

***The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology.* Eds. J. Webster, K. Tanner, and I. Torrance. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. (xi + 708 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-19-924576-5]**

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***The Oxford Handbook of Eschatology.* Ed. J.L. Walls. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008. (xii + 724 pp.) [ISBN: 978-0-19-517049-8]**

Large handbooks that offer original essays reflecting current research in a given field are often disappointing. Too often they end up as simplistic attempts to summarise existing ideas or offer downsized treatments of authors larger and more important works elsewhere. One often gets the impression these essays are the castoffs from some larger (and better) research programme cobbled together for the gain of the publisher. These two Oxford handbooks definitely do not belong in this category.

Both the volumes under review offer new, constructive essays from many of the leading scholars in their respective fields. In addition, the various editors are all in their publishing and research prime and as such have a clear grasp of their fields and have invited and edited essays which will establish themselves as some of the more useful in their field. For those looking for an up-to-date survey of eschatology or systematic theology, these two volumes are indispensable.

The *OHST* offers thirty-seven essays spread over four sections: doctrines, sources, conversations, and prospects. Contributors are drawn from a wide range of Christian traditions including: Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Pentecostal, and Baptist. While I could not readily identify anyone from Eastern Orthodoxy, there are many contributors who specialise in patristic and eastern theologies. Contributors are also spread across North America and Great Britain primarily. In addition, John Webster offers a weighty introduction (18 pages) in which he presents the history, task, form and organization of systematic theology as it is currently understood and practiced in the western world. The introduction itself makes the volume worth having. What is also helpful about *OHST* that each essay concludes with a reference list and then a brief suggestion for further reading, thus increasing its usefulness.

The *OHE* offers thirty-eight essays spread over three parts: Part One: historical eschatology; further sub-divided into biblical and patristic eschatology, and eschatology in world religions, Part Two: eschatology in distinct Christian traditions and theological movements, and Part Three: issues in eschatology; further sub-divided into theological issues, and

philosophical and cultural issues. Contributors are drawn from a diverse range of contexts and backgrounds including Protestant, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, North America, Europe, and Asia. Well established scholars abound including Wolfhart Pannenberg, Gerhard Sauter, Jerry Walls, Andrew Louth, Clark Pinnock, Richard Bauckham, David Bentley Hart, Rosemary Radford Ruether, and Robert Jewett, to name a few. In addition, the topics covered in this volume cover the field of biblical studies, constructive theology, philosophy, world religions, and cultural studies. This truly has become the definitive, authoritative handbook on eschatology currently available.

One minor criticism of this series of Oxford handbooks is that there is no consistent format across volumes. In the *OHST* each essay is followed by a reference list and then suggestions for further reading. In the main text an author-date referencing system has been used. However, in *OHE* an endnote system is adopted followed by a bibliography. This minor issue aside these volumes represent the best in current scholarship on their respective topics gathered together in a single volume for easy access and comprehensive coverage. The editors of each volume are to be congratulated for the outstanding achievement of producing theological handbooks which are of the highest quality. Every theological library must have these volumes on their shelves, as do specialists in each of these fields.

Myk Habets

Daniel J. Treier. *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture*. Nottingham: Apollos, 2008. (221 pp.) [ISBN 978-1-84474-311-7]

Readers of Scripture have long known that hermeneutics alone cannot be the path to true understanding of texts - divine or human. Theological Interpretation of Scripture (TIS) is the latest attempt to articulate and form communities of readers which can utilise the latest in critical biblical scholarship and at the same time, read Scripture as a holy text for disciples of Christ, filled with the Spirit. In order to do this advocates of TIS draw upon reading strategies of the past, such as the *regula fidei* and present hermeneutics, such as speech-act theory or realist approaches to the biblical narrative which lend themselves to dramatic readings of the *historia salutis*. Thus TIS is both new and old.