

Phan, Peter C., Ed., ***The Cambridge Companion to the Trinity***

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Cambridge companions are often excellent introductions for scholars wanting to gain a grasp of the breadth of a field. This work continues that tradition, containing 23 mostly well-written chapters by mostly well-known scholars. The handbook covers a broad range of topics and is well organised, building from early foundation chapters into more niche issues. Every chapter has a useful list of further reading, and most chapters are well end-noted, citing many relevant texts.

Peter Phan's opening chapter provides a good brief introduction to the historical developments in the doctrine of the Trinity and rightly emphasises how intercultural communication difficulties played a significant role in various controversies. He continues this introductory material in the second chapter on systematics, noting the shifting perspectives on the immanent and economic Trinity.

Wainwright's exploration of cultural influences on the New Testament views of God includes some good points on the traditions which inform the text, but also evidences too many trendy eisegetical fads which have little underlying substance, for example, her use of Sheffield's dualist notion of Matthew's discrediting of the earthly father. The gospel writer would no doubt be bemused by such interpolation of intent and ignorance of the Jewish cultural framework.

McGuckin's contribution on the Greek fathers is delightful for emphasising the lived experience of the church and the early traditions surrounding the Trinity. His explanations of the views of the Holy Spirit, development of Logos Christology, Ignatius, Clement, Justin Martyr and Origen *etc.* are clear and sound and situate the

following chapters on this essential historical foundation period. The following chapter by Barnes thus concisely demonstrates the important distinctives of early Latin Trinitarian theology from Tertullian to Augustine, particularly the issues of power and Spirit Christology.

Min's piece on the Trinity in Aquinas neatly explains the important developments in Western Trinitarian thinking under the influence of Aristotle. It suffers, however, from summarising the illogical jumps of Aquinas without taking into account the critiques of Zizioulas and others. Osborne's following chapter is, therefore, refreshing for displaying evidence of divergent viewpoints, and shows how Bonaventure's Trinitarian theology is more relational than that of Aquinas. Osborne discusses Bonaventure's sources and approach, and his section is well-written and draws links to many theologians past and present. Luther and Calvin did much to shape Protestant Trinitarianism and Chun ably discusses how their *sola scriptura* approaches produce their particular emphases on Christ as the act of God *etc.* His assertion that the scholastic viewpoint is a necessary balance to the monastic is however not substantiated.

There is not enough space to discuss all the chapters on contemporary authors and issues, but a few contributions stand out. Kim's marvellous chapter on Trinity and Taoism challenges Western dualist rationalism and reads the Trinity in the light of Confucian thought. This raises many questions about how an Eastern perspective helps to explain the Trinity, and Kim also presents some creative ideas about an ontology of nothingness. Fredericks writes brilliantly on the Trinity in light of Buddhism, and his insights make this possibly the best chapter of the book. Fredericks explains how various perspectives in Pure Land Buddhism can inform our understanding of the Trinity and he draws excellent connections to the

Cappadocians, Zizioulas *etc.* Kilby accurately conveys the nuances of Hans Urs von Balthasar and his theology of separation within the Trinity in light of the Cross. Karkkainen summarises well both Moltmann and Pannenberg, and Papanikolaou deftly surveys modern Orthodox theology especially Zizioulas, Lossky and Bulgakov. There are also chapters on Hispanic, Black and feminist approaches, and the chapter on the Trinity and Hinduism is thought-provoking. Other chapters on politico-social perspectives and Trinity and Judaism and Islam complete the book.

There are however some problems with this collection. The perspective is overwhelmingly Western-centric and particularly biased to Roman Catholic theologians, and a few authors make far too many sweeping generalisations. Burrell for instance seems to assume the whole church is Roman Catholic, ignores generations of Protestant and Orthodox scholars, and is stuck with antiquated notions of a 'parting of the ways'. The work also shows some evidence of editorial oversight, for instance it is odd that Burrell's name is missing from the list of contributors. Yet once allowance is made for these generalisations and a few weak chapters, as a concise summary of a wide range of perspectives on the Trinity this is a very good work. There is plenty of meat and some solid creative thinking, and this book would be of benefit to any scholar. This is a substantial introduction to the topic of the Trinity and indeed an inexpensive and very useful Cambridge Companion.

**John D'Alton**  
**Monash University**