



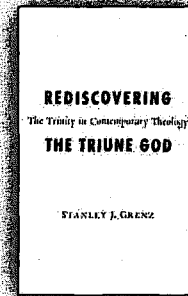
Reformation
REVIVAL
JOURNAL

A Quarterly for Church Renewal

VOLUME 14 · NUMBER 1 · 2005

BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong

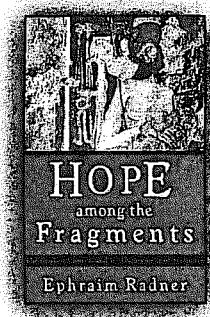


REDISCOVERING THE TRIUNE GOD: THE TRINITY IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY
Stanley J. Grenz
Minneapolis: Fortress (2004)
289 pages, paper, \$23.00

The evangelical theology that I studied in the 1960s and 1970s made only passing reference to the Trinity. It seemed far more interested in demonstrating the rational foundations of a faith under siege than in teaching a robust theology consciously rooted in the ancient, and contemporary, theology of the Christian church. In more recent decades, evangelical theologians such as Stanley J. Grenz have labored with great effort to redress this problem. This present work adds to the renewal of a better theology by taking us to the very heart of the church's most important foundational assertion: namely, that God is one, but he is one as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The inner Trinitarian life of God is important for both the life of the Christian and the church.

Why do Christians continue to insist on the doctrine of the Trinity? What role does this have in contemporary dialogue with other religions? Grenz offers a comprehensive and comprehensible survey of the Trinitarian contributions of major twentieth-century theologians, including: Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Robert W. Jenson, Leonardo Boff, John Zizioulas, Catherine Mowry LaCugna, Elizabeth Johnson, Hans Urs von Balthazar, and

Thomas F. Torrance. This approach makes this work valuable for any survey of the material of the past one hundred years. Grenz has clearly become one of evangelicalism's most highly regarded theologians over the past fifteen years. His concern for restoring a robust Trinitarian theology is well worth the attention of serious readers. This present volume demonstrates once again the author's proven ability to put complex and critical ideas into their proper theological context.



**HOPE AMONG THE FRAGMENTS: THE
BROKEN CHURCH AND ITS ENGAGEMENT
OF SCRIPTURE**

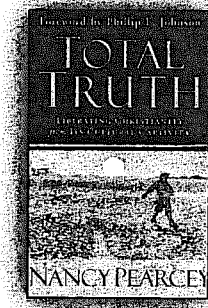
Ephraim Radner

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Brazos (2004)

240 pages, paper, \$24.99

The editors of *Reformation & Revival Journal*, a quarterly committed to *renewing the church* by Word and Spirit, are profoundly interested in every contemporary effort to speak for a more christocentric doctrine of the church. Perhaps no author understands this need better than Ephraim Radner, an Episcopal priest in Pueblo, Colorado. Radner, the author of the equally outstanding, *The End of the Church*, gives us a scripturally- and theologically-anchored critique in his newest book. And like a good physician he also provides a clear and convincing diagnosis.

Theologian Robert W. Jenson properly grasps the value of the approach taken here when he writes that Radner "praises the necessity of [the] temporally persistent establishment, waiting for Providence rather than choosing a cure or a way out, and staying put." Radner is a reformer, and a reformer that evangelicals should listen to when they write and teach for church renewal. I highly recommend this volume to all church leader/practitioners. It employs classical models in refreshing ways and therein provides solid direction.



**TOTAL TRUTH: LIBERATING CHRISTIANITY
FROM ITS CULTURAL CAPTIVITY**

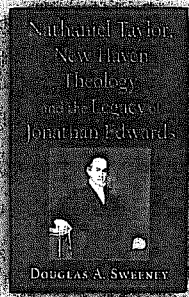
Nancy Pearcey

Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway (2004)

479 pages, cloth, \$25.00

Worldview analysis has become big in evangelical circles. Some of it is overly popular, and at times far too simplistic. Some is way too technical for ordinary readers. Nancy Pearcey has provided a needed contribution to this growing body of thought. Her work is balanced and thorough. Pearcey rightly insists that the gospel is the criteria of all truth claims. She accomplishes this with clear prose, lucid arguments, and good illustrative material.

Total Truth is wide ranging in its survey of American evangelicalism. I have a quarrel with the author's understanding of George Whitefield's role, but this does not detract from the overall importance of her argument. She argues against the public and private split caused by earlier revivalistic evangelicalism, showing how personal and cultural renewal is damaged by the bitter fruit of this divide. Pearcey believes, with Saint Augustine, that "moral character is assessed not by what a man knows but by what he loves." The recovery of this perspective is vital to renewal, and Pearcey helps us understand both the how and the why of this recovery.

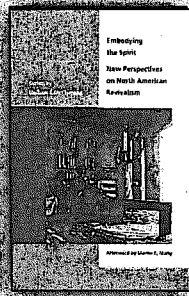


**NATHANIEL TAYLOR, NEW HAVEN
THEOLOGY, AND THE LEGACY OF
JONATHAN EDWARDS**

Douglas A. Sweeney
New York: Oxford University Press (2003)
255 pages, cloth, \$55.00

Nathaniel Taylor is not nearly as well known as Jonathan Edwards, but his major importance to the development of religious ideas, and especially Calvinistic theological praxis, is beyond question. Finally we have an academically thorough, eminently fair, and completely readable study of Nathaniel Taylor and of how he developed the theological legacy of the esteemed Edwards.

Sweeney's argument is that Taylor clearly reinterpreted Edwards, but the result was still a certain kind of highly influential Edwardsianism. He further argues that Jonathan Edwards and his disciples were much more successful in forming early American religion and culture than has often been argued by historians. Protestant piety owes far more to Taylor, and thus to Edwards, than most have realized, and Sweeney has rightly understood this tradition and its enduring power in American life.



**EMBODYING THE SPIRIT: NEW
PERSPECTIVES ON NORTH AMERICAN
REVIVALISM**

Michael J. McClymond, editor
Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press
(2004)
346 pages, cloth, \$49.95

Recent scholarship has shown growing interest in evangelical and Pentecostal movements. This interest inherently leads to the study of revival and revivalism. It is generally admitted that such enthusiastic forms of religious expression have deeply impacted religious institutions, ideas, and practice in American history. It is even more common to now admit that this influence is still prominent, far more prominent than most academic secularists realize. This collection of essays seeks to correct some of this academic oversight by providing a thoughtful overview of issues like gender, radio evangelism, Latino revivalism, and the most famous North American revival phenomena of the 1990s, the so-called Toronto Blessing.

Michael McClymond, the general editor, was interviewed in *Reformation & Revival Journal* (vol. 12, no. 3, [Summer 2003]), and is a professor of theology at St. Louis University. He has a unique interest in revival and thus is an excellent editor for such a volume. Church historian, Martin Marty, provides an excellent afterword.



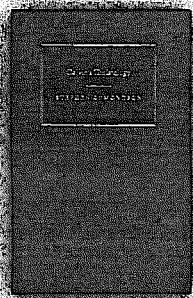
THE COMPASSION OF THE FATHER

Boris Bobrinsky
Crestwood, New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (2003)
176 pages, paper, \$14.95

Unification with God is not a theme stressed in Western theology as it ought to be. One generally has to go to Eastern writers to find this biblical emphasis well developed and drawn out into practical devotional understanding. (This is slowly changing as evangelicals discover the early church, both East and West!) Father Bobrinsky brings his long experience as a parish minister and a teaching theologian to this

particular volume, thus making it all the more useful for prayerful reading.

Is conversion a way, a process, or simply a point in time? How does the body enter into the conversion of the whole person? Is there such a thing as the baptism of the intellect? How do we invoke the name of God while we grow into our unification with the divine (or "participate in the divine nature," 2 Peter 1:4)? Bobrinskoy will not be easy for some evangelicals to grasp at first, but the effort is truly worthwhile.



CALVIN'S CHRISTOLOGY

Stephen Edmondson

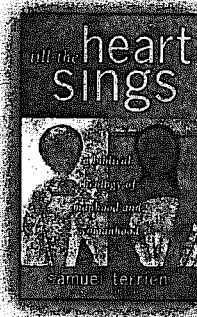
New York: Cambridge University Press
(2004)

248 pages, cloth, \$70.00

Calvin studies provide a rich vein of material for church renewal. This volume adds to the vein a new strand of gold. Using the threefold office of priest, prophet, and king, Stephen Edmondson, a professor of history at Virginia Theological Seminary (Episcopal), shows how Calvin's theology provides us a satisfying picture of Christ as the mediator of God's covenant. In short, Christ's *work* is the pivot on which the doctrine of Christ (Christology) turns. Edmondson's thesis is that Christ's person is the goal to which all of this work moves since Christ mediates our salvation (union with God) through union with himself.

Earlier works have explored this subject, but this is the first such work in several decades, and thus it should add considerably to the field. By focusing upon Christ's work in actual human history, Edmondson has shown how Calvin adds to the present renewal of interest in Christology and Trinitarian emphasis. A less expensive edition is available in paper for

\$25.99. Serious students of John Calvin, as well as thoughtful pastors, would profit from this work.



**TILL THE HEART SINGS: A BIBLICAL
THEOLOGY OF MANHOOD AND
WOMANHOOD**

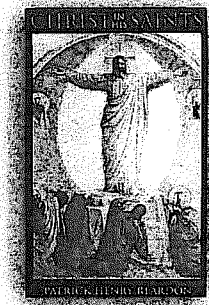
Samuel Terrien

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans (2004)

274 pages, paper, \$24.00

Samuel Terrien's highly-acclaimed original work on human personhood, published in 1985, is here revised and updated with a new foreword. The argument advanced is simple: the Bible advances a theology of personhood, thus of male and female, that is entirely different from that of the ancient world. This theology, argues Terrien, rejects both sexism and misogyny, treating women as created fully in the image of God, just as men.

There are few who would argue with the fact that male and female are equal ontologically. The difference comes when the debate turns to function and form. Terrien's treatment is not satisfactory in my opinion; indeed, it includes some highly questionable conclusions for an evangelical theology. At the same time, I believe he is correct to emphasize our essential equality. There are better works that address this subject from more evangelical authors. The reader will learn much from Terrien while being advised to not follow him at every turn.



CHRIST IN THE SAINTS

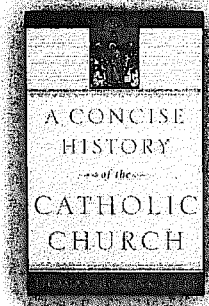
Patrick Henry Reardon

Ben Lomond, California: Conciliar Press
(2004)

314 pages, paper, \$17.95

Father Patrick Henry Reardon, author of the widely-acclaimed *Christ in the Psalms*, examines the lives of almost 150 saints and biblical heroes in his newest book. (The saints studied are all biblical figures!) This book is a treasure trove of inspiring and faith-building stories. It can be read whole, or day-by-day in a devotional manner, which I would recommend to every believer who wants to deepen their own faith.

The introduction deals with "the cloud of witnesses" in Hebrews and should make many Protestants think more deeply about this text. The layout then follows fourteen different types of saints, including repentant saints, saints in need of improvement, loyal saints, gentle saints, saints under pressure, and visionaries and contemplatives. Reardon's knowledge of the writings of early church fathers is united effectively with his grasp of the biblical text to make this a readable, warm, and very helpful book. It would make a great gift book as well.



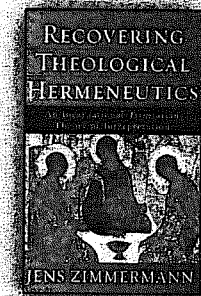
A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Thomas Bokenkotter

New York: Doubleday (revised, 2004)

607 pages, cloth, \$27.50

This revised and expanded edition of an earlier book provides, to my mind, the best popular overview of the history of the Catholic Church available in modern English. The author seeks to provide Catholics with a "guide" to their complex history. He also seeks to provide perspective on changes brought about by Vatican II. He focuses on the main events and personalities in history and allows the reader to grasp the overview of things without getting lost in the forest of minutiae. The result is immensely interesting, readable, and fair-minded in every way. Protestants who want a good overview from a Catholic author should consider this work. The annotated bibliography provides one of the best such sources I know for Catholic studies.



RECOVERING THEOLOGICAL HERMENEUTICS: AN INCARNATIONAL-TRINITARIAN THEORY OF INTERPRETATION

Jens Zimmermann

Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker (2004)

345 pages, cloth, \$32.99

The author argues, rightly, that "there is no understanding of self without understanding of God." Zimmermann's proposal does two things, as Kevin Van Hoozer rightly states in his endorsement of this book. First, Zimmermann regains control of hermeneutics by reclaiming its foundation in the reality of Christ and the relationship of the persons in the Trinity. Second, and equally important for evangelicals, he restores the health of hermeneutics by resisting the tendency to reduce the renewal of this discipline to exegetical rules and procedures. By this approach, the author demonstrates that there is more light to yet break forth from Holy Scripture (thus, he maintains a truly healthy *sola Scriptura* doctrine), while he recovers the light of the ancient church and the pre-modern input of the Reformers, Puritans, and Pietists.

Zimmerman gives a highly informative overview of the field of hermeneutics, looking at Augustine, Luther, the Puritans, and the Pietists, as well as modern interpreters such as Kant, Schleiermacher, Heidegger, Gadamer, and Levinas. But there is much more than overview here. The work gives a truly magisterial analysis of philosophical and theological judgments. Zimmerman is a professor of English, German literary theory, and hermeneutics at Trinity Western University in British Columbia. This work is probably most useful for academics and those who have had some training in the field before they come to this volume.

To those who refuse the gospel, it is both foolishness and a stumbling block (1 Corinthians 1:18–31), but to those who respond in faith it proves itself to be “the power of God for . . . salvation” (Romans 1:16).

ROBERT H. MOUNCE

[Commenting on Romans 3:25–26] The significance of Isaiah 40–55 here lies in its ability to tie together and explain what otherwise is inexplicable, namely why Paul should imagine that the death of Jesus, described in sacrificial terms, should be supposed not only to reveal the righteousness of God but also to deal properly, i.e., punitively, with sins. The idea of punishment as a part of atonement is itself deeply controversial . . . but it is exactly this idea that Paul states.

N. T. WRIGHT

The sharp contrast between law and love reflects, however, a very narrow view of each; law is reduced to a set of rules, and love is excluded from social situations involving large numbers of people. Although sometimes traced back to Luther’s sharp distinction between law and gospel, the separation of law and love was expressly denied by Luther who treated love, like other works of the law, as an active virtue of a person, whereas faith in his view is a passive virtue, being received as a gift from God.

HAROLD J. BERMAN