

James M. Arcadi and James T. Turner, Jr., eds. *T&T Clark Handbook of Analytic Theology*. London: T&T Clark, 2021. x + 529 pp. \$175.00 (hbk); \$35.95 (paper).

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In this handbook, Arcadi and Turner bring together contributions by theologians and philosophers that demonstrate the methods, concerns, and benefits associated with analytic theology. Though sometimes caricatured in particular circles, analytic theologians are not a uniform bunch, and the diverse frameworks and approaches are on full display in this volume. While the expression ‘analytic theology’ may be relatively new, Arcadi opens the handbook by noting the long history that clear, careful, and precise philosophical thinking has had within theology. As stated in that introduction, the contributors were asked to provide a general survey of their respective topic as well as offer their own constructive take on the issue (p. 4). In that regard, some of the chapters are uneven. Most contributors do well in offering both a general survey and some constructive suggestions; however, a few chapters do not provide a survey but are rather narrow in their scope. For example, the chapter on atonement only discusses penal substitution (ignoring other ways of understanding Christ’s redemptive work), and the chapter on baptism exclusively focuses on a Reformed account. Still, even the narrowly-focused chapters are useful as a way for readers to step into the conversation on these topics; and more importantly, each chapter provides a depiction of how analytic theology can be done.

The organization of the handbook follows the typical structure one would likely find in any volume on systematic theology. This highlights the fact that analytic theology does not necessarily have its own set of issues. Rather, analytic theology is an “intellectual culture” (Arcadi, p. 2), one that typically prizes clarity, precision, intelligibility, etc. As such, the topics available to analytic theology are wide open. Following the standard order in systematic theology, then, is a sensible approach given the established framework it has in theological discourse.

The handbook is divided into six parts. Part I opens up with methodological issues and other preliminary considerations related to religious epistemology, the role of tradition, and the nature and value of faith. Part II engages with the doctrine of God, discussing issues related to classical theism, divine attributes (such as omnipotence and divine love), and the doctrine of the Trinity. Part III is on Christology, concerning issues related to Christ’s dual natures, whether Christ could sin, his atoning work, and the doctrine of election. Part IV engages with pneumatology, in particular the indwelling of the Spirit, deification, and charismatic gifts. Part V includes an array of papers dealing with the created order, such as theological anthropology, sin (original and individual), racism, disability, gender, animal salvation, resurrection, etc. Finally, Part VI deals with issues related to Christian praxis such as spirituality, the Eucharist, liturgy, and prayer.

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A benefit of this volume is the variegated ways in which analytic theology can be practiced and the array of topics that can be addressed. A nice feature of this handbook is the attention to topics that have been underexplored in recent times by those in analytic circles. Notable chapters (for this reviewer) were Sameer Yadav's discussion on racism and his evaluation of Willie Jennings' supersessionist diagnosis, Hilary Yancey's exploration into illness and disability (along with a fascinating discussion of a Lukan healing narrative), Faith Pawl's examination of animal salvation and animal sin, William Wood's discussion on sin and self-deception, and Joanna Leidenhag's investigation into the charismatic gifts. Since most of the chapters focus more on breadth than depth, readers are invited to continue their investigation, where the chapters serve as a helpful springboard into their respective topics. Additionally, the volume includes a comprehensive bibliography that was compiled by Jesse Gentile, and that bibliography will be extremely helpful for students and scholars who intend to dive deeper into these topics.

(While Arcadi notes the explicitly Christian character of this volume, the title should have probably been called the "Handbook of *Christian* Analytic Theology." While some of the chapters are relevant to theism generally, many chapters are dedicated to Christian theism, and virtually all of the contributors are writing from within that tradition. However, there is plenty of work in analytic theology that can be done within Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, etc. The hope is to see more analytic theology being done that engages the plethora of religious doctrines within different faith traditions.)

Now in some circles, analytic theologians have been accused of being biblically ignorant or employing careless hermeneutics. But James Anderson's chapter on election, Carl Mosser's chapter on deification, Hilary Yancey's chapter on illness and disability, and James Turner's chapter on the resurrection (among others) evince scholars who handle Scriptural texts with care and attentiveness, including serious engagement in biblical exegesis. Others have criticized analytic theologians for being ignorant of the historical development of certain doctrines, thereby changing the subject or failing to analyze the concepts from the contextual and cultural milieu in which they originated. However, Ross Inman's chapter on divine immensity and omnipresence, Tim Pawl's chapter on the incarnation, Adonis Vidu's chapter on the indwelling of the Spirit, and Ryan Mullins' chapter on classical theism (among others) demonstrate a broad and deep interaction with the history of these doctrines. Finally, some censure analytic theology for being impractical or out of touch with Christian life. Yet David Efrid's chapter on Christian spirituality and Michelle Panchuk's chapter on gender and justice (among others) offer serious engagement with issues that matter to the way that Christians live and experience the world. While some analytic theologians may handle Scripture carelessly, neglect historical theology, or ignore practical concerns, this is clearly not true of the discipline in general nor of many of its practitioners.

Of particular interest to this reviewer was the chapter by Oliver Crisp, who discusses the role and relevance of models in theology. Models are employed widely in analytic theology, and Crisp nicely clarifies their typical use and explains some of the different types. He defines models as "simplified conceptual frameworks of descriptions by means of which complex sets of data, systems, and processes may be organized and understood" (p. 9). Other contributors throughout the volume mention models as a "heuristic means that can help to understand a domain of discourse" (Göcke, p. 61) or as "simplifying and organizing the mystery of the divine, for the purpose of coming to a greater understanding" (Wessling, p. 142). These simplifications are understood as being representational and having "a certain fidelity to aspects of the thing they represent" (p. 10). Crisp considers some objections and worries over the use of models in theology, such as the concern that it involves distortions in theological

statements (p. 11). While not resolving these worries, Crisp presents the different frameworks in which models can be employed, such as instrumentalist, anti-realist, arealist, and realist approaches. Crisp states several times that (on a realist approach) these models should be construed as “approximations to the truth of the matter” (p. 13, 14, 17). However, even under a realist framework, it is questionable whether every model should be taken as approximating to the truth of the matter.

To get a better handle on the nature and value of models, analytic theologians would do well to learn from those in science and philosophy of science who not only make use of models but categorize, clarify, and evaluate them. It can be agreed that models are simplifications, but what kind of simplification is occurring? It seems that many models in theology should be construed as idealizations. Some idealizations abstract relevant features from the target object, striving to be representationally accurate. However, a realist framework can accommodate models that deliberately distort the features of the target object. Rather than seeing the charge of distortion as a criticism against analytic theology, this framework sees it as part of the task at hand. Representational accuracy is not the aim in these types of models. Reasons for opting for this approach may arise from endorsing a strong version of apophaticism or embracing a healthy dose of mystery in one’s theology. Moreover, representational accuracy or approximations to the truth of the matter may not be the only epistemic goods worth pursuing in theology and in theological modeling. Exploring other epistemic goods would be worthwhile as analytic theologians consider what they are doing with their models.

The deliberate distortion approach may sound strange, but perhaps this is because of the framework in which analytic theology has typically been done. As David Eford (a much beloved and deeply missed figure in analytic theology) shows in his chapter, conceptual engineering is a common activity in analytic theology. One may engage in conceptual engineering to create a model like the one Crisp mentions, seeking to approximate the truth of the matter. The artifact constructed, then, would be a model which can be depicted in a way much like a scientific figure or diagram in a textbook. The two-dimensional picture is a distortion, but it approximates the truth. Yet instead of conceptual engineering, perhaps analytic theologians should use the metaphor of the conceptual artist—or as I prefer, the conceptual iconographer. Works of art like icons are not striving to be representationally accurate. Yet they still represent. And they can be intellectually illuminating and emotionally inspiring. Figures or diagrams in textbooks do not elicit or evoke worshipful attitudes. Works of art may do so. Perhaps it would do analytic theologians some good to reconsider their stance: less like the scientist, and more like the artist. No doubt, more can and needs to be said, but that is for another occasion.

What I can say with enthusiasm is that this handbook should be regarded as one of the go-to references for anyone interested in diving into the expansive and intriguing discussions happening in (Christian) analytic theology. I expect many of these chapters to serve as launching pads for many graduate students and scholars seeking to learn more about and contribute to these fascinating discussions. Since analytic theology is not cemented in discussing only a particular set of topics, I am eager to see the direction analytic theology will go, especially since there are still many areas in theology that have not yet been given much attention by analytic theologians. Finally, the tired criticisms against analytic theology should hopefully be put to rest, as this collection shows how biblically, historically, theologically, and philosophically sophisticated analytic theologians can be.