

Peter Hofmann

Die Bibel ist die Erste Theologie. Ein fundamentaltheologischer Ansatz.
(The Bible is the Primary Theology: A Sketch of Fundamental Theology)
Schöningh, Paderborn 2006, 462 pp.

In this book, Peter Hofmann attempts to sketch a fundamental theology which is twofold apologetic: First, it cannot argue without philosophical reason. Second and most important, thought is challenged by scripture and theological reason reflected in tradition, liturgy and magisterium. According to Hofmann, the Bible offers a 'primary theology' before theological reason comes to reflection. Therefore, he chooses the Bible with its canonic-intertextual meaning as starting point and tries to develop a systematics of fundamental theology wholly out of scripture. Unfortunately, he states the necessity of a canonic-intertextual exegesis of the Bible without further justifying it or discussing the systematic problems connected with this like that of inspiration, scripture and tradition. Because of his self-set limits by scripture and tradition, magisterium and liturgy, a dialogue with philosophy seems not as easy possible as with other fundamental theologies.

Somewhat surprising is the structure of his book since Hofmann begins with seven important problems of fundamental theology and in a second part depicts his sketch of fundamental theology and not vice versa. But his sketch is the background of the first part, not only in the fifth chapter, where he is discussing several different understandings of Job, or in the seventh chapter, where he is concerned with Shabbat and Sunday in context of eschatology. The classical treatises of fundamental theology are shown clearly in the second part, beginning with reflections on theological cognition of the basis of a canonical-intertextual exegesis of scripture. The second chapter, concerned with God and revelation, contains the *demonstratio religiosa* and the first part of the *demonstratio christiana*. The second part and the *demonstratio catholica* are presented in the third chapter where Hofmann discusses God's mediation in redemption and historical institution.

While it is written in a clear language and offers interesting insights, it was not carefully proof-read and some of the intentional repetitions had rather an irritating effect.

(Thomas Fornet-Ponse)