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Reformation
& **REVIVAL**
JOURNAL

CHRISTIAN
ONENESS

A Quarterly for Church Leadership

VOLUME 13 · NUMBER 1 · WINTER 2004

BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong

*T*heological discussion is a necessary help to discover and to manifest the unity in faith which we already enjoy and to restore that unity where it has been lost.

CARDINAL JAN WILLEBRANDS

*P*ace is the first casualty of untruthfulness.

ARCHBISHOP ROWAN WILLIAMS

*O*nly one thing can give unity in the Church on the human level; the love which allows another to be different even when it does not understand him.

KARL RAHNER

*T*he true Church government is to leave the conscience to its full liberty . . . and to seek unity in the Light and in the Spirit, walking sweetly and harmoniously together in the midst of different practices.

ISAAC PENNINGTON

POCKET DICTIONARY OF ETHICS

Stanley J. Grenz and Jay T. Smith

Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press (2003)

128 pages, paper, \$7.00

*T*his is the fifth such "Pocket Dictionary" produced by InterVarsity Press over the past several years. The series is an excellent idea and this particular volume will prove to be helpful to both pastors and beginning students who are looking for uncomplicated explanations of important subjects and key words. Most ministers have had far too little exposure to philosophy and ethics. This little guide will serve you well if it is placed in a handy position near the place where you study.

There are over 300 definitions here, ranging from altruism to virtue. Ethicists from St. Augustine to modern radicals like Peter Singer are included. One interesting, and extremely useful, feature is the inclusion of marketplace specialties, ranging from advertising to technological ethics. Stan Grenz is a prolific writer and well-known evangelical theologian and Jay Smith is a pastor in Washington.

PORTRAITS OF BIBLE WOMEN

George Matheson

Grand Rapids: Kregel (1908, reprinted 2003)

141 pages, paper, \$9.99

*G*eorge Matheson (1842-1906) was a Scottish minister who lost his eyesight early in his life yet persevered in

serious academic work to complete two degrees from the University of Glasgow. He then carried on an effective pastoral ministry for many years. His imagination was keen and his speaking powerful, attracting large crowds to his church. His most famous written work is the familiar hymn, "O Love That Will Not Let Me Go."

Matheson is the famous author of numerous portraits of Bible characters. This particular reprint includes studies of Eve, Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel, Miriam, Deborah, Ruth, Hannah and Mary. Matheson had a remarkable ability to see both spiritual and psychological insights that allow the reader to look into the souls of these remarkable biblical women. This book is not a feminist agenda book but it reveals a very high view of the place and role of women, a view that might surprise some but will prove helpful to all who have a teachable spirit.

SPIRITUAL LANDSCAPE: IMAGES OF THE SPIRITUAL LIFE IN THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

James L. Resseguie

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers (2004)

195 pages, paper, \$19.95

Professor James Resseguie, professor of New Testament at Winebrenner Theological Seminary, drawing from recent work in narrative criticism and the New Testament, helps the reader see the spiritual significance of things like landscapes, social relationships and the local economy in Luke's Gospel. Put another way: "What role do stories play in the narrative of Luke and how can these function in spiritual formation and development?"

I am reminded of the work of Kenneth E. Bailey when I read a book like this. The stories of the gospel come alive and fresh insight is developed that feeds the mind and the soul. More work of this sort could reform the modern pulpit in a fresh and exciting way.

ANNOUNCING THE KINGDOM: THE STUDY OF GOD'S MISSION IN THE BIBLE

Arthur F. Glasser, with Charles E. Van Engen, Dean S. Gilliland and Shawn B. Redford

Grand Rapids: Baker (2003)

400 pages, paper, \$26.99

Have you ever desired a panoramic tour of the advancement of God's kingdom from Genesis to Revelation? Or, have you, like me, longed for a theology of mission that centers on the establishment and growth of Christ's kingdom in this present world until the end of this age? Look no further. The fruit of Arthur Glasser's long life in teaching missions has resulted in what is clearly the best and most comprehensive work in missiology to this point.

Clearly, every evangelical leader should read this book. It should become a standard text in seminaries and a useful overview for serious students of mission. I cannot recommend this book too highly. It provides serious fuel for mission committees, mission pastors, and pastors who preach on missions. Indeed, anyone who seeks to obey our Lord's Great Commission can gain great help from this magisterial volume.

LIVES OF THE MIND: THE USE AND ABUSE OF INTELLIGENCE FROM HEGEL TO WODEHOUSE

Roger Kimball

Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher (2002)

375 pages, paper, \$16.95

Kimball, the managing editor of *The New Criterion*, offers an engaging and well-written study of genius and pseudo-genius, showing how intelligence can be both used and abused. Kimball argues for what he calls the "spiritual prudence" of intellectual ideas, meaning that the idea is rooted in a healthy contact with reality. He applies this idea to the work of figures as diverse as Hegel, Plutarch, Kierkegaard, P. G. Wodehouse, Descartes and Bertrand Russell.

The great strength of this excellent book is the way the author demonstrates what happens when intellect trumps common sense. Kimball rightly warns of the danger of much higher education that really becomes "higher stupidity." Chapter titles demonstrate the breadth of Kimball's survey: What's Left of Descartes? What Did Kierkegaard Want? Wittgenstein: The Philosophical Porcupine and The Genius of Wodehouse, a fascinating piece to say the least.

INTELLIGENT DESIGN AND ITS CRITICS: PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL, AND SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES

Robert T. Pennock, editor

Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2001.

803 pages, paper, \$47.95

Over the past ten years or so a new movement in the evolution/creation debate has arisen—intelligent design creationism (IDC). This emphasis, popularized by the writings of professor Phillip E. Johnson at the University of California, Berkeley, is put under the microscope by the contributors to this huge volume. The discussion of IDC is surveyed by looking at it as a political movement, a philosophical movement, a scientific movement and a theological development.

Essays in this immensely useful volume include the work of noted Christian authors such as Phillip E. Johnson, Alvin Plantinga, Howard J. Van Til, William A. Dembski, and Nancey Murphy. Both friends and foes of IDC are enlisted from the ranks of confessional Christians and non-Christians. Though the essays are of uneven quality one could not hope to find a more complete survey of the subject at the present moment in the history of ideas.

CRITICAL ISSUES IN AMERICAN RELIGIOUS HISTORY: A READER

Robert R. Mathiesen

Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press (2001)

659 pages, paper, \$29.95

This is a well-conceived textbook that actually serves the interests of anyone interested in reading primary material in American religious history. Mathiesen has gathered important original source material and joined it with contemporary reflection and commentary by modern historians.

Mathiesen identifies fifteen chronologically-arranged issues that have stirred debate over the course of our nation's religious history. Mathiesen's work is unique in the way he arranges his material. He sees four interrelated dimensions of tension. These are the tension between the secular and the sacred, beliefs and behaviors, inclusion and exclusion, and conflict and consensus. Each of the fifteen themes is woven around a particular critical issue pertaining to one or more of these four tensions. The layout is faithful to this editorial design and thus provides a deeply satisfying work.

FEED MY SHEPHERDS: SPIRITUAL HEALING AND RENEWAL FOR THOSE IN CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP

Flora Slosson Wuellner

Nashville: Upper Room Books (1998)

191 pages, cloth, \$18.00

Spiritual formation, or Christian nurture, has made a big comeback among Evangelicals. It was never lost among Catholics and the Orthodox, but in our circles we became enamored with methods and programs and almost lost the ancient patterns for growth. The problems in this rediscovery are manifold. It remains to be seen if this is just another "fad" for many of our churches and schools.

The calling to Christian leadership and ministry is demanding. It overwhelms many and the drop-out rate is

high, very high. The Christian leader needs help to avoid depression, misconduct and burnout. Flora Wuellner is a minister in the United Church of Christ and has conducted retreats for Christian leaders for many years. She is a battle-tested guide, thus this is a valuable book for serious pastors.