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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### *HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES*

Robert Bendetto, Darrell L. Gruder, and Donald K. McKim  
Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press (1999)  
508 pages, cloth, \$79.50

This handsome, well-bound, and useful reference volume is the work of three scholars affiliated with theological seminaries which profess to be Reformed institutions. All are connected with churches aligned with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, an ecumenical body in which liberal religious persuasions predominate. The authors have, nevertheless, provided substantial coverage of historically orthodox persons and institutions from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Their material relative to the twentieth century slights conservative figures and movements. There are no entries, for example, about Louis Berkhof or Carl McIntire, and even large conservative schools of theology such as Calvin Theological Seminary, Reformed Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary receive no attention. There is no specific information about denominations such as the Christian Reformed Church, the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church in the United States, or the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North America.

In spite of weaknesses due to omissions, this is a valu-

able book. It begins with a chronology of Reformed history from 1500 to 1997 which cites major events all around the world in which Reformed churches or individuals were involved. The term *Reformed*, as the authors have employed it, includes Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Anglicans, and some Baptists, as well as those ecclesiastical movements which use the label directly. Entries appear in alphabetical sequence, with persons, geographic regions, church bodies, doctrines, and events arranged in that order. Many items are very brief, while others are substantial. The coverage of geographic regions in which Reformed churches have been at work is extensive and is one of the best features of the book.

Among the schools of modern theology, the authors of this *Historical Dictionary* appear to have a preference for the neo-orthodoxy of Karl Barth and Emil Brunner. In some entries the authors reveal their biases by citing the higher criticism of Scripture and Darwinian evolution as *progressive* views (280). Toward what goal such concepts have progressed, they do not say. The contention that Barth regarded the Bible as the *written word of God* (352) is misleading as stated, but no clarification is forthcoming.

Near the end of this book is a bibliography of about 120 pages topically arranged. Most entries are in English but some in other languages. There are no annotations. Many entries pertain to the non-Western world, and a few items are unpublished dissertations.

Despite the liberal bias of the authors, this is a fine compilation of historical and theological material about the Reformed faith, one which every library with a collection of sources for the study of Reformed Christianity should acquire.

JAMES EDWARD MCGOLDRICK  
Taylors, South Carolina

### *A SAD LITTLE DOG!*

Jim Cromarty

Darlington, England: Evangelical Press (2000)

175 pages, paper, \$13.95

The title of this book doesn't really describe what it's all about. It's a title that catches one's eye, and for a dog lover, the cover picture is irresistible! But it is not a storybook about a dog, but rather it is a devotional book for families. In it are fifty-two stories from daily life that correlate with Bible truths. The author is a husband, father, and former pastor, and therefore has many interesting personal stories that he relates to Scripture.

Each story is about three pages in length. It begins with a Scripture passage for a family to read together. The human-interest story is next, followed by a psalm and then some questions to ponder. One of the endorsements on the back cover suggests this book would be good even for small children. As a former reading teacher, I recommend this book for use with elementary school-aged children, and if you have younger children "listening in"—that's fine! A fun way to incorporate spiritual truths with reading skills is to have each family member take turns reading the Scripture passages. We did that in our home when our children were growing up. One person begins reading the Scripture for as long or as short as he/she wants. Everyone has to pay close attention because they never know when the person before them is going to stop reading and they have to "pick it up" where their predecessor left off! This causes everyone to stay alert during your Bible-reading time. If you have a family of many fluent readers, you may also want to have family members take turns reading the main story. After each story, the author has a section titled, "To think about." Some of these questions are from the story, some are from a recommended Scripture passage that relates to that story, and

some are questions that ask the readers how the lesson from the story relates to their own lives.

This is a good book for family devotions. The stories are the kind that most people can relate to. For readers from the United States, however, some of the British spellings might confuse young readers just learning to spell. But don't let that deter you from buying it and using it. If you are looking for some help for beginning a family devotional time, or if you are just looking for something new for your family devotions, this book will edify your family.

ANITA ARMSTRONG  
Carol Stream, Illinois

### *THE BIBLE EXPLORER*

Carine Mackenzie

Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000

168 pages, cloth, \$17.99

Remember when you were a child and you would open a new book to the middle and inhale deeply? When I first opened the pages of *The Bible Explorer* I appreciated the wonderful smell of really good pages! The pages aren't the only quality feature of this book, however. It is very cleverly laid out. It displays a computer-like menu bar at the top of each page to show what part of Scripture is being explored, the "Bible reference," and a "Link" section which shows you what themes are being dealt with on each particular page. The themes are prayer, salvation, prophecy, animals, and emotions. Another icon is the "Explorer." This shows you how one Bible story has connections with another. Almost every page also has a "Fact File." Here you will find interesting facts to investigate. For instance, you might want to know why the raven never came back to Noah's ark but the dove did. Every page also has a "Memory Verse" and a

"Think Spot" to help you think further about important lessons from God's Word.

This book features a comprehensive and colorful contents page and beautiful illustrations by Jeff Anderson. This book would be a great gift for young children to young teens. It even has a presentation page for you to fill out if it is a gift. Every home would benefit from having this appealing, fact-filled book that will definitely make learning Bible facts fun!

ANITA ARMSTRONG  
Carol Stream, Illinois

### *THE ESSENTIAL IVP REFERENCE COLLECTION: THE COMPLETE ELECTRONIC BIBLE REFERENCE LIBRARY*

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2001)

One CD-Rom disk, \$169.99

This is the first review of an electronic resource in the ten years of this quarterly journal. Given the growth of this type of product, and the extensive use of computers by an increasing number of readers in the Western world, and far beyond, I doubt that this will be the last such review done in this publication.

InterVarsity Press is to be commended for making some of the very best resources for pastoral and lay readers accessible in this format. Packaged in an attractive format, the user will have a book-like box to put on the shelf as a single accessible work. (The graphic arts are done with great care and eye appeal!)

Included on the one CD are over 10 million words and 12,000 pages of printed text. There are a number of award-winning volumes, such as: *New Bible Dictionary*, *New Bible Commentary*, *New Dictionary of Theology*, *New Bible Atlas*, *the New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, *Dictionary of Jesus and the*

*Gospels, Dictionary of Paul and His Letters, Dictionary of the Later New Testament, the Dictionary of New Testament Background, Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament, Bible Background Commentary: New Testament, Hard Sayings of the Bible and Dictionary of Biblical Imagery.* These books, most of which I have used from the date of their original publication, are simply the best resources in their field. In addition to up-to-date information the reader will profit from the work of some of the world's very best biblical scholars. I continually go to some of these volumes, weekly if not daily. I consider them indispensable for a serious Christian's library. Also included here are unlockable versions of the Bible, including, NIV, NRSV, RSV, NASB, NLT and *The Message*. Even *The Complete Works of Josephus* and *The Works of Philo* are available on this disk. And, for computer lightweights like myself, the user's manual is on the CD itself. How can you mess this up, unless you try?

Though the price for this CD might seem high, the volumes themselves would cost over \$450 if purchased alone in print format. (I still intend to keep my volumes, but I see that I will be using this edition more regularly and easily!) In addition to these compact and immensely practical features Logis promises that when their new Libronix Integrated Digital Library System is released later this year a free upgrade is available for those who need it.

What more can I say? Here, on one disk, you can have the very best modern library of reference works from evangelical scholarship the world over all for a relatively modest price. This tool is highly recommended.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

### **ECCLESIASTES: ANCIENT WISDOM WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS**

T. M. Moore

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2001)

132 pages, cloth, \$12.99

This fresh new translation and interpretive paraphrase is a work of art in the very best sense of the word. You are meant to read it, gaze at it, ponder it, and then see things differently each time you use it. T. M. Moore will allow you to meditate upon this ancient book with new eyes, seeing the treasure of wisdom it contains for an age that desperately needs this ancient message.

"Meaningless!" says Qoheleth the preacher, "All is meaningless!" We live. We work. We die. All our efforts to find lasting satisfaction, to discover real meaning and purpose in life, true joy in our journey of 70 or 80 years here on earth, seems as nothing. What is modern, indeed postmodern, man to make of life? Where does he find meaning that truly satisfies? The universal struggle of Ecclesiastes is the struggle of every man, every woman, for every time period in history.

The author lays out a translation of Ecclesiastes alongside his brief, but insightful, comments on the text. (The actual text type and style the publisher chose is very pleasing to the reader's eye! And the cover design is superb.) Words that Moore includes in his translation which are not found in the actual Hebrew text, but employed to help the reader grasp the meaning of the writer in his context, appear in Roman type. This interpretive paraphrase is superb at most points. Readers could certainly find here the material for a month's personal devotions. You could also use this book in group study. A wonderfully helpful twenty-five page study guide follows the text and commentary. Thirteen weeks of discussion could follow the questions given here, making this a perfect resource for an adult class. Further, there are twenty-two pages of succinct notes at the

end of the book. I found these to be *immensely* profitable. You might want to mark the notes with a book mark and go back and forth your *second* time through the book. (Yes, you definitely should read this book more than once. This is the great value of meditating upon Scripture text and using a resource like this to help you along the way.)

Life, even for the Christian, is never a simple, rosy, positive, blessing-filled journey. The smiling, happy-clappy, prosperity "Christianity" of our time desperately needs a good dose of Ecclesiastes. Indeed, I personally need a good dose of it to keep my perspective in this confusing age. T. M. Moore made me slow down and listen. He has also made me ponder the real meaning of what I do and why I do it in my fast-paced life. Simply put, he has helped me to think more carefully. I owe him a debt of real gratitude for this volume. I am certain that I will turn to it again.

I believe that this work will benefit everyone from high school students to young adults facing life-changing decisions. (It could make a great gift book, especially since "gift books" are quite often filled with Hallmark theology and syrupy, sugary nothing!) It also addresses the trials of "mid-life crisis" as well as the trials we face in rapidly approaching old age. Charles Colson, in writing about the book (on the dust-jacket), puts it well: "Never has the study of Ecclesiastes been more timely than in our day. With the conflict of worldviews intensifying daily, people are looking for the kind of insights and answers the ancient sage provided in [Ecclesiastes]. T. M. Moore has rendered a valuable service to seekers from every walk of life by helping us to grasp the message of Solomon's often difficult meditations in new and challenging ways." I could not agree more. This is a book for pastors and lay leaders, indeed for every Christian who wants to grow. I pray it will have a long and fruitful life.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

*GOD OF GRACE & GOD OF GLORY: AN ACCOUNT OF  
THE THEOLOGY OF JONATHAN EDWARDS*

Stephen R. Holmes

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2001)

289 pages, cloth, \$38.00

Interaction and reflection upon the life and thought of the early American theologian/preacher, Jonathan Edwards, has become a subject of countless seminars, classes, monographs and full-length books. Forty years ago one would have been hard pressed to find serious academic interaction, or for that matter lay or pastoral interest, with the thought of America's greatest theologian. Now, given the state of recently published popular works and academic studies, times have clearly changed. Not only are the previously unpublished works of Edwards being published by a major university press but Jonathan Edwards is himself recognized, both in America and abroad, as one of the church's most compelling and significant theologians. Of this there is no doubt.

Stephen R. Holmes, lecturer in Christian doctrine at King's College, London, seeks to meet a need that has arisen because of recent Edwards studies. Given the amount of newly-published Edwards material that Yale University Press has given us over the past fifteen years, Holmes seeks to fill the void of study regarding Edwards by writing a *comprehensive introduction* to Edwards for the non-specialist. At the same time he seeks to make a fresh and original contribution to the field. It is in this area that some will find themselves in disagreement with his conclusions. I would guess almost every reader of this journal would follow Holmes' thought, and agree quite readily with his conclusions, until the final chapter.

Holmes opens up Edwards' theology succinctly, and I would even say beautifully, but then cites what he believes

to be the major flaw in his theology—namely his failure to make his discussion of perdition *coherent* with his overall theological vision. In reflecting upon these matters Holmes writes:

For Edwards hell, like every other area of the great drama of God's actions in creation and redemption, has been towards the increase of God's glory. To show that it would achieve this purpose, he must demonstrate that it was entirely in accord with divine justice. My contention . . . has been that, finally, he failed to do that (233).

Holmes seeks to show the reader a deeper reason for being unhappy with Jonathan Edwards' whole concept of God's self-glorification in the damnation of unbelievers. He argues: "On the basis of the gospel story we simply cannot accept that God glorifies himself in two equal and opposite ways, in the display of His justice and the display of His grace" (239).

He then draws this conclusion:

To speak only of "grace," mercy" and "freedom," as Edwards does, leads inevitably to the double decree and the vision of God creating some people only to torture them for all eternity in unimaginable ways—although Edwards stood in a tradition that tried hard to help our imaginations at this point! To speak only of "love" and "goodness" leads to a variety of approaches ranging from Origenist universalism, through Hick's near-universalism, to broadly Wesleyan Arminianism. So it will not do to speak in either of these ways. We must acknowledge that God is God, against the latter, and that God is love, against the former, and so, as Barth does, deny universalism, but so affirm the grace and mercy of God that we are constantly drawn in that direction. Only by doing this can we do justice to God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ (239).

Holmes believes that Edwards was correct in seeking to promote the glory of God as *central to everything God does*. What he questions is whether or not Edwards made an adequate case for how this same glory is magnified in his understanding of hell. (Holmes is clearly not *denying* hell, nor is he asserting that *all* will finally be saved, as the above quotation plainly demonstrates. What he is *seriously questioning is the way* Edwards, and many who have since followed him, spoke about hell!) He concludes that Edwards' failure is finally "a result of a prior failure to let the gospel story inform his position sufficiently" (240). It is a failure, he argues, to be shaped by "his own best instincts of God's Trinitarian, gospel-shaped, self-glorification" (240). In the end what Holmes is suggesting is that Edwards' view of reprobation is non-Christological and, thus, incoherent. This is especially so because of his well-conceived doctrine of creation and the glory of God. The reader may strongly disagree with Holmes' conclusion, even for reasons beyond the scope of such a brief review, but do not let this keep you from this engaging and insightful work. Holmes has clearly read and understood Edwards correctly, of this there is little doubt to my own mind. He has also done a great service for Christian leaders, including non-scholars, by engaging an important theologian without simply repeating what the theologian said as the last and final word on hell, or for that matter, any other subject. We do Edwards, and more importantly, the revelation of God in Holy Scripture, a grave disservice if we slavishly follow any *single* voice in theology or church history without further careful and critical thought. I want to let Holmes have the final word by quoting from the final paragraph of his thoughtful book.

We may, as Edwards did, talk about the lost as the bearer of God's wrath. This echoes Scriptural language, and is proba-

bly the majority line in the tradition. It can, however, be sustained only if we immediately acknowledge that Jesus Christ also bore God's wrath on the tree. This is not a plea for universalism: I am not suggesting we refuse to speak about hell; instead, I am insisting that if we do speak about it we do so Christianly—a procedure which, I suspect, may finally be the only way to avoid the current stampede towards universalism in the Church. The intellectual achievement of Jonathan Edwards was breathtaking; his vision of the overarching narrative of the gospel story of God glorifying Himself through the gift of His Son and His Spirit to His unworthy creatures sought to bring all things in heaven and on earth within its compass. I am merely arguing for a correction by which whatever things may be under the earth are brought within the same narrative, so that in all, and through all the only God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be glorified for ever (272).

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

*INTERPRETING THE NEW TESTAMENT: ESSAYS ON METHODS AND ISSUES*

David Alan Black and David S. Dockery, editors  
Nashville: Broadman & Holman (2001)  
565 pages, paper, \$29.99

This is a comprehensive volume on New Testament interpretation that could be used at both the foundational level for teaching theology students and as a resource for serious pastors and leaders who want to get a broad and effective foundation in New Testament studies. As the subtitle indicates, the book addresses both the *method* of New Testament interpretation as well as *issues* that relate to this discipline.

The introduction contains a chapter by Peter H. Davids

titled "Authority, Hermeneutics, and Criticism." This twenty-page overview is followed by an excellent historical survey on the discipline of New Testament interpretation by the editor, David Dockery. The second section undertakes a broad-ranging survey of the basic methods used by New Testament scholars in interpreting the Scripture. Many evangelicals will wonder why serious conservative scholarship should bother at all with some of these issues but *Interpreting the New Testament*, in my thinking, fills a great void at this point—it looks quite fully at the various *critical* methods used in the study of the New Testament while keeping an obvious evangelical concern for the authority of Scripture. Here six entire chapters are given to textual criticism, source criticism, form criticism, redaction criticism, literary criticism and sociological criticism. Since most conservative pastors avoided these disciplines in seminary, or weren't sure what to do with them if they were employed by some of their professors, this material provides about the best 140 pages on the subject available.

The final section of the book addresses what the editors call the "Special Issues in New Testament Interpretation." An example here is the helpful introduction by Klyne Snodgrass in his chapter, "The Use of the Old Testament in the New." (I was personally privileged to have had an entire seminary course on this single subject alone!) Discourse analysis, the diversity of literary genre, and pseudonymity in the New Testament, all receive chapters as well. Finally, the book turns to some of the more typical issues; e.g., interpreting the synoptic gospels, interpreting the Gospel of John, interpreting Acts, etc. Brad Green explores the foundations of New Testament theology itself and Richard Wells rounds out this helpful section with a chapter titled, "New Testament Interpretation and Preaching." The writers keep their focus on the whole throughout, namely on the message of the New Testament itself.

The twenty-two essays of this volume are not overly technical in spite of the subject matter undertaken. The reader is encouraged throughout to preach Christ in accordance with the message of the New Testament itself. This is a much-needed handbook that will serve serious pastors and lay readers well. It is the best of conservative scholarship in this field.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

**THE NEW APPLICATION COMMENTARY:  
ECCLESIASTES/SONG OF SOLOMON**

Iain Provan

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2001)

399 pages, cloth, \$24.99

**E**cclésiastes and the Song of Solomon are typically two of the most difficult books in the canon of Scripture to preach, period. Given the difficulties of a modern audience, and the lack of careful understanding of the world of the Old Testament in our time, few who do undertake preaching either of these books can actually do it well, at least from what I have seen in my own experience.

For example, how does the faithful expositor reconcile Ecclesiastes' seemingly hedonistic orientation with its continual expression of emotional and spiritual brooding throughout the book? Or, in the case of the Song of Solomon, how does the preacher treat the book? Does he treat it as a spiritual allegory of Christ's love for the church or as a frank, but sometimes disturbing, portrait of erotic love? And these are only the *really big* issues the preacher must face in dealing with these books. A host of lesser ones beg the student of these two books to do careful research and to develop an adequate sense of the ancient world and

of the kind of literature that the expositor is actually dealing with in this portion of Scripture.

Iain Provan, recently appointed professor of biblical studies at Regent College, Vancouver, Canada, in this new addition to a popular Zondervan series, *The New Application Commentary*, has given the Christian leader one of the finest treatments of these two books on the market today. There are so many insights teeming in this volume that a short review cannot do justice to them. Consider one trenchant comment about the message of Ecclesiastes:

One of the intriguing questions about this whole discussion of contradiction, quotation, and addition is why, in the first place, we should expect Qohelet or the book of Ecclesiastes as a whole to be less than complex. It is a book that grapples with reality, and reality is complex. Should the words of a wise man about reality not be difficult to simplify (33)?

But what difference does the original meaning of this book, assuming the reader can make sense of it, have to do with a Christian reading of it today? Provan argues, correctly I believe, that we live in a world that is "toiling after gain." This is self-evident to everyone living through these times. Provan's commentary is uniquely calculated to demonstrate how this particular wisdom book should have a profound message for modern hearers.

The book is well outlined and the author includes a full bibliography of useful works for the serious exegete to consult. The indices are also well done, including both a Scripture index and a subject index.

Though some dare to preach through Ecclesiastes, rarely will modern preachers deal with the Song of Solomon. It is even more rare to hear well-done exposition of the book. Provan suggests that the problem is often the failure of readers to "look the Song of Songs straight in the eye, as it

were, and deal with its implications for a Christian world-view" (277). His arguments take the reader to the issues related to dealing honestly with this book.

Again the author's handling of the biblical material provides insightful reflection regarding the modern era. He writes:

The challenge and the healing of the Song of Songs are offered, however, not only to the church, but also to the world at large. For it is by no means only in the church that we find fractured selves and fractured relationships. In many ways, in fact, the sexual revolution in the West, which was in part a reaction to a false and repressive view of sexuality, has resulted in a far worse state of affairs than what preceded it; for sexual expression, when it is not rooted in a committed, lifelong relationship, wreaks destruction. The mantra of the revolution is "sexual freedom," but slavery rather than freedom has resulted, and entire new empires (e.g., Internet pornography) have surfaced in which abusive male power has again reasserted itself over women (280).

I must confess, few modern works on the Song of Songs have satisfied me. They either adopt older views wholesale or modern interpretations of romance. This one is truly different. The approach Provan takes to the book, which I believe to be wise and balanced, is given in his Introduction: "We shall pursue a broadly based 'allegorical' approach, therefore, rather than a narrowly focused one. Our approach might better be described as parabolic rather than as allegorical" (255).

The author demonstrates a wide grasp of both old and new literature for both of these books. He presents sound arguments for interpreting them correctly. And he does this in a format that will genuinely help the preacher/teacher of these two books to understand how to relate the ancient

text to modern lives. I recommend this volume very highly!

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

### *MARY JONES AND HER BIBLE*

Author Anonymous

Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2000

145 pages, paper, \$5.99

*Mary Jones and Her Bible* is an inspiring story about a young girl who went to great lengths to own a Bible of her own in her own language. The author is unknown because it is a story passed down through generations. Mary Jones was an only child in a poor family. Her parents were weavers, and she had to do most of the household chores to help them. The highlight of her week was to be able to go to church with her mother. She was drawn to God and desired to please him from a very young age. This is the story of how Mary saved her own money for six years and then, at the age of sixteen, walked fifty miles in order to be able to buy her own Bible. It is an informative and inspiring book for young people to read. It gives them a vivid picture of the lives of young people in another country (Scotland) in another generation. It is easy reading even for an adult. It would be an appropriate book for an elementary-school student to use for a book report.

ANITA ARMSTRONG  
Carol Stream, Illinois

*THE BRITISH PARTICULAR BAPTISTS*

Michael A. G. Haykin, editor

Springfield, Missouri: Particular Baptist Press

Volume One, 249 pages, cloth, \$22.50

Volume Two, 271 pages, cloth, \$23.50

These two nicely-bound volumes contain twenty-four sketches of the most important British Calvinistic ("particular" referred to the atonement thus the word was used of Calvinists) Baptists of the seventeenth, eighteenth, nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. (A third volume has been announced for later this year.) Here you will find the well known, such as John Bunyan (but was he *really* a Baptist in the normal sense of the word?), John Gill, Robert Hall, Sr., Abraham Booth, John Rippon, John Ryland, Jr., Andrew Fuller, William Carey and the Haldanes. You will also find the less well known, such as William Kiffin, John Spilsbury, Benjamin Francis, Samuel Pierce, Benjamin Beddome, Caleb Evans, and William Ward.

Michael Haykin, the general editor of these volumes, is professor of church history at Heritage Baptist College and Heritage Theological Seminary (Cambridge, Ontario) and a contributing editor to *Reformation & Revival Journal*. He has a superb grasp of Baptist history and has not only contributed several wonderful entries to these two volumes but has made some excellent choices for subjects. (Sadly, the work needed better proofing before publication. I found mistakes scattered throughout, mostly typographical.) The writers are all contemporary Calvinistic Baptists who are sympathetic to their subjects. The group is well represented by Canadian, American, and British contributors. The downside of using completely sympathetic biographers is that some of the treatments do not adequately address weaknesses in the subjects.

Haykin rightly argues, in the opening section (1:15-17),

that British Particular Baptists are the direct historical product of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. (This view, clearly contrary to the popular "trail of blood" thesis sometimes used by Baptists to argue that they are not heirs of the Reformers, is surely right!) Haykin has correctly argued that Baptists emerged from "the womb of English Puritanism in the early to mid-seventeenth century" (1:16). These were men and women who concluded that the Church of England would never be fully reformed and decided to form their own congregations, separate from the state. Those among these separatists who adopted the position of believers' baptism were subsequently to become the people we know as the Baptists.

The contributions to these two volumes are at times quite stimulating, while at other times a little disappointing. The length of the essays varies widely, as one would expect of such a series. (The historical material available on some of the men chosen is, no doubt, quite limited.) Some of the entries are as short as thirteen pages while others (the two by Thomas J. Nettles in particular) are closer to forty pages in length.

I noted above the matter of whether or not John Bunyan should rightly be called a Baptist. This matter is taken up by Allen Smith (1:89-90). His brief explanation that Bunyan was truly a Particular Baptist, even though he differed so strongly from his peers over the relationship of believers' baptism to church membership and communion, is far too brief to satisfy the importance of this argument. Those who are intrigued will have to go elsewhere to pursue the matter.

There are several first-rate essays in these two volumes. Timothy George deals with the well-known William Carey (a special interest of the author's who has previously written a full-length biography on the subject) and Tom Nettles with Andrew Fuller, an important person not only for Baptists but of the rise of the whole missionary enterprise.

Grant Gordon writes on John Ryland, Jr., and Robert W. Oliver about Abraham Booth. These are men who are more than important Baptists; they are, in my estimation some of the most important Christians of the era. Everyone, Baptists or not, would profit from knowing these godly men.

All in all, these two volumes offer the reader some of the finest biographical material available on these early Baptists. Since most modern Baptists have little or no clue where they came from historically, or what their forefathers believed and confessed theologically, these volumes would be useful for seminaries as well as for individual Christians who simply want to know the lives of some of the great men of the past. I recommend these volumes. You will, no doubt, not easily find them in a local Christian bookstore so you might consider ordering them directly from the publisher: Particular Baptist Press, 2766 West FR 178, Springfield, Missouri 65810. You can call (417) 883-0342, or email to: gwlong@juno.com, to get more information or to place an order.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

*THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY*  
*VOLUME 1, A-D*

Erwin Fahlbusch, Ian Milic, John Mbiti, Jaroslav Pelikan,  
and Lukas Vischer, editors.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, translator and English language  
editor

David B. Barrett, statistical editor  
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (1999)  
893 pages, cloth, \$100.00

This is the first volume of a third revised edition of the original German work, *Evangelisches Kirchenlexikon*

*Internationale theologische Enzyklopadie*. (There are five volumes in all.) This first volume contains 465 articles and is not only a translation of the German work but includes many additions and enhancements in the English edition.

*The Encyclopedia of Christianity* describes the Christian faith and church, as it exists in its many forms throughout the world today, in relationship to the core catholicity of the apostolic tradition throughout the 2000 years of Christian history. It is a comprehensive work, given the scope of this volume alone, and has already received tremendous critical acclaim in its original German edition.

Some of what makes this series unique are the following:

- It is a fully international work, with entries by scholars from many countries and backgrounds.
- It is current, taking into account over 170 countries and the present Christian situation in each of them, including the former communist countries that gained independence since 1989.
- It reflects the theological diversity and spiritual heritage found around the world.
- It includes the statistical data of David B. Barrett on religious affiliation and church composition in each country and continent.
- It has fresh and original pieces on important figures throughout the entire history of the church.

The *Library Journal* says, "This first volume sets the standard for reference works of this kind. . . . This is possibly the best encyclopedic reference on Christianity." The reason for this glowing response is not hard to detect when you actually begin to look through the volume and read portions that are never found in similar works. The uniqueness of this work is its global ecumenical approach and historical context.

In this first volume, to give the reader some idea of the

breadth of the articles included, we encounter entries on the following subjects: abortion, acculturation, adiaphora, Afghanistan, Afro-American cults, Alexandrian theology, alpha and omega, amen, Anabaptists, anchorites, angel, antichrist, antinomy, Antiochian theology, anti-trinitarianism, *Apostles' Creed*, Archimandrite, Arianism, Aristotelianism, ark of the covenant, Arminianism, Asian theology, assurance of salvation, *Athanasian Creed*, and axiom. And this is only a very short list of the over than 120 entries under the letter A.

The work is, simply put, staggering to the reader. There is not much you might want to survey in the world of Christian practice and thought that is not included here. There is one small problem. You want to sit down and start reading but the task is too daunting for the busy person. That's why this is a first-class reference work. It is something you will go back to again and again, most likely with great profit. The only drawback will be that some of the information will be dated almost as soon as the volumes are translated and published. I suppose enterprising scholars will find a way to eventually revise this well-done revision in due time.

*THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CHRISTIANITY*  
VOLUME 2, E-I

Erwin Fahlbusch, Ian Milic, John Mbiti, Jaroslav Pelikan, and Lukas Vischer, editors.

Geoffrey W. Bromiley, translator and English language editor

David B. Barrett, statistical editor

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2001)

787 pages, cloth, \$100.00

Like the first volume, referred to above, this one is part of a work presently being translated into English. This vol-

ume contains more than 300 articles for the alphabetical entries E-I. The entries range from early catholicism, early church and Easter to incarnation, infallibility, and Ivory Coast. Here the reader will find many expected entries, including: Meister Eckhart, Jonathan Edwards, empiricism, Enlightenment, ethics, euthanasia, evangelism, excommunication, exorcism, faith, faith missions, *filioque*, foot washing, *Formula of Concord*, fundamentalism, glossolalia, Gnosticism, grace, guilt, healing, heaven, *Heidelberg Catechism*, *Helvetic Confession*, hermeneutics, holiness movement, Holy Spirit, homosexuality, Huguenots, hymn, hymnal, hymnology, icon, incarnation, and the Inquisition. But there are scores of unexpected entries as well, such as: electronic church, emperor worship, epanagoge (you'll have to look this one up), esotericism, ethnology, exequies (this might require a look as well), Fatima, fish, functionalism, Gnesio-Lutherans, Gestalt Psychology, Haggadah, henotheism, inconostasis, Impressionism, and irrationalism.

An extensive cross-referencing system is incorporated and used wisely. The reader will need to consult the introductory material frequently to get the hang of using this important data. Reading the list of contributors is another eye-opener. Rarely will you encounter such a wide range of scholars from seemingly every corner of the globe.

What is an epanagoge? It is a term taken from the history of the Greek Church which has reference to the second draft, or introduction, of what was meant to be a comprehensive legal collection planned by Emperor Basil I (867-86). It also has reference to the law books of Emperor Justinian (reigned 527-65). Funny thing, Basil never sanctioned the epanagoge as law. So now you know the rest of the story. Try that on your church history friends. I'll let you find out what exequies refers to on your own.

I can't help but note, with deep appreciation for God's gift of a long and fruitful life to Geoffrey W. Bromiley (now

in his 90s), just how much this careful scholar and humble Christian man has given to the church. Not only has Bromiley written much sound theology, but he has translated both single volumes, and whole multi-volume works, from German into English. (His most famous project was his translation of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*.)

Henry Chadwick, the distinguished historian at Cambridge University, has said that this work is "A major resource . . . necessary for libraries, students, and teachers" (from the dust jacket of the volume). I agree. The price is steep but the volumes are well worth it. There is a gold mine here that one will explore and return to over and over again. Forget the single-volume works, if you can, and start to add these volumes to your library if you are a serious student of theology and church history. If you can't afford a set make sure your library gets them. Public libraries should be urged to carry these volumes too. A little pressure from you, the local patron, will go a long way!

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

### **RELIGION IN NINETEENTH CENTURY AMERICA**

Grant Wacker  
New York: Oxford (2000)  
188 pages, cloth, \$24.00

### **RELIGION IN COLONIAL AMERICA**

Jon Butler  
New York: Oxford (2000)  
157 pages, cloth, \$24.00

### **PROTESTANTS IN AMERICA**

Mark A. Noll  
New York: Oxford (2000)

155 pages, cloth, \$24.00

### **CHURCH AND STATE IN AMERICA**

Edwin S. Gaustad  
New York: Oxford (1999)  
157 pages, cloth, \$24.00

### **WOMEN AND AMERICAN RELIGION**

Ann Braude  
New York: Oxford (2000)  
141 pages, cloth, \$24.00

### **ALTERNATIVE AMERICAN RELIGIONS**

Stephen J. Stein  
New York: Oxford (2000)  
156 pages, cloth, \$24.00

My personal introduction to this excellent series, *Religion in American Life*, came in reading *Church and State in America*, by the noted American church historian, Edwin S. Gaustad. Perhaps no recent church historian better grasps the essential issues related to church/state than Gaustad. I was thus drawn to the book by having previously read several of his works. Though this work is brief, and thus limited in its scope, it is essential reading in the light of modern debates over subjects like prayer in public schools, teaching the Genesis story, and other more complicated issues related to religion and state. For decades, indeed to some extent from the very beginning of our constitutional republic, the practice of a kind of principled pluralism has been the norm. This practice has been under attack from two totally opposite extremes for nearly forty years. On the one hand we have the danger of embracing a hostile humanistic pluralism. This challenge would vacate the public arena and allow it to become, in the words of Richard

John Neuhaus, "a naked public square." Christians from the right have responded to this hostile secular humanism with horror and political bombast. Reading Gaustad would go a long way toward correcting both extremes.

Gaustad deftly uses stories, speeches, anecdotes and historic documents, to prove that, as Michelangelo once said, "religious liberty is made up of a series of trifles, but religious liberty is no trifle." Pastors need to read this book and then use it for special study within the leadership of their church.

Mark Noll, a highly-respected American church historian, gives us, in *Protestants in America*, a useful retelling of the basic narrative of our history. From the earliest European settlements of Massachusetts and Virginia right down to Martin Luther King, Jr., Billy Graham, and the Promise Keepers, Noll tells the story well. Noll shows that America is truly "a nation with the soul of a church" (Sidney Mead) and that this soul has predominantly been Protestant. But he also shows how this changed by the end of the last century. The future will surely be different, unless we see another Protestant revival. (Even then, I believe, the nation would not look like it did under Protestant influence in its earlier time, if for no other reason because of the pluralism of religious expression that is now present in our wider culture.) Noll gives the reader a sane, sensitive, and careful overview that connects Protestant history of the early settlement to the present day.

Jon Butler, in *Religion in Colonial America*, shows that though the piety of the Pilgrims did frame earliest American life, by the 1730s Catholics, Jews, and Africans had joined Native Americans, Puritans, and numerous other Protestants in the still small colonies. Butler begins his easily-read narrative with a description of religious affairs in both the Old and New Worlds. He shows how John Winthrop's Puritan experiment failed and why. He surveys the work of evangelism by an ex-slave, Absalom Jones, and the spiritual

vitality and resistance of Native Americans, who never converted to Protestant faith in large numbers. Out of this diverse scene came the earliest revivals. And of this background came the idea that government should not be used to establish a religion among people but to preserve the free exercise of religion for all.

Grant Wacker, another prominent evangelical church historian, looks at *Religion in Nineteenth Century America*. During this middle period of our religious history Wacker shows how the beginning place is found in two novel ideas: the separation of church and state and the freedom to practice any religion. (Read Jon Butler first if you wish to follow the logical sequence of ideas here.) The forces behind these two ideas produced the confluence of religious practice that shaped the nation, both black and white, and led to the Civil War. They also provided the social context for the Industrial Revolution, which had an entirely different impact upon America than Europe.

Wacker demonstrates how and why evangelical Protestantism flourished at the same time that large numbers of Jews and Catholics were arriving as immigrants to the growing nation. Wacker employs useful anecdotes to explain movements such as temperance and Sunday schools. He includes helpful treatments of the rise of new distinctly American religions, such as Christian Science and Mormonism. He also gives fitting tribute to the life and impact of D. L. Moody upon the period. This work is highly recommended.

*Alternative American Religions*, by Stephen J. Stein, is exactly what the title says: a survey of Quakers, Christian Scientists, Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses, among many others. Because of the place the First Amendment has had in American religious life and development, such groups have flourished.

In exploring the development of "alternative" groups

Stein investigates dissenters of all types. He surveys nineteenth-century Vermont Pilgrims who wore bearskins and refused to bathe or cut their hair, as well as seventeenth and eighteenth-century Mennonites, Amish, and Shakers. One unique aspect of Stein's work is how he shows the connection between the rise of some of these alternative religious groups and how they affected racial relations and the growing liberation and empowerment of women. This feature alone makes the book worthwhile.

This series will eventually include seventeen volumes. We consider only six of them in this review. The last is Ann Braude's provocative and insightful *Women in American Religion*. The simple fact is that women have gained more freedom in the American context than perhaps anywhere else in the world, except in parts of secular Europe. Religion has had a major part to play in this development, both evangelical and non-evangelical religion. Most conservative readers know little of this story. Braude fills in a lot of missing information and writes in a style that is captivating and straightforward. Women have played a central role in American religious life from the earliest settlement of the nation down to the present. Evangelicals desperately need to understand this history and Braude is a tool that could serve them well, at least as an overview.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

### *RESIST THE POWERS WITH JACQUES ELLUL*

Charles Ringma  
Colorado Springs, Colorado: Piñon Press (2000)  
Paper, \$10.00

Most modern daily devotional books are traditionally strong on "inspirational" thought and weak on theo-

logical reflection joined with heart-searching food that truly engages the mind. This volume is genuinely different, different to the point of having the potential to become a highly successful idea and a wonderfully useful resource for serious believers. The author has borrowed liberally from the thoughts of French Reformed social writer Jacques Ellul (1912-1994) and produced daily devotions ranging from 150-300 words per day. Each page, which is the space given to that day's devotions, has a quote from Ellul at the heading of the page, a devotional section written in Ringma's own words, based upon a text taken from something written first by Ellul (these are identified in at the end of the book), and finally a reflection or action step to be taken after the reading. The style is simple and nicely formatted. The selections are usually well made. The only frustration, at least for persons like myself, is I wanted to know how closely the material actually followed the words of Jacques Ellul. (Ringma informs the reader in his well-written introduction that he has *not* repeated Ellul verbatim, but rather entered into a "creative dialogue with the great French thinker.")

Having stated my one minor reservation I cannot tell you how thrilled I am with this little book. My enthusiasm is the result of several noteworthy items that I see developed by it. First, Jacques Ellul is not widely enough known among modern evangelicals. His thought will prompt readers to understand the powers of our own technological age and to tenaciously hold to a vision of the kingdom of God joined with true piety. Second, Jacques Ellul is one of the most important thinkers of the twentieth century, period. This is especially true when it comes to thinking through issues of real reformation. Third, this way of presenting the work of Ellul will allow people who have never read him to be introduced to his thought in a simple format without being simplistic. Finally, this book will help us bring mind and heart, as well as true sociology and true theology,

together. Ringsma is correct when he writes, "Spirituality cannot be conceived apart from theology. Theology, on the other hand, need not be formal, academic, and arid." This book wonderfully accomplishes this goal.

Piñon Press is a division of NavPress, based in Colorado Springs. The reason there are no page numbers listed above is due to the layout of the book. Page numbering is not used since the text follows the days of the month over the course of one full year. (I think page numbers should have been included since the material at the back of the book is most helpful and without page numbers it is difficult to cite text and follow things at certain points.)

Dr. Charles Ringma is a Dutch-born Australian, trained at Reformed Theological College in Victoria. He has previously served as a community worker among the Aborigines and the poor in Manila. He presently serves as professor of missions and evangelism at Regent College, Vancouver, BC. A wonderful bibliography of Ellul's writings, both in and out of print, is added, along with a fairly well done chronology of Ellul's life. (I would have wished for more biographical material on Ellul so the reader could better understand him.) This little book is highly recommended.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

### SEIZE THE DAY WITH DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Charles Ringma

Colorado Springs, Colorado: Piñon Press (2000)

Paper, \$10.00

A companion volume to the aforementioned book of meditations, *Resist the Powers with Jacques Ellul*, this book is much the same in terms of both style and format. It includes the short daily entries, developed by Ringma from

Bonhoeffer's thought. A major difference is that in this volume the author does not indicate clearly which Bonhoeffer selection his words are taken from in the day-by-day selections. There is, however, a Bonhoeffer quotation at the top of each day, and the title of the book from which this is taken is also listed.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945) was the well-known German pastor/theologian who resisted the German takeover of the state church by his support of the Barmen Declaration (which was written while he was in America through the efforts of Karl Barth and Martin Niemöller) and the Confessing Church movement. Bonhoeffer is best known for his two books: *The Cost of Discipleship*, on the Sermon on the Mount and the concept of what he called "cheap grace," and *Life Together*, a classic small book on Christian community written from Finkenwalde, where he led a seminary in exile during the early years of Hitler. Bonhoeffer wrote many other important books, including *Letters and Papers from Prison*, his autobiographical work while incarcerated prior to his hanging by the Nazi's in 1945. Recently Fortress Press began a new critically-annotated edition of the works of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Several volumes are now in print.

The value of Ringma's little devotional volume is quite simple. It has the potential of getting many new readers into the life and thought of one of the twentieth-century's most important martyrs. Here readers will discover how critical and careful thought can be united with Christ-centered faithful living. This little book is a wonderful resource for teaching people about Bonhoeffer. It is also a wonderful tool for serious daily reflection that could make a real difference in how we think and live in the modern age. I have personally been using it for some days now and find it useful. I highly recommend it.

As with the Ellul volume this one includes a full chronology of the life and events of Bonhoeffer's years with

a full bibliography of Bonhoeffer's works. The brief introduction to Bonhoeffer, which only takes up three pages, is succinct and well done. Pastors and lay readers are both encouraged to purchase and try this useful resource.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

**THE ANCHOR BIBLE**  
**THE FIRST AND SECOND LETTERS TO TIMOTHY: A NEW**  
**TRANSLATION WITH INTRODUCTION AND COMMENTARY**  
**VOLUME 35A**

New York: Doubleday (2001)  
Luke Timothy Johnson  
494 pages, cloth, \$40.00

This is a serious, first-rate, academically-satisfying commentary on two of Paul's pastoral letters. Luke Timothy Johnson, professor of New Testament at the Chandler School of Theology, Emory University, in Atlanta, Georgia, is a highly regarded New Testament scholar and exegete. Johnson's work is always marked by great care with specific attention to detail at every point. This commentary may disappoint you in terms of some of the arguments Johnson advances but it will make you wrestle with the text of the Bible very seriously.

The dust jacket states that lay readers will profit from this volume. I have no doubt that this might be true for some but for most I think it will be a stretch to deal with Johnson's level of argumentation. There are ninety-nine pages of introductory and background material alone. Then there is a bibliography of over twenty-eight pages. Then each epistle has its own introduction of twenty pages or so. From a look over the footnotes there is little that Johnson has missed in surveying the field of New Testament

research, including all the important evangelical commentaries and academic contributions to the subject. For example, Johnson argues quite strongly against any kind of hierarchical reading of male headship in the pastoral letters and 1 Corinthians 14. He gives the readers all the serious options for how to read these problematic texts before he draws his own conclusions, which I do not find entirely convincing. The point which should not be missed, however, is that he devotes considerable weight, with much care, to the text of 1 Timothy 2:8-15, which is called "Gender Roles in Worship" (199-211). In this section alone he cites, and disagrees with, several of the most prominent evangelical commentators on this issue; e.g., Robert Yarbrough, Thomas Schreiner, A. J. Koesterberger and H. S. Baldwin. The same observation holds true for almost every section of his work on both epistles. The reader can pick any text, or theme, in these two epistles, and the work will bear out that Johnson has wrestled with the text profoundly, even if the conclusions are not convincing. (Sometimes his conclusions are *very* convincing to this reviewer! They are always useful.)

This series includes not only commentary and academic reference work but a fresh translation of the biblical text itself. Johnson has done a superb job in translating the text and his rendering of certain words, and his explanation for his decision, is often quite enlightening as well.

I cannot endorse this commentary without reservation. At the same time I hope thoughtful readers, who understand how to use critical commentaries with care, will use this volume. I believe this volume will aid the competent exegete and preacher.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

**UNAPOLOGETIC APOLOGETICS: MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

William A. Dembski and Jay Wesley Richards, editors  
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2001)  
280 pages, paper, \$19.95

This is a surprisingly good book. Most of the essays in it are worthwhile and some are positively outstanding. I say that for several reasons. For one, this is not really an apologetics book, at least in the standard way many will think of apologetics. (It does not readily fit into the categories of evidentialist or pre-suppositionalist systems and it seeks to support the faith against the remaining modernist reactions found in a mainline seminary setting!) Second, these essays are the product of a group of students who gave the chapters as papers to a theological forum organized and led by evangelical students, called the Charles Hodge Society, at Princeton Theological Seminary. The story of the beginning and development of the Charles Hodge Society is a thrilling story itself. Here students encourage one another to think biblically, to face the modern world honestly, and to prepare their minds for the false worldviews they will encounter from some of their professors. These students are seeking to make a positive difference in the overall makeup of student life at Princeton. Every Christian who loves reformation in the church will be excited by these developments.

William A. Dembski, the author of a significant book, *Intelligent Design*, is now widely known for his work in this field. He possesses the rare mixture of two Ph.D.'s (philosophy and mathematics) combined with a M.Div. at Princeton Theological Seminary. He moves comfortably in the field of his research and doctoral study and in the world of serious theology. With Jay Wesley Richards, who holds a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary, these two men

created what Phillip E. Johnson has called, on the cover of the book, "the mother of all seminary peer groups, an apologetics seminar where the tough issues are debated even in front of outside critics." The book contains fifteen essays from this group. Every seminarian in America would profit from this volume, especially if they are students on a mainline seminary campus where biblical truth is often undermined directly or otherwise.

The book is divided into five parts. The first deals with foundations. This is followed by three essays on Scripture. All three of these are worthy contributions to a field often filled with landmines. The third part deals with Christology. Jay Wesley Richards asks, "Is the Doctrine of the Incarnation Coherent?" and in another chapter he asks, "Can a Male Savior Save Women?" His answer to both is a ringing yes, but the way he arrives at these answers is worth the price of the book. His bibliography on the issue of inclusive language for God is an excellent guide to move beyond the chapter itself.

Part 4 deals with theology proper. Here subjects such as radical feminism, language about God, and Christian experience add important material to an already useful volume. The concluding section has three chapters on science. Here the work of Dembski is stellar, as expected.

One has to marvel when reading a book like this. These chapters were originally given by students, to students, and for students. If this kind of work can be done by evangelical students, in a liberal theological community, then theological reformation can take place in almost any setting.

The Charles Hodge Society has also produced a theological journal, *The Princeton Theological Review*. The school fought the use of this name, since it was used by the erstwhile journal the school let die in the 1920s. Fortunately the students won their battle and the journal goes on. There is to be found in this book, and in the model of the

Charles Hodge Society, a resource for reforming the student life of thousands of seminarians if the Lord puts this work in the hands of the earnest evangelical students. Every Christian leader should pray for, and encourage, every seminarian he or she knows to read this book. The chapter on "Naturalism in Theology & Biblical studies" (Jay Wesley Richards) should be given to every student, graduate or undergraduate, before they face the modern university or seminary classroom. This work is superb! I enjoyed the book immensely and predict many will also come to appreciate it.

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

***THE RACE SET BEFORE US: A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF PERSEVERANCE AND ASSURANCE***

Thomas R. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday  
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2001)  
344 pages, paper, \$19.99

For thirty years I have looked for an adequate and satisfying treatment of the numerous warning passages of the Bible. I have preached the text, but always wondered why no one took up this subject as a whole and put together a comprehensive theology of assurance, warning, and final perseverance. I wanted someone to take up every text seriously and to show how to adequately deal with the evidence of the New Testament itself. When I was asked to read the manuscript of this book before its publication with a view toward writing an endorsement, I did so hoping that my search might finally have led me to the book I had longed for. I was not disappointed. I will, no doubt, recommend and consult this book for years to come. Saying that it is superbly written, and biblically satisfying, is an understatement.

Simply put, Schreiner and Caneday ask what the New Testament "prize" is that the believer must strive for in the Christian life. Is it an extra bonus, a reward of some importance, or is it actually salvation itself? Can the prize be lost? Or is everyone who begins the race, by accepting Jesus, going to finish the race and in the final day be declared to be a *true* Christian? And how do we take the various warning passages of Scripture, which clearly tell us that *salvation* is conditionally based upon our continuing in the faith (cf. Colossians 1:21-23 as just one prime example). Is the final outcome left up to us to make sure we believe and persevere? And what about assurance of salvation? If I live my life with a clear understanding that I must persevere or I will not be saved, doesn't this undermine any meaningful sense or possibility of full assurance? What happens to hope in this context?

The authors present the four traditional ways that interpreters have employed the warnings and admonitions of the Bible:

The loss of salvation view. You can be genuinely and truly born of God and *lose this salvation* by failing to heed the warnings of the Bible.

The loss of rewards, but not salvation, is in view in the warnings and admonitions of the Bible. If you are born of God you cannot lose your salvation but you can *lose specific rewards* offered to you for obedience.

The race represents real salvation. Those who abandon the race by not heeding the warnings and admonitions of the Bible *prove* that they never had true salvation in the first place.

The warning and admonitions only caution the one in the race as to what could happen if they abandoned the race; i.e., the warnings and admonitions are to be taken *hypothetically*.

The view Schreiner and Caneday present is *not* represented by any of the four traditional views outlined above. They understand that the Scriptures employ a biblical and eschatological framework known as the "already/not yet." They then use this framework to interpret the central issues in a way that will open whole new avenues of thought for serious exegetes of the Bible. Their position, in short, needs to be clearly stated.

The warnings of Scripture are, in reality, *conditional*. If you would finish the race, and thus be saved, you must *keep on believing and trusting* through the faith that *obeys* God. The warnings and admonitions of the Bible call for a faith that endures and receives the prize. The prize is eternal salvation. Schreiner and Caneday call their position the "God's means-of-salvation view." Conditional promises and conditional warnings are just that, *conditional*. If you refuse them, and fall out of the race, you will not be saved, period! Biblical warnings necessarily point us to the *last* day. Their orientation is always eschatological. "Salvation, in other words, is not only a term to describe what God has already done by justifying and converting us but also a word that portrays what God has not yet done when he will bring us 'to the goal of our faith, the salvation of our souls' (1 Peter 1:9)" (43-44).

This "means of salvation view" treats good works as *absolutely necessary* for salvation, but also as the *consequent result* of the gift of true faith. It does not alter one iota the gracious character of redemption. It does properly require the reader of the Bible to take the warning passages as both evidence of present assurance and as promises for a future that is certain, *if we continue* in the faith which God has given to us. The reason we expect to continue is not because we are so faithful but because he is faithful. His faithfulness, however, will lead us to be faithful and to remain in the race until the end.

What is necessary, in the view of the authors, is "obedi-

ent faith." A faith that does not genuinely follow, trust, obey, and do good works is actually no faith, biblically speaking. Chapter three is devoted to a wonderful exposition of the necessity of this "obedient faith."

Other matters include serious reflection upon those who fall out of the race, how the believer draws upon God's grace to go the distance, and how we all can run the Christian race with confidence and assurance. Finally, the question of who runs to the finish and actually wins is answered in the chapter titled, "Running by Divine Appointment."

By not providing simplistic and pat answers to problematic texts and by not appealing to the consistency of a pre-adopted hermeneutical system from outside the Bible, the authors have given the church a definitive and clear understanding of a most vital pastoral issue. If pastors would preach "the whole counsel of God" to their flocks, and thus be enabled to answer properly on the last day for their teaching (1 Corinthians 3:10-15; James 3:1), I submit that this book will prepare them no other I know. This book will go further in answering your questions and in providing a means whereby you can properly preach these warning texts to your flock than any English language resource currently available. Whether you are a pastor or not, get this book—read it and discuss it. Get others to read it with you. It is one of the most important books I have read in years!

JOHN H. ARMSTRONG  
Editor

**CHILDREN'S STORIES**

Dwight L. Moody

Scotland: Christian Focus Publications

180 pages, paper, \$5.99

*Children's Stories* is a compilation of mostly one-page vignettes told by D. L. Moody. They remind me of the kinds of stories friends share with each other at a dinner table. Some of them are cute, some are inspiring, and some are the sort that you hear and exclaim, "Oh, wow!" This book would be excellent as a conversation starter at the family dinner table. Here are two of my favorite sample stories from the book:

**HOLD UP YOUR LIGHT**

A man was walking along a street one night, and saw a man with a lantern. The man seemed to be blind so he asked, "My friend, are you blind?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Then why do you have a lantern?"

"I carry it so that people may not stumble over me, of course," said the man.

Learn from that blind man. Hold up your light, burning with the clear radiance of heaven so men may not stumble over you.

**OVER THE RIVER**

There was once a minister whose child had just died. Instead of preaching one morning he asked another minister to preach for him. The other minister came and told a story about his home town which had a large river flowing down the middle of it. The minister told how he lived on one side and his daughter on the other. "To tell the truth," he said, "I was never very interested in the people who lived on the other side of the river, until my daughter married and went over there to live. Now every morn-

ing I look across that river, and feel very concerned about all the people there.

"Now," said the visiting minister, "Your minister here has lost his child. I think that as this child has crossed a river, the river of death, heaven, the place on the other side of the river, will be clearer to your minister than it ever has been before. His child is now there."

We should also long for heaven. We should look to the other side of this river. Shall we not just let our hearts and affections be set on the other side of the river? We shall soon be in the other world.

See what I mean? Each little story has a poignant and powerful message for its readers. This book would be especially beneficial for those readers who work with children. It will inspire those who already *are* Sunday school teachers and instill in others the desire to teach children. This book will make you want to pray more after you read page after page of marvelous answers to prayer. This is the sort of book one can pick up and enjoy just a little bit at a time—or all at once!

ANITA ARMSTRONG  
Carol Stream, Illinois

**LIGHTS IN LISULAND**

Irene Howat

Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2001

173 pages, paper, \$5.99

*Lights in Lisuland* is the story of the missionary, Isobel Kuhn. It follows her life from the time she was converted until her death. She and her husband were missionaries to China. They lived a spartan, and many times dangerous, existence. Reading about how they sent their children away

to boarding school at a very young age reminded me of the many friends I grew up with in Wheaton, Illinois, whose parents were missionaries and they were living in a missionary children's boarding school. Isobel Kuhn was not able to see her daughter for seven years because of war in China. This book tells of the power of prayer in their lives and of the many sacrifices of creature comforts they endured joyfully and without complaint. It details fascinating descriptions of ship travel to and from China and the Philippines. It could be read profitably by an adult, a student, or read aloud to an entire family. School-aged children would find it an appropriate selection for a book report, too.

*ANITA ARMSTRONG*  
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