

formation of a community animated by love. Other critiques might center on whether the rather simple, even if profound, thrust of the book's constructive proposal—namely, the necessity and viability of cultivating an ethic of loving friendship in the civic sphere—represents a significant achievement. Yet in today's world one would be hard-pressed to show that it is not.

Gregory's irenic style and mostly careful exegesis of all discussion partners is certainly winsome. At times it feels like a friendly dialogue carried on with O'Donovan by means of numerous references to his thought. However, one can get almost lost in the brisk movement of the argument as it skips along through a dizzying array of interlocutors and secondary sources, even to the end of making a few related points several times over. Still, these deficiencies are far outweighed by the erudition and clarity of Gregory's book, as well as its commendable aims. **N&V**

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Irenaeus of Lyons and the Theology of the Holy Spirit by Anthony Briggman (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012*), 320 pp.

IRENAEUS OF LYONS has long been viewed as a pivotal figure in the history of Christian doctrine. With Origen of Alexandria, he is esteemed as an early theological "systematizer." Like Origen's later *On First Principles*, Irenaeus's *Against Heresies* is frequently hailed as a "systematic" work. It exhibits a captivating intellectual coherence unparalleled by its predecessors. Often, however, such praise fails to offer more than uncritical fawning. Furthermore, Irenaeus's trinitarian theology is liable to the criticism that it is actually "binitarianism" masquerading as trinity-talk. Against both quasi-hagiographical and binitarian readings of the Bishop of Lyons, Anthony Briggman's monograph documents Irenaeus's role in the rise of early Christian pneumatology.

A number of historical commitments regarding second- and third-century pneumatology present themselves as Briggman's story unfolds. The book begins and ends by setting Irenaeus within a larger narrative framework—namely, the "three-stage" pneumatological narrative proposed by Michel Barnes. In the first stage (100–200 A.D.), ear-

ly Christian pneumatology is “Jewish-Christian.” With the second stage (Tertullian and Origen), the Jewish “superstructure” of Christian pneumatology is rejected. That rejection generates a “low” pneumatology. The third stage is a late-fourth-century revival of “high” pneumatology. Irenaeus’s action in this drama is to have set out the most sophisticated and robust account of the Trinity on offer at the end of the “first stage.”


The monograph comprises seven chapters. The first chapter begins prior to Irenaeus, with Justin. We learn that Justin’s trinitarian convictions were hamstrung by his persistent binitarian orientation: Justin failed to differentiate the identities and activities of the Word and the Spirit. Justin’s failure leads to a soft (my term) Spirit-Christology. Irenaeus, on the other hand, was no mere “binitarian.” Briggman draws an intellectual-historical boundary line through the middle of *Against Heresies*. By the time Irenaeus sat down to write *Against Heresies* 3, he had produced a pneumatological account that “supersedes that of *Against Heresies* 1 and 2 by so large a degree that it may be best to regard his reasoning in the first two Books as the most advanced theology of the Spirit of the previous generation” (45). Briggman’s attribution of development to Irenaeus on this score is significant. If he is right, we will need to speak of an “early” and “late” Irenaeus when it comes to the question of pneumatology.

The monograph’s later chapters delve more deeply into Irenaeus’s trinitarian theology. By Chapter 5, we have reached Irenaeus’s well-known deployment of the “Two Hands” model for the divinity of the Spirit and the Son. With this model, Irenaeus unites the Son and the Spirit to the Father-Creator, thereby subverting the gnostic claim that the flesh is created by a lesser deity. The model originates as a Jewish tradition from Asia Minor that was also known to Theophilus of Antioch. Irenaeus’s identification of the Spirit with Wisdom enables him to out-narrate the gnostic myth of Sophia and her impassioned fall. As we might expect, Irenaeus might have thanked his polemical poise against the gnostics for his trinitarian proto-orthodoxy.

The first half of Chapter 6 is devoted to dismantling John Behr’s account of Irenaeus’s theological anthropology. According to Behr’s reading, Irenaeus taught that the Holy Spirit is present not only to those who believe in the Son, but to all human beings, as an essential component of the human being. Briggman sifts through each of the texts to

which Behr appeals for support, wresting them away with meticulous argumentation. In fact, Irenaeus held to a strictly bipartite anthropology (body and soul), and, Briggman argues, the Holy Spirit gives life to all not by its presence, as Behr claims, but only by dint of its instrumentality in creation. The Holy Spirit *is*, however, an essential component of the *perfect* human being, the human being in Christ. In Chapter 7, Briggman shows why Irenaeus cannot be charged with “Spirit-Christology” or angelomorphic pneumatology. This demonstration finally distinguishes Irenaeus from Briggman’s initial account of Justin as “binitarian.”

One of this book’s strongest features is that it is an excellent book on Irenaeus that does not stop at Irenaeus. Briggman’s skillful analysis of Justin Martyr is sympathetic but not naïve, and his evaluation of Theophilus of Antioch as Irenaeus’s source is shrewd. His placement of Irenaeus within a narrative that includes Justin, Origen, Tertullian, and Novatian is illuminating but not overstated. Briggman explains how Irenaeus’s Two Hands model provided a stronger account of the Spirit’s identity as Creator than Origen’s could. Origen’s anti-monarchian attribution of “Wisdom” to the Son weakened the Spirit’s role in creation and thereby undermined the Spirit’s divine identity. Tertullian and Novatian likewise failed to identify the Spirit with Wisdom. After Irenaeus, an age of “low” pneumatology would persist until the middle-to-late fourth century.

Briggman’s attention to detail and forceful argumentation give teeth to his reading of Irenaeus. His contestations of John Behr’s account of Irenaeus’s pneumatology give those teeth an edge. Though the word “rich” is cliché in reviews of academic books, a better descriptor for Briggman’s monograph is hard to find. Students of the history of the doctrine of the Trinity in late antiquity will discover in this book a resource worth knowing—even if Oxford’s prices keep them from knowing it without access to a research library! 

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