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## BOOK REVIEWS

***Brahms's A German Requiem: Reconsidering Its Biblical, Historical, and Musical Contexts.* By R. Allen Lott. Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2020, xvii+ 512pp., \$117.28.**

Despite almost universal modern assessments of Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* (A German Requiem) as a deliberately secular choral treatment of death, R. Allen Lott, professor of music history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, meticulously demonstrates that “the *Requiem* is not theologically or doctrinally inclusive but instead adroitly summarizes the unique Christian view of death, grief, and an afterlife” (p. 2). Along with being one of the most performed choral works from the nineteenth century, Brahms's *Requiem* is notable for the fact that unlike a standard Latin mass for the dead, the composer used exclusively texts from Luther's German translation of the Bible. Yet Christ is not explicitly named, leading most modern scholars to conclude that Brahms did not intend his *Requiem* to be a Christian work but rather a humanist composition inclusive of all creeds. In contrast to this recent consensus, Lott presents his case through evaluating early writings about the work, investigating how audiences understood it during the first fifteen years of performance, and performing in-depth textual and musical analysis, providing a definitive conclusion that a Christian understanding of this beloved nineteenth-century choral masterpiece “is not only allowable but the most rational one to adopt” (p. 2).

Lott lays an interpretive foundation for his analysis in chapter one, arguing for a “course correction to a path that has been focused primarily on Brahms's enigmatic objectives” (p. 13) since “intention does not trump execution” (p. 14). Therefore, determining whether the *Requiem* is a Christian work should be decided based on how the original audiences would have understood the intertextuality of the biblical texts Brahms chose and how he set them musically (p. 37). The broader contexts of those passages, along with that of the

sacred music traditions within which Brahms composed his work, strongly suggest Christian theological implications.

Lott introduces those implications with an exegesis of the biblical texts in chapter two, which he argues “embody unambiguous Christian positions that are distinct from other religious traditions” (p. 60). He demonstrates that, despite common claims, the *Requiem* is certainly about Jesus Christ since Brahms quotes Jesus’ own words (p. 61) and other texts that mention or allude to Christ without naming him (p. 64). “These multiple references to Christ,” Lott contends, “inherently make the *Requiem* a Christian work” since “Christ’s identity as the Son of God and the Savior of the world are the most distinguishing features of Christianity that separate it from all other religions” (p. 67). Further, “Brahms’s text includes unambiguous references to Christian doctrines that are not commonly held” (p. 72), including explicitly Christian understandings of creation, redemption, resurrection, and the afterlife, each of which provides uniquely Christian comfort and promise of joy in the face of death. “Only simple ignorance of or willful disregard for the details of the text,” Lott concludes, “can justify a universal interpretation of the *Requiem*” (p. 93).

If Lott’s biblical exegesis were not enough to convince skeptics, he demonstrates in chapter three that “the first commentators ... consistently read and heard [the *Requiem*] as a piece upholding common Christian beliefs” (p. 98). Based on the fact that “religion continued to be a vital element in nineteenth-century German life” (p. 101), “it should not be surprising that listeners experienced the *Requiem* with its purely scriptural text as a Christian work” (p. 110). Lott provides numerous statements by critics, musicologists, and theologians of the time who clearly identified it as Christian, even Protestant (p. 120). Its classification “as a specimen of church music, which could only refer to settings of doctrinally orthodox texts, verify the recognition and acceptance of the work’s Christian content” (p. 133).

In chapter four, Lott examines one of the most frequently cited “proofs” of the *Requiem*’s supposed universal focus, a letter written by conductor Karl Reinthaler prior to its 1868 premiere in Bremen, wherein he stated, “For the Christian consciousness it lacks the point around which everything revolves, namely, the redeeming death of the Lord” (p. 171). Lott demonstrates that this one statement taken

out of context does not account for the fact that Reintaler made other comments in his letter supporting a Christian interpretation and repeatedly programmed the work for Good Friday performances (p. 178). In fact, such explicitly Christian programming continued for years by others; Lott demonstrates that “more than one-fourth of the early performances of the *Requiem* occurred during Holy Week, indicating a perceived resonance between the work and an important Christian observance” (p. 184).

Lott presents what he considers “the most important hermeneutical guide to the *Requiem*”—musical analysis—in chapter five, explaining that “Brahms set his *Requiem* text sympathetically, convincingly, dramatically, and, above all, with an earnest devotion to sacred music traditions” (p. 230). In particular, Brahms alludes in the *Requiem* to several well-known sacred works, most notably Handel’s *Messiah*. Lott argues that “the general similarities between the *Requiem* and *Messiah* as well as several areas of textual overlap and interrelatedness encourage a Christian perspective on the *Requiem*” (p. 277), which he explores at length. Finally, Lott meticulously traces Brahms’s “musical devotion to scripture as a composer and his continuation of longstanding practices,” leading listeners “to accept the revered, traditional interpretation of the biblical text” (p. 319).

In the final analysis, Lott provides an overwhelmingly convincing, substantively documented case for a Christian interpretation of Brahms’s *Requiem*. Indeed, as Lott notes, “modern scholars seem to impose a set of guidelines for assessing the *Requiem* that are not followed for any other musical work, not even the other choral works of Brahms” (p. 327), in an attempt to substantiate a universalist claim. Far from being a dry musicological monograph, Lott’s extensive analysis is engaging and even devotional, and though his musical analysis requires some competency in music literacy (especially in chapter five), theologians and even lay Christians would find this work fascinating. Perhaps Lott’s treatment will cause skeptics and Christians alike to consider anew that “blessed are the dead who die in the Lord.”

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***The Holy Spirit.* By Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger. Theology for the People of God. Nashville: B&H, 2020, xxiii+543pp., \$44.99.**

The first volume in a new series called “Theology for the People of God” takes up the topic of the Holy Spirit in biblical and systematic theology. Coauthored by a biblical studies scholar and a historical and systematic theologian, their treatment seeks to balance the weight of both fields and offer a thoroughly integrated approach to the doctrine. This partnership, as envisioned by the series, is meant to serve a perspective that is “convictionally Baptist and warmly evangelical.” The series editors articulate well their vision in this way: “Careful theology is an integrative task, and to that end the volumes in *Theology for the People of God* emphasize integration of biblical and systematic theology in dialog with historical theology and with application to church and life” (p. xxii). Professors Allison and Köstenberger have more than answered that call with the series’ first volume by principally rooting their contribution in sustained and rigorous exegetical work alongside thorough attention to theological debates about the Spirit that have punctuated Christian history and continue amidst the church’s witness today.

*The Holy Spirit* proceeds in two parts but in both halves the discussion focuses on the driving questions: 1) Who is the Holy Spirit? 2) What does the Holy Spirit do? Such a framing helps to organize the detailed and nuanced survey given of biblical teaching on the Spirit in the first half of the volume. Here, the authors move step by step through mentions of the Spirit from the Old and New Testaments giving accounts of how various biblical genres treat the Spirit as well as the aggregate pictures from each testament. Their choice to review so carefully the biblical record generates its particular benefit when they arrive at “A Biblical-Theological Synthesis of the Holy Spirit in Scripture,” which is their transition point for moving from biblical to systematic theology. Thus, they reflect that, “the Spirit is not only integrally involved in God’s work throughout salvation history; he increasingly steps into the foreground” (p. 201). Here, their summative conclusions from the biblical witness reveal the trajectory of their most significant answers to the theological questions around the Spirit’s identity and activity. Such a leveraging of biblical theology

for systematic foundations represents a prime example of the “helpful methodological contribution” they are seeking to make (p. 7).

The second part begins by addressing both the historical neglect and lingering suspicion of the Holy Spirit in some churches today. Having named these problems, the authors seek to navigate between two extremes in which the Spirit is seen as either a “last-minute addition” to the traditional categories of doctrine or the opposite error of giving the Spirit “first-order priority” in an undue, reactive way. By way of corrective, then, they devote much attention to the intratrinitarian relations within God as the grounds for their abiding thematic—drawn from Augustine—that envisions the Spirit as love and gift. Their account of the Trinitarian processions and missions thus secures a stable foundation upon which to consider the Spirit’s relation to each doctrinal *loci*, among which the chapters on salvation and ecclesiology respectively are alone worth the volume’s purchase. Along this tour of doctrinal connections, they provide illuminating diagrams, helpful applications for Christian practice, and careful, extended engagement with theological issues such as Spirit Christology, Spirit baptism, cessationism versus continuationism, and the Spirit’s role in the exclusivism versus inclusivism debate, among others. Creating their own question and answer format, the book concludes with a final consideration of the most relevant questions on the role of the Spirit in both the individual and corporate Christian life (e.g. worship, illumination, discernment).

There is much to appreciate about Allison and Köstenberger’s volume. In addition to being consistent, cohesive, and succinct, many readers will find their treatment imminently accessible, readily applicable, and free from unhelpful academic squabbles. While their Baptist convictions are clearly evident, the volume maintains a generative conversation with theologians from the breadth of church history, highlighting the likes of the Cappadocians, Augustine, Luther, and Calvin. Best of all, the volume is thoroughly exegetical, continually employing a “ground-up” approach that constructs its systematic proposals from sound biblical interpretation. The clear aim was to supply a resource for the church that would stand the test of time, and in that light, any innovations for the field remain modest and uncontroversial (e.g. the discussion of prolepsis on pp. 348-350). Where the authors must supply a firm judgment, it comes only

after careful consideration of the options. The charts, diagrams, and other explanatory material will be a welcome find for students and laypeople alike. Still, there are areas where the practical concerns of their broader audience should dictate further discussion. Despite the fact that they review the influence of Pentecostal and Charismatic theologies on evangelicalism, their attention to the project's implications for worship today seems unfortunately meager and brief (perhaps only four pages in the whole volume). There are few areas of concern regarding the Spirit that are riper for rehabilitation and development than worship, and one wonders what help the authors could bring if that discussion matched their commendable treatment of the Spirit and individual discernment (pp. 398-400). Relatedly, their discussion of how the Spirit fosters unity among Christians develops in an awkwardly narrow and perhaps confusing way, especially given the enthusiasm with which they quote Miroslav Volf as saying that, "*the unity of the church is grounded in the interiority of the Spirit*" (emphasis original). Surely this insight runs counter to the prior condition they have placed on biblical unity as understood principally in terms of Calvin's two marks for the church (p. 435). Are we to see, then, the unity they envision as limited exclusively to those who share the same ecclesiology? If so, this seems to digress from the more conciliar tone employed throughout the work, evident in places like their advocacy for a "spiritual presence" view of the Lord's Supper (pp. 453-455). Regardless of a few potentially missed opportunities for further application, readers will discover here a solid and trustworthy guide to a robustly evangelical doctrine of the Spirit that promises to empower a more thoroughly Trinitarian witness for the church. On a personal note, it should be observed that these two Trinity alums have dedicated this excellent volume to those who have served at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

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***Baptists and the Christian Tradition: Toward an Evangelical Baptist Catholicity.* Edited By Matthew Y. Emerson, and Christopher W. Morgan and R. Lucas Stamps. Nashville: B&H, 2020, 400pp., \$34.99.**

As a rule, Baptists are not typically known for their catholicity. More often, when other ecclesial traditions think of Baptists, they think of sectarianism. Sometimes this an unfair characterization rooted in centuries of theological debate and even rivalry. Too often, the charge has merit. Whether because of an abundance of kingdom-advancing resources, regrettable denominational pride, or genuinely sectarian theological trajectories, the “default factory setting” of many Baptists—including Southern Baptists—is insularity rather than catholicity.

For the past generation or so, a growing number of theologians with roots in Southern Baptist life have argued for grounding Baptist faith and practice within the context of more catholic sensibilities such as the value of tradition in doctrinal and ethical reflection, an emphasis on a more formal liturgy, and the importance of historical and theological continuity. In the second half of the twentieth century, longtime Southwestern Seminary theologian James Leo Garrett Jr. cultivated an evangelical Baptist catholicity while Southern Baptist Theological Seminary church historian Glenn Hinson advanced a version of Baptist catholicity informed more by mainline Protestant sensibilities. In more recent years, Southern Baptist theologians Timothy George and David Dockery have followed the Garrett trajectory, infusing it with emphases from postwar evangelicalism, while moderate theologians such as Steve Harmon and Curtis Freeman have synthesized elements of the Garrett and Hinson approaches, in dialogue with postliberal theology.

This is the context into which *Baptists and the Christian Tradition* has been published and the conversation into which the contributors have entered. The volume sets the agenda for how Baptist scholars and ministers can embrace a Garrett-George-Dockery form of evangelical Baptist catholicity, that is in constructive conversation with Hinson-Harmon-Freeman trajectory, for the sake of renewing contemporary Baptist faith and practice. Many of the book’s contributors are identified with the Center for Baptist Renewal, which

co-editors Matt Emerson and Luke Stamps lead as co-executive directors. It is best to understand *Baptists and the Christian Tradition* as a convictionally Baptist and explicitly evangelical form of retrieval theology that is in the spirit of earlier efforts by the late Methodist theologian Thomas Oden and ongoing efforts by the Presbyterian scholars Scott Swain and Michael Allen.

The contributors to *Baptists and the Christian Tradition* reflect on a number of themes that are important to framing an evangelical Baptist catholicity. The result is a work that might be called “constructively conservative.” It is *constructive* in that so many of the themes the book addresses are underdeveloped in evangelical Baptist theology. Yet is also *conservative* in that the project is deeply rooted in the supreme authority of Scripture and sensitive to the “Great Tradition” represented in the ancient church’s creedal consensus and the best theological and moral thinking of the medieval and Reformation eras.

Some of the chapters put Baptist theology in greater dialog with the Great Tradition. Examples include Chris Morgan and Kristen Ferguson’s needed chapter on Christian unity; the fine essays by Luke Stamps and Malcolm Yarnell on Christology and the Trinity, respectively; Rhyné Putman’s excellent treatment of the relationship between Scripture and tradition; and Patrick Schreiner’s call for Baptists to give greater heed to classical approaches to biblical interpretation. Other chapters focus on themes that are of perennial import to Baptists, but that can benefit from a deeper engagement with pre-Reformation thinkers. Examples include Madison Grace’s discussion of Baptist ecclesiology in the context of the classical four “marks” of the church; Matt Emerson’s chapter on the ancient and Baptist practice of credobaptism; Michael Haykin’s retrieval of earlier Baptist expressions of the real spiritual presence of Christ in the Lord’s Supper; and Amy Whitfield’s work on how Baptist denominational polity at times precluded Baptist participation in ecumenical efforts.

Dustin Bruce’s chapter on spirituality and Taylor Worley’s chapter on worship offer fruitful discussions on how contemporary Baptist practices might be shaped with greater attention to the insights of other traditions. Projects on catholicity can at times be insensitive to matters of diversity, perhaps because so much of the Christian

tradition overlaps with the history of so-called Western civilization, so I was encouraged to read Soojin Chung's chapter on global Christianity and Walter Strickland's chapter on racial tensions. The church has always been bigger and more diverse than overly euro-centric accounts of Christian history have made it out to be, and the same should be true of our pursuit of evangelical Baptist catholicity. David Dockery reflects on the intersection of Baptists and evangelicalism, which has been a significant theme throughout his career, while Jason Duesing offers a helpful summary of Baptist contributions to the wider Christian tradition.

There is much herein to both challenge and benefit readers. Some will be challenged by the call to take classical Christology and Trinitarianism seriously, especially as it pushes back against sloppy or even troubling contemporary theologies put forward by some Southern Baptists and other evangelicals. Others will be challenged by the call to engage with non-Baptist and even non-Protestant voices when it comes to spiritual formation and worship, albeit always from a starting point of Baptist and evangelical convictions, or to heed greater attention to the biblical theme of unity with other believers who may not share our convictions on secondary and tertiary matters. The benefits for many readers will include greater exposure to Christian history (especially pre-Reformation history), engagement with lesser-known Baptist voices (especially from the British Isles), and reminders that the Baptist story, like the wider Christian story, has never been (and should never be) a predominantly white story recounted mostly in English. Herein lies much of the cure to Baptist insularity.

In the interest of full disclosure, I need to lay my own cards on the table. I am a fellow of the Center for Baptist Renewal and close friend of the co-editors. I was also involved in the planning stages of this book and dialogued with some of the contributors as they wrote their chapters. I am not a neutral reviewer and do not pretend to be such. I am a vocal proponent of evangelical Baptist catholicity. For that reason, I could hardly be more excited for the publication of *Baptists and the Christian Tradition*. It deserves a wide and reflective reading by Southern Baptist pastors and scholars. I would recommend reading it in conjunction with *Theological Retrieval for Evangelicals: Why We*

*Need Our Past to Have a Future* (Crossway, 2019), an excellent recent work in the same vein by Baptist pastor-theologian Gavin Ortlund.

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***Early Reformation Covenant Theology: Early Reception of Swiss Reformed Thought, 1520-1555.* By Robert J. D. Wainwright. Reformed Academic Dissertation. Phillipsburg: P&R, 2020, xvii+416pp., \$59.99.**

While the concept of “covenant” has been fundamental to Reformed theology since the early days of the Reformation, the story of its origins and development has been contested by scholars for generations. In *Early Reformation Covenant Theology*, Robert Wainwright, a chaplain and fellow at Oriel College, Oxford University, mines the primary sources of both the Swiss and early English Reformers in an effort to reconstruct the story of the rise of covenant theology in the early Reformation (1520s-1550s). The book is an outstanding example of historical theology done well, where readers watch the emergence of a theological concept develop in the context of real-world circumstances without the interference of some predetermined consensus of a later period guiding the storyline.

Wainwright’s book, which is a revision of his Oxford dissertation, has a complex thesis, one that can be divided into three main concerns. First, he argues that we can discern a coherent tradition of covenant theology in three early Swiss theologians: Huldrych Zwingli, Heinrich Bullinger, and John Calvin. While each affirmed justification by faith (solafideism), they generally articulated the concept of covenant in a bilateral manner, meaning that both parties within the covenant are bound by mutual responsibilities: God graciously and freely provides for salvation in Christ to those who believe, and the redeemed are under the reciprocal obligation to keep the covenant by walking with him and keeping his law. This concept of “reciprocal” obligation on behalf of the Christian, Wainwright

maintains, is a central feature of Swiss covenant theology, and was responsible for the robust ethical approach to ecclesiastical reform carried out in Zurich and Geneva (pp. 331-32).

A second part of Wainwright's thesis concerns how Swiss covenant theology took root in England. Wainwright meticulously analyzes the writings of four early English Reformers—William Tyndale, Miles Coverdale, John Hooper, and John Bradford—to demonstrate that they heavily drew upon the covenantal concepts pioneered by their continental counterparts. A complicated picture emerges from these investigations. For Tyndale, Coverdale, and Hooper, Wainwright argues that we see the unmistakable evidence of Swiss covenantal themes appearing in their writings. This is demonstrated by the way these theologians closely coordinated Christian faith (i.e. justification) with moral responsibility (i.e. sanctification) within the context of covenant (p. 220). Hooper, for instance, believed "human works [are] worthless for salvation," yet he strongly maintained that the redeemed are obliged to keep the divine law and strive for godliness if they are to demonstrate that they are truly covenant children (p. 200).

Interestingly, John Bradford's theology took a different turn. Following Martin Bucer, the Strasbourg Reformer who rejected the conditionality associated with a bilateral understanding of covenant (p. 221), Bradford prominently featured the theme of divine election in his writings. Wainwright observes that this emphasis essentially prevented Bradford's thought from becoming overly saturated with covenantal and moral themes. Bradford was deeply concerned with Christian morality, but for him sanctification emerges from the gratitude and awe that arises from an awareness of divine election, not from the conditionality entailed in the bilateral understanding of covenant we find in Swiss theology (pp. 213-16). Bradford's theology reveals that different approaches to Reformed thought were present in these early years of the English Reformation.

In the third part of his thesis, Wainwright devotes two chapters to the sacramental theology of the Swiss and English Reformers. There he notes how Swiss covenantal themes appear in the sacramental writings of the early English Reformers, a point which further demonstrates how a specifically Swiss formulation of covenant was central to the systematic development of Reformed thought in England. "Where Swiss concepts of covenant were adopted by

Englishmen,” Wainwright observes, “their sacramental theologies evidence this reception” (p. 329).

One of the great values of the book is the way it restructures our understanding of how covenant theology emerged in the English Reformed tradition. While it is true that Luther’s solafideism was prominent among English Protestants during the 1520s, Wainwright notes how there was an identifiable pivot toward Swiss views after 1530, especially by Tyndale, Coverdale, and Hooper. Furthermore, Wainwright suggests that this early English approach to the covenant is a coherent tradition in the history of covenant theology—a school if you will—one which must be distinguished from the later federal theology of the Puritan tradition (pp. 347-48). The Puritans were moral precisianists who extensively elaborated the way the law of Christ is to guide every aspect of Christian behavior and national life. By contrast, the early English Reformed highlighted in this book were not as “precise” in their application of the bilateral covenant (p. 348). They were, Wainwright suggests in the title of his final chapter, “imprecisely Reformed.”

*Early Reformation Covenant Theology* is an outstanding example of a study in historical theology. Wainwright is thoroughly immersed in the primary and secondary sources, and he successfully draws readers into the nexus of two intellectual worlds: the Swiss and English Reformers. The vast apparatus of footnotes throughout its pages constantly reminds readers that the book is a dissertation, a work of meticulous scholarship aimed at a highly-trained academic audience. Yet this observation should not dissuade non-specialists from reading it. Wainwright’s clear writing renders the study accessible to laypersons who are fascinated with covenant theology and the Reformation, and who want to take the effort to work through this rich and rewarding study. I highly recommend it!

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***Crawford Howell Toy: The Man, the Scholar, the Teacher.* By Mikeal C. Parsons. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2019, 384pp., \$35.00.**

Scholars have largely ignored Crawford H. Toy (1836-1919), who was one of the most important figures in Southern Baptist history. He was the first professor dismissed from an American theological faculty for holding liberal theology. His dismissal in 1879, along with those of two missionary appointees in 1881, provoked extensive controversy over the doctrine of inspiration. James Boyce and John Broadus, professors at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, led Southern Baptists through this controversy and established a precedent that Southern Baptists have summoned repeatedly in denominational controversies ever since.

Mikeal C. Parsons, who holds the Macon Chair in Religion at Baylor University, has published the first scholarly biography of Crawford Toy. It is well researched and contributes significantly to Southern Baptist history and to American religious history generally.

Parsons tells the story of Toy's life well. Toy attended the University of Virginia where he was converted in 1854 and joined the Charlottesville Baptist Church, where John Broadus was pastor. Through Broadus's preaching, Toy felt a call to serve as a preacher of the gospel on the mission field and was appointed to Japan, but the Civil War wrecked his plans. Toy served in the Confederate army and after the war studied in Germany for two years. He taught Old Testament and Hebrew at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary from 1869 until his dismissal in 1879. He taught at Harvard University from 1880 until his retirement in 1909.

Parsons also includes chapters on Toy's wife, Nancy Saunders Toy, and Toy's student and colleague, David Gordon Lyon, as well as an appendix disentangling the conflicting accounts of Toy's courtship of Lottie Moon. Parsons's extensive research uncovered details and facts that add to our knowledge of Toy's life and correct some mistakes in the historiography.

The account of Toy's dismissal and its causes will attract the most interest. When students and a few newspapers raised questions about Toy's orthodoxy in the late 1870s, Boyce and Broadus began questioning and remonstrating with him. By late 1878 they supported

his resignation. Toy defended his view of inspiration before seminary trustees in 1879, but after examining him, they voted 16-2 to dismiss him.

Parsons argues that Boyce and Broadus conspired discredibly to oust Toy. He contends that Boyce became jealous and hostile toward Toy, and that Broadus became fearful of his own position and so turned against Toy. The two then engaged in “character assassination” (p. 57) to get him fired, under the pretense that Toy’s continuation would provoke a public controversy that would destroy the seminary (pp. 55-7, 68-87).

Parsons suggests also that Toy’s views were sufficiently conservative to be acceptable at Southern Seminary. He bases this on the fact that trustees did not charge Toy with heresy, and on the insinuation that Toy’s colleagues Broadus and William H. Whitsitt shared Toy’s view of inspiration. Broadus, however, most certainly did not hold Toy’s view. Whitsitt, who joined the faculty in 1872 and who shared an apartment with Toy from 1877 to 1879, apparently did, but he kept it a secret hidden in his diary until 2009, when his diaries were opened to researchers.

Whitsitt claimed in diary entries in 1886 that Boyce and Broadus schemed maliciously and deceitfully to force Toy out. He claimed that Boyce was motivated by jealousy of Toy’s growing fame and suggested that Broadus was “led around by the nose” by Toy until Broadus became afraid of opposition and fell in with Boyce. It was their “animosity” that drove them to lay a trap into which Toy unwittingly fell.

In the diaries, Whitsitt regularly described his colleagues, Boyce, Broadus, and even Toy, in terms filled with contempt and patronizing pity. He secretly despised them. Whitsitt boasted that he was too intelligent to be trapped and destroyed the same way that Toy was, and so he disingenuously convinced Broadus that he rejected Toy’s views.

In his resignation letter and in articles through 1881, Toy defended his views as orthodox. He claimed that he still believed in the fact of inspiration in the Bible, but he redefined inspiration to involve the subjective element only. The Bible’s value, Toy held, was not in its uninformed and often erroneous literal teaching, but rather in the fact that its authors sensed spiritual reality and were able

to communicate this spiritual sense through unreliable outward forms. The Bible was inspired, Toy held, because it inspired inward religious consciousness.

Parsons portrays Toy as holding broadly traditional views. Although Parsons discusses Toy's 1874-75 Old Testament lectures, which are mostly traditional, he omits discussion of his 1877-78 lectures, which were thoroughly liberal. In these later lectures Toy taught that the Old Testament's history was often false and that many prophecies were never fulfilled. The Old Testament's portrayal of Israel's history and of the origins of their religion, Toy said, was a fictional invention, for its ritual and ideas evolved slowly and did not coalesce until the era of the exile, when Ezra and his colleagues composed most of the Old Testament corpus from various pre-existing materials and imposed their ideas on the whole history as if God had given it all through Moses at Mount Sinai in the wilderness. The Old Testament passages interpreted as Messianic in the New Testament did not in fact teach anything about Jesus. Jesus could nevertheless be construed, Toy explained, as a spiritual fulfillment of the all the Old Testament teachings that God would bless the nation of Israel outwardly [H. C. Smith, Lecture Notes 1877-78, SBTS].

Toy's views had changed dramatically. These were the conclusions of the antisupernaturalist historical criticism of the Bible. Toy embraced naturalism and rejected the objective truth of the Bible's accounts of miracles, creation, and God's activity generally. He held that Moses probably provided the germinal principles that evolved into monotheistic Judaism, just as Jesus provided the germinal principles that developed into Christianity.

Toy's teaching of the historical-critical evolutionary reconstruction of the history of Israel showed that his new view of inspiration represented a substantial departure from orthodox interpretation of the Bible. Toy's defection from traditional views had matured well before Boyce and Broadus asked him to resign. Toy himself agreed in 1893 with Broadus's contention that Toy's diverging views required his dismissal: "You are quite right in describing my withdrawal as a necessary result of important differences of opinion" (Toy to Broadus, 20 May 1893).

Parsons suggests also that Toy's views remained rather conservative for over a decade at Harvard, and it was only in the late 1890s

that he “evolved beyond traditional Christian doctrine” (p. 283). He appeals to the fact that Toy joined the Old Cambridge Baptist Church and attended there regularly until his marriage in 1888, after which the couple attended but did not join the Cambridge First Parish Unitarian Church. He argues that they gathered with the Unitarians chiefly to build their social network. Parsons suggests that this is evidence that Toy was not so radical. From any remotely evangelical or Baptist viewpoint, however, abandoning a Trinitarian communion for Unitarian worship would constitute apostasy.

Parsons seems to place little importance on Toy’s more radical views. Parsons gives no notice to such matters as Toy’s belief, published in 1891, that the Gospel of John was thoroughly unreliable, but that the other gospels show enough of the “spirit of his [Jesus’] instruction” to demonstrate that Christianity evolved from the “germinal principles” of Jesus’ teaching, or that Jesus claimed to be human only and in no sense divine, or that Jesus rejected any notion of being a sacrifice for sin, or that he was opposed to any notion of justification by faith, or that salvation was by obedience—“it is individual conduct that determines men’s destinies” [“The Relation of Jesus to Christianity,” 1891].

Parsons defends at some length Toy’s 1907 letter in which he affirmed William James’s pragmatic philosophy, and confessed that “I find myself ready to accept the doctrine that ‘truth’ is not a static and stagnant thing, but a thing that we are constantly creating for ourselves” (pp. 280-2).

And, in defense of Toy’s more radical views, Parsons argues that to the extent that Toy became radical, it wasn’t his fault. “Those most responsible for his ‘heresies,’” Parsons says, were Boyce and Broadus, for they are the ones who expelled him from the conservative milieu of Southern Seminary and forced him to take up residence and work amid Harvard’s rationalistic culture (pp. 275-6).

Whether or not readers agree with Parsons’s interpretations of Toy’s career, all will appreciate the significance of this scholarly biography of this influential figure.

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***Imagining Theology: Encounters with God in Scripture, Interpretation, and Aesthetics.* By Garrett Green. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2020, 288pp., \$63.00.**

Building upon a career of reigniting interest in the role of imagination in theology, Garrett Green, professor emeritus at Connecticut College, explores in his most recent work the implications for theology of a Christian imagination paradigmatically revealed in Scripture. *Imagination* in Green's thinking "functions throughout human experience, enabling us to envision the whole of things, to focus our minds to perceive how things are ordered and organized" (p. 10). Understanding the imaginative potency of Scripture combats a modern scientific approach to theology characteristic of theological liberalism with a normative Christian imagination, "the employment of the human imagination in ways that remain faithful to the biblical paradigm" (p. 22).

Green opens by presenting guidelines for discerning such a normative use of imagination and then develops a hermeneutic that he applies in a series of essays on various theological issues. His guidelines include the following:

1. The Bible embodies the concrete paradigm on which all genuine Christian theology is based, enabling the faithful to rightly imagine God (p. 12).
2. Right imagination of God is a movement not only of the head—our mind or intellect—but also of the heart, our feelings and affective responses (p. 14).
3. The theological use of imagination must always remain open to the Mystery of God, resisting every temptation to rationalize, demystify, or control the divine (p. 15).
4. In accordance with its biblical paradigm, theological imagination always remains open to novelty, eschewing every attempt at metanarrative or systematic closure (p. 16).
5. Because theological imagination is dependent on the Holy Spirit, it is an enterprise of faith, appearing uncertain and circular from a worldly perspective, depending on the certainty of God's revelation for its claim to truth (p. 19).
6. Theological imagination belongs to the present age, the *regnum gratiae*, the era of our earthly pilgrimage, when we

“see through a glass, darkly.” We will no longer need to imagine God in the world to come, when we shall see him “face to face” (p. 21).

These rules provide a hermeneutical framework that resists “de-mythologizing” Scripture, instead insisting that in Scripture “the form *is* the content: that is, the meaning of a religious world is precisely its shape, the concrete web of ideas, social interactions, symbolic forms, and so on, that give it the peculiar qualities that make it what it is and not something else” (p. 30). Form and content, Green argues, is a false distinction employed by both those rejecting the historicity of Scripture and often those defending it. A better way would be to see the unity of Scripture as an expression of imagination that then shapes our imagination. On this basis, Green suggests, theology that recognizes “the fundamentally imaginative nature of religious belief and practice” (p. 58) is no threat to Christianity; rather, “the believer can affirm the truth of revelation, without shame or embarrassment, in spite of its imaginative character” (p. 61), and in fact “the church is a school of the imagination, the place where we learn to think, feel, see, and hear as followers of the crucified and risen Messiah” (p. 72). This, he suggests, was the project of his former Yale professor Hans Frei, who describes Scripture as a “realistic story” in which its truth is inherently embodied in the literary narrative (p. 84). A biblically-formed imagination, then, provides a lens that “allows us to make sense of what we perceive” in the world (p. 100), considers man-made art to be a doxological tool that “points aesthetically toward the God of the Bible” (p. 120), suggests that the metaphors Scripture uses “say what cannot be said in any other way” (p. 129), and helps Christians “apprehend another world” (p. 193) that forms an eschatological hope in the midst of a secular, pluralistic age.

Green’s argument provides a refreshing corrective for the frequently anti-aesthetic, overly-rationalistic emphasis of much of modern evangelical theologians. He is right: the Spirit-inspired word is a work of literature employing a vast variety of aesthetic devices to communicate what could not be otherwise. Since God is a spirit and does not have a body like man, since he is infinite, eternal, and total other than us, God chose to use particular aesthetic expressions that renew our minds (Rom. 12:2) and thus form our imagination of who God is.

Yet Green sometimes swings the pendulum too far into a

neo-orthodox ambivalence regarding the historical veracity of biblical narratives (p. 86). He criticizes Barth's distinction between *Geschichte* and *Historie* (p. 31), while at the same time asserting his own distinction between "our scientific understanding of the origin of species" and "our theological apprehension of the origin of the world. Relativism no longer threatens to undo our grasp on reality because we no longer imagine that we need universal principles to link all human knowledge systematically or to ground it in incorrigible truth" (p. 38). In my opinion, recent work by evangelical authors like Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine* among others, carves out a more conservative position that does not fall into the traps of higher critical cultural-linguistic philosophy on the one hand or what Vanhoozer calls the "dedramatized propositionalism" that characterizes many forms of the historical-grammatical philosophy.

Nevertheless, Green's articulation of a Scripture-formed imagination, particularly in the early chapters, contains many helpful principles that would aid a conservative evangelical in recovering from Scripture a "normative way to imagine God" (p. 14).

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***T&T Clark Handbook of Asian American Biblical Hermeneutics.***  
**Edited by Uriah Y. Kim and Seung Ai Yang. New York: T&T Clark, 2019, 544pp., \$176.**

This volume is a collection of articles from a wide range of Asian voices in their American contexts among Filipino, Vietnamese, Japanese, Indian, Korean, and Chinese populations. The biblical scholars represented here voice their views that have been shaped by their sociocultural contexts. The articles are divided into three sections—contexts, methods, and texts—the parts that play a role in the process of interpretation. Altogether, thirty-seven biblical scholars of Asian descent have taken part to produce this collection of essays that bring to light the way Asian Americans have understood

biblical hermeneutics.

The first section of seven articles on contexts starts with Tamara Ho's discussion on the complex heterogeneity of the Asian American identity with a religious experience shaped by the numerous world religions which are found in Asian countries. Russell Jeung's article looks at Chinese Americans, their history of immigration, and their "dizzying array of beliefs and traditions" that formed through their differences in income, generation, and familial roots. Lester Ruiz portrays the Filipinos in their multiculturalism in the aftermath of colonialism as they worked through estrangement and hospitality, which are also found in the biblical tradition. Jaisy Joseph and Khyati Joshi examine how Indians have stepped into an interreligious consciousness for interfaith dialogue among the various religious groups in the Indian community. Mai-Anh Le Tran speaks of the turbulent times in Vietnamese history and how their life in America has afforded greater freedom and much religious hybridization. Jung Ha Kim gives an account of Korean American hermeneutics with an overview of the prevalent Korean Christian church culture in the United States. Joanne Doi provides a glimpse into the Japanese mindset that moved from its horrific past of unjust wartime incarceration toward solidarity and remembrance in the present moment: just as wounds remain on the risen body of Christ, the Japanese hold to their past and look ahead toward reconciliation and progress. These experiences of Asians in America situate the reading of the biblical text from their challenges and struggles toward a redemptive future found in the shared Christian hope.

The next section on methods offers some needed reflection on the current methods of interpretation. Here, traditional approaches like historical criticism (Mary Foskett), social criticism (D. N. Premnath), literary criticism (Jin Young Choi), and theological reflection (Bo Lim) are brought into light in connection with the various Asian American experiences. Other non-traditional approaches are also included in the survey. Each of these articles demonstrates an understanding of the field by tracing the history of these methods while also combining the Asian American experience and the effects it has had on the discipline. Theological wisdom is needed to navigate one's path through these discussions.

The third and final section on texts is the largest constituent of

the volume. The twenty-two articles provide insights through the Asian American lens. The general pattern of exegesis is generally in the following steps: observations of the text, an account of the traditional readings of the text, and the perspective of the text through the contributor's history and personal experience. Some memorable, meaningful, and creative connections are presented in this section. For example, the exile of Cain and God's continued protection in Genesis are compared to the flourishing of Asian immigrants with opportunities in the new land (Hemchand Gossai). Zelophehad's daughters in Numbers 27 and 36 uphold family honor as exemplary women in line with the filial piety of Confucianism (Sonia Wong). The book of Job undergirds the voice of the marginalized in the Chinese diaspora experience (Chloe Sun). Daniel in his Babylonian exile shows how Korean Americans face the challenges of cultural adaptation and assimilation (John Ahn). Jesus's call to discipleship in Matthew strongly points to filial piety and radical discipleship among Chinese Christians (Diane Chen). The parable of the great banquet in Luke 15 offers insight into the privileged status of certain South Asian immigrants, moving them toward greater empathy for the disadvantaged in society (Raj Nadella). Readers will need to exercise careful discernment as they work through these articles.

The final product of this volume is a considerable achievement in bringing together the minority voices of biblical studies as their stories and struggles are heard along with their interpretation. The people, their approach, and their interpretation of the biblical text pull together a rich chorus of witnesses that gives the biblical texts significance in their respective Asian, yet still American, contexts. With the theological spectrum being so wide among the contributors, the handbook does not suggest that there exists any collective uniformity among them nor does it show that Asians conform to any singular dogma or tradition, but the collection does allow for these different voices of different backgrounds to be heard and appreciated. Any reader of biblical texts will naturally bring their background and training to their understanding of the biblical text. Missiologists have long identified the contextualized reception of Jesus's message throughout church history. While this handbook has done a great service to show that the biblical text and its redemptive story have affected Asian

Americans in ways profoundly contextualized in their cultural space and varying ecclesial traditions, it must also be noted that some of the contributions found in this volume fall outside the consensus of Christian orthodoxy.

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***A Survey of World Missions.* By Robin Hadaway. Nashville: B&H, 2020, 352pp., \$29.99.**

Robin Hadaway's survey of world missions issues a fresh study on the range of ideas in missiology. He argues for renewed attention to the subject because while "all evangelical Christians understand the world desperately needs Christ and the task of proclaiming the gospel is great," agreement on approaching the missionary task is markedly different among Christ-followers (p. 16). The author enters the genre with fresh perspectives on mission philosophies, strategies, and methods. Hadaway, missionary scholar and practitioner, engages the reader with both densities of research and examples from his own missionary experiences. Drawing from his Baptist context, readers interested in the various nuances of missions among the Southern Baptist denomination will find a concentrated sampling of missiological insights from its primary international sending support structure, the International Mission Board. As suggested in the title, Hadaway surveys the missiological research and application around broader categories "not to limit one's thinking, but to help the missiologist and practitioner process where they fit along the mission spectrum" (p. 16). The author builds his study on biblical premises and leads the reader to consider the various missiological studies addressed both historically and in contemporary perspective (p. 17).

After an introduction highlighting the present realities in missiological studies, Hadaway leads the reader through the biblical, theological, and historical foundations in evangelical missions.

Setting the Bible as the “foundation and basis for missions” (p. 17), the author sets missions within the Genesis to Revelation storyline of Scripture consisting “of the activities of God and his representative to bring Adam’s race back into fellowship with him through his Son, Jesus Christ” (p. 18). Hadaway’s treatment of the biblical-theological framework for missions or specific texts is broad but not deep as he surveys the foundational landscape of the field. The theological foundation for missions focuses primarily on soteriology and its relationship to evangelism as well as the role of the church in carrying out the missionary task. Hadaway devotes space to surveying the various views on salvation, including everything from pluralism to Calvinism. The author further argues that the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel in mission lies within every church (p. 50). The historical foundation of Hadaway’s survey includes major epochs of mission history as well as unique biographical sketches of some who shaped the philosophies and methodologies of missions today.

In chapters five through seven, the author offers an array of contexts for missions. Hadaway’s overview of world religions defines major (and minor) world religions with the focus on the need for contextualizing the gospel to communicate effectively in the various worldviews around the world. Although contextualizing is a focus and encouragement to the reader, the author concludes by asserting, “At the end of the day, each person from other faiths must be asked to turn from that belief system and follow Christ” (p. 131). Thus, his sections on worldview and contextualization (chapters six and seven) delve deeper into an analysis of what that entails. Hadaway’s survey of contextual approaches in gospel proclamation specifies current realities in seeking to address the need for further studies. The author writes, “Currently, contextualization is probably the most important, yet controversial concept in missions ... and challenges the missionary to his core” (p. 189). This sentiment builds his case for understanding mission philosophies, strategies, and methods.

Hadaway’s survey of the various philosophies, strategies, and methods guides the reader in considering how one should think about the approach to mission, specifically how the missionary evangelizes toward church planting. Helpful to this section are unique strategies implemented currently on the mission field. Although the author does not offer critiques of the various approaches, he postulates

enough information to inform the reader of current mission praxis. Hadaway's final two chapters briefly examine the role of the mission agency in the life of a missionary as well as the author's perspective on missions in the twenty-first century.

The author does not shy from illuminating the reader to a wide range of beliefs and approaches to mission that deserves further study. Therefore, educators, students, church leaders, and missionary practitioners will appreciate the array of issues and ideas that offers context in grappling with the church's role in the mission of God. Furthermore, the author's experience on the mission field and familiarity with leadership in mission agencies bolsters his sections on mission strategy and method, having tried or viewed first-hand their strengths, weaknesses, and need for inclusion of further study.

Since this is a survey, the challenge for the reader is the lack of clarity on the author's missiological positions. The basis of analysis lends more toward a researched overview of topics and not a formal stance on missiological principles. Hadaway is clear on the biblical basis for mission and his articulation of the gospel. However, on the topics presented, readers will find minimal subjective assertions throughout the book.

In sum, *A Survey of World Missions* is a gift to the church and academia in helping think through the essential categories for evangelical missions, especially as it updates the field of study with fresh missiological considerations. Although all evangelical Christians will benefit from thinking through this survey, the book will enlighten and inspire those who claim Southern Baptist roots. Classrooms will want to utilize this resource as a springboard for thinking more deeply about the church on mission. Hadaway's final words offer great encouragement in recognizing that "although Christian missions may seem to the observer as haphazardly planned, . . . God takes the long view and sees a greater purpose for the ages" (p. 288). Hadaway writes with God's perspective in view, and for that reason, this book will serve the church and her mission well.

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***Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith.* By Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson. Nashville: B&H, 2020, 624pp., \$49.99.**

Chris Morgan, dean of the School of Christian Studies at California Baptist University, has provided Christ's church with a gift in his *Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith*. Written with Robert Peterson, Morgan's one-volume systematic theology should be the go-to introduction for evangelical Christians, and especially for Baptists and other credobaptists, to the discipline. While other popular one-volume systematic theologies will surely continue to be read and used profitably, Morgan's new text can be considered the gold standard for evangelical, credobaptist, single-volume introductions to Christian theology.

Several unique features of Morgan's book catapult it to the top of the list, but most significant is its incorporation of biblical theology to the task of systematic theology. Morgan, with contributions from Peterson, discusses each major Christian doctrine in the context of "the biblical story line of creation, fall, redemption, and new creation" (p. 1). While other recent systematic texts give credence to the grand narrative of Scripture and its importance for theology, Morgan and Peterson's is among the first, especially within a Baptist context, to do so considering each doctrine rather than merely as prolegomena.

In addition to this thoroughgoing biblical-theological approach, Morgan and Peterson also make sure to discuss each doctrine's exegetical basis from select passages of Scripture, each doctrine's impact on the life of the individual believer and on the whole church, and each doctrine's place in the Christian tradition and its relation to classic Christian confessions of faith. Fundamentally, Morgan and Peterson describe their work as "evangelical, written with a high view of Scripture and consistent with historic confessions of faith" (p. 1). In other words, in *Christian Theology* we have a single-volume, single-author (by which I mean, not an edited, multi-authored text) introduction to systematic theology that is grounded in an inerrant and fully authoritative view of Scripture, rooted in and faithful to the best of the Christian tradition, shaped by the biblical story, and aimed at the life of the believer and the health of the church. And, to top it off, this book is imminently readable and accessible.

These characteristics, and particularly their combination, sets Morgan and Peterson's text apart from other one-volume systematic theologies currently used by evangelicals, and particularly by evangelical credobaptists. On the one hand, the fact that this volume is not an edited, multi-authored text gives it a coherence that is not always evident in volumes with multiple contributors from various theological backgrounds and with various theological commitments. On the other hand, among single-authored systematics popular in evangelical circles, Morgan and Peterson are unique in their combined emphasis on exegetical rationale, context in the biblical story, and relation to the Christian tradition for each doctrine. Other single-authored systematics, and especially those used by credobaptists, often lack significant engagement with one or more of these important aspects of the task of systematic theology, whereas Morgan and Peterson consistently emphasize the necessity of all three.

Although *Christian Theology* is, in my estimation, the gold standard for evangelical, credobaptist, single-volume systematic theologies, I should also note that this is an *introduction* to the discipline. There are aspects of the discussion of each doctrine that could be expanded, especially as it relates to exegetical basis, historical context, and dogmatic location. Regarding the first two, this is simply a matter of proliferating the foundational work that Morgan and Peterson already provide in their chapters. In other words, there is always more to say about the biblical basis for a doctrine and its place in Christian history and thought.

However, regarding the third – dogmatic location – readers should be aware that *Christian Theology* only engages in basic dogmatic questions when it comes to most doctrines. For instance, regarding the doctrine of the Trinity, the authors are clear that God is one God who exists in three Persons, and they even refer to the eternal relations of origin (pp. 102–103). When it comes to explaining the latter concept and its biblical basis, however, there is little discussion. The emphasis, as Morgan and Peterson state in the introduction, is on the most basic affirmations of the Christian faith. The same could be said, for example, of mentions of the doctrine of simplicity (p. 102) and of the heresy of Apollinarianism. With respect to the former, there is only passing reference, while with the latter the authors define the heresy's meaning but without mention of the

doctrine of dyothelitism or its relation to the doctrine of the Trinity. I want to emphasize that these observations are not criticisms, but only intended to highlight the *introductory* nature of the text. For those who taste and see the beauty of the discipline of systematic theology after reading *Christian Theology*, more work will be required to plumb the dogmatic depths of the doctrines discussed. Again, this aspect of the book is noted by the authors, and each chapter contains a list of resources for further reading to aid those who wish to explore further.

In summary, *Christian Theology* is a highly accessible, readable introduction to the Christian faith that is at once academically stimulating and devotionally engaging, a rare single-volume systematic that gives proper attention to exegesis, biblical theology, historical theology, and ecclesial application. It should be used in churches and classrooms alike. I cannot recommend it highly enough.

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***A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms.* By Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson. Nashville: B&H, 2020, 192pp., \$19.99.**

This succinct reference book contains over 700 entries from, “the Bible, theology, church history (people, movements, councils, and documents), philosophy, church practice, and more” (p. x). Entries include topics such as: aseity of God, authority of Scripture, biblical theology, Christ’s names and titles, homiletics, inerrancy, simplicity of God, and *sola scriptura*. *A Concise Dictionary of Theological Terms* serves as the companion piece to Morgan’s *Christian Theology: The Biblical Story and Our Faith* textbook.

Each entry is cleanly defined from a Baptist framework built upon an evangelical foundation. Most of the terms contain further references so that the reader can locate and connect terms to their larger theological conversations. For instance, “Council of Chalcedon” is

summarized and then sends the reader to “Deity and Humanity of Christ.” Many of the terms also contain helpful biblical references so that those seeking further Bible study can easily locate applicable passages. The single-column format helps the user to utilize the reference work more like a book rather than a typical two-column dictionary.

This volume meets two major needs. First, it will be effective as a textbook in theology classes. It is a fitting companion to a theology textbook, particularly Morgan’s, but it would also work well with others. Second, if scholars, pastors, students, and church leaders download the Kindle version, this volume could effectively replace any tendency to search Wikipedia or Theopedia for such terms. Solid theology clearly and concisely written could be as close as our phones. Morgan and Peterson’s *Dictionary* will serve as a valuable resource for scholars, pastors, students, denominational leaders, and church leaders.

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***How the Spirit Became God: The Mosaic of Early Christian Pneumatology.* By Kyle R. Hughes. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2020, vii+162pp., \$23.00.**

This volume by Kyle R. Hughes, History Department chair at Whitefield Academy in Atlanta, carries on his project that started with *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit: Prosopological Exegesis and the Development of Pre-Nicene Pneumatology* (Brill, 2018). In that work, he primarily focused on the development of early Christian pneumatology in Justin, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. In this present work, Hughes surveys the development of pneumatology from Pentecost to the Council of Constantinople using the illustration of a mosaic that was built tile by tile into a full divine pneumatology.

In the first chapter, Hughes tackles “The Problem of the Holy Spirit.” Here, he introduces the issue by noting the difficulty artists

and iconographers face with respect to the Holy Spirit. For the Father and Son, there is a type of personification in biblical portrayals that artists can draw (for example, the Father as an old man with a white beard or a depiction of the Son incarnate). However, aside from a dove, the Spirit is often portrayed inanimately as one who is “poured out” or “fills.” Given that these depictions might lend one toward seeing the Spirit as some sort of force rather than person, Hughes notes that interpreters had a less difficult task in talking about the Father and Son as personal beings. Nonetheless, the early church eventually settled on the Trinitarian formula of one God in three persons.

In chapter two, Hughes asserts that the Gospel of John in particular offers the clearest biblical portrait of the Spirit’s distinct personhood. In particular, “The Johannine presentation of the Paraclete sets up an enormously important idea that will be of great significance for later Christian writers’ theology of the Holy Spirit” (p. 22), namely the Spirit’s prosopological speech in divine revelation. Chapter three focuses principally on the Epistle of Barnabas and the work of Justin Martyr, showing the Old Testament’s testimony to the Spirit as the linchpin for developing a specific Christian identity over and against Judaism.

Chapter four is in many ways a condensed argument from *The Trinitarian Testimony of the Spirit*, in which Hughes lays out the development of the Spirit as a divine person in the theologies of Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian. Hughes shows that these early Christian theologians made important contributions to second- and third-century pneumatological development by making “use of an ancient person-centered reading strategy that scholars have termed prosopological exegesis” that personified the Spirit in particular biblical texts in which he seemed to be speaking in a distinct, volitional manner (p. 74). In chapter five, Hughes furthers the discussion by giving attention to the divine economy “tile” Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen contribute to the development of a pneumatological mosaic. Origen’s conclusions about the Spirit’s role in divine revelation, Hughes asserts, especially laid the foundation for later Christians to describe the Spirit as an eternally present person with the Godhead.

Chapter six pulls the pneumatological development together, noting chiefly how Athanasius, Didymus the Blind, and Basil of

Caesarea helped codify the pro-Nicene articulation of the Spirit's full divinity. Hughes notes that Athanasius "broke a long tradition of subordinationism in affirming the coequality of the Spirit with the Father and the Son, emphasizing the unity of action and identity in the Trinity" (p. 128). That said, Hughes asserts that Didymus and Basil helped clarify that which Athanasius left "somewhat underdeveloped" through reflections on the Spirit's role in sanctification and liturgy. The seventh chapter acts as a conclusion, encouraging Christians to receive "the invitation of the Spirit: to make space in our lives for the Spirit's life-giving breath to create in us the very character of Christ, by which we may behold God face-to-face" (p. 139).

The strengths of this book are legion—from its succinctness to its clarity to its theological precision—but its greatest contribution is its avoidance of generalizing early pneumatological development. While nominalism can die the death of a thousand qualifications, Hughes finds the balance between surveying the development, while also deftly noting the nuances in the articulations of certain theologians and time periods in the first five centuries of Christian pneumatological reflection. This type of careful work is difficult in such a brief space of under 150 pages, and yet Hughes accomplishes this task exceptionally well. The only major critique worth noting is the lack of attention to the two Gregories. Of the Cappadocians, Basil is an obvious forerunner to Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa; however, in a chapter in which Hughes seeks to show the final major development of a fully divine pneumatology, he underemphasizes the two men—Nazianzus earns two citations and Nyssa earns zero—who fleshed out Basil's theology with the most rigor. If one were seeking to put a bow on the development of fully divine pneumatology, Nazianzus and/or Nyssa would have been more apt as the final tiles to the mosaic.

Hughes notes that his audience is broad, aiming at scholars, pastors, students, and laypersons (p. 13). He accomplished this task wonderfully, balancing scholarly rigor with accessible and clear prose and storytelling. This book is recommended for anyone seeking to understand how and why Christians confess the Holy Spirit's full divinity.

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***Resilient Faith: How the Early Christian “Third Way” Changed the World.* By Gerald L. Sittser. Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2019, xv+222pp., \$19.99.**

Gerald L. Sittser serves as professor of theology and as senior fellow and researcher in the Office of Church Engagement at Whitworth University in Spokane. He has taught at Whitworth since 1989.

*Resilient Faith: How the Early Christian “Third Way” Changed the World* is Sittser’s ninth book. Previous works by Sittser recognized for their excellence include: *When God Doesn’t Answer Your Prayer* (Zondervan, 2003), which received the 2005 Gold Medallion Award in the Christian Living category from the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association, and *Water from a Deep Well: Christian Spirituality from Early Martyrs to Modern Missionaries* (IVP, 2007), which won the Logos Book Award.

The origin of *Resilient Faith* may be traced to Sittser’s study of a second-century document, “The So-Called Letter to Diognetus,” many years ago. In this writing, an unknown author references the Christian movement as the “third race” (which Sittser renders as the “third way”) to distinguish it from the Roman (“first race”) and Jewish ways of life (“second race”). This classification of Christianity intrigued Sittser and led him to ask, “What made early Christianity so unique that ancient people regarded it as a ‘third way,’ a set of beliefs and practices different from the Roman and Jewish ways?” Furthermore, “Why did Christianity’s distinctiveness attract some to the faith and repel others?” His desire to understand the rise of Christianity within its historical and cultural context is similar to portions of Fox’s *Pagans and Christians* (pp. 263-335) and Green’s *Evangelism in the Early Church* (pp. 29-75).

Sittser’s exploration of these questions is motivated by a greater concern than merely tracing the rise of Christianity, however. His larger goal is to provide guidance to modern Christians who desire

to see a resurgence of Christianity. He argues that early Christianity supplies the beliefs, practices, and approach needed for renewal. In regard to approach, Sittser posits that the earliest believers neither accommodated nor isolated themselves from the culture. Instead, they “immersed themselves in the culture as followers of Jesus and agents of the kingdom, influencing it from within both as individuals and as a community” (p. 174). While this is true, at times Christians did separate themselves from certain professions (e.g., actor) and cultural spheres (e.g., gladiatorial events).

Sittser begins by contrasting the context of the modern church with that of the ancient church (Chapter one: “Then and Now”). Noting that modern Christianity no longer dominates over the culture as it did in the past, he argues that many in the West today question Christianity’s relevance due to the fact that Christians have failed to demonstrate the uniqueness of their beliefs and practices. Stated differently, modern believers have compromised Christianity’s identity and the gospel message (p. 12). In contrast, the ancient church displayed a distinctive identity and articulated a unique message that centered on Jesus (p. 16). They regarded him as the new way and sought to live as citizens of God’s divine kingdom within the context of the Roman Empire. Also, the ancient church took spiritual formation seriously, giving a great deal of time and effort to shaping Christian disciples (p. 17).

In Chapters two through eight, which comprises the bulk of the writing, Sittser explores selected topics related to his two key questions of concern. This review will comment on several chapters.

In the “Old World and New World” (Chapter two), Sittser contrasts the “old world” of the Romans with the “new world” brought by Christianity. In the new world of Christianity, Jesus stood as the distinguishing feature (p. 19). Christians, unlike their polytheistic neighbors, worshipped him exclusively (p. 24), viewing him as the Son of God and Savior of the world (p. 34). In addition, Christians refrained from participating in the imperial cult (p. 21). At times, their behavior incurred pagan criticism as seen in the writings of Pliny (pp. 19-22) and Porphyry (pp. 34-35).

In Chapter five (“Authority”), Sittser examines three sources of authority that not only distinguished the church but also kept it strong and stable: belief, book, and bishop. Belief refers to the “rule

of faith” (p. 89) or “orthodoxy” (p. 91). The church’s beliefs conflicted sharply with Gnostic teaching (pp. 85-88), which presented a completely different worldview. Sittser also suggests that Christian beliefs arose independently on a grassroots level as opposed to “top down” (p. 91).

The second source of authority, the Bible, also played an important role in the life of the church. Believers read it personally, listened to others read it, memorized it, copied it, distributed it, and gathered weekly (sometimes even daily) to learn from it (pp. 91-93).

Another source of authority was the office of the bishop. The earliest believers regarded bishops as leaders who continued the apostles’ ministry (p. 93). Bishops exercised authority over the churches through their teaching, shepherding, and care. They also bore witness to the life and teachings of Jesus (p. 96).

In the final chapter (“Crossing to Safety”), Sittser discusses the catechumenate, the early church’s three-year process for bringing pagans into the church. The gulf was so wide that prospective converts needed a bridge to assist them in crossing over to a position of functional discipleship. For Sittser, this type of intense discipleship is absolutely necessary for a resurgence of the church today (pp. 177-178).

The author concludes with a helpful annotated bibliography of early Christian literature (pp. 179-196). This section includes a categorized list of primary (e.g., martyrdom accounts, church manuals) and secondary sources (e.g., early Christian theology, worship, Christian life in the world). It contains a wealth of information.

Sittser’s *Resilient Faith* makes a much-needed contribution to the modern church. He successfully identifies the beliefs, practices, and approach that distinguished the ancient church and contributed to its growth, including: a firm commitment to Jesus as the center of a believer’s life and existence, a strong personal ethic, service to the “least of these” motivated by a desire to follow Christ’s example; and a dedication to worship which in turn prepared believers to live in the world, avoiding both the path of accommodation and isolation and practicing a rigorous program of discipleship.

Those who wish to see the church experience a resurgence today should study Sittser’s book carefully. While recognizing that the early

centuries were not a golden age of Christianity, he calls his readers to follow the ancient church's example at its best. Highly recommended.

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