's acceptance by grace always stands in sharp contrast to earning it on the basis of works. Every time the thought of grace appears, there is the idea of its being undeserved. In no way is the recipient getting what he or she deserves. Favor is being extended simply out of the goodness of the heart of the giver.



Sit, Walk, Stand

by [Watchman Nee](#)

This was the first book by Nee that I read back in the 1970's as a young Christian. It had a major impact on my thinking. Nee starts out by saying that "Christianity does not begin with a big *do*, but with a big *done*!" Wow, I had never even thought of that. What a load off of me if what Jesus did for me was complete and I could start my journey with Him from there. Nee goes on and follows his book title, demonstrating that we need to *sit* (in the finished work of Jesus) before we *walk* in Him and with Him. But then he also relates how we must *walk* with Jesus daily before we can take any kind of *stand* for Him. How backwards this is from our natural thinking. But it is, once again, what grace is all about. All that we are and do is based squarely in who God is and what he has done as a finished work in Jesus. Incidentally, this Sit-Walk-Stand sequence comes directly from the three main subjects presented (in this order) in Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus (Letter to the Ephesians).



The Normal Christian Life

by [Watchman Nee](#)

Watchman Nee has such a heart for his savior and such special insight to the life of a Christian based on the true meaning of grace. What struck me most about this book, when I read it some three decades ago, was that he reached a point in his book where he challenges the reader that if you are feeling that you just cannot live this *Christian Life* ... then you are ready to realize that it is true, you can't, and you are also ready to trust God completely to live it through you! This is what grace is all about, and also what the transcripts of the broadcasts at the beginning of this booklet are trying to relate – that we can only live in the new person that we now are in Jesus and can never succeed in trying to improve the old person that we were outside of Jesus!

This list of resources is only one small portion (75+) of my larger library that I have acquired over the past 40 years of study (about 1000 volumes). So this small collection is in no way better (or more important) than other books I have acquired over the years. But this is a collection that has been more recently attained, and represents an area of thinking, study, and evidence that I was unaware of until only a few years ago. I had always prided myself in being "widely read" in theology, history, and philosophy. So when I came across this body of information on the Restoration view (eventual salvation of all by grace alone), which is actually quite vastly represented currently and historically, I had to ask myself, "Why I did not know about, and had not come across, such information in the past?"

The answer is that, actually, I was exposed to some of this information many times over the past forty years. But since I was deeply ingrained in a particular theological perspective and approach in determining truth (dispensational, Calvinistic, evangelical), I fell into the age-old problem of "rejecting without examining" anything that did not agree with what was already held to be true. This is not only a dangerous mind set, but one that is foreign from the writings of the followers of Jesus who said things like, "Examine everything carefully, and cling to whatever proves to be good" (as a result of such a process). These writers of the New Testament never encouraged anyone to *blindly* trust the opinions of others – not even those in ecclesiastical authority!

Each person is personally accountable to God for discovering and determining the truth by using prayer, their brain, logic, reason, emotion, common sense, and fair-mindedness with which God has endowed each human being. It has even been recorded in the Old Testament writings that God invites everyone to “come and let us reason together.” Wow! God is a reasonable God who does all he can to reveal the truth to anyone who will take the time, effort, and unfiltered exposure to all that is available to them. And today, with the internet and all its reaches into truth and falsehood, there is no excuse for not coming to good conclusions based on solid and verifiable evidence. But a person has to *want* to know the truth and be *willing* to change their beliefs. And they have to want this more than what comes naturally to human beings, which is to “not have to change”, and instead be assured by someone else that what they *already* believe is true and needs no examination or verification.

Though this list of resources is only a small part of my library and are resources I have found to be flawed in many ways, I also found an agreement within them from the highest scholar (and there are many) to the most common writers (and many of them also). This agreement is that they all see a God of the *highest moral excellence*, wanting only the very best for all his creation, and committed to bringing every lost soul into full and absolute reconciliation with himself in eternity. Many books in this list of resources are scholarly works. They are harder to read for many people, but are usually better documented (but not always) and deal with issues on a higher and more detailed level. But there are also many books in this list that are lower level, academically, and generally easier to read for most people. Both kinds of books are needed. I enjoy reading both.

These resources listed above are far from comprehensive. But they are a fairly complete list of what I have read and studied over the past several years, in addition to a great deal of direct in-depth study of the Old and New Testament writings. My goal was to try to understand what was taught historically by the Jews, by Jesus, by his followers and apostles, and by the early church in the first generations of Christianity. My target subject was God’s plan of redemption for humanity, the fate of people in eternity, and God’s heart and disposition toward His creatures as those who have been made in his very own likeness. This seems like one of the most important subjects we can ever study or consider, because the implications and results are forever.