



*Reformation*  
& **REVIVAL**  
**JOURNAL**

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## BOOK BRIEFS

John H. Armstrong



### *THE SPIRIT OF EARLY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT*

Robert Louis Wilken

New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University  
Press (2003)

368 pages, cloth, \$32.00

Rarely does a book of such scholarship deliver such a clear and profitable message to both scholars and ordinary readers. This new book, by the author of the most important earlier work, *The Christians As the Romans Saw Them*, is a rich and well-argued interpretation of the Christian faith as seen through the minds of early church theologians, bishops and hymn writers. It is not a history, in Wilken's own words, but an argument about how the early church's mind worked.

Wilken examines everything from icons to poetry. He correctly keeps his lens on Christ and the Trinity as the central theological focus of the early church. How did these early believers construct a new world, both intellectually and spiritually, morally and theologically? Wilken's answer will inform, inspire and energize you. Every thoughtful Christian will profit. Robert Louis Wilken is a preeminent early church historian who teaches the History of Christianity at the University of Virginia.



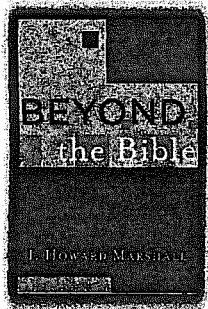
**DIARY OF REVIVAL: THE OUTBREAK  
OF THE 1904 WELSH AWAKENING**

Kevin Adams

Nashville: Broadman & Holman (2004)

176 pages, paper, \$14.99

A century ago, in October 1904, a season of powerful revival touched the little nation of Wales. From very small beginnings in a southern Welsh village this revival spread across the world touching multitudes. The story is told in this new work by a Welsh pastor who has spent several decades researching his subject. Adams is both a historian and an advocate for revival. This warmly-written and easy-to-read work will excite those who pray for such awakening in our time. Recommended both for intercessors for, and students of, revival.



**BEYOND THE BIBLE: MOVING FROM  
SCRIPTURE TO THEOLOGY**

I. Howard Marshall

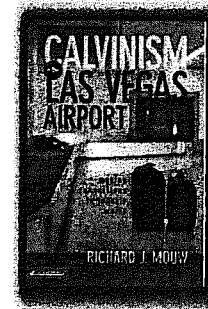
Grand Rapids: Baker (2004)

136 pages, paper, \$13.99

What happens when a premier New Testament exegete seeks to answer the question of how you get from the "then" of the biblical text to the "now" of the listening church of today? The answer is provided in this provocative little book by I. Howard Marshall, one of the most respected evangelical scholars of our time. Marshall develops his approach in 79 pages. A response, in two following essays, is given by

two equally serious New Testament scholars, Kevin J. Vanhoozer and Stanley E. Porter.

Marshall seeks to develop a hermeneutical way between liberal and fundamentalist methods, between "reductionism" and "closure," as Walter Brueggemann calls it. The argument is important and the response is equally important. This little book is a wonderful work-out for all who take the modern hermeneutical enterprise seriously, which should be all serious students of the Bible.



**CALVINISM IN THE LAS VEGAS AIRPORT**

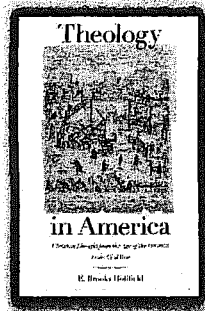
Richard J. Mouw

Grand Rapids: Zondervan (2004)

139 pages, cloth, \$14.99

In the movie, *Hardcore*, a pious and zealous Calvinist elder seeks to explain TULIP to a prostitute. The conversation, Mouw believes, shows why Calvinism appears to be so incongruous to many in our day, with the perception that it is irrelevant, harsh and even disrespectful. What Mouw undertakes in this readable, racy, and even inspiring, little book is nothing less than the rehabilitation of the doctrinal emphasis of the Canons of Dordt. He does this by showing both the strengths and the weaknesses of Calvinism. And he does this as a true friend to the theology, a rare gift to the church.

This book can and should be read by anyone of college age or older who has a remotely passing interest in explaining or critiquing movements of so-called Calvinism. I wish I had read this book thirty years ago. It would have spared me a great deal of grief, but then without the grief I might never have learned the very lessons Mouw humbly teaches me. I highly recommend this book.

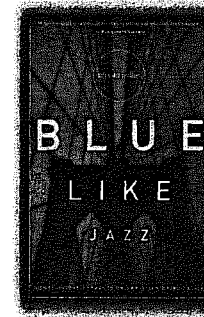


**THEOLOGY IN AMERICA: CHRISTIAN  
THOUGHT FROM THE AGE OF THE  
PURITANS TO THE CIVIL WAR**

E. Brooks Holifield  
New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University  
Press (2003)  
617 pages, cloth, \$37.50

This work is considered by Doug Sweeney, an evangelical historian, to be "the definitive history of early American theology." It demonstrates remarkable depth and unusual clarity. The context of a subject is always made clear and the interrelationships noted properly. Whether the subject is Jonathan Edwards or Transcendentalism, New England theology or New School Presbyterianism, Holifield is both the master of nuance as well as a fair and balanced reporter.

Brooks Holifield is the distinguished professor of American Church History at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. His various books on American church history have interested me for more than twenty years. In this present volume he has surely produced one of the two or three most important works on this era of American Christianity now in print. Several noted historians have suggested that this is a work "few might rival." This is high praise for sure. I am quite inclined to agree and thus highly recommend this magnificent work.

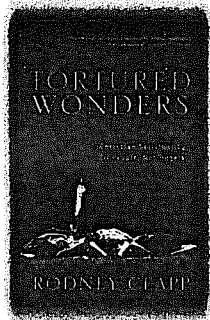


**BLUE LIKE JAZZ**

Donald Miller  
Nashville: Thomas Nelson (2003)  
243 pages, paper, \$13.99

Miller's book is subtitled: "Nonreligious Thoughts on Christian Spirituality." This is a breezy, enjoyable story and one of the best reads I enjoyed in 2004. The point of "jazz" in Miller's title is to underscore the lack of *clear resolution* that occurs in such music and in much of our attempt to make sense of the Christian life. Miller writes, "Sometimes you have to watch somebody love something before you can love it yourself. . . . I used to not like God because God didn't resolve."

I was first encouraged to pick this book up by a class of seminary students I taught in May. Once I began reading I couldn't put it down, devouring it in a very short space of time. This is clearly one of the best postmodern reflections on faith and culture I have read. I highly recommend it for anyone older than sixteen and interested in deeper reflection upon the great mystery of faith.

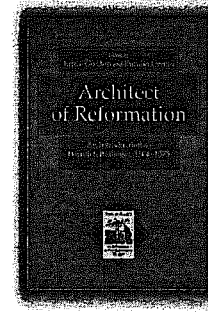


**TORTURED WONDERS: CHRISTIAN  
SPIRITUALITY FOR PEOPLE, NOT ANGELS**

Rodney Clapp  
Grand Rapids: Brazos (2004)  
278 pages, cloth, \$21.99

Spirituality is hot today, but a great deal of it fails to connect the physical and the spiritual, falling into traps originally set by ancient Gnosticism. Twentieth century Evangelicals are equally opportunity offenders when it comes to this problem and Clapp focuses on addressing this problem by means of a healthy dose of incarnational Christianity. Real redemption involves both body and soul. Clapp not only understands this doctrinal truth but profoundly grasps how popular culture has profoundly caused us to miss it in our churches.

Rodney Clapp is a contributing editor to *Reformation & Revival Journal* and the author of *Border Crossings*, a collection of essays that touch upon some of the themes more fully developed in this new volume. He writes and speaks on church and culture and is editorial director for Brazos Press. Clapp's style is insightful, earthy and astute. He knows how to explore complex issues in ways that always make his ruminations fresh.

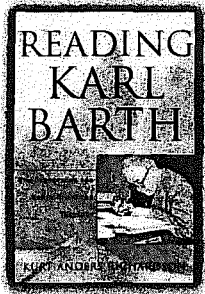


**ARCHITECT OF REFORMATION:  
AN INTRODUCTION TO HEINRICH  
BULLINGER, 1504-1575**

Bruce Gordon and Emidio Campi, editors  
Grand Rapids: Baker (2004)  
300 pages, paper, \$34.99

Bullinger, friend and successor to Huldrych Zwingli in Zurich, served the Reformation cause there for nearly fifty years. He is widely considered to be the man most directly responsible for the construction of the Reformed church in the sixteenth century yet he has correctly been called "the forgotten Reformer." This present volume is "the first broad introduction to Bullinger's life and theology available in English."

This volume includes a wonderfully written introduction by Bruce Gordon and twelve original essays, most written by European scholars and most of these by professors from Zurich. The collection was prepared in celebration for the 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Zwingli's birth. The purpose is to draw together recent scholarship and to foster further research. This work will appeal to more academic readers who have a keen interest in Reformation studies.



*READING KARL BARTH:  
NEW DIRECTIONS FOR NORTH  
AMERICAN THEOLOGY*

Kurt Anders Richardson  
Grand Rapids: Baker (2004)  
246 pages, paper, \$21.99

Evangelicals have been discovering Karl Barth in recent years, now three decades after his death (1968). The only view of Karl Barth many of my generation of Evangelicals was given was represented by the late Cornelius Van Til, who treated Barth's epistemology as his theology. Many who have bothered to read Barth have found him surprisingly biblical and amazingly important for the modern situation. Kurt Richardson, professor of theology at McMaster University, in Hamilton, Ontario, is one of several important Barth scholars who can help Evangelicals gain theologically through fresh interpretations of this great thinker. Recommended for serious academic scholars and pastoral readers.