

in ways that correspond to new historical situations and conditions. Interestingly, Hvidt notes that while prophetic revelations in the Catholic tradition have not been received directly as dogmatic traditions, they have served as catalysts for and confirmations of dogmatic truths and have also been instrumental in leading to new pious traditions. Again, while Protestants may not agree with these ideas, the author has provided a compelling case for how these prophetic revelations to individuals have played an important though seemingly indirect role in the church.

The final chapters include discussions within the realm of the sociology of religion and its relationship to prophecy. Prophecy, according to Hvidt, represents the liminal within the structure of the church. Though at times it is content to be separate from the structure to which it belongs, the goal is the restructuring and strengthening of the community as a whole. In this paradigm, the prophetic revelations are designed to highlight the original revelation of the Word and Christ, and to lead the church into a deeper understanding of the mystery of its life as the community of the body of Christ.

Hvidt concludes by emphasizing the fact that prophecy is not to be confused with predictions of the future but always points to the present. Thus, those who receive prophetic revelations are pointing to the present needs and concerns of the church and do so in relation to the testimony of previous revelation in the Scriptures and in Christ. Whether this study is compelling to those who hold a cessationist view or not remains to be seen. However, the importance of this contribution to scholarship, and to the church itself, makes this a worthwhile read for both to scholar and layperson alike. An intriguing look at the gift of prophecy in the church.

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***The Divine Spiration of Scripture: Challenging
Evangelical Perspectives***

A.T.B. McGowan

Nottingham: Apollos, 2007, 229 pp., £14.99, pb;
ISBN 978-1-84474-220-2

SUMMARY

By challenging evangelical perspectives on Scripture, Andrew McGowan has stirred up criticism from those who equate the Reformed view of Scripture with the importance put on the concept of 'inerrancy' by the Hodge-Warfield school. McGowan's view is that the view of Scripture as 'infallible', the more European view of James Orr and the Dutch Calvinists, is equally orthodox and that it is a better way of defending the full authority of Scripture. The book argues that we should understand the 'spiration' of Scripture not as apologetic prolegomena, but in the context of the doctrine of God, and particularly, of the Holy Spirit.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Indem er evangelikale Perspektiven zur Schrift herausfordert, hat Andrew McGowan Kritik von denjenigen heraufbeschworen, die die reformierte Ansicht über die Schrift mit der Wichtigkeit gleichsetzen, die das Konzept der „Irrtumslosigkeit“ für die Hodge-Warfield-Schule hat. Doch McGowans Sicht lautet, dass die Sicht der Schrift als „unfehlbar“, also die eher europäische Sicht von James Orr und den holländischen Calvinisten, ebenso orthodox und ein vorzuziehender Weg ist, die volle Autorität der Schrift zu verteidigen. Das Buch argumentiert, dass wir die „Spiration“ der Schrift nicht als apologetische Prolegomena verstehen sollten, sondern im Zusammenhang der Lehre von Gott und insbesondere vom Heiligen Geist.

RÉSUMÉ

McGowan critique certaines perspectives évangéliques sur l'Écriture et s'est attiré des critiques en retour de la part de ceux qui identifient la doctrine réformée de l'Écriture avec la notion d'inerrance telle que l'ont défendue l'école de Hodge et de Warfield. McGowan considère que la position européenne de James Orr et des calvinistes hollandais, qui affirment simplement l'infaillibilité de l'Écriture, est tout autant orthodoxe et constitue une meilleure façon de défendre l'entière autorité de l'Écriture. Il argue que l'on ne doit pas considérer la « spiration » de l'Écriture comme une prémisse apologetique, mais qu'il faut la replacer dans le contexte de la doctrine de Dieu et du Saint-Esprit.

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The sub-title of Andrew McGowan's book seems to foresee that its publication might be somewhat controversial, and judging by the reviews which have already appeared, this expectation has not been disappointed! But to assess this controversy, we first need to see the scope of the contents of the book.

After the introductory chapter, the author openly affirms in chapter 2 that his intention is a 'reconstructing' of the doctrine of Scripture, and any reconstruction is bound to be controversial. But the matter is put in broad historical perspective and it is evident that the intention is to draw on resources within the Reformed tradition. It is made clear that historically, Scripture has sometimes been seen as the logical starting point in some of the Reformed confessions, but not in others, and the view is taken that while the former makes sense logically, the latter is more appropriate theologically. Theology begins with God, and therefore Scripture should be seen within that context, specifically within the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. Where one of the historic confessions begins with Scripture, this seems to have been the result of the epistemological issues raised during the period of modernity and formulated most sharply by the Enlightenment. This approach, shaping one's theology in order to speak to epistemological questions, is related to the 'evidentialism' of one school of apologetics. After an overview of the Enlightenment and Liberal Theology in the third

chapter together with the responses to Liberalism from Barth and Torrance, and from conservative evangelicalism, the fourth chapter looks at the development of the doctrine of 'inerrancy' in the United States and the connected development of Fundamentalism. This entire development was a reaction to the pressure from modern thought. Post-war American Evangelicalism moved on from Fundamentalism, but there were serious divisions over the issue of 'inerrancy'.

In the fifth chapter, Professor McGowan begins the positive task of outlining the evangelical alternative. While many American Reformed Evangelicals (with the notable exception of Cornelius Van Til) generally take the Warfield evidentialist approach, including the defence of the 'inerrancy' of Scripture, the alternative is the more European tradition. The leading figures here are the Scottish theologian, James Orr, and the Dutch school of Kuyper, Bavinck and Berkouwer. The key word here is not 'inerrant' but 'infallible'. Americans might quickly jump to the conclusion that this is the position of Rogers and McKim, but that is a mistake. The Europeans are not concerned to argue for 'limited inerrancy': they simply reject the category of 'inerrancy' as useless for the task. Its deficiency (one might add) is that it focuses attention on *degree* of detailed accuracy, and therefore cannot bear the weight of the absolutist all-or-nothing thinking which it is supposed to support. The assertion that Scripture is 'infallible' focuses attention instead on what Scripture *teaches*, and asserts that its authority therefore is paramount over tradition (particularly confessions) and human reason. That is the great fault-line which really matters in contemporary theology, and these European Reformed theologians put the dividing line exactly where it should be.

It must be granted that reviewers only have limited space and so cannot develop the wide perspective possible in a book. Nonetheless, some of the reviews of this book have shown a sad myopia. Some rehearse the tired old arguments for 'inerrancy', evidencing the fondness for Aristotelian logic (God is perfect: God is the author of scripture: therefore...) that characterizes the narrow scholastic mind. Along with that goes the fortress mentality which sees any alternative to that whole approach as a dangerous betrayal of orthodoxy. The lack of perspective is breath-taking. It is this kind of thinking which characterizes the Reformed tradition at its most fissiparous and this reviewer is reminded of John Frame's essay on 'Machen's Warrior Children' [in Sung Wook Chung (ed.), *Alister E. McGrath and Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003)]. Historically, it is evident that, although McGowan does not subscribe to the epistemology of Old Princeton, he stands firmly within Reformed orthodoxy. He has done all Evangelicals a service by challenging the idea that that school alone represents Reformed orthodoxy, and his proposals on Scripture deserve wide consideration.

One friendly reviewer who is a parish minister sees the issue as irrelevant in the pulpit. But there he is quite

wrong. This may not be an issue to be debated in detail in the pulpit, but, as the final chapter of the book makes clear, the authority of Scripture has immense and serious implications for preaching. Andrew McGowan has done us a service by reminding us that, without being bound to one particular kind of scholastic epistemology, we can fully recognize its authority.

Thomas A. Noble, Manchester

The Blackwell Companion to the Bible and Culture

John F. A. Sawyer

Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, xii + 533 pp., \$ 150, cloth and dust jacket; ISBN 1-4051-0136-9

SUMMARY

This collection of essays examines the many ways in which the Bible has been understood and has shaped various aspects of culture. Thirty contributions by an international team of authors are devoted to the mutual interdependence of Bible and culture in history, in Judaism and Islam as well as in different parts of the world, in different expressions of culture as well as in a number of current concerns. The volume offers inspiring insights and raises hermeneutical issues that evangelical scholars need to address.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Artikelsammlung untersucht die vielen Wege, auf denen die Bibel verstanden wurde und auf denen sie verschiedene kulturelle Aspekte geformt hat. Dreißig Beiträge eines internationalen Autorenteams widmen sich der gegenseitigen Abhängigkeit von Bibel und Kultur in der Geschichte, im Judentum und Islam wie auch in unterschiedlichen Teilen der Welt, in unterschiedlichen kulturellen Ausdrucksformen wie auch in einer Anzahl gegenwärtiger Anliegen. Der Band bietet inspirierende Einsichten und wirft hermeneutische Fragen auf, die evangelikale Gelehrte ansprechen müssen.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage collectif traite des diverses manières dont la Bible a été interprétée et de l'influence qu'elle a exercée sur divers aspects de la culture. Trente auteurs de divers horizons internationaux y ont contribué pour traiter de l'interdépendance de la Bible et de la culture pour ce qui concerne l'histoire, le judaïsme, l'islam, différentes expressions culturelles dans le monde entier et un certain nombre de préoccupations contemporaines. L'ouvrage offre des perspectives stimulantes et soulève des questions herméneutiques que les spécialistes évangéliques ne doivent pas éluder.

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The present volume addresses the fascinating relationship between the Bible and culture. "The aim is to pro-