

The Bible in a Disenchanted Age. The Enduring Possibility of Christian Faith

R. W. L. Moberly

Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018 (217 ss).

This book is a valuable read. Moberly writes clearly and his topic is of the utmost importance. While his work is scholarly in character, he does a fine job at making himself, others, and the issues at stake understood. As the title of the volume makes evident, the author is going to delve into a disenchanted age, the Bible, and whether or not Christian faith is still a viable possibility in our times.

Moberly sets the scene by exploring several features of why people today have become disenchanted with God and the Bible. In particular, he underscores the negative influence of the Renaissance and the early modern period, where discoveries were made which seemed to diminish the scope and reliability of the Bible and thus to throw into question traditional views of God. According to Moberly, how the Bible and God were understood now took new directions. Was God like many other deities mentioned in various writings? Should the Bible be read as any other book? While this historical context, says Moberly, contributed to disenchantment, he also argues that more contemporary challenges raised by Richard Dawkins and others, who question both the existence of God and the validity of the Bible, have played a significant role.

The author then further explores the types of questions raised above in an initial comparison between The *Aeneid* and the Book of Daniel. Should God's dealings with the Jews be understood in a different way from Jupiter's dealings with the Romans? Why should the biblical account be privileged? If both writings

are the result of 'merely' human constructions, does the Bible offer anything unique and revelatory? After posing the problem in this manner, the bigger question that Moberly is getting at is how might the Bible, in its classical sense as a source of 'ultimate truth and wisdom about God and humanity, be meaningful in a disenchanted age?'

As part of the cure for disenchantment, in the next part of the book, Moberly turns to reading the Bible and suggests three ways to do so: as history, as classic (both perhaps non-religious), and as Scripture. Following a sketch of the first two and then an extended and illuminating analysis of *Aeneid* 1 and Daniel 7 based on these, he deals with the topic of the Bible as Scripture or how to read the Bible from a Christian perspective with faith. Moberly includes, in this third way of reading the Bible, another foray into *Aeneid* 1 and Daniel 7.

Building off this, Moberly next offers a discussion about faith, belief, and religious knowledge. He wants to say more here about the validity of the biblical witness and why believing the Bible is a good thing. The author looks at the relevance of John 7:16-17, Jesus' authority, and other pertinent matters for his position of truth and trust, and draws out interesting conclusions.

The Epilogue of the book on biblical literacy is extremely helpful and finely balanced. Moberly does an excellent job at arguing against some of the reasons people doubt the Bible and then turns this into an opportunity to discuss and commend better ways of reading and studying it. He suggests several essential hermeneutical guidelines and gives useful advice on how attentive and serious readers can develop literary competence.

This is a marvelous book. Moberly is dealing with highly significant issues and questions, and he does so with care, sensitivity, and wisdom. I highly recommend it.

Gregory J. Laughery

The Enduring Authority of the Christian Scriptures

D. A. Carson, ed,
London: IVP, 2016 (1240 ss).

This is a massive volume comprising a lengthy Introduction, thirty-four chapters, and a Q & A at the end. Major sections deal with the following topics: Historical, Biblical / Theological, Philosophical / Epistemological, and Comparative Religions.

In the Introduction, Carson offers a broad overview of what he sees as the contemporary discussion regarding the nature of Scripture. He surveys a diversity of perspectives from those that question the authority of Scripture, to those who defend it in one form or the other. Carson also offers a very brief summary of the major sections and the chapters addressed to particular issues within them. At the outset of this book, he makes it clear that he is pro-inerrancy and anti-historical criticism. His apologetic tone is evident. Thus, this book is not an exploration, as much as it is a defense of one view of the nature of Scripture.

The first nine chapters deal with historical issues on the authority of the Bible. They include looking at various views of Scripture from the Patristic period through Augustine, and the Reformers, to German pietism, Wesleyan theology, Old Princeton, Karl Barth, and Roman Catholic perspectives from the nineteenth century to the present.

The following fourteen chapters delve into Biblical and theological issues. There are several chapters on the Old Testament, the Old Testament and the New, and others on how history and theology are connected. Further topics in this section include, God, God and the Bible, literature, and myth.

In the next six chapters the authors take up philosophical and epistemological questions. A diversity of issues such as truth, non-foundationalism, authority, science, and inerrancy are examined.

There are then four chapters devoted to a comparison of religions. Hindu, Muslim, and Buddhist texts and claims are discussed and compared to the biblical text.

One chapter is dedicated, following Augustine, to taking and reading the Bible.

Lastly, several pages of Q&A on the authority of Scripture with Carson responding complete the volume.

There's plenty of material here, but the book carries a steep price. By and large all the chapters are coherent and share the same perspectives on Scripture, no matter what particular topic is addressed. If you're interested in a rather conservative defense of the traditional doctrine of the authority of Scripture presented in a diversity of ways, then this book is for you. The list of contributors is impressive and the authors do a credible job with an aspect of scholarly work (apologetics), without however questioning their initial presuppositions on the nature and status of the biblical text. It is and always has been God's inerrant Word and in their opinion nothing can change that. Thus, the Bible, for these interpreters, is the norm for all truth at all times.

Gregory J. Laughery