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BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong

GENDER: MEN WOMEN SEX FEMINISM

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Ben Lomond, California: Conciliar Press (2002)

184 pages, paper, \$15.95

This is a collection of previously-published articles and short pieces on the present gender debates. Mathewes-Green, a commentator on National Public Radio's Morning Edition, is also the wife of an Orthodox priest. She just happens to be one of the brightest and most engaging contemporary Christian writers I know. There is a chapter titled, "A Cab Ride with Gloria Steinem." I was moved to the depths by this particular account, praying that Ms. Steinem might embrace the good news.

This book will not allow you to remain unmoved. The arguments may not convince you but the issues are handled with care and fairness. I agreed and disagreed but I could not stop marking my copy on page after page. I recommend it highly.

CHRIST'S FULFILLMENT OF TORAH AND TEMPLE

Matthew Levering

Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press (2002)

264 pages, paper, \$24.00

This is a book for both scholars and serious lay readers. If you want to understand Thomas Aquinas and the new Thomism developing within the Catholic church this is the place to begin. For what purpose does Jesus "save" human beings? Levering identifies six important aspects of soteriology

and develops each carefully and concisely. For Aquinas, Christ fulfilled Israel's Torah and Temple, law and liturgy. Torah expresses God's wisdom, incarnated ultimately in Christ. Christ's passion fulfills the moral, juridical and ceremonial precepts of that same law. This is a book evangelicals would profit from, if for no other reason than that they are unacquainted with Aquinas and what the tradition has to offer a serious reflective theology.

CREED & CULTURE: A TOUCHSTONE READER

James M. Kushiner, editor
 Wilmington, Delaware: Intercollegiate Studies Institute
 (2003)
 239 pages, paper, \$15.00

As the Christian tradition lost its nerve in the face of secularism and pluralism? Some say yes. I believe the increasingly encouraging evidence is otherwise. One of my favorite magazines for addressing contemporary intellectual thought is *Touchstone*, a periodical of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant opinion. Now the best of *Touchstone*, which began in 1987, is available in one very helpful volume. What does the Church say to the contemporary gods of tolerance and diversity?

Included are essays by Thomas Howard, Leon J. Podles, David Mills, James R. Edwards, Patrick Henry Reardon, James Hitchcock, and the late conservative icon Russell Kirk. I do not agree with a number of conclusions made in this volume but I was forced to think and rethink a great deal. I recommend both the book and the magazine.

REALITY: A SCIENTIFIC THEOLOGY

Alister E. McGrath
 Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2002)
 343 pages, cloth, \$50.00

One of the most prolific writers of our time is clearly Professor Alister McGrath. He writes both popular and scholarly works and seems to produce two or three new titles per year. This volume is the second of three in a new systematic theology. The *modus operandi* of this series is to explore Christian theology in terms of its relationship to the natural sciences. McGrath has doctoral degrees in science and theology and thus is immensely capable of such work. I am a bit dubious about the way in which natural science and revealed theology can become conversation partners in a new systematic theology, but this series is the first attempt that I have come across that demands my careful interest and effort.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF CHRISTIAN THEOLOGIANS

Patrick W. Carey, and Joseph T. Lienhard, editors
 Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson (2002)
 589 pages, paper, \$39.95

A one-volume dictionary of Christian theologians that covers the entire history of the Church right to the present time has been desperately needed for some time. More than 450 of the Church's formative and most influential theologians are covered. Originally designed as a reference work for research libraries this one-volume paperback makes the work more accessible to pastors and others. The majority of the contributing writers are Catholic but notable Protestant writers are also included. A highly useful resource for serious thought and survey.

ROMANS: AN EXPOSITION OF CHAPTER 13

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones
 Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth (2002)
 323 pages, cloth, \$33.99

Few preachers in the twentieth century were as widely regarded as the late Welsh minister D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones. His ongoing series of expositions on Romans, currently numbering thirteen volumes, is now improved by the addition of these twenty-three addresses on the famous thirteenth chapter. In a time when the Christian's responsibility to government and the rule of law is again under scrutiny, how are we to understand Paul in these famous words of the Roman letter? This is a popular readable exposition at its best. Sometimes Lloyd-Jones develops ideas from the text that seem a bit unaware of serious exegetical issues, however, in most cases he is not only readable but very helpful.

EVE'S REVENGE: WOMEN AND A SPIRITUALITY OF THE BODY

Lilian Calles Barger
 Grand Rapids: Brazos (2002)
 224 pages, paper, \$14.99

Our culture is clearly preoccupied with youth and beauty. This tendency has, in particular, impacted millions of women. Who knows how many Christian women have been impacted by this misogynist tendency? Anyone who counsels at all will tell you the problem is deep and difficult.

This book is a culture-challenging critique of this idolatry. It deals with America's obsession with the human body and does so in a way that affirms the real beauty of women. Naomi Wolf, author of *The Beauty Myth*, notes that this is "a rich and thought-provoking treatment of the nature of women's physicality and value." I completely concur. Get it, read it, and by all means make sure the sisters in your circle of Christian friends read it.

COMMUNITY FORMATION IN THE EARLY CHURCH AND IN THE CHURCH TODAY

Richard N. Longnecker, editor
 Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson (2002)
 251 pages, paper, \$19.95

A well-done collection of essays which deals seriously with ecclesiology both historically and sociologically. Four divisions include: Social Context, New Testament, Early Centuries and Church Today. The essays range from 15-25 pages in length and all are keenly sensitive to the patristic writers. They are catholic in tone and direction. The style is accessible to general readers who are interested in solid thought.

Two ways of understanding the Church run through the volume. On the one hand the Church is "God's new creation" while on the other it is a human institution and a voluntary fellowship of individuals. In a time when both need to be kept before the leadership of the Church this will be a helpful addition to the libraries of those who lead the Church.

ACQUAINTED WITH GRIEF: WANG MINGDAO'S STAND FOR THE PERSECUTED CHURCH IN CHINA

Thomas Alan Harvey
 Grand Rapids: Brazos (2002)
 190 pages, paper, \$14.99

According to Thomas Harvey the numerous questions Christians in the West have regarding the Church in China can be answered by asking another crucial question: "Who was Wang Mingdao?" Mingdao was a minister and evangelist who has been called the "Dean of the House Churches" in China. After twenty years in prison he was released as an old man and died in 1991. His story will move you deeply and in ways you would not expect. His story is, in reality, the story of the Church in the vast nation of China.

Thomas Alan Harvey is a faculty member at Trinity Theo-

logical College in Singapore and serves the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., as educational liaison to the Singapore Presbyterian church. He has written numerous scholarly essays for journals.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF HEAVEN

Alister E. McGrath

Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell (2003)

203 pages, paper, \$17.95

The concept of heaven has had a great impact on culture, both East and West. Where did the idea of heaven come from? How has it impacted Western culture in particular? McGrath presents an overview of the subject that is both readable and highly engaging. He begins with the biblical material and then traces the impact of heaven upon literature, culture, and modern thought. This is not the typical Christian book on heaven and for that reason alone it is worth the time of interested readers. This is a gracious and clear survey of relevant history and theology.

THE TRUSTWORTHINESS OF GOD

Paul Helm and Carl R. Trueman, editors

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2002)

289 pages, paper, \$28.00

The essays in this volume engage the nature of God and scriptural revelation in a popular and readable manner. The goal throughout is how understanding God's faithfulness, from the standpoint of the doctrine of God itself, will clarify the perspective we have regarding the Bible itself. Old Testament essays include studies of Old Testament wisdom literature and the reliability of Deuteronomy. New Testament studies look at Jesus and the Scripture, Paul's view of Scripture and how Paul treated Old Testament texts. The historical and systematic section has a very helpful essay by Gerald Bray on the

Church Fathers and their use of Scripture as well as Professor Helm's essay on "The Perfect Trustworthiness of God." Included in the volume are a wide array of scholars from both sides of the Atlantic, including non-Americans such as Craig Bartholmew, Colin Gunton, David Peterson and Donald Macleod.

SPIRITUALITY & LEADERSHIP

Alan E. Nelson

Colorado Springs, Colorado: NavPress (2002)

175 pages, paper, \$13.00

NavPress has recently begun to publish very good material that demonstrates how spirituality and leadership are necessarily linked. Nelson argues that the world has many leaders but people today are looking for leaders who are genuinely spiritual. Where are those people who lead with wisdom and power that comes from above? This is not a manual for how to develop skills and managerial influence but rather a simple treatment of how the Christian leader should look at leading from a Christian perspective rooted in God the Spirit.

FROM GRIEF TO GLORY

James W. Bruce III

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2002)

144 pages, paper, \$10.99

Few sorrows compare, says Bruce, with losing a child. Bruce and his wife felt that pain when their infant son died. They sought comfort in the counsel of others including Luther, Spurgeon and John Bunyan. The result of their search is this excellent and emotionally helpful book. You will be reminded of God's sovereign care and love by this well-written little book. Leaders should use this book to comfort those who experience such sorrow.

CREATION

Hans Schwarz

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans (2002)

254 pages, paper, \$29.00

I have noted or reviewed numerous books by Professor Hans Schwarz over the years. This new book is equally important and demonstrates how good theology is to be written. Schwarz is always clear, careful and balanced. He summarizes the scientific material in an even-handed manner and continually brings the reader back to the central issue—God is creator and lord over all. By this approach Schwarz models a better way to treat science and the Bible. Both pastors and lay readers will profit.