

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.

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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-

vide a series of assessments of the ways in which the various 'practices' of cultures – aesthetic, political, religious – inform and are informed by scripture (2).” The thirty essays, mainly by British authors, seek to explore the impact of the Bible or particular biblical texts on various periods of history (e.g. the Reformation), politics in general, ecology and other topics or on specific communities in different parts of the world. The articles close with bibliographies.

Part one is concerned with ‘Revealing the past’, considering the Bible’s journey through time from the Ancient World to the modern world. P.R. Davies surveys ‘The Ancient World’, K. Cooper ‘The Patristic Period’, M. Dove ‘The Middle Ages’ (emphasis on Wycliffe and the translation of the Bible into English); I.N. Rashkow ‘The Renaissance’ (translation into the vernacular), P. Matheson ‘The Reformation’, E. Cameron ‘The Counter-Reformation’ and J.W. Rogerson ‘The Modern World’ (post-enlightenment history of biblical scholarship).

Part two describes how Bible and culture relate to each other in different religions and parts of the world (Christianity and Europe are sufficiently covered in part one, so they do not need entries of their own): E. Kessler, ‘Judaism’ (including the Bible in Jewish art); S.N. Lambden, ‘Islam’ (including the resemblances between Bible and the Quran, accusations of scriptural falsification); C.-S. Song, Asian forms of Christianity; J.A. Draper, ‘Africa’; S.M. Langston, ‘North America’; E.S. Gerstenberger, ‘Latin America’ and R. Boer and I. Abraham, ‘Australasia’.

Part three, ‘the Bible and the senses’, focuses on aesthetic and performative renderings of the Bible: J. Carruthers, ‘Literature’ (sketching a history of re-writing, supplementation and defamiliarization); A. Bach, ‘Film’; J.W. Rogerson, ‘Music’; H.J. Hornik and M.C. Parsons, ‘Art’; A. Ballantyne, ‘Architecture’; M. Twycross, ‘The Theatre’ (medieval dramatizations, liturgical drama); B.O. Long, ‘The Circus’ (a dramatization of *The Fall of Nineveh* performed in Philadelphia in 1892) and G. Loughlin, ‘The Body’.

Part four describes ‘Reading in practice’. There is G. West on ‘Contextuality’; T. Gorrington on ‘Politics’; A. Primavesi on ‘Ecology’; I.N. Rashkow on psycho-analytical approaches; D.F. Sawyer on ‘Gender’ (addressing feminist hermeneutics); J. Carruthers on ‘Nationalism’; S.A. Bong on ‘Post-colonialism’ (Asia is used as example); and A. Tate on ‘Postmodernism’. The volume closes with indexes.

This volume provides a refreshing survey of the complex relationship between Bible and culture(s). It raises several hermeneutical issues which are aptly summarised by Sawyer’s introduction and to which scholars from different backgrounds and other readers of the Bible need to find appropriate responses. In many ways the book is post-modern and also politically correct in its approach. Diversity is appreciated and celebrated. Though the question of validity in interpretation is not its focus

(and rightly so!), the volume draws attention to this neglected question as the interaction between Bible and culture has not always been a happy one. Far too many (thoughts and) acts have been justified and called for by deliberate or ignorant false readings of biblical texts. What are the instruments to deal with them? It would be worthwhile to also describe how the Bible itself, responsibly interpreted, has in many cases provided the necessary correctives – though it at times took far too long to bring about change. In addition to considering the consequences of false readings, one also needs to respect the integrity of the biblical authors who first and foremost deserve to be understood on their own terms.

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The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology

John Webster, Kathryn Tanner,
Iain Torrance (eds.)

Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, xii + 708pp,
£ 80.75, cloth; ISBN 978-0-19-924576-5

SUMMARY

This book aims to provide an overall account of the field of systematic theology as it is understood by contemporary practitioners, to ‘take stock of where the discipline lies’. The book unfolds in four parts encompassing a total of thirty-seven entries. Part I considers doctrinal *loci*; Part II explores the ‘Sources’ of theology; Part III focuses on a selection of interactions that systematic theology takes up in giving a conceptual reconstruction of Christian teaching; and in Part IV, entries examine the ‘Prospects’ of systematic theology. It is difficult to imagine another volume that rivals the quality, scope and diversity of the contributions found here. University professors will find the essays here useful as brief introductions to the doctrinal *loci* of Christian theology, the settings in which it is conducted and sources from which it has traditionally made use.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die Herausgeber des *Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology* beschreiben seinen beabsichtigten Zweck damit, dass es eine übergreifende Darstellung des Gebietes der systematischen Theologie bietet, wie diese von ihren gegenwärtigen Fachleuten verstanden wird, mit ihren Worten: „eine Bestandsaufnahme zu bieten, wo die Disziplin steht“. Um dieses Ziel zu erreichen, entfaltet sich das Buch nach einem einleitenden Artikel von John Webster in vier Teile, die insgesamt 37 Einträge umfassen. Teil I betrachtet lehrmäßige *loci*; im zweiten Teil untersuchen die Artikel die „Quellen“ der Theologie; der dritte Teil, „Gespräche“, konzentriert sich auf eine Auswahl von Interaktionen, die die systematische Theologie aufgreift, um eine konzeptionelle Rekonstruktion der christlichen Lehre zu bieten; und im vierten Teil untersuchen die Einträge die „Aussichten“ der systematischen Theologie. Man kann sich schwer-