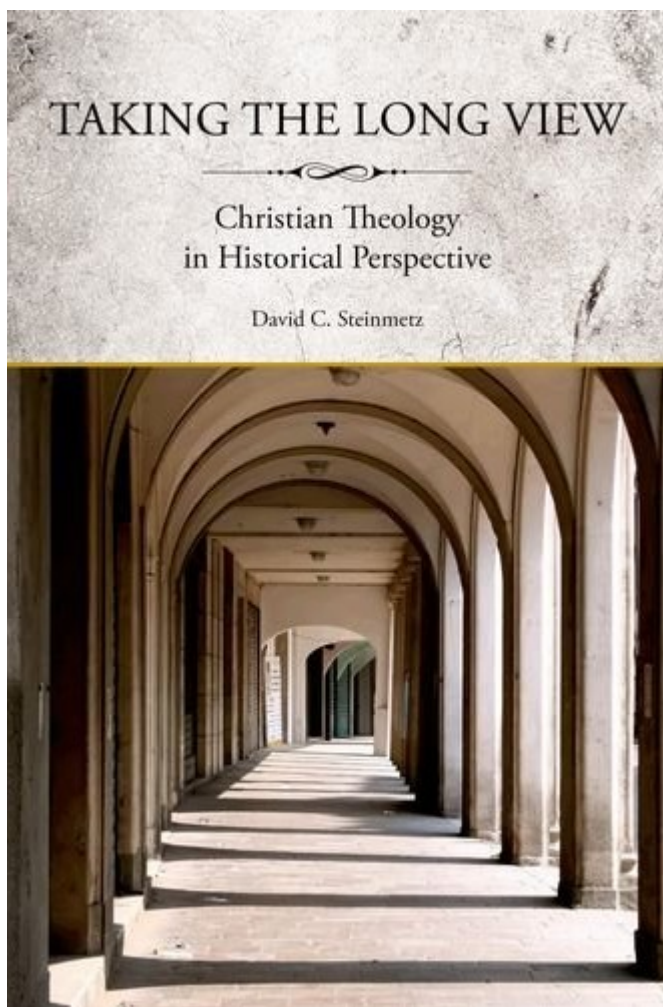


Taking the Long View, by David C. Steinmetz

Books in the [November 1, 2011](#) issue

In Review



Taking the Long View

by David C. Steinmetz
Oxford University Press

Steinmetz is a senior scholar who can distill his learning in graceful, compact essays. The articles collected here appeared in various journals, including the *Century*. Most grow out of the author's research on the Reformation, his primary field, but all have a broader horizon and bring the historian's insight to issues of wide significance, such as the use of inclusive language for God and arguments over intelligent design. In "The Superiority of Pre-Critical Exegesis," Steinmetz makes clear (with pertinent historical examples) that the modern quest to determine the one, original meaning of a scriptural text is naive and inconsistent with the best practices of the church. His summary of the Reformers' views of conversion and repentance leads Steinmetz to affirm, with Luther and Calvin, that "only those who love God can hate sin," which means, paradoxically, that "only a saint can know what sin is" and hence "real repentance is an activity of the spiritually mature."