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Carter and Iveys' "Steal away home: Charles Spurgeon & Thomas Johnson unlikely friends on the road to freedom" (book review)

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Book Reviews



Carter, M., & Ivey, A. (2017). *Steal away home: Charles Spurgeon & Thomas Johnson unlikely friends on the road to freedom*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 294 pp. \$19.99. ISBN 9781433690655

The legacy of Charles Spurgeon has revived in recent years and works on the legendary British pastor abound. An altogether unique entry in the field on Spurgeon is this monograph by Pastors Matt Carter and Aaron Ivey, both of the Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas. *Steal Away Home: Charles Spurgeon & Thomas Johnson Unlikely Friends on the Road to Freedom* seeks to present a side of the famed preacher that even the seasoned scholar may overlook. Knowing that readers of Spurgeon, both the novice and the scholar, can become so familiar with the theology of the man while overlooking his humanity, Carter and Ivey have woven together a story based in reality yet written as a drama.

Steal Away Home does not fit within traditional genres. It is not pure biography or historical narrative because “the line between fiction and history is blurred,” and yet the line is so fine that the descriptor “historical fiction” is not quite appropriate either. Carter and Ivey have done their homework in the historical materials to ensure that they really know the story of both Charles Spurgeon and Thomas Johnson. However, the historical record sometimes leaves gaps and does not always tie together in the package the way the authors have presented. They have taken the liberty to fill in the gaps and tie the stories together in a compelling way. Some readers may not like this approach, preferring to stay with the many solid biographies or Spurgeon’s own autobiography itself. For those not deterred by potential deviations from history, the readers will find themselves learning in a completely new way.

Whether your library leans more popular or more academic, *Steal Away Home* will be beneficial to your patrons. It will challenge the scholar and strengthen the student as well as just being a delightful read to anyone looking for a good book. Add it to your collection today.

Reviewer

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