

BOOK REVIEW

Michael Allen, ed., *The New Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023), pp. xiii + 370. ISBN 9781108885959 doi:[10.1017/S1740355324000044](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1740355324000044)

This comprehensively updated version of the original *Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (edited by Colin Gunton and published in 1997) comes more than twenty-five years since the first volume. Fittingly, its entirely new chapters address essential developments in Christian theology that have occurred during the past quarter century, and the methods contributors employ to examine their topics have been updated in accord with the most recent scholarly findings. Michael Allen has assembled for the companion a first-rate set of authors, many of whom are widely known for their expertise in the topics on which they have written, and each of whom offers superb presentation and analysis of that person's subject. A particularly valuable feature of the companion relates to the wide range of ecclesial positions represented, as Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant scholars all contribute to the volume. That ecumenical character, in addition to being visible through the identity of individual authors, can also be observed in the chapters themselves, which are composed in a broad and inviting manner that will reach readers from a variety of confessional stances.

In his introduction, Allen entices with the remark that 'significant things are afoot in the world of Christian divinity' (xi), and he and other contributors deliver on that claim in myriad ways throughout the volume. To say that the collection is current, however, should not obscure the thoroughgoing engagement with tradition that one finds throughout its pages, as the reader emerges with not only knowledge of discrete topics and trends but also the history of Christian reflection throughout the centuries. Although the volume is *systematic* in its structure, then, upon examination of its topics one sees that it is just as much a *historical* examination. Furthermore, in many cases, it is a fresh look at tradition that makes for a distinctive feature of the companion.

The volume consists of two sections, the first of which, 'Doctrines', examines ten systematic theological *loci*, and the second of which, 'Movements', presents eleven developments or conversations within contemporary Christian theology. The first section begins with 'The Triune God' by Michael Allen, followed by 'Creation and Providence' by Simon Oliver, 'Humanity' by John Behr, 'Israel' by Matthew Levering, 'Christ' by Katherine Sonderegger, 'Atonement and Sin' by Adam Johnson, 'Holy Spirit' by Daniel Castelo, 'Holy Scripture' by Kevin J. Vanhoozer, 'Church and Sacraments' by Tom Greggs and 'Eschatology' by Ian A. McFarland. In this mode of organisation, this

section remains close to that of the previous companion, adding to the original eight chapters the two on Israel and holy scripture. However, even chapters with titles similar to their predecessors offer significant updates to the systematic *locus* examined. Among the more notable features of this section concerns the contributors' abundantly evident expertise in biblical, historical, philosophical and theological examinations of their topics, as they deftly move from one mode of explanation to another and thereby shed light on their subject matter from a number of different angles.

In the second section, one sees a decided departure from the structure of the original companion, as the previous iteration did not treat 'movements'. The reorganisation results in a volume that will be a welcome resource for those seeking understanding of the most pressing challenges and opportunities for contemporary theology. The section begins with 'Feminist Theology' by Shelli M. Poe, followed by 'Theological Interpretation of Scripture' by Andrea D. Saner, 'Radical Orthodoxy' by Catherine Pickstock, 'Public Theology' by Kristen Deede Johnson, 'Disability Theology' by John Swinton, 'Black Theology' by Willie James Jennings, 'Pentecostal Theology' by Harvey Kwiyani, 'Analytic Theology' by Oliver D. Crisp, 'Apocalyptic Theology' by Wesley Hill, 'Reformed Catholicity' by J. Todd Billings and 'Ressourcement Thomism' by Thomas Joseph White, OP. Chapters in this section offer a brief history of the movement examined, a description of the central convictions of the movement and a discussion of the movement's reception among scholars, often with a robust treatment of critical reactions to it. Several chapters provide a sense of what the future likely has in store for the movement treated. It should be noted that one detects in this section perspectives that could be characterised as ranging from more 'progressive' to more 'traditional'; although such terminology has its limitations, it does gesture toward an important dimension of the diversity that one encounters in the collection. A great deal of what animates contemporary Christian theology is represented here.

Looking at the volume as a whole, one clearly sees that contributors are unfailingly abreast of the most significant recent scholarship that concerns their various topics, and they act as expert guides through secondary literatures that are often highly complex and potentially disorienting. The result is that every single chapter is not only of exceptionally high quality but also drafted with a light touch and confidence that makes each contribution readable and accessible to the newcomer to the field. Readers can therefore turn to the volume with assurance that they will emerge from each chapter with a strong sense of the topic examined. The ambitious scope of the volume (twenty-one chapters in 370 pages) leads to contributions that are slightly shorter than one often finds in comparable collections. However, such relative brevity will no doubt encourage some readers to embark on explorations that can be concluded with efficiency. An extensive index is yet another welcome feature that will facilitate exploration of various subjects across the volume as a whole.

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