



A Quarterly Journal for Church Leadership
Volume 9 • Number 2 • SPRING 2000

BOOK NOTICES

John H. Armstrong

**HOLMAN NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY: GALATIANS,
EPHESIANS, PHILIPPIANS AND COLOSSIANS**

Max Anders

Nashville, Tennessee: Broadman & Holman (2000)

358 pages, cloth, \$16.99

This commentary, part of a new line of study materials recently unveiled by an increasingly important publisher in the evangelical arena, offers helpful material to those who want a user-friendly format. To give the reader some sense of the series I position the publisher's approach somewhere between the popular Application Commentary series (Zondervan) and Warren Wiersbe's very popular Be Series (Chariot/Victor) on the whole Bible.

This volume covers the main idea of the text with brief references to the purpose, meaning and importance of the book being surveyed. This type of book has its place with general readers, but I sincerely hope serious pastors will not settle for this "ready-made" approach to preaching. Harder work in the text must be done for careful exposition.

WHY GOD'S WORD IS ALL WE NEED

Gene Edward Veith

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

48 pages, paper, \$4.99

Gene Veith, an increasingly important critic of culture and Christian worldviews, offers a succinct endorsement of the Reformation doctrine of the sole sufficiency of Holy Scripture. Veith shows how the Incarnate Word reveals himself through the written Word. He writes, "There is no way to know about Christ except from God's Word" (26). One has to wonder how many modern evangelicals agree with this most basic of Reformation principles. This booklet is part of an on-going series of excellent tract/booklets produced by the Alliance of Confessing Evangelicals, with the series title, *Today's Issues*.

THE GRACE OF REPENTANCE

Sinclair Ferguson

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

48 pages, paper, \$4.99

Rarely does a modern author get to the heart of a matter so fruitfully and clearly as does Sinclair Ferguson in this outstanding booklet. Pastors and church leaders should read this, discuss its content, and pass it along to their congregation. If repentance was the first word Jesus spoke in his public ministry, surely it ought to be returned to our present vocabulary and practice when the church so desperately needs to hear again our Lord's command.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY

John Hannah

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

48 pages, paper, \$4.99

That we were created for God's glory is a given, if the teaching of the Bible is taken seriously. The modern church has virtually forgotten this given. We emphasize self-worth, personal rights and private morality. John Hannah, professor of historical theology at Dallas Theological Seminary, shows how the thought of Jonathan Edwards powerfully corrects the modern error by returning us to God-centeredness. Another in the series, *Today's Issues*. Very highly recommended for church use.

THE SIGNS OF TRUE CONVERSION

Mark R. Talbot

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

47 pages, paper, \$4.99

Mark Talbot, associate professor of philosophy at Wheaton College, gives a simple but clear statement of the marks of true conversion. He carefully lays out the traditional Reformation view in a simple and useful way. He is surely correct when he observes that "It is possible to be saved without knowing or perhaps even while denying *sola fide*" (26). He insists, with Luther, that this article will cause the church to stand or fall. The problem is, however, what does *sola fide* really mean once the slogan is put into a biblical context?

This reviewer thinks it is best to speak of faith *only*, not of faith *alone*! By this we mean that only faith justifies, *not* love, works, etc. As the classical Reformed scholar Turretin noted, "The eye alone sees; but the eye ripped from the

body sees nothing." Evangelicals must be more cognizant of the simple fact that the only time "faith alone" occurs in the New Testament the context is not a positive one (cf. James 2:14)! To counteract Roman Catholic teaching we quite often get this statement of *sola fide* out of balance biblically.

THE ASSURANCE OF SALVATION: STUDIES IN JOHN 17

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)
662 pages, cloth, \$25.00

This volume is actually a reprint of four volumes of sermons from John 17 now issued in one attractively designed larger volume. Lloyd-Jones explores the depth of Jesus' prayer for his disciples and for us, his followers, now twenty centuries later. It is thrilling and rewarding to ponder the actual intercession of our Lord for us!

This is a verse-by-verse exposition, given by the famous London minister in 1952-53, that includes forty-eight sermons in all. The depth and mystery of our Lord's words are unfolded with the usual clarity that readers have come to expect in the works of Lloyd-Jones. This is a recommended volume for both ministers and lay readers.

AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANITY: STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF ACTS, VOLUME ONE

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)
304 pages, cloth, \$22.00

This first volume, in a multi-volume set to be released in coming years, includes twenty-two sermons on

Acts 1-3. For those of us who love Lloyd-Jones we greet another volume of previously unpublished sermons with great joy. Lloyd-Jones is at his best in Acts!

Here you will find exposition that emphasizes clearly that the Christian life is not a list of things to *do* but rather a message regarding what Jesus came *to do for you*. Here ministers will find rich fare and a good model for preaching through Acts, as long as they are not tempted to borrow overmuch from this gold mine. Crossway is to be thanked by the church at large for continuing to get entirely new volumes of Lloyd-Jones's sermons into print.

FOR THE LOVE OF GOD: A DAILY COMPANION FOR DISCOVERING THE TREASURES OF GOD'S WORD, VOLUME TWO

D. A. Carson
Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (1999)
415 pages, cloth, \$19.99

This volume, a companion to an earlier one with the same title, is one of the most useful devotional resources I have ever perused. What Carson does, and he does it masterfully, is show us how to understand the Bible as a whole. This is a 365-day devotional with a complete Bible-reading plan for those who wish to work through the entire Bible in one year. It is superb in every way and much to be preferred to most of the more popular devotional volumes that flood the modern scene.

I meet believers all across the nation who have profited from Carson's first volume. They are hooked! Now every one who appreciated the first volume can add this new one and take Carson's most healthy approach through another year.

THE DIFFICULT DOCTRINE OF THE LOVE OF GOD

D. A. Carson

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)

93 pages, paper, \$12.99

Most Christians think they understand the doctrine of the love of God. Think again. To truly grasp this doctrine is to plumb depths similar to considering the mysteries of the incarnation, the Trinity, and predestination. Our generation, in popular circles, reduced God to love, all love, and nothing but love. A new generation, interested in serious reformation, has almost forgotten the love of God. How do we sort this out biblically? Here is the very best answer available.

I heard Carson give the essential content of this book in an oral presentation several years ago. It was one of the most memorable addresses I have ever heard the esteemed professor give. Now the entire church can benefit by his careful thinking and clear writing. Get this book, read it, and pass it along to every Christian you know. They will thank you, I am sure.

THE NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY: JOSHUA

David M. Howard, Jr.

Nashville: Broadman & Holman (1998)

464 pages, cloth, \$29.99

This volume is part of a series designed for the pastor or layperson who desires to carefully dig into the text of Scripture using serious research methodology and careful exegesis in the original languages. David Howard, a professor of Old Testament at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, provides insightful analysis with an approach that is sensitive to the literary features of Joshua. This is an

extremely helpful tool for those who would study and/or preach through this book of the Hebrew canon.

THE NEW AMERICAN COMMENTARY: JUDGES, RUTH

Daniel I. Block

Nashville: Broadman & Holman (1999)

765 pages, cloth, \$32.99

Daniel I. Block is one of the best conservative Old Testament exegetes writing this kind of material in North America. He is professor of Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky. His two-volume exegetical work on Ezekiel (Eerdmans) is his most significant commentary to this point.

This volume is technical but usable for most serious students. Block delves into the historical, political and sociological background of Judges and Ruth. Alan Groves, professor of Old Testament at Westminster Theological Seminary, writes of this work, "I stand in awe of what he has accomplished. His work is most impressive. His theological and practical implications sections are pithy, helpful, and flow from the text leading up to his conclusions." Groves concludes, ". . . this commentary is a landmark achievement for the scholarly study of Judges." Block writes in his preface that his desire and prayer "is that having listened to me speak (via the printed page), all who read the books of Judges and Ruth will discover the relevance and power of God's ancient Word in their own lives." I believe Block has given the church the best available work on these books to date. You will not go wrong owning and using this volume.

WHO WILL BE SAVED?

Paul R. House and Gregory A. Thornbury, editors
 Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2000)
 239 pages, paper, \$19.99

It has been common for several generations to hear self-consciously liberal scholars argue that there is salvation in some other name than Jesus Christ. To read such arguments is no surprise. What is surprising is the story of evangelical writers and theologians who have joined these liberals in saying much the same. This present volume is a collection of carefully written essays and interactive forum discussions that will challenge this drift. The book includes eleven chapters and is divided into three parts: 1) Who Saves? 2) Who Will Be Saved? (3) How Shall the Lost Hear the Gospel?

Authors include Carl F. H. Henry, R. Albert Mohler, Jr., Winfried Corduan, Timothy Beougher and Thom Rainer. Forum discussions include contributions from Scott Hafemann, D. A. Carson, Timothy George, and Ben Mitchell. A dialogue on inclusivism between Clark Pinnock and R. Douglas Geivett is a special feature of the book. Paul House contributes an afterword on the need for vigilance and vision regarding the issues considered in this helpful book. The style is readable, and all interested readers can surely profit from this work.

CONCORDIA COMMENTARY: REVELATION

Louis A. Brighton
 St. Louis: Concordia (1999)
 673 pages, cloth, \$29.95

This is part of an ongoing series that presently includes two volumes on the Gospel of Luke. Brighton, a pro-

fessor emeritus at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, taught exegetical theology for twenty-five years and also served as a pastor for twenty-two years. Included in this useful book are three sections: a literal translation that is fresh and useful, textual notes on grammar and language that are both readable and succinct, and a theological commentary. This last feature makes the commentary somewhat unique. The doctrine of the book is applied to the church in terms of ministry, worship and the proclamation of the Word.

This series is a Lutheran contribution which is incarnational, sacramental and confessional. Archaeology, history and extra-biblical material are also used appropriately within this work. This is a useful addition to serious libraries. Recommended for pastors in particular. Non-Lutherans may not agree with some applications, but they can, nevertheless, benefit from exposure to some of the arguments that are unique to this confessional tradition.

JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH ALONE

Jonathan Edwards
 Don Kistler, editor
 Morgan, Pennsylvania: Soli Deo Gloria (2000)
 154 pages, cloth, \$18.95

This volume is a newly edited edition of two public lectures, expanded for written purposes, and given by the esteemed pastor/theologian in November 1734. It was one of the first works of Edwards, published originally in 1738.

According to the publisher's preface to this new edition, Dr. Samuel Logan, president of Westminster Theological Seminary, noted in 1984 that Edwards was responding in these lectures to encroaching Arminianism in Northampton, as well as to antinomianism in the colonies,

popular since the days of Anne Hutchinson. The material here on "The Place of Obedience" is particularly relevant for our day as is the answer Edwards gives to six objections against his understanding of this doctrinal tenet. Because this particular volume is beautifully reset in readable twelve-point type this alone will make the book very useful for a new generation.

What you do in public worship, do it with all your might. Shake off that slothful, indifferent, lukewarm temper, which is so odious to God. . . . Think it not enough to present your bodies before the Lord. . . . The worship of the body is but the carcass of worship; it is soul worship that is the soul of worship. Those that draw near with their lips only shall find God far enough from them; not only lips, and mouth, and tongue, but mind, and heart, and affections; not only knee, and hand, and eye, but heart, and conscience, and memory, must be pressed to attend upon God in public worship. David says, not only "my flesh longs for thee," but "my soul thirsts for thee." Then will the Lord draw near, when our whole man waits on him; then will the Lord be found, when we seek him with our whole heart.

DONALD S. WHITNEY, "WORSHIP . . . FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS" IN *SPIRITUAL DISCIPLES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE* (DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS: NAVPRESS, 1991), 5:90.

"There is no way," says the Welsh Baptist, Geoffrey Thomas, "that those who neglect secret worship can know communion with God in the public services of the Lord's Day."

DONALD S. WHITNEY, "WORSHIP . . . FOR THE PURPOSE OF GODLINESS" IN *SPIRITUAL DISCIPLES FOR THE CHRISTIAN LIFE* (DOWNERS GROVE, ILLINOIS: NAVPRESS, 1991), 5:89.