

The Oxford Handbook of Sacramental Theology. Edited by Hans Boersma and Matthew Levering. New York: Oxford University, 2015. Pp. xx + 716. \$150.

This volume provides an examination of sacramental thought that is sweeping in its historical scope and wide in its ecumenical breadth. It will be a useful resource for libraries, not least of all because of the extensive bibliographical listings it contains. Here, I will turn to an assessment of each of the book's six sections.

The first section, "Sacramental Roots in Scripture," comprises eight chapters. Of particular interest is the treatment of the cure of Naaman the Syrian and the sacramentality of the Ark of the Covenant (chap. 1) as well as standard treatments of the Lord's Supper and baptism in chapter 7 on the Pauline epistles. The volume also addresses sacramental themes in the Torah, intertestamental writings, and other New Testament documents but there is, surprisingly, no treatment of the prophetic critique and Israelite worship (cf. Amos 5).

The second section, "Patristic Sacramental Theology," offers four chapters. It traces the rise of sacrificial thinking about the Eucharist (notably in chap. 9) but notes that the ecclesial assembly shares in and is constitutive of the eucharistic sacrifice along with the offering of Christ (chap. 11). This point is an essential touchstone of eucharistic theology though it is unfortunately absent in other parts of the book. The section concludes with a chapter on late patristic developments in Eastern thought. Readers not familiar with the liturgical insights of Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor will find here a fine introduction to these figures.

"Medieval Sacramental Theology" is the third section, with five chapters. The strength of this unit is its concise treatment of eucharistic controversies in the tenth and eleventh centuries (chap. 13) and the emergence of the tripartite nomenclature of *sacramentum tantum*, *res et sacramentum*, and *res tantum* in the twelfth century (chap. 14). The section concludes with chapters treating Wycliff and Hus (chap. 16) and developments in Orthodox thought, including the controversy over leavened vs. unleavened bread. However, this section overlooks the rise of the Irish system of repeatable penance and also the nature and impact of the Carolingian Reform.

The fourth section, "From the Reformation through Today," is the longest, with eleven chapters. In keeping with the ecumenical character of the volume, chapters here treat Lutheran thought (chaps. 18 and 24), Reformed thought (19 and 24), Anglican thought (chap. 19), the Radical Reformation (chap. 20), Catholic thought (chaps. 21, 23, 27), and Orthodox thought (chap. 28). Chapter 20 on the Radical Reformation brings a particularly important and at times neglected voice to the sacramental conversation. Chapters 23 and 27 are particularly weak, however. The former, a treatment of post-Tridentine sacramental theology, reads more as a critique (an attack even) on the work of Robert Daly and Edward Kilmartin than as an exposition of Catholic sacramental thought between the fifteenth and twentieth centuries. The latter, examining Catholic sacramental thought in the twentieth century, directs primary and near exclusive attention to magisterial documents. It features no exposition of Karl Rahner or Edward Schillebeeckx (or the more recent Louis-Marie Chauvet). Chapter 28, on

Orthodox thought, offers expositions of a number of important Orthodox theologians (e.g., Panagiotis Trembela).

The fifth section, “Dogmatic Approaches,” begins (chap. 29) with a fine account of the relationship between liturgy and liturgical theology, and sacrament and sacramental theology. The remaining seven chapters in this section treat each of the sacraments. Strengths in this section include the treatment (chap. 30) of baptism in light of the landmark Lima document and the analysis of marriage (chap. 33) in a culture in which individualism is prized and family units are seen as shelters from the world instead of places from which to engage the world. Weaknesses here include chapters on confirmation (chap. 31) and Eucharist (chap. 32). The first is a thoroughly neo-Scholastic treatment of the sacrament, which makes no reference to the studies done by John Roberto, Aidan Kavanagh, or Paul Turner. Chapter 32, for its part, places excessive weight on the words of institution, taking no account, for example, of the Vatican’s 2001 “Guidelines for Admission to the Eucharist between the Chaldean Church and the Assyrian Church of the East,” according to which the anaphora of Addai and Mari is valid even though it lacks an institution narrative.

The concluding section, “Philosophical and Theological Issues in Sacramental Doctrine,” provides eight chapters of discussion. Particularly strong here are chapter 39 on the sacramental imagination and chapter 41 on the eschatological significance of sacramental worship. Particularly weak here is chapter 37, which, in its treatment of sacramental causality, offers no assessment of the questions raised on this point by Louis-Marie Chauvet.

All in all, the *Handbook* is a solid reference work—a place from which to launch further investigation.

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