

favorite historical hypothesis. I can think of no better book to allow readers to "walk in the shoes" of the women of the radical Reformation.

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Spencer, Aida Besancon, with Donna F. G. Hailson, Catherine Clark Kroeger, and William David Spencer. *The Goddess Revival*. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1995. 304 pp. \$11.99.

There seems to be no subject that is more charged with passion and prejudice than the relation between the sexes. This also is true of various and increasing attempts by numerous feminist approaches to such issues as God's nature, and gender identity in Scripture. The re-imagining of God as Mother which replaces the traditional understanding of God as Father with the revival of a new goddess religion is currently taking place with rapid speed. What is at stake in this new movement is nothing less than the proper understanding of the very nature of God. Who is God? Who is God not? How is God to be addressed, and how can we think and talk properly of God? This is the point of this book. Written by Aida Besancon Spencer with the help of her husband William David Spencer and Donna F. G. Hailson and Catherine Clark Kroeger, *The Goddess Revival* helpfully defines and analyzes a new movement in its diverse branches and offshoots, and plows through the growing literature, thereby giving an introduction to a newly emerging goddess spirituality as well as to its ancient and partly occult roots.

In the first chapter, "God as Female," Donna F. G. Hailson gives a broad overview of diverse goddess spirituality. William David Spencer authored chapter 2, on the male deities now being worshiped. Chapter three, by Catherine Clark Kroeger, addresses the perspective of deities worshiped during the first century in the Greco-Roman world. In the remaining chapters, Aida Besancon Spencer analyzes from a biblical perspective the writings on goddess feminism. Whereas chapters 1, 2, and 3 mainly describe and briefly analyze the worship of gods and goddesses, chapters 4 to 8 are an extended analysis, an apologetic, an appeal, a call to such crucial questions as: Who is God? How is God unique? Why is God neither a male nor a female god? How is God both transcendent and immanent? How may God be known? What is the place of general revelation? What is idolatry? What is the charge the church needs to hear? There are four appendixes, one written by Lupe Rosalez, a former witch and now devout Christian, giving a brief account of what enticed her about witchcraft; a second one by Peter King, on how he helped her to leave witchcraft; one on the term Father (Patēr) in the Bible; and last but not least, an eight-part Bible study on the nature of God, which amplifies earlier chapter content.

Goddess Revival not only gives a helpful overview of the diverse goddess spirituality but also deals much more with the classical doctrine of God than the title suggests at first sight. The challenge that this book seeks to meet is the difficulty of how to affirm that both men and women are made in the image of God, without embracing in any way a perception of God that is less than biblical, or even idolatrous. Their book contains many useful responses to common charges leveled by feminists against what is in reality a distorted perspective of God. *The*

Goddess Revival, however, seeks more than just to rebut wrong and/or misguided ideas. It attempts to win adherents of goddess spirituality to the worship of the true God as portrayed in the Bible. This is done with an openness to other positions and a concern to be well balanced, yet biblically faithful.

Yet, the book also seems to pursue a different agenda. It is written with clear implications on the role of women in the church and with an appeal that women's rights are worth defending (179ff). Admitting that "many of the complaints about the church by goddess feminists are simply true" (182), it challenges the Christian church at large to "search for more biblical ways to understand and speak about God" if the church wants renewal (183). That renewal is needed within the church is beyond question. However, the crux of the book comes, in my opinion, in its understanding and use of metaphorical language in the Bible. To claim that "outside of knowing God through actions and adjectives, God is known by metaphorical language" (110), seems to significantly limit our knowledge of God and is open to serious dispute. Moreover, to conclude that it is nonsensical "that Father, Lord, Son, Creator, Redeemer, Judge, and Savior are literal terms as opposed to Good Shepherd, True Vine, Rock, Fortress, and motherhood, which are metaphorical and symbolic" (111) is no less problematic. The thrust of *The Goddess Revival* is clearly aimed at more than simply pointing out deficiencies and false concepts in goddess spirituality. According to A. Spencer, it is not only wrong but "idolatry" to "treat God as a literal father, lord, name, savior, high one, and judge, or to treat Jesus as a literal lord, son, name, light, food, savior, life," etc. (117). It is firmly stated that "to treat God literally as any one of these metaphors limits God to the earthly equivalent, making a false image of God, an idol" (117). This claim has far-reaching implications for all Christians. One even wonders whether at this point the authors have subtly introduced a different understanding of God, the very thing they sought to avoid. If our language about God is mainly metaphorical, as it is claimed, it is not surprising to read that the pronoun "he" for God should be avoided (127f). But why should the pronoun "he" for God be avoided, if God saw fit to use it? The Bible uses masculine language for God because that is the language with which God has revealed himself.

"Father" is not simply a metaphor projected by humanity onto God in heaven. It is a name and filial term of address revealed by God himself in the person of his Son. To abandon it can be done only with great loss and peril for proper Christian worship. The acknowledgment of God as Father is an essential part of Christian kerygma. It is certainly not accidental that the Apostle's Creed begins with the confession: "I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." It seems as if one problem with Spencer is her overly restricted use and limited understanding of the word "father" to sexual aspects that prevent her from using it meaningfully for God. What is particularly disappointing, however, is the fact that *The Goddess Revival* fails to interact with other literature in which significantly different conclusions are reached about our language of God, and how God should be worshiped and addressed. One thinks about books such as Mary A. Kassian, *The Feminist Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1992); Werner Neuer, *Man and Woman in Christian Perspective* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1991); and particularly the penetrating and substantial analysis by Manfred Hauke, *Women in the Priesthood: A Systematic*

Analysis in the Light of the Order of Creation and Redemption (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), especially, 121-276, to name but a few, even though one does not need to follow them in every point. Sometimes the grammatical arguments brought forward by Spencer in support of her argument are less than convincing and at times simply incorrect, as for instance when it is claimed that "'Wife' in German is masculine (*das Weib*)" (122). "*Das Weib*," however, is neuter in German, as the German neuter article "*das*" readily indicates.

Not even A. T. Robertson, who is quoted in support of this mistaken statement, makes such a claim in his *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*. Such sloppy research makes one wonder about some of the other research presented in *The Goddess Revival*, and cautions the reader to carefully think through some of its claims and their far-reaching implications for the doctrine of God and theology in general.

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Toulouse, Mark G., and James O. Duke, eds. *Makers of Christian Theology in America*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1997. 568 pp. Paper, \$34.95.

Toulouse and Duke (both of Texas Christian University) have made a major contribution to the reference works related to the intellectual history of American religion. The book surveys the contributions of ninety-one "makers of Christian theology." The volume's aim, the editors note in their general introduction, is "to orient readers to the subject matter at issue rather than to plead a case" (13).

That aim definitely seems to have informed the choice of the individuals they selected for treatment. Thus one finds among the ninety-one not only those who have contributed to mainline religious thought, but also the makers of theology in traditions generally viewed as being far from the center of the mainline. As a result, the volume sports chapters on those who defined the edges of reason and revelation, the developers of Black theology, and the main theological voices of the Orthodox tradition. On the individual level, such people as Joseph Smith, John Dewey, Ellen G. White, W. E. B. DuBois, and Charles Taze Russell find their place along with America's Hodges, Niebuhrs, and Edwardses.

That lineup is quite at variance from the collections of an earlier generation, such as Sydney E. Ahlstrom's *Theology and America* (1967). Toulouse and Duke are definitely in the tradition so nicely represented by R. Laurence Moore's *Religious Outsiders and the Making of Americans* (1986). The historiography represented by *Makers of Christian Theology in America* is concerned with both the center and the edges of historical theology.

The theologians treated in the book are arranged topically in a generally chronological format. Each of the ninety-one essays includes basic biographical data, an analysis of the key theological issues and concerns to which the figure responded, a critical discussion of the major theological theses developed by each person, an assessment of the short-term and long-range influence of each theologian's thought, and a bibliography of useful primary and secondary literature on each person.

The core of the editors' task was one of selection. In that realm the key words in their title proved to be both problematic and informative. How, for example,