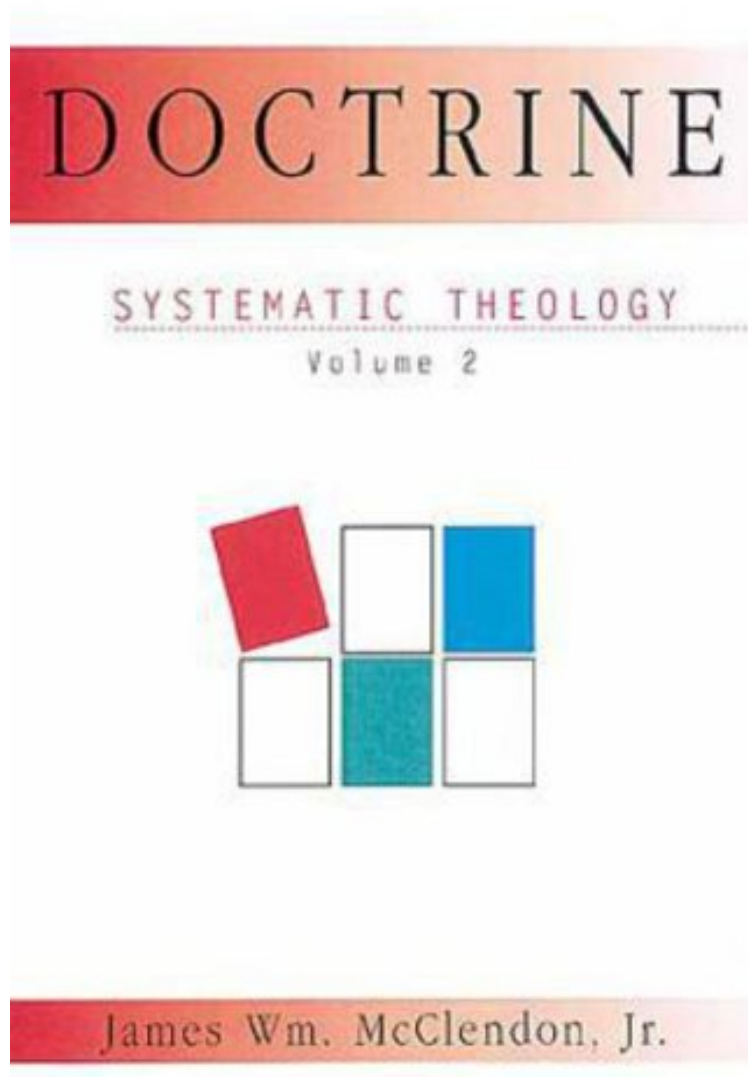


Doctrine: Systematic Theology Volume 2

Von Nancey Murphy, James Wm. Jr. McClendon
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Von Nancey Murphy, James Wm. Jr. McClendon : Doctrine: Systematic Theology Volume 2 before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Doctrine: Systematic Theology Volume 2:

Kundenrezensionen Hilfreichste Kundenrezensionen 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich.
Potentially life-changing theology Von Ian Packer The appearance of (yet) another systematic theology would not generally be the occasion of great excitement. The mature thought of someone of the stature of, say, a Pannenberg may well draw large attention but a pattern fairly typical of systematic theologies is likely to be followed and while there

will undoubtedly be abundant insights into specific issues, there is unlikely to be the kind of large scale revisioning of systematic theology that one finds in the work of James McClendon. McClendon's projected three-volume systematic theology is now two-thirds complete with Ethics appearing in 1986, Doctrine in 1994 and Witness forthcoming but expected shortly. McClendon's systematic theology is important for a variety of reasons. Notably, it represents, aside from Robert Jenson's new Systematic Theology, the only major and substantial, truly theological project (rather than methodological or epistemological) underway among those theologians loosely associated with the label 'postliberal'. More importantly, it exemplifies an approach to theology that gives priority to the ecclesial community rather than the academy: this does not mean theology 'made popular' but rather theology self-consciously rooted in the practices of the Christian community. The most conspicuous evidence of this is the way that McClendon chose to begin his systematic theology: with ethics (Vol 1)! The usual presentation of systematic theology assumes an order presumed to be the only logical and proper way: that is beginning with 'prolegomena', followed by 'doctrine', then 'ethics'. 'Prolegomena' discusses questions of method and so forth, largely in terms of current philosophy and usually in terms of philosophical 'grounding' or justification for the following theological project. Doctrine provides a systematic presentation of Christian teaching often in quasi-scientific format and categories. Ethics, however, as Ron Sider says, is "often left until last and then left out"! McClendon seeks to counter this disjunction between doctrine and ethics by exemplifying another way that shows that 'doctrine' and 'ethics' are two sides of the same coin. It is the modern situation that has treated them separately. McClendon does not challenge the threefold description of the theological task. He recognises that our convictions that make our "common life possible fall into three broad, overlapping categories, those that inform Christian living (moral convictions), those that display the substance of Christian faith (doctrinal convictions), and those that open out into a Christian vision or worldview (philosophical convictions)." (21) It is only with the foundationalist treatment of logical priority that he is concerned. According to McClendon, one can begin with any of the three but must recognise that each one presupposes to some degree the rest. The terms represent three levels of entry into theology, three kinds of "probing". Thus it is inaccurate to portray him as seeking to base theology on ethics as a new foundation. His decision to begin with ethics has to do with chronological priority, not logical priority. Unsurprisingly then, McClendon finds himself in the company of those 'postmodern' in his rejection of general human categories as the basis of Christian systematic theology. He is not concerned with 'first principles' or to start from scratch but best exemplifies John Yoder's alternatives to "methodologism"; namely "walk and word", to begin "where we are", in the midst of the story of God in Israel, Jesus and the Christian community as witnessed in the Scriptures. Interestingly, it is almost to 'damn with faint praise' to label McClendon 'postmodern' since his earlier 'philosophical' work, Understanding Religious Convictions (co-authored with James Smith), was in many respects ahead of its time. As he and Smith comment in their updated edition, "we believe, not that we are catching up with the times, but that the times have at long last caught up with us." If there is any doubt as to McClendon's engagement with the mainstream 'greats', then his Doctrine should remove them. McClendon engages with the breadth of the Christian tradition in an erudite and masterful way. Yet, as Hauerwas notes, it is Hans Hut (the sixteenth century martyr) rather than Hegel (the philosopher of the absolute) who is representative of the power of the Christian reality and who is paradigmatic of Christ's victory. In this way, McClendon both takes the best of the mainstream tradition and also subverts it with the 'weakness' of Christ and 'foolishness' of the gospel. One of the many merits of McClendon's Doctrine is his exemplification of his concerns. His second volume is an example of service to the teaching practice of the Christian community. Such teaching of doctrine is "first order" and doctrinal theology is "second order" (23-4). Doctrine's order is also somewhat disorienting to the traditional systematic theology reader. Whereas traditional theology typically begins with attributes of God, God as Trinity etc, the chapter on the "Identity of God" does not appear until halfway through. Instead McClendon begins with Eschatology under the section, "The Rule of God" moving on then to "The New in Christ" and then to Creation. The narrative approach places eschatology as the focus and telos of all that is to come and the view through which all else is understood, presented in a way more radical than that of the 'eschatological theology' of Thomas Finger. Each theme is treated fully cognizant of the others preceding and following. Philosophical engagement is also frequently present but it is McClendon's exemplification of the Christian tradition that is able to argue and persuade in way that is far superior to the philosophers and methodologists such that it seems, in David Ford's Barthian phrase, "the Best Apologetics is Good Systematics." I only wish that McClendon had written a larger volume of doctrine or perhaps two since there is sometimes the sense that discussion is cut short. I felt left hanging at the end of his discussion of the divine and human in Christ as well as on theories of the atonement, for two examples. But where it may not fully satisfy here in this regard, it may instead inspire others to continue thinking.

0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Fresh but Idiosyncratic Theology Von Ein Kunde McClendon's 'Doctrine' is an unconventional presentation of Christian teaching that defies easy categorisation and summary. The author arranges his material the opposite way of most systematic theologies: beginning with eschatology and ending with methodological considerations. His work has the strength of including a lot concentrated biblical exegesis and theological history, which does, I think, greatly determine the way that he formulates his theology. However, his presentation is often dense and inaccessible, couched in a narrative scheme that is never made entirely clear to the uninitiated. This means that his exact thoughts on a certain issue are often hard to

pin down. Also the 'baptist vision' that he seeks to present is highly questionable; I have never seen anything like it in either the theology or practice of the Baptist churches that I have been a part of. I think this 'vision' is more of a reification than something that actually exists in the real world. Nevertheless, his work does possess fresh insights and new ways of thinking about some timeless doctrinal issues in the contemporary world. 0 von 1 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. How to Use the Language of Orthodoxy Without the Content! Von Ein Kunde McClendon's theology is a classic example of a textbook that is written for a traditional audience by one who, charitably speaking, is less than traditional. McClendon is forced to use traditional categories while filling them with ideas for which they were never designed. For example, McClendon purposefully organizes this text into three distinct sections, avowedly borrowing a Trinitarian concept. This leaves the reader amazed to find that McClendon is not at all trinitarian in his theology; he is a Modalist (cf. chapter seven: "The Identity of God"). This sort of theological shell-game makes for difficult reading as McClendon awkwardly attempts to mask his idiosyncratic (for a baptist) theology behind Orthodox categories. As a student at Baptist Theological Seminary at Richmond, I struggled through this ponderous tome; it did not repay my effort. R

Kurzbeschreibung Christian doctrine, McClendon tells us, is no laundry list of propositions to be believed, but is rather an essential practice of the church. Doctrines are those shared convictions which the church must teach and live out if it is to be the church. The author rejects the prevailing assumptions stemming from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and redefines theology as a discipline within the context of particular religious beliefs and practices of concrete believing communities. McClendon ties the reading of Scripture to the community's understanding of itself and its own mission. Kurzbeschreibung Christian doctrine, McClendon tells us, is no laundry list of propositions to be believed, but is rather an essential practice of the church. Doctrines are those shared convictions which the church must teach and live out if it is to be the church. The author rejects the prevailing assumptions stemming from the rationalism of the Enlightenment, and redefines theology as a discipline within the context of particular religious beliefs and practices of concrete believing communities. McClendon ties the reading of Scripture to the community's understanding of itself and its own mission. Buchrckseite Christian doctrine, McClendon tells us, is no laundry list of propositions to be believed, but is rather an essential practice of the church. Doctrines are those shared convictions which the church must teach and live out if it is to be the church.