

Veli-Matti Kärkkäinen, ed. *Holy Spirit and Salvation: The Sources of Christian Theology*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010. 470 pp. Paperback \$50.

This source book of pneumatology is a collection of excerpts from various Christian sources. Taking into account “an unprecedented interest in the Holy Spirit” in the past few decades and the correspondingly extensive amount of literature on this subject, Kärkkäinen gives to students of theology and church history a chance to get a good glimpse at the issues associated with the Holy Spirit and Its role in Trinitarian theology, ecclesiology, and soteriology. The ambitious task of introducing almost the entire content of Spirit theology to the reader is fulfilled through the careful choice of the most significant works on the subject, supplemented with introductory notes to each excerpt.

What is the Spirit and Its role in salvation and “deification” of humanity? What is the relationship between the hypostases of the Holy Trinity? How did the Trinitarian debates affect the relation between the East and the West? What is the role of the Spirit in the life of the Church and the role within religious communities? This volume is designed to present these and many other questions associated with the Holy Spirit in such a way that they are answered by the writings of various thinkers.

This volume begins with an exposition of pneumatologies of the Apostolic Fathers and early apologists and proceeds to the patristic texts of Eastern and Western origin. It then takes its route through medieval mysticism and the scholastic tradition followed by the Reformation. After addressing nineteenth century theologies of the Spirit, nearly 200 pages are devoted to contemporary theologies of the Spirit which include charismatic traditions and testimonies from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

There are limitations in aiming to present all information on the subject within the scope of 450 pages. For example, the reader has to be aware that five pages on Basil the Great and his arguments on defending the deity of the Spirit might not be enough to fully understand what was at stake at that time. Fortunately, the introductory notes contextualize the excerpts historically and facilitate understanding.

It should be noted, moreover, that one might not feel entirely comfortable with the choice of definitions and classifications presented in the volume. For example, so called “Spirit Christology” attributed to the early church fathers raises some questions. Is it a proper way of introducing the fathers who neither knew nor used the term? Is this term

well defined in the volume? Is it not just another attempt to find in patristic sources something alien to them to justify a contemporary debate? These questions are not insignificant. However, the issues of definition and classification do not diminish the educational value of this book and students of theology and church history will benefit from reading it.

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