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BOOK NOTICES

John H. Armstrong

SOUND OF TRUMPETS

Faith Cook

Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth (2000)

176 pages, paper, \$9.99

Faith Cook's earlier books, *Singing in the Fire*, *Grace in Winter*, and *Samuel Rutherford and His Friends*, clearly display her ability to write short and interesting biographical studies. *Sound of Trumpets* is more of the same, providing 25-35 page biographical sketches of seven Christians who rose above the pattern of this world to become stalwarts for truth in action.

Most of these sketches present to the average reader people they probably have never heard of, much less considered as role models of faith. These are everyday heroes of the faith, not modern "media personalities." As an example, consider Archibald Brown, one of the first converts baptized by C. H. Spurgeon in the newly-open Metropolitan Tabernacle, in 1861. He began a work in one of London's most difficult areas, became an itinerant minister late in life and, in the years between, became the pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle itself. He knew revival tides and he knew seasons of mercy drops, yet in it all he was a faithful servant of God.

Or consider Dr. Tom Bernardo, whose concern for the poor children of London touched the souls of multitudes. When he died in 1905 a nation grieved. His faith-works brought glory to God and his story needs to be heard again,

nearly one hundred years after his death. Then there is Sally Wesley, the beloved wife of Charles. Many have heard of John's unhappy marriage, but how many know about Sally, the godly and cheerful soul-mate of John's brother, Charles? Faith Cook's work can be read with profit by anyone twelve years of age or older. In fact, read these stories aloud to your family if your children are ten years of age or older.

GOD'S ANSWERS FOR LIFE'S NEEDS

Paul E. Engle and Margie W. Engle
Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker (2000)
183 pages, paper, \$9.99

Because we live in an age when so many who profess faith in Christ know so little of the Bible itself, helpful little books like this are important. This is a handy reference tool that addresses thirty-two common issues we all face in life. It accomplishes this goal by summarizing relevant Scripture texts and by offering prayers and promises that follow those texts.

Appropriately the book begins with the issue of "Becoming a Christian." This is followed by themes such as: "Burnout and Exhaustion," "Disciplining and Training Our Children," "Discovering Our Gifts," "Financial Perspectives," "Finding Peace," "Giving Thanks in All Circumstances," "Honesty," "Illness," "Marital Conflict," "Moral Purity," "Incentives for Prayer," "Preparing for Sunday Worship," "Resisting Temptation," and "Wisdom for Making Decisions." This is a practical resource that can be used by pastors and other church leaders for training and assisting young believers as well as those who are not well taught, which is far too many in most churches.

REMEMBER HIM

J. W. Alexander
Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth (2000)
56 pages, paper, \$4.99

James Waddel Alexander (1804-59) was both a theological professor (Princeton Seminary) and a faithful pastor who ministered in New York at the time of the 1857-58 revival. Several years ago the Banner of Truth published communion addresses by Alexander under the title *God is Love*. This little volume addresses the subject of the Lord's Supper itself by asking and answering some basic questions; e.g., the nature of the sacrament, the doctrine of the sacrament, the benefits to be expected, improper motives, causes of fear, warnings, insufficient reasons for delay, imperfect views of the ordinance, encouragement, etc. There are eighty such nuggets in all, none more than 200 words in length. Both pastors and elders can and should consider using this profitable little book for giving sound and wise instruction to the whole church family.

MAKING MANY GLAD: THE LIFE AND LABOURS OF DANIEL BAKER

William M. Baker
Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth (2000)
560 pages, paper, \$10.99

Daniel Baker (1791-1857), who I daresay is known to few, if any, readers of this publication, was an active and faithful Southern Presbyterian minister and evangelist. He served several pastorates, none for longer than nine years. He itinerated from Pennsylvania and Ohio to Virginia, the Carolinas, his native Georgia and around the states of the old South all the way to Texas. This reprint

(1858) was written by his youngest son, who himself served as pastor of a Presbyterian church in Austin, Texas.

The Banner of Truth has done a remarkable service by reacquainting this generation with the lives and works of a host of similar nineteenth-century preachers and theologians (cf. Douglas Kelly's book, *Preachers with Power*, 1992). The reading of this type of biography provides a certain perspective on how truly needy of sound gospel ministry are the times in which we presently live.

*DIVINE AND HUMAN AND OTHER STORIES BY LEO
TOLSTOY*

Peter Sekirin, translator

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan (2000)

211 pages, cloth, \$19.99

Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) was a Russian novelist and philosopher who authored several classics that many of us read, or should have read, years ago; e.g., *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*. Now comes an entirely new selection of Tolstoy stories that has, until now, never been translated into English. *Divine and Human* actually consists of selections taken from *The Sunday Reading Stories*, a piece that the author himself considered the major work of his life.

Here you will read such short stories as: "The Son of a Thief," "The Repentant Sinner," "The Archangel Gabriel," "The Prayer," and the novella from which the present book gets its title, "Divine and Human." If you are a Tolstoy lover this book will delight you. If you are not, this would be a wonderful place to begin. The translator's preface is valuable, but the foreword by Alexander Nikoliukin, of Moscow, is both moving and extremely important.

*CHRISTIANITY AND WESTERN THOUGHT: A HISTORY OF
PHILOSOPHERS IDEAS AND MOVEMENTS, VOLUME 1*

Colin Brown

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (1990)

447 pages, cloth, \$29.99

*FAITH & REASON IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY,
VOLUME 2*

Steve Wilkins and Alan G. Padgett

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2000)

436 pages, cloth, \$24.99

Colin Brown's *Christianity & Western Thought* is an extremely useful, practical and important overview of how philosophy and Christian thought have intersected historically in a love-hate relationship. Colin Brown's volume was written in a helpful and readable style. This new volume, written in the same spirit and with the same purpose, seeks to take up where Brown's work ended. It does so with great success.

Wilkins and Padgett survey the relationship of faith and reason in the nineteenth century. The same authors are presently preparing a third volume, dealing with the twentieth century. The publisher's goal is to prepare "the premier text of philosophical history written from a conservative Christian perspective." If you are a pastor or serious layperson, these volumes will provide you with the best interaction between philosophy and theology that we currently have in print.

A PROMISE KEPT: THE STORY OF AN UNFORGETTABLE LOVE

Robertson McQuilkin
Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale (1998)
85 pages, cloth, \$9.99

The story of Robertson McQuilkin's resignation from his long presidency (1968-1990) of Columbia Bible College and Seminary (now Columbia International University) made significant news in the Christian world. This news was originally made as the result of an article in *Christianity Today*, "Living by Vows" (October 8, 1990). A kind of sequel followed, in the story, "Muriel's Blessing" (*Christianity Today*, February 5, 1996). In one way this account should never have made news at all.

The simple story is this: McQuilkin's wife, Muriel, was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, and, as a result, he resigned his institutional position at Columbia in order to care for his wife personally. The story is newsworthy precisely because it strikes us as heroic and courageous. The fact is, as Robertson McQuilkin realizes, his action was simply a step taken by a man who obeyed God and did not walk in harmony with the culture of our time. Now, in this lovely gift edition book, the story is told, and told well, by McQuilkin himself. This is highly recommended for use by all who counsel others about the covenant of marriage and all who want to understand what it means to love "until death separates."

AMAZING LOVE: THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL SON

John R. de Witt
Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth (2000)
160 pages, paper, \$6.99

John R. de Witt, now retired after a long pastoral ministry, taught Systematic Theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, Mississippi, and wrote seriously during his many years of active preaching ministry. He wrote both pastorally and academically. (His translation of the Dutch work of Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* [Eerdmans, 1975] may well be his greatest academic work in terms of contribution to the English-speaking world.) This is clearly a more pastoral work, yet there is real substance here nonetheless.

This book, first published in 1981, is now reprinted for a new generation of readers. It provides a helpful overview of the best known parable in the New Testament but it also takes the reader to the heart of biblical Christianity. De Witt is an excellent communicator, both in preaching and writing. I highly recommend this volume for all Christians!

THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CROSS: THE WAY OF THE FIRST EVANGELICALS

Gene Edward Veith, Jr.
St. Louis, Missouri: Concordia (1999)
127 pages, paper, \$8.99

Gene Edward Veith, Jr., now a popular contributor to the widely-read *World* magazine, serves as professor of English at Concordia University-Wisconsin, in Mequon, which is a northern suburb of Milwaukee. He is the author of a number of books, the better known of which are: *Post-modern Times*, *Modern Fascism: Liquidation of the Judeo-Chris-*

tian Worldview, Reading Between the Lines, and Loving God with All Your Mind. This present volume, despite the distinctive Lutheran approach that will sound unfamiliar to some readers, is a rich feast!

Listen to Veith's own moving words about the thesis of this volume:

At different times in my life I have embraced liberal theology, accepting whatever is progressive and crusading for social justice, and I have been a raving fundamentalist. . . . What I needed was a spiritual framework big enough to embrace the whole range of human existence, a realistic spirituality . . . that is not a negation of the physical world or ordinary life, but one that transfigures them.

I found it in Christianity, a religion that is not about God as such, but about God in the flesh, and God on the cross (20).

This is an introduction, and a good a one as you will read, to distinctively Lutheran spirituality. All traditions can and should learn from this primer, which I consider both a literate and readable work.

***BOLD PURPOSE: EXCHANGING COUNTERFEIT
HAPPINESS FOR THE REAL MEANING OF LIFE***

Dan B. Allender and Tremper Longman III
Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale (1998)
271 pages, cloth, \$19.99

This extremely readable work is actually a serious theological overview of Ecclesiastes that will reward every type of reader. The authors combine fiction with clear theology to keep the reader's interest. The thesis is simple: we spend far too much time chasing the abundant life,

only to find in the end that it does not satisfy.

Our purpose in life, argue Allender and Longman, must transcend the "the good life" and focus not upon family, health and relationships, but rather upon God himself. The work of these two authors is generally superb and this present volume is no exception. Those from more rigid schools of counseling should read *before* they react!

***APPOINTED TO PREACH: ASSESSING A CALL TO THE
MINISTRY***

David W. Hegg
Inverness, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications (1999)
156 pages, paper, \$16.99

After serving on countless ordination examination councils over the past twenty-five-plus years I assure you, many of those entering the ministry in our time have little or no sense of "divine calling." This book is written to correct this serious problem. It also provides chapters which offer a good look at other related topics, such as: "The Process of Ordination," "Preparing for Ordination," and "The Ordination Council."

This book is pastoral, useful and very timely. Pastors, seminarians, lay leaders, indeed virtually all Christians should think about this subject more clearly. This is the best book on the subject for modern evangelicals.

**MARTIN LUTHER AS PROPHET, TEACHER, AND HERO:
IMAGES OF THE REFORMER, 1520-1620**

Robert Kolb

Grand Rapids: Baker (1999)

278 pages, paper, \$21.99

A vast number of studies exist on the life and work of Martin Luther, so vast that only a select few scholars have dared to tackle the subject seriously. Robert Kolb, a genuinely serious Luther scholar, considers in this readable and engaging work how Luther's contemporaries and successors used his influence to support the German Reformation. He demonstrates that Luther's disciples used his influence, adapting it to the needs of the church in three respective ages. During his lifetime Luther was seen by many as a prophet. Later his influence became more like that of an authoritative interpreter and teacher. By the end of the sixteenth century Kolb tells us he was perceived as a hero, the man whose work was celebrated in art and even on stage.

What is the impact of Luther upon the Church since the sixteenth century? Kolb provides as good an answer as I have read on this important question. Serious evangelicals, Lutheran and non-Lutheran, should interact with this work.

Kolb is missions professor of systematic theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri. He is also the author of several previously published works of importance: *For All the Saints: Changing Perceptions of Martyrdom and Sainthood in the Lutheran Reformation*, *Luther's Heirs Define His Legacy: Studies on Lutheran Confessionalization*, *Confessing the Faith: Reformers Define the Church, 1530-1580* and *The Christian Faith: A Lutheran Exposition*.

THE WORD & POWER CHURCH

Doug Banister

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan (1999)

208 pages, cloth, \$16.99

What happens when a non-charismatic church seeks genuinely to learn from charismatics, and their plea for renewal and unity in the Spirit, while retaining a serious evangelical theology? This book seeks to answer this question by a first-person overview of the remarkable ministry of an Evangelical Free church in Knoxville, Tennessee. The author, a graduate of Talbot School of Theology, will offend those who are not open to synthesis (in the area of gifts and theology) of any sort, but will delight those who have been looking for a thought-provoking why and how for a Word and power marriage in actual practice.

Banister takes a big picture look at Scripture, church history, and the condition of the Church in North America today. He tries to show how Pentecostalism and evangelism need one another because each, he argues, possesses strengths vital to the other. One does not have to agree with everything Banister writes to find in this story much to encourage a wider lens approach to the dynamic of the Spirit's work in our time. At the same time, this book should not be used, as I fear it will be, as a "guide" for each local congregation.