

of who (and what) is active in the formulation of RE.

One unhelpful (and unnecessary) by-product of this threefold approach is the plethora of technical terms that the authors insisted on developing across most of the chapters. While technical language is not unhelpful per se, in this case (and only at certain points) these terms added little to the clarity to the overall argument. There are concluding sections in the book that reference all of the main key concepts: not only do we have community, agent and symbol, but we are also asked to juggle objectification/subjectification, internalisation/externalisation, consecration/insignation, ultra-externalisation/ultra-internalisation, ultra-objectification/ultra-subjectification, ultra-consecration/ultra-insignation and fetish/kitsch. While some of these seventeen technical concepts are already established within the canon of sociological terminology, others are not – it is more than possible that this heavy use of discipline specific language will alienate many readers, especially those coming from a humanities background (theologians interested in sociological perspectives on religion, for example) with their own very different lexicon.

Anthropologists might wish to see more ethnographic evidence. Both authors made repeated reference to their own participant observation among churches in England and while the evidence, when presented, was very insightful, it would have been helpful to have the fieldwork context filled in more fully. Also, with this fieldwork being the main source of *primary* data, the book did feel as if it was distinctly slanted towards the Christian perspective. While this is unlikely to be a problem to readers coming from a theological background, it is unlikely to sit well with those researching 'non-Christian' religions. The (limited) direct engagement with the theological tradition was interesting when it occurred, in particular with reference to the authors' explication of emotional regimes through some interesting engagement with the Puritan tradition. Equally, the methodological appendix was interesting insofar as it gave some welcome groundness to an otherwise fairly theoretical text.

The main strength of this book is also its main weakness: its eclecticism. At times it felt rich and varied; at others it felt confused and confusing. Readers may well be left wondering if more original insight could have been gained had the authors spent less time developing a multi-disciplinary overview and instead devoted themselves more fully to their own *sociological* perspective. That being said, a book that claims to be nothing more than a first step toward a more general appreciation of the importance of the scientific study of RE may well have succeeded in achieving exactly what it set out to do, that is, to provide a broad overview of the theoretical and methodological possibilities held within this badly neglected but rapidly developing field.

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*The Cambridge Companion to Christian  
Philosophical Theology*

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SUMMARY

The aim of *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology* is to provide an up-to-date and accessible introduction to the entire field of Christian Philosophical Theology. As a collection of essays it seeks to offer critical and philosophical reflection on the Christian tradition. The work is divided into two parts: God and God in relation to creation. In the first part the divine nature and attributes are considered in overview. Approaches to these vary quite widely from full-blooded classical theism to a more revisionist understanding, particularly with regards to God's eternity and foreknowledge. The second part is similarly mixed, with some essays offering strong defences of major Christian doctrines and others effectively watering these down.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Werk *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology* [Der Cambridge Begleiter zur Christlichen Philosophischen Theologie] will eine moderne und zugängliche Einführung in das gesamte Gebiet der christlichen philosophischen Theologie geben. Die Aufsatzsammlung beabsichtigt, eine kritische und philosophische Reflexion über die christliche Tradition zu bieten. Das Buch ist zweigeteilt: Gott und Gott in Beziehung zur Schöpfung. Der erste Teil betrachtet die göttliche Natur und ihre Attribute im Überblick. Die Ansätze variieren dabei erheblich von einem vollblütigen klassischen Theismus bis hin zu einem eher revisionistischen Verständnis, insbesondere was Gottes Ewigkeit und Vorherwissen angeht. Der zweite Teil ist ähnlich bunt gemischt: einige Ausätzen, die zentrale christliche Lehren stark verteidigen, und andere, welche dieselben wirkungsvoll verwässern.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage a été conçu pour servir d'introduction accessible à la théologie philosophique chrétienne en tenant compte de ses récents développements. Cette collection d'essais vise à apporter une réflexion philosophique et critique sur la tradition chrétienne. L'ouvrage comporte deux parties : la première traite de Dieu, la seconde de Dieu en relation avec la création. La première traite dans les grandes lignes de la nature divine et des attributs de Dieu. Les points de vue y varient grandement, entre un pur théisme classique et une position plus révisionniste, notamment pour ce qui concerne l'éternité et la prescience de Dieu. La seconde partie est pareillement mélangée, certains essais élaborant une solide défense des principales doctrines chrétiennes tandis que d'autres les émousent sensiblement.

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The aim of *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Philosophical Theology* is to provide an up-to-date and accessible introduction to the entire field of Christian Philosophical Theology. Here it should be immediately noted that the editors' broad understanding of Christian Philosophical Theology, as involving philosophical reflection on the Christian tradition rather than as a distinctively Christian approach to Philosophical Theology, is crucial for determining the scope of their undertaking. As a consequence the work itself is diverse, both in its very nature as a collected volume of essays on a whole range of topics and moreover in representing a wide spectrum of Christian and scholarly opinion. It therefore resists easy categorisation, with some authors defending full-blooded classical theism and others seeking a more revisionist understanding.

The work itself is divided into two parts: God and God in relation to creation. The collection begins with an essay by Ronald Feenstra on the Trinity. The choice to start here was, I believe on reflection, a good one. In such a work it is important to establish right from the outset the particular distinctives of a *Christian* Philosophical Theology. Unfortunately, while the essay establishes the biblical grounding of the doctrine and offers an extremely brief survey of the tradition, lack of space precludes any substantial development of the ideas presented here. Although the two main paradigms of Social and Latin Trinitarianism are certainly presented, one is left uncertain of their ultimate significance. Furthermore if the editors' intention to open their collection with an article on the Trinity was to signal the doctrine's fundamental importance, this is on the whole not reflected by the essays in the rest of the volume.

In comparison the following articles by Brian Leftow on necessity and Brian Davies on simplicity are much more philosophically satisfying. Both offer cogent defences of these concepts, stressing the need to retain them in any meaningful philosophical account of God, Leftow via perfect-being theology and a possible worlds' defence of necessity and Davies through a lucid explanation of Aquinas' doctrine of simplicity. In addition Davies' article is important for establishing divine simplicity as a bedrock for speaking of divine transcendence. He therefore warns us against the temptation of assimilating God to human understanding. Continuing this theme, in his essay on omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence William Wainwright points out the traditional importance of divine simplicity in establishing these claims. However his own defence of them at times arguably risks violating some of the established canons of classical theism. Even more so is this true of William Hasker whose fascinating exposition of eternity and providence ends up veering towards a temporal, everlasting God as the only satisfactory solution to the antinomy of divine timelessness and human free will. Surely, however, whatever the issues involved, this is

an unacceptable domesticating of God. Finally in this section we must mention John Hare's essay on divine goodness which offers a marvellously compressed survey of this topic from classical philosophy, through Aquinas and Scotus, right up to the present day.

It is unfortunately not possible here to survey all of the essays of the second part but as extremely fruitful reflections those of Katherin Rogers on the Incarnation, Stephen Davis on Resurrection, Paul Moser on sin and salvation and Chad Meister on the problem of evil stand out. In the first of these Katherin Rogers offers a spirited defence of Chalcedonian Christology drawing extensively on Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* as well as her own imaginative reworking of a standard incarnational analogy. Stephen Davis, while perhaps slightly weak on the philosophical implications of Christ's own Resurrection, nevertheless offers a satisfying account of how God's will is the 'glue which binds the world together', thus enabling the solution of knotty identity problems often raised in this area. In one of the best offerings of this collection Paul Moser gives an excellent scripturally anchored account of soteriology, in a refreshing manner seeking to orient this towards a Trinitarian perspective of the Christian life. Finally Chad Meister draws attention to the fact that conventional discussions of the problem of evil have largely ignored Christ and have therefore missed the opportunity of reconfiguring this around his work of redemption. By contrast from an evangelical perspective the articles by Gordon Graham on atonement, Harriet Harris on prayer and Jerry Walls on heaven and hell are largely disappointing, all representing a watering down of traditional doctrines, whether by a capitulation to process theology in Harris' case, a denial of the finality of hell for Walls or a conflation of penal substitution and inherent righteousness in Graham's essay. However as we have already made clear such doctrinal diversity is characteristic of the volume as a whole and while at times frustrating at least gives an accurate snapshot of the field of Philosophical Theology today.

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