

is effective for such a person is surely to marginalise faith in a way that is foreign to Calvin.

Calvin's view of the Lord's Supper is, as Gerrish rightly points out, more complex than many realise. This book is a most helpful guide to these complexities and offers a valuable corrective to 'Zwinglianising' tendencies in the interpretation of Calvin. The complexities, not to say contradictions, in Calvin's exposition guarantee that neither this nor any other work will become the last word on it, but this is a book that cannot be ignored by anyone with an interest in the subject. Some books one reads once with gratitude, having learnt from the book all that it has to offer. Other books have a depth that repays rereading. This book definitely falls into the latter category.

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### ***At the Heart of the Universe: What Christians Believe***

**P. Jenson**

Leicester: IVP, 1994, 176pp., £5.99, pb,  
ISBN 0 85110 987 X

### **RÉSUMÉ**

*Cet ouvrage, destiné au grand public, contient une présentation de ce que les chrétiens croient. Il se distingue par l'ordre des matières abordées: l'eschatologie est traitée en premier lieu parce que l'auteur pense que tous les autres thèmes de la théologie systématique doivent être envisagés à la lumière du dessein eschatologique de Dieu. L'ouvrage peut être recommandé comme une introduction claire et vivante à la doctrine, pour des croyants et des non-croyants aussi bien. On y trouve encore des remarques stimulantes pour le prédicateur.*

### **ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*Dieses Buch ist eine allgemein verständliche Auslegung dessen, was Christen glauben. Es ist durch die Ordnung des Materials bezeichnet: die Eschatologie wird am Anfang gestellt, und zwar aus der Überzeugung, dass die anderen Themen der systematischen Theologie im Licht der Endziele Gottes gesehen werden*

*sollten. Dies Buch ist also als klare und lebendige Einführung in die Glaubenslehre für Gläubigen sowie Ungläubigen zu empfehlen. Es enthält auch viel Anregungsmaterial für den Prediger.*

This book—a popular introduction to Christian doctrine—is based on the 1990 Annual Lectures at Moore Theological College, Sydney, given by Moore College's principal, Peter Jenson. What distinguishes the book is not so much its content—it affirms all the main tenets of conservative evangelical orthodoxy—nor its style—there are other introductions to doctrine in a racy, conversational style. Rather it is the order of material and the perspective this gives to the main themes of Christian doctrine.

Eschewing the conventional 'revelation-God-creation-Christ-salvation-church-last things' structure of systematic theology, Jenson has placed eschatology at the beginning and therefore at the heart of his exposition. While the traditional approach may have a certain logic, it is, Jenson argues, static and remote from the Bible, shaped by philosophical rather than biblical considerations. Instead Jenson orders his material in five parts: eschatology, creation, revelation, salvation and renewal. Beginning with eschatology 'captures the biblical sense of purpose in God and the corresponding dynamic of history . . . The doctrine of God is not complete until we see the whole of what he is achieving.' (pp. 10-11)

Having started with the presence and future of the kingdom, or rule, of God, Jenson deals with creation and humankind under the rubric: 'Who rules the world?' What should have been humankind's rule under the authority of God has become rule in rebellion to God, a rule that is self-serving with devastating implications for human culture and institutions. Against this background, Jesus announces the kingdom of God: God has spoken—through his Son and through the covenant-promises which he fulfils and which are recorded in the 'covenant book'. (p. 99)

True to his teleological approach, Jenson's discussion of the work of Christ begins with Christ as Judge. Our need for salvation, which the work of Christ meets, arises from the eschatological judgment of God against humankind and our exclusion from the blessings of the End.

The book ends by looking at the appropriation of salvation through our union with Christ by faith and our unity together in

Christ. Inevitably something else will suffer from being placed last if it is not to be eschatology: in Jenson's case it is ecclesiology.

This is not a textbook—it reads too well for that!—although there is an index relating the main text to the theological words it avoids. Each chapter ends with discussion questions.

Jenson has set out the structure and dynamic of Christian belief in a clear and lively way for believers wishing to grasp 'the whole truth in outline' and for unbelievers wishing 'to explore the essentials of Christian truth' (the book has an apologetic feel at times). There is much here, too, to stimulate the preacher seeking effectively to communicate the truth. 'Doctrine', Jenson reminds us, 'is far too vital and interesting to be locked up in textbooks.' (p. 9). Jenson's work is a good illustration of this.

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***The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Modern Christian Thought***

**Edited by Alister E. McGrath**

Oxford: Blackwell, 1993, xiii + 701pp., £60.00, ISBN 0 631 168 966

**RÉSUMÉ**

*Cet ouvrage tente de présenter la pensée chrétienne depuis 1700 jusqu'à nos jours en relation avec diverses disciplines—entre autres la philosophie, la sociologie et les sciences, en tenant compte de la diversité de ses expressions dénominationnelles, régionales et culturelles. Plusieurs articles sont admirables, d'autres sont de valeur inégale, et l'équilibre entre les articles laisse à désirer. Il y a des lacunes graves : l'Afrique, le Congrégationalisme et le Néo-Scholasticisme. Le volume, bon dans certaines de ses parties, n'atteint pas pleinement son objectif.*

**ZUSAMMENFASSUNG**

*In diesem Buch wird versucht, einen Überblick über das christliche Denken vom Jahre 1700 bis heute in Zusammenhang mit verschiedenen Wissenschaftsbereichen zu geben. Es handelt*

*sich u.A. mit Philosophie, Soziologie und Naturwissenschaft im Blick auf verschiedene konfessionellen, regionalen und kulturellen Ausdrücke des Christseins. Sind viele Artikel sehr wertvoll, gibt es auch manche, die nicht ausgeglichen sind; auch problematisch ist das unbalancierte Verhältnis zwischen den verschiedenen Artikeln. Es gibt bedeutende Lücken, z.B. Afrika, Kongregationalismus, und Neuscholastizismus. Das Buch ist zum Teil gut, erreicht aber nicht völlig sein Ziel.*

The objective of the contributors to this handsome volume is admirable: to survey Christian thought from 1700 to the present day in relation to a variety of disciplines—among them philosophy, sociology, and the sciences, with reference to varied denominational, regional and cultural expressions. Whereas there is an abundance of reference books specific to philosophy, theology, the Bible, ethics, sociology and world religions, there is none to compare with this in terms of breadth of coverage within the post-Enlightenment period. Major articles on themes are supplemented by others on persons, and a glossary of the theological terms and a most useful index completes the work.

Let it be said at once that many of the articles are authoritative and comprehensive, among them those on Atheism, Christian Socialists, Epistemology, Ethics, Spirituality and War and Peace. It is particularly refreshing to see a properly discriminating account of Deism.

Sadly, at a number of points and in a variety of ways the book falls short of its goal. Firstly, there is the question of balance *within* articles. For example, that on Ecumenism restricts the term to unity among Christians, and makes no reference to the impetus towards the formation of the World Council of Churches which was provided by some of the Christian World Communions which predated it. That on Philosophy of Religion helpfully indicates some of the problems treated by philosophers of religion today, but is weaker on the development of the discipline since 1700. The authors of the articles on Lutheranism and Presbyterianism are strongly Euro-U.S.-centric. Neither mentions the relevant international organs (Lutheran World Federation; World Alliance of Reformed Churches); the former pays no heed to Indonesia or Africa, the latter ignores *inter alia* Francophone and Anglophone Africa, and even South Korea, where the growth of Presbyterianism has been as phenomenal as its fragmentation has been