



Reformation
REVIVAL
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BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong

The church's basic responsibility to society is to be itself, in all its purity and holiness, according to criteria internal to itself.

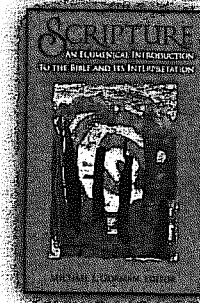
LEONARD SWEET

What is culture? It is the formation of attention.

SIMONE WEIL

Postmodernity can be described as a period of cultural disquiet. In the face of the betrayals and failures of past overarching metanarratives, culturewide suspicion and incredulity take hold. A single story, providing coherence to personal identity, grounding for ethical action and passion for life in history, is displaced by a carnivalesque existence of fragmentation, numbness and boredom. Final decisions based on rational analysis give way to the undecidability of keeping all options open and the spiritual promiscuity of pop religion.

BRIAN WALSH AND SYLVIA KEESMAAT

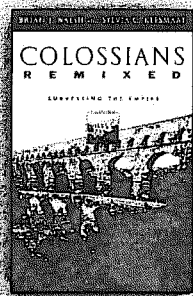


SCRIPTURE: AN ECUMENICAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE AND ITS INTERPRETATION

Michael J. Gorman, editor
Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson
Publishers, 2005
288 pages, paper, \$19.95

Fifteen Protestant and Catholic scholars offer a collection of essays that guides the reader into many of the most important issues in serious Bible study and hermeneutics. What makes this book particularly valuable is that beginning students can profit from it. The authors are aware of the diversity and technical questions without bogging down into pedantics or academic jargon.

Part one deals with the Bible directly. What kind of book is it? What do history and geography have to do with reading it correctly? How were the various books composed and what should we do with non-canonical books? How was the text transmitted and translated? Part two deals with interpretation. Here the reader gets excellent essays on postmodern critical methods, theological/ideological strategies for interpretation, and how various churches interpret the Bible and why. There is even a marvelous essay titled, "The Bible and Spiritual Growth." The final chapter is "The Bible and Ecumenism." This is a superb volume and highly recommended.



**COLOSSIANS REMIXED:
SUBVERTING THE EMPIRE**

Brian J. Walsh and Sylvia C. Keesmaat
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity
Press, 2004

256 pages, paper, \$22.00

Biblical, cultural and political studies have interacted in academic circles for several decades, producing new insight into the message of the Bible. Fresh attempts to understand how Paul might engage contemporary Western culture lead the way in this field. This volume not only utilizes the fruit of these disciplines but brings together serious study of Colossians with the pressing questions of our time. Put simply, what are the questions that we must face today that are parallel with those Paul faced in writing this letter?

This book has been called, by J. Richard Middleton, "a Molotov cocktail lobbed into the midst of contemporary biblical studies and the American empire." It makes for a creative and intellectually satisfying treatment that serious Christian leaders should read and teach. Brian McLaren calls this book, "a tasty sample of postmodern engagement with a biblical text." I agree!



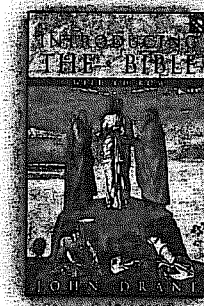
**RALLYING THE REALLY HUMAN THINGS:
THE MORAL IMAGINATION IN POLITICS,
LITERATURE, AND EVERYDAY LIFE**

Vigen Guroian
Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books, 2005

254 pages, paper, \$15.00

Guroian believes contemporary culture is distinguished by its relentless assault on the moral imagination. It degrades sexuality, promotes a radical doctrine of human rights, seeks to remake human nature through biotechnology, and deprives men and women of the kind of imagination that Edmund Burke believed allowed us to raise the perception of our own human dignity.

Guroian uses the light of the past to show a better way for the future. He utilizes twentieth-century writers like Chesterton, O'Connor, and Russell Kirk to make his case. Guroian is professor of theology at Loyola College in Maryland and the author of numerous books on ethics and theology. He is plainly one of the most important writers in the field of Christian ethics in our time.



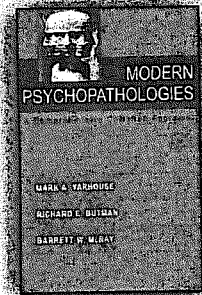
INTRODUCING THE BIBLE

John Drane
Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005
730 pages, paper, \$49.00

This clear and valuable work reads more like a documentary than an academic introduction. Key subjects such as theology, authorship, history and literature are covered quite thoroughly. Maps, charts, photos, paintings, mosaics, line-drawings, and chronologies appear in abundance and are used well.

In 1986–87, a British publisher issued two volumes by John Drane on biblical introduction. These two excellent volumes have now been put together, as they should have been. Fortress has done a wonderful job in packaging the book, and a marvelous CD-ROM has been included in this new edition. This could be used by home Bible study groups, college classes, or adult Sunday school programs. It is first-rate in every

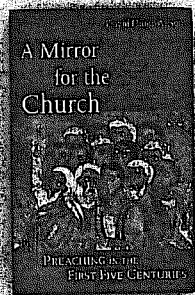
way. Drane is a teacher of biblical studies in the United States, Scotland and Australia.



MODERN PSYCHOPATHOLOGIES: A COMPREHENSIVE CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL
Mark A. Yarhouse, Richard E. Butman, and Barrett W. McRay
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2005
416 pages, cloth, \$26.00

Designed as a companion volume to InterVarsity's earlier book, *Modern Psychotherapies*, this new work seeks to fill a gap in the voluminous literature that seeks to integrate Christian faith and psychology. The book is addressed to both students and mental health professionals.

There are nine core chapters, each addressing a set of disorders by offering an overview of etiology, treatment, and prevention. Earlier chapters look at the integration of Christianity with the scientific study of psychopathologies. The goal is to provide a foundation for a Christian vision of mental health in dealing with common pathological issues.

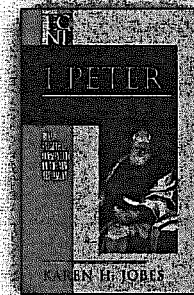


A MIRROR FOR THE CHURCH: PREACHING IN THE FIRST FIVE CENTURIES
David Dunn-Wilson
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005
224 pages, paper, \$22.00

A common error made by both preachers and listeners is that sermons, in both their style and form, have pretty

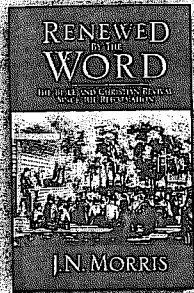
much been the same throughout church history. Nothing could be further from the truth, as Dunn-Wilson shows. Preachers have sought to meet the shifting needs of their congregations in every era. *A Mirror for the Church* explores this dynamic movement, showing how it underwent great change within the first five centuries.

Dunn-Wilson asks and answers some important questions: Who were the first preachers? What did they preach about, and what methods did they use? What were the first congregations like in terms of the people in them and how they related to the world around them? Dunn-Wilson shows that there were some constant themes throughout this era. He also shows how the early churches adapted to the great social changes that were going on during these centuries. He concludes by suggesting ways that we can learn and make application to our own time. This is a highly original work that would be useful for both pastors and homiletics classes.



1 PETER
Karen H. Jobes
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005
364 pages, cloth, \$39.99

Karen Jobes, a professor at Westmont College, has written a fresh, stimulating, and readable commentary on one of the more difficult books in the New Testament. She is very aware of the scholarly literature, employing both rhetorical and social-scientific explanations of the text of Peter. She also uses traditional modes of interpretation. The result is satisfying and immensely helpful for both students and preachers. This is a sound evangelical commentary that reflects the gains made in biblical studies over the past few decades. Highly recommended.



**RENEWED BY THE WORD: THE BIBLE
AND CHRISTIAN REVIVAL SINCE THE
REFORMATION**

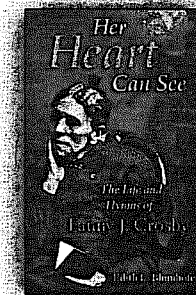
J. N. Morris

Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson,
2005.

160 pages, cloth, \$16.95

Jeremy Morris, who teaches church history at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, builds the story of revival on the often bewildering diversity that has increasingly impacted Christianity since the Reformation. He argues that Christianity, at least in the modern world, has been fashioned by common experiences, one of which is revivalism. In order to understand the churches of America and Britain today, you have to understand the history of revival. This need for revival is rooted in the very convictions that called the church into being in the first place.

The book has three main divisions. The first covers what Morris calls "classical" evangelical revival, starting with Methodism in Britain and America. This eventually results in a general ethos which dominated English-speaking Protestant churches by the middle of the nineteenth century. The second pattern Morris surveys is Catholic revival in the nineteenth century, which touched Catholic, Anglican, and some elements of other Protestant churches. The last movement studied is the Pentecostal and charismatic revival movements. Morris seeks to show that Christianity has a self-regenerating power that is deeply rooted in texts that witness to the centrality of Jesus Christ lived out in living human communities.



**HER HEART CAN SEE: THE LIFE AND
HYMNS OF FANNY J. CROSBY**

Edith L. Blumhofer

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005

365 pages, paper, \$20.00

This is an intimate look at the life of Fanny Crosby (1820–1915), the most prolific hymn writer in American church history. As is widely known, Fanny Crosby lost her sight in early childhood due to a physician's negligence. She went on to compose over nine thousand hymns, as well as songs, cantatas, and lyrical productions. Her favorites include such well-known hymns as, "Blessed Assurance," "Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior," "Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross," "Rescue the Perishing," "Safe in the Arms of Jesus," and "I Am Thine, O Lord." Fanny Crosby's life touched many important people in her own day, including politicians like Henry Clay, Grover Cleveland, and Winfield Scott. She also shared personal friendships with Dwight L. Moody, Ira Sankey, Jenny Lind, P. T. Barnum, and other famous figures of her era.

Blumhofer is a professor of history, and the director of the Institute for the Study of American Evangelicals, at Wheaton College. She is the author of a respected biography of Aimee Semple McPherson and is an able writer who uses her primary source material well, thus allowing her to tell an important and interesting story.

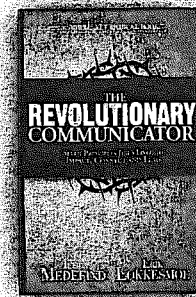


THE WAYS OF JUDGMENT

Oliver O'Donovan
Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005
330 pages, cloth, \$35.00

O'Donovan's earlier book, *The Desire of Nations*, looked in depth at the correspondence between theology and politics. This book approaches the subject from the political side, offering a theological assessment of political activity and social life. What is the *essence* of political activity and life? The answer O'Donovan provides is deeply rooted in an intellectual history of the theological and philosophical ideas out of which our modern political theory and rhetoric grew over time.

O'Donovan believes that contemporary social and political realities are obscure and elusive. In contrast, he finds the gospel filled with light. For this reason he seeks to shed light from the Christian faith directly on politics. One of the most intriguing questions is, "How can Christians engage politics in the spirit of Jesus' words that we 'judge not'?" O'Donovan is professor of moral and pastoral theology at Oxford.



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNICATOR

Jedd Medefind and Erik Lokkesmoe
Lake Mary, Florida: Relevant Books, 2004
165 pages, cloth, \$15.99

This simple book looks at seven principles that Jesus lived and taught, which were used to impact, connect, and

lead others. Our age longs for authenticity. The two authors, who both teach and live in the world of communication, seek to help readers rise above modern "noise" so they can shape and influence those around them. The approach taken is engaging and practical. Suggestions offered are very elemental but quite useful.

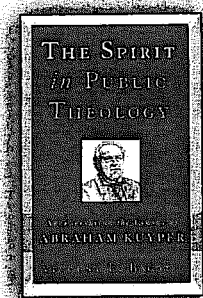


**EXPERIENCING HEALING PRAYER: HOW
GOD TURNS OUR HURTS INTO
WHOLENESS**

Rick Richardson
Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity
Press, 2005
248 pages, paper, \$13.00

Rick Richardson provides a deeply moving book that shows us how prayer, practiced in community relationships, is God's appointed means for healing us in body and spirit. As one who has suffered in body and spirit, and as one who has experienced the powerful intercession and ministry of others, I found this book a rich feast for both mind and soul.

Though many books about prayer deal with the subject of healing, few of them do it as honestly and wisely as this one. There is very good counsel here about how to avoid getting off track by remaining balanced and biblical. There are several extremely valuable appendices as well, which help the reader to develop a church-based ministry that corresponds to the content of this powerful book.

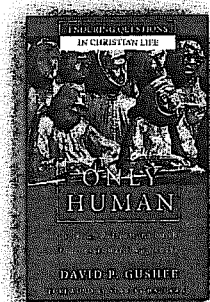


***THE SPIRIT IN PUBLIC THEOLOGY:
APPROPRIATING THE LEGACY OF
ABRAHAM KUYPER***

Vincent E. Bacote
Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005
172 pages, paper, \$18.99

A renaissance in Kuyper studies has taken place over the last ten years. Evangelicals seem hungry to engage the public arena with a solid theology of creation and culture. There are many good books that deal with the thought and life of Kuyper, an important theologian and political figure. This book is unique, however, in that it specifically seeks to help the reader "appropriate" the Kuyperian heritage.

This is a very balanced exposition of Kuyper's much-debated doctrine of common grace, which has become the modern Reformed basis for Christian involvement in public life. What makes this particular volume useful is the linking of this doctrine with the work and witness of the Holy Spirit. Vincent Bacote is a professor of theology at Wheaton College.



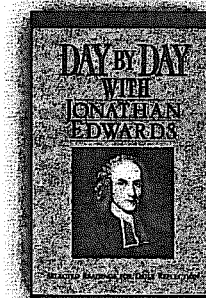
***ONLY HUMAN: CHRISTIAN REFLECTIONS
ON THE JOURNEY TOWARD WHOLENESS***

David P. Gushee
San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005
224 pages, cloth, \$22.95

Drawing from ancient and contemporary discussions about what it means to be fully human, about what is right and wrong in us, and about both our origins and destiny,

Gushee appeals to serious readers by exploring important questions such as: "Is there such a thing as a human nature, seen as something that all humans truly share?" "Why do we often experience ourselves as internally divided, being torn between competing impulses and desires?" "Is it true that humans are intrinsically 'sinful' and what does this mean?" "Are human beings free to map their own destiny and to make meaningful choices?" "Is God able and willing to intervene in the human situation and change our lives?"

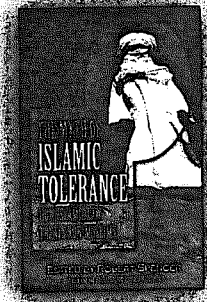
This is the first volume in a new series titled, *Enduring Questions in Christian Life*. The series is designed to address subjects that will appeal to the deepest moral and spiritual concerns of thoughtful people. If the forthcoming books are as solid as this one, the reader can hope for more good material. David Gushee is an ethicist who teaches at Union University in Jackson, Tennessee.



DAY BY DAY WITH JONATHAN EDWARDS

Randall J. Pederson, compiler and editor
Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson,
2005
394 pages, cloth, \$19.95

This new collection of selected readings will meet a real need for devotional material from the great Jonathan Edwards. It lays out the material by months and dates and gives a biblical text with each reading. The print quality and type font is very good. Pederson and theologian/pastor Joel Beeke provide a good introduction to the life and written work of Jonathan Edwards.

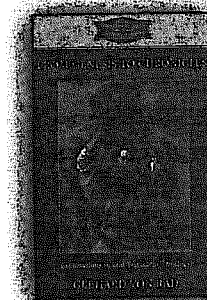


***THE MYTH OF ISLAMIC TOLERANCE:
HOW ISLAMIC LAW TREATS
NON-MUSLIMS***

Robert Spencer, editor
Amherst, New York: Prometheus Books,
2005
593 pages, cloth, \$26.00

The prevailing academic opinion in the West is that Islam is inherently tolerant and a religion of peace and justice. This collection of essays brings together a number of clear thinkers who demonstrate that human rights are completely suppressed in Islamic societies. The horrors of dhimmitude (life for Christians and Jews under Islamic law) are well documented in this provocative book.

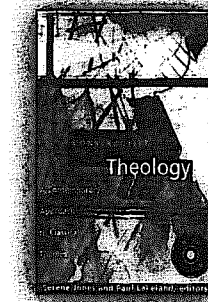
The documents and chapters of this collection devastate the political correctness (PC) myths that permeate multiculturalist thinking. They also show how the dangers of misunderstanding can and will hurt the West. The writers who contributed to this volume are some of the leading authorities on Islamic social history of our time. Spencer is a freelance writer who directs Jihad Watch. He has written several previous books on Islam. This is a disturbing book and should be consulted by all who wish to discuss the issues.



***FROM GENESIS TO CHRONICLES:
EXPLORATIONS IN OLD TESTAMENT
THEOLOGY***

Gerhard Von Rad
Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005
286 pages, paper, \$18.00

This reprint is one of the most important, and often cited, works of the Old Testament scholar Gerhard Von Rad (1901–71). It includes essays first published in English in 1966, but has been out of print for many years. The chapters cover a broad range of topics, including the doctrine of creation, memory, and tradition in Deuteronomy, historical writing in ancient Israel, cultic language in the Psalms, and the Old Testament worldview. With this reprinted edition students and scholars alike will have access to some oft-cited material that is very important for serious work in Old Testament theology.



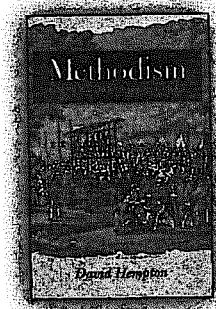
***CONSTRUCTIVE THEOLOGY: A
CONTEMPORARY APPROACH TO
CLASSICAL THEMES***

Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland, editors
Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005
309 pages, paper, \$30.00

The purpose of theology, in every generation, centers in the task of "faith seeking understanding." Creativity and fresh insight are always appropriate, though clear affirmations of orthodoxy should always be embraced, so the church will not forget its collective, historical witness to Christ. This book is a widely diverse collection of reflections upon God, the human person, sin and evil, Jesus Christ, the church, and the Holy Spirit. The attempt throughout is to relate these central subjects to the postmodern condition. Each section deals with the special questions that flow out of the bigger themes. The work is of mixed quality but the approach is engaging and helpful. This makes for a good text for class use but it can also be used to get a sense of how theologians are wrestling with ancient ideas.

Thoughtful evangelicals will surely disagree with some of

the trajectories here, but they would do well to become more familiar with them if they are serious about engaging the discipline of systematic theology. Most of the contributors appear to be professors who teach and write in mainline Protestant settings.



METHODISM: EMPIRE OF THE SPIRIT

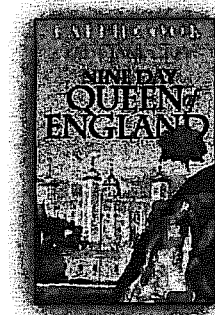
David Hempton

New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2005

278 pages, cloth, \$30.00

Studies of Methodism are so numerous that even the most dedicated specialist can't keep up. Sometimes an extraordinary new work appears that compels both laymen and scholars alike to take note. This is such a book. One scholar says this is one of "the most impressive and lively" books "on Methodism to emerge in years."

The evangelical revival, and the emergence of Methodism, did more to transform Protestant Christianity than any renewal movement in the West since the Protestant Reformation. It produced a dynamic worldwide missionary movement and thus became a tradition that altered the state of Christian faith for generations. Now the impact is felt throughout the world. Hempton plows deep and gives the reader rich insights. If you read one book on Methodism in the next few years, make it this one.



LADY JANE GREY: NINE DAY QUEEN OF ENGLAND

Faith Cook

Darlington, United Kingdom: Evangelical Press, 2005

249 pages, cloth, \$22.99

Some years ago I saw a moving motion picture on Lady Jane Grey. I am still not sure how accurate some of the history was but I have never forgotten the impression the movie made upon me. It was powerful. Christ was exalted and the truth of grace freely promoted by this young lady's courageous life. Because of this movie I have always wanted to know more about this teenage girl who became queen. Now I have the book I wanted.

Faith Cook has written a number of Christian biographies and is a wonderful writer. She is the wife of an English pastor and was the daughter of Overseas Missionary Fellowship (OMF) missionaries in China. I hope she keeps writing books like this one. It is a most delightful story that is very well told.