

***Praying the Bible.* By Donald S. Whitney. Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015. 112 pp., \$13.99. Printed Caseside. ISBN-13: 978-1-4335-4784-3.**

Perhaps no spiritual discipline is more integral to Christian growth as prayer, yet no spiritual discipline may be as neglected. Prayer is oxygen for the Christian life. It is our spiritual lifeblood wherein we commune with God; but when asked, most Christians—including Christian leaders—acknowledge a shocking dearth of prayer.

In fact, many Christians admit to being adrift in their prayer lives—listing about from one dry, forced prayer time to the next, and living with the sense of guilt such prayerlessness breeds.

Don Whitney argues in *Praying the Bible* that a Christian's main problem with prayer may be more methodological than spiritual. Whitney notes most Christians tend to pray about the same old things (health, ministry, job, future, crises, family, etc.) in the same old way. This is a rote formula, guaranteed to bore even the most fervent Christ follower.

According to Whitney, the answer must be a simple one. Drawing on the practices of Christian luminaries such as the Puritans, Charles Spurgeon, and George Mueller, Whitney gives a simple, yet life-changing antidote to prayerlessness—pray the Bible.

Indeed, fireworks happen when the Word and prayer are joined together. Doing so moves prayer from the static to the dynamic—giving the Christian a vast reservoir from which to pray, and it more assuredly aligns one's prayers with the will of God. Thankfully, *Praying the Bible* not only commends a method, it teaches us how to practice it. Whitney carefully walks the reader through how to pray the Bible, making the practice of praying Scripture understandable and practicable for even the newest of believers.

In the late 1990s, I learned from Don Whitney how to pray the Bible. It changed my prayer life then, and it continues to shape it now. In fact, I can usually see a direct correlation between my consistency in praying the Bible and my relative spiritual vibrancy. That's why I come back, again and again, to the basics of praying Scripture.

Being a pastor or Christian leader does not remedy prayerlessness. In fact, it may exasperate it. Excessive busyness most

always leads to spiritual barrenness. This could be remedied if we learn from Whitney how to pray the Bible, and then resolve to do just that.

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***Augustine's Theology of Preaching.* By Peter Sanlon. Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2014. 200 pp., \$24.00. Paperback. ISBN-13: 978-1451482782.**

Peter Brown, in the epilogue of his updated definitive biography on Augustine, confesses, “[If] I were to start again to write a biography of Augustine, I would be more aware than I was prepared to be when I began in 1961, of the knowledge of the wider context of his life and thought which recent scholarship has made possible for us.”¹ Though much of Augustine’s writing has been available for centuries, recent discoveries in the last quarter of the twentieth century have brought new material into the Augustinian corpus. Recently discovered sermon material has allowed scholars of more recent generations to further engage Augustine as a premier Christian rhetor and, most importantly, pastor. Even with the flurry of new texts, few have engaged the notion of Augustine as preacher. Peter Sanlon’s entry into this field, *Augustine’s Theology of Preaching*, seeks to fill this void.

Sanlon’s thesis is helpfully simple: “interiority” and “temporality” provide the “undergirding theological convictions” and serve as “hermeneutical keys to Augustine’s preaching” (xvii). Sanlon highlights the need for his study by demonstrating that the majority of recent work regarding Augustine’s *Sermones* focuses on “textual and reception matters” (xxi). Sanlon highlights the primary place of Scripture in the preaching of Augustine. This is no mere observation—rather—Sanlon consistently demonstrates the prime place of Scripture in Augustine’s preaching and the desire to connect his hearers to the words

¹ Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo: A Biography*. Forty-fifth Anniversary Edition (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2000), 488.

of Scripture. Sanlon provides a wonderfully personal reflection on this point: “My own experience has been that engagement with the preaching of Augustine over a number of years has deepened my core convictions about God speaking to his people through Scripture being preached” (xxxii).

From here, Sanlon walks readers through the historical context necessary for understanding Augustine’s preaching. In chapter one, Sanlon provides a brief summary of North African Christianity as well as significant preachers who preceded Augustine. This chapter helps readers understand “the commonalities and distinctives of Augustine’s preaching compared to other relevant preachers” (21). In chapter two, Sanlon provides a summary of pagan oratory’s influence upon Augustine as a preacher. While Cicero is a primary and explicit influence upon Augustine’s life, there were numerous “earlier orators whom he engaged with [that] contributed to Augustine’s view of rhetoric” (24). Pagan oratory provided a significant influence upon Augustine as one styled in the “ideal product” of an orator.² It is here that Sanlon introduces the concept of the *cor* (Latin: *heart*) in the preaching of Augustine. The goal of preaching, with this understanding of the “desirous centre of human identity,” would serve as an essential facet of Augustine’s preaching (43). Such a notion took man’s disordered nature into account and thus viewed the preaching act as the process of creating in listeners Christ-like virtue. This concept serves Augustine’s notion of interiority and temporality. Sanlon notes, “The temporal narrative of Scripture had to be preached in such a way that listeners felt themselves drawn into the narrative” (47).

Having established this foundation, Sanlon turns his attention to Augustine’s hermeneutics as discerned through his *De Doctrina Christiana*. Understanding Scripture, for Augustine, comes primarily through Christ as the Inner Teacher. Only those who have the transformed eyes of Wisdom, that is Christ, may rightly understand and teach Scripture. For the one who wishes to understand the true nature of Scripture, he or she is to reflect on Scripture until “led through to the kingdom of love” (63). Sanlon does well to draw together Augustine’s

² Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 24. Brown provides a helpful summary on the nature of Augustine’s training as it led to the art and practice of rhetoric. For more see Brown, *Augustine of Hippo*, 23–8

concern for interiority, Christianized rhetoric, and the primary place of Scripture as discerned through *De Doctrina Christiana*. This text contains the key to a proper understanding of hermeneutics and art of preaching from the pen of this North African bishop. From here, Sanlon further expands on the notion of interiority, temporality, and Scripture as he continues to build his proposed theology of Augustine's preaching. Chapter four serves as the fully orbed explanation of his thesis. Further elaborating on the already proposed concepts of Augustine's preaching, Sanlon interacts with alternate modern interpretations of Augustine's hermeneutic. Namely, Sanlon interacts with the likes of Coleen Hoffman Gowans, Paul Ricoeur, and Charles Taylor. In conversation with these modern thinkers, Sanlon further demonstrates how his thesis on the interplay between temporality and interiority best fits the evidence found in Augustine.

Upon building the house, Sanlon invites readers to explore the rooms within by means of three case studies. First, Sanlon analyzes various sermons on riches and money, demonstrating how the concepts of interiority and temporality guided Augustine's exhortations. When it comes to riches, for Augustine, "[interior] desires lead to exterior actions in the temporal plane while the shape of temporality shapes interiority" (119). Next, Sanlon examines Augustine's sermons on death and resurrection. Augustine maintains that the effects of Jesus's resurrection in time (temporality) have an effect now on our lives as Christians (interiority). Finally, Sanlon evaluates Augustine's sermons on relationships. In this chapter, Sanlon consistently demonstrates how the concepts of interiority and temporality guide Augustine's view of relationships in the body of Christ, whether parents with children, between spouses, master and slave relationships, or relations between friends. Sanlon is consistent in weaving the thread of his thesis throughout the entirety of these case studies.

This text accomplishes the enterprising task of providing an approachable theology of Augustine's preaching. With this said, I propose two minor observations that could have enhanced this text. While Sanlon introduces his thesis at the beginning, his full explanation of temporality and interiority does not appear until chapter four. Additionally, Sanlon introduces his text by illuminating the practical benefits of understanding Augustine as preacher. While this exhortation is helpful, Sanlon does little throughout the text to connect his work back to this

practical appeal. Certainly readers are competent to draw the practical conclusions, but the book would have been strengthened had Sanlon made consistent and intentional moves to connect the dots in this area.

Peter Sanlon's *Augustine's Theology of Preaching* serves as a fine example of Augustinian scholarship. It fills a noticeable void in assessing Augustine's life as a preacher. It is a book for preachers. It is also a text for those exploring early Christian pastoral ministry. Particularly, it is a must-read for those seeking to understand Augustine's use of Scripture in his preaching act. Others have and certainly will continue to propose additional perspectives, yet Sanlon's work has rightly earned a prime seat at the conversation table.

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***Revelation: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary.* By Craig R. Koester. The Anchor Yale Bible, vol. 38A. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2014, xlii + 881 pp., \$125.00 cloth, ISBN 9780300144888. \$65.00 paperback, ISBN 9780300216912.**

Just a few decades ago, those interested in a reliable commentary on the book of Revelation had few options available. Among them C. Charles' 1912 entry in the ICC series was seriously dated, G. B. Caird's volume in the BNTC series was distinctly more theological than exegetical, and J. M. Ford's contribution to the Anchor Bible suffered from eccentricity. R. Mounce's volume in the NICNT series was, for most, the only reliable exegetical guide. This seemingly deserted land, however, was soon to spring to life with an unprecedented production of top-level commentaries: D. Aune (1997-1998), G. K. Beale (1999), G. Osborne (2002), B. Witherington (2003), S. Smalley (2005), I. Boxhall (2006), D. deSilva (2009, somehow not included in Koester's bibliography) and P. Patterson (2012). These, alongside several notable translations into English, such as E. Lupieri (1999) and P. Prigent (2001), as well as a

steady stream of doctoral dissertations, have given Revelation a fair hearing after decades of either neglect or abuse.

In such a crowded field, and especially in the wake of the exhaustive triad of Aune, Beale, and Osborne, was there room, let alone justification, for yet another commentary on Revelation? After reading Koester's commentary this reviewer gives an unreserved and resounding affirmative answer. Koester has produced a robust piece of scholarship, a commentary that is both highly informed and informative, challenging yet enjoyable, rigorously exegetical yet not devoid of deep spiritual insights. The commentary not only replaces the infelicitous previous entry in the Anchor Bible series (J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation*, Doubleday, 1975); it also positions itself as a reference work for *Apocalypsis* research for decades to come.

The commentary keeps to the established format of the Anchor Yale Bible commentary series, commencing with a new translation of the Greek text and a substantial introduction. The massive bibliography that follows is usefully arranged in chronological order. The body of the volume consists of the commentary proper, with notes and comments for each section of the book.

The translation is fresh and exquisite. It is carefully tuned to the Greek text, as in 13:8, "all those whose names have not been written – from the time the earth was made – in the scroll of life of the Lamb who was slain" (p.15), where eternity past is a temporal clue to the writing of the names in the scroll and not with the slaying of the Lamb. It also reflects faithfully the exegetical decisions and theological stand taken in the commentary, such as the rendering of 1:19, "[s]o write what you have seen, which included things as they are now as well as things to come" (p. 4), construed as a reference to a two-stage vision about the present and the future, not a three-stage one concerning the past, the present, and the future, an alternative for which commentators opt frequently. As with all translations, the roughness and grammatical syllogisms that permeate the book, while acknowledged *in extenso* in the comments, are smoothed out in the translation. One can only hope that a "warts and all" translation of the Greek text will soon be attempted, which would give the English reader the same unusual textual encounter as the original readers and hearers of the Greek text would have had.

The introduction is divided into five major sections. The first offers a conspectus of the history of Revelation interpretation and

influence, diachronically divided into four segments: 100–500 CE, 500–1500 CE, 1500–1750 CE, and from 1750 to the present. Each segment is further divided into various schools of thought, such as the East and the West, for the first segment, or the Reformed, the Anabaptist, and the Catholic traditions, for the 1500–1750 period. It must be emphasized that, while most commentators include brief reviews of previous commentaries, Koester's presentation of his predecessors is significantly more substantial. This rich diachronic analysis is very beneficial for modern exegetes, who are prone to disregard the twists and turns in the history of Revelation studies, a book that shows just how limited, myopic, ideologically-bound, and epoch-determined many of its interpretations proved to be. The history of interpretation is further developed in each section of the commentary proper. While there is inevitably a measure of overlap, no historical exemplification supplied is superfluous.

The second section treats the historical-critical issues, devoting attention to the typical matters: authorship, unity of the text, date, and early Christian traditions. This is followed by a third section devoted to an apt reconstructed social setting of Revelation. Literary aspects, comprising genre analysis, structure, narrative aspects, and intertextuality, coupled with rhetorical aspects, focusing on literary strategy, language and style, receive extensive treatment. Considerations about the text of Revelation completes the introduction. While Koester's stand on these matters could be summarized here, it would not do justice to his rigorous sifting through the evidence, textual, historical, rhetorical, etc., that led him to adopt a particular stance. Leaving out nugget-size summaries will limit the risk of having readers, disagreeing with Koester's position, unwilling to follow the rigorous analysis, evenness in data presentation, fairness both in self and alternatives' assessment, robust logic, and nuanced conclusions that characterizes his research.

Moving onto the commentary proper, Koester divides the book into six sections, construed as a virtual six-cycle drama: Christ and the seven assemblies (1:9-3:22), the seven seals (4:1-8:5), the seven trumpets (8:6-11:18), the Dragon, the Beasts, and the Faithful (11:19-15:4), the Seven Bowls and the Fall of Babylon (15:5-19:10), and from the Beast's Demise to New Jerusalem (19:11-22:5). While this proposed structure is not novel, it is salutary to see a commentary that avoids finding perfect parallelism between the cycles. While some cycles (the first, second, third

and the fifth) develop around a particular septuplet, others do not do so. In the sections in which the septuplets are missing, instead of finding a series of un-numbered septuplets, Koester focuses on the pattern that is manifest in the cycle: a triplet schema for the fourth (the Dragon the Beast and the Faithful), and a linearly developed doublet, from the beast's demise to the new Jerusalem. The title and the introduction to the book (1:1-8) as well as the conclusion to the book (22:6-21) are treated on their own respectively. The analysis of each cycle follows an established pattern comprising of general comments on the cycle, history of interpretation of the main *crucis interpretum*, and the most notable literary features.

Three further accolades of this commentary are justified. First, one must welcome the choice of Koester of not aligning his interpretation with any of the classical four schools of interpretation or even with the recently much-favored eclecticism. While there are other commentaries that attempt independence from the straight jacket imposed by a particular school of interpretation, Koester succeeded in being consistent with his position throughout the commentary. His foremost concern is reading this literary masterpiece in light of its original setting, readers, author, and historical context. Second, it is refreshing to see a commentary that not only refrains from decoding Revelation or making it simple, but maintains the book's multilevel paradoxes of whatever nature, be they theological, literary, or experiential. He surmises that "this paradoxical vision takes readers into a world where a specific number refers to a crowd that is numberless, where blood makes clothing white, and where a Lamb acts as a shepherd" (p. 424). Last, but certainly not least, it should be emphasized that the work is extensive but not overwhelming: from the cultural background information, to the self-imposed limitation of interpretive options worthy of attention, the commentary strikes a very balanced note, with an adequate volume of attention that leaves no stone unturned, yet does not attempt to write the last word on the matter.

Koester's labor will rightfully be ranked among the most important commentaries on the book of Revelation for generations to come, and any further work on this ancient document will have to engage with its distinct approach and conclusions. If there is a downside to Koester's masterful addition to the plethora of commentaries on Revelation, this must be that it has made the task of choosing that one

commentary-to-have even more difficult. Given the quality of Koester's work, at least for this reviewer, the choice has actually been made easier.

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***The New Cambridge History of the Bible. Volume 1: From the Beginnings to 600.* James C. Paget and Joachim Schaper, eds. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013, xxviii + 979 pp., £129.99; \$191.09 hardback, ISBN 9780521859387.**

Almost five decades after the publication of the renowned *Cambridge History of the Bible* (3 vols., 1963-1970), the time has come for a completely new edition of this reference work that incorporates and does justice to the enormous advances in the area of biblical studies. *The New Cambridge History of the Bible*, in four volumes (2012-2016), was launched to accomplish this much needed and long awaited task. The title under review is the first volume in the series, which covers developments up to AD 600. The justification for the new series is most evident when the two editions are compared side by side. Not only is the volume of information at least double, but so are the number and diversity of topics covered. It is not unusual to see topics which in the old series were mere paragraphs become chapters in their own right. Case in point, the two chapters allocated to the Septuagint is an appreciated development, given the momentum in Septuagint studies during the last decades.

The first volume in the new series is divided into five parts. Part One is dedicated to the biblical languages, the writing systems and the book production. The original languages of the Scriptures receive attention in the first two chapters. In "The Languages of the Old Testament," G. Khan surveys various aspects related to the Hebrew and the Aramaic languages of the OT, including the earliest surviving records, the composition of the texts, the textual witnesses in the Tiberian Masoretic manuscripts, as well as the biblical scrolls from Qumran. Particular attention is devoted to issues of orthography and phonology behind the text, both in its consonantal form and in various systems of

vocalization. J. Joosten undertakes a similar analysis in “The Greek language of the Septuagint and the New Testament,” and revisits the ongoing question about the nature of the biblical Greek. By looking at the varieties of Greek evidenced in various corpora of the LXX and the NT (book by book), he reaffirms the current scholarly consensus that the biblical Greek has never been a distinct language or dialect. W. Schniedewind and L. Hurtado (in collaboration with C. Keith), survey the culture of writing and book production. The former investigates the ancient Near East (ANE) perimeter, specifically, the way in which the two writing cultures, cuneiform in Mesopotamia and hieroglyphic in Egypt, shaped the writing and book production in ancient Israel. The latter, focuses the attention on the Hellenistic and Roman periods, stressing the importance not only of the classical texts, but also of the phenomena of copying, distribution and reading in this period.

Parts Two and Three are devoted to the core subjects of the volume, the Hebrew Bible (HB)/Old Testament (OT) and the New Testament (NT) respectively. Given the complexity of the subject matter, the space allotted to the OT is the longest section of the volume. In “The Old Testament text and its transmission,” E. Ulrich examines the evidence behind the transmission of the text from its earliest stages to the forms available today. J. Schaper traces the literary history of the HB, first by genre: from prophetic oracles to scrolls, from social regulations to legal texts, from stories to historical books, from proverbs to wisdom books, and from psalms to hymn-books; then by the formation of the HB’s major literary clusters. In “The Old Testament canons,” J. Barton alerts the reader to the complexities of the canonization of the Scriptures, and traces the formation and inter-relationship of various OT canons, including the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and the Ethiopic. Correspondingly, J. J. Collins looks at the non-canonical literary vestiges, in “The ‘apocryphal’ Old Testament.”

The next group of chapters is devoted to the interpretation of the HB. G. Stemmerger’s “From inner-biblical interpretation to rabbinic exegesis” surveys the significant moments in the inner interpretation of Scriptures, an activity older than the final redaction of many of the books, all the way to the various stages of rabbinic exegesis and hermeneutics, including the halakhic and haggadic midrashim, with consideration given to the Mishnah, Tosefta, Talmudim, and Targumim. R. Hayward undertakes a similar investigation with regard to the

Aramaic Targumim, their exegesis, genre, social setting, and dates of composition, while J. Campbell surveys “The Scriptural interpretation at Qumran,” pointing to the role played by the Scriptures in the community, the specific qumranic exegesis and the *peshet* style commentary. K. De Troyer covers the Septuagint, its history and its revisions, in one of the most robust reconstructions of the textual witnesses to the Septuagint in print. W. Horbury deals expertly with the Hellenistic Jewish exegesis evidenced in the Greek compositions of the Greek-speaking Jews. The last three chapters of Part Three deal with the function of the Scripture in several historical settings. R. Hayward looks at its role in the Jewish Temple, in both periods of the first and the second temple as well as in the Babylonian exile. J. Watts addresses the social function of the Scripture, which includes the political interests behind its publication and use. The final chapter is E. Tov’s survey of the modern editions of the Hebrew Bible, including the HUB, BHS, BHQ, Biblia Qumranica and Oxford Hebrew Bible, and ends with an enticing proposal for a multi-column edition.

The New Testament is analyzed through a smaller number of topics. In “The New Testament canon,” J. Verheyden surveys the history of the canon as a project that has aimed at uniformity and consensus, but ended in convenience and compromise. “The New Testament text and versions” allows D. Parker to probe the highly dynamic field of NT textual criticism, as older debates are revisited with sharper and more robust definitions, terminology, and goals. The important field of the NT use of the OT is handled with characteristic astuteness by D. C. Allison. He revisits not only the standard headings (quotations, allusions, larger patterns) but also aspects such as the original readers, context, and Scriptural authority; all pertinent issues seldom included under such a rubric.

In a series of studies unprecedented in the older edition, Part Four surveys “Biblical Versions other than the Hebrew and the Greek.” P.-M. Bogaert examines the Latin Bible, P. J. Williams, the Syriac versions, and W.-P. Funk, the translation of the Bible into Coptic, each contributor offering the perspective of a well-known specialist in his respective field, skillfully synthesizing the major developments in each of these fields over the past several decades.

Part Five also offers a vast expansion of topics compared to the 1970 edition. Its title, “The Reception of the Bible in the Post-New

Testament Period,” confirms the emergence of reception criticism as one of the fastest growing areas in biblical scholarship. In a lengthy tour de force, J. C. Paget surveys the interpretation of the Bible in the second century, dealing with subtopics such as the evolving Christian Bible, institutional settings of interpretation, and modes and goals of interpretation. Similarly, W. Löhr looks at the Gnostic and Manichaean interpretation, bringing more clarity not only in mapping various Gnostic movements, but also tracing the influence they exerted over the emerging Christian exegesis. Several towering representatives of the Church Fathers are singled out for their remarkable contribution to the study of the Bible: Origen (G. Dorival), Eusebius (M. Hollerich), Jerome (A. Kamesar), and Augustine (C. Harrison). Four chapters devote further attention to various important schools of biblical exegesis and interpretation: “Syriac exegesis” (J. Coakley), “Figurative readings: their scope and justification” (M. Edwards), “Traditions of exegesis,” (F. Young), “Pagans and the Bible,” (W. Kinzig), and “Exegetical genres in the patristic era” (M. Elliott). Three chapters devoted to the role of the Scriptures in various venues, “The Bible in doctrinal development and Christian councils,” (T. Graumann), “The Bible in liturgy,” (G. Rouwhorst), and “The Bible in popular and non-literary culture,” (L. Grig), bring this massive tome to a close.

No conventional review could do justice to a volume of such breadth and magnitude. Space is insufficient to present even the main ideas of its 37 chapters, let alone to interact with or critique them. Yet, several overall comments are in order. *TNCHB* is similar in genre and approach to several compendia devoted to the same subject matter. The first volumes in either the *CRINT* series (Fortress Press) or the *HB/OT* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht), the *Oxford Handbook of Biblical Studies*, and the twin *The Biblical World* and *The Early Christian World* (Routledge) come to mind. *TNCHB* carves its own niche by limiting itself to the essentials and, just as its title suggests, letting the historical dimension, not the theological or the literary, take first place among equals. Furthermore, it is a paramount expression of the *status quaestionis* in fields related to the Bible, which avoids, on the one hand, providing overwhelming amounts of information, and, on the other hand, migrating into secondary or superfluous topics. More importantly, however, stands its eminence as a true and reliable guide in such matters. In an age of an unprecedented increase of information and its

accessibility, one might question the need for an expensive volume such as this one. When *Google* and *Wikipedia* are one mouse click away, how could one justify the almost prohibitive price of the *TNCHB* volume, if not for libraries, most certainly for seminary students? The potential readers will have to answer this question for themselves. *TNCHB* offers a compendium of essays written by renowned scholars, senior researchers in their respective fields and masters of primary resources, who deliver trail-blazing and authoritative research. While the democratization of information makes the availability of data more convenient, it would never replace the unassailable need for, and value of, true scholarship. The editorial team offers in the first volume of *NCHB* one such work that will set the standard for decades to come.

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***Loving Jesus More* by Philip G. Ryken. Wheaton: Crossway, 2014. 176 pp. \$14.99. Paperback. ISBN 13-978-1433534089.**

In this book, Philip Ryken notes that, “[T]here is hardly anything we need more in the Christian life than more love for Jesus” (14). If indeed, we truly love Jesus, how are we to deal with doubts and prejudices, with those in our church who are hard to love, and with the knowledge that we are incapable of loving as Jesus did on our own? This book was written to help us better understand the love of God, and therefore, to better live and love in the power of the Spirit. Ryken calls us to question our doubts and addresses our lack of love for Jesus with the gracious words of a compassionate friend.

Each chapter of this book is adapted from a chapel sermon preached by Ryken at Wheaton College, where he is currently president. As such, the book maintains a conversational and pastoral tone. Ryken conveys foundational Biblical truths in common terms so that both the new convert and the more experienced believer can be encouraged. The book primarily deals with the motives of our hearts; thus, there is no point where we are given “seven simple ways to love Jesus more.”

Instead, we are offered Scriptural insights and numerous examples of how Christian love has been displayed in other's lives.

From the first chapter, the love God has shown us in salvation is connected with the natural effects it should have on every facet of our lives. The love God has shown us, and now empowers us to show, affects everything from our faith to our pursuit of knowledge to our ability to show forgiveness, as Ryken explains in the next three chapters. Throughout the book, he points us again and again to our constant dependence on God if we are to love like he does. The beautiful truth that is revealed is that the more we understand Jesus' love, the more we will love him. The more we love Jesus the more we will learn to love others like He does. The more we love others, the more we are pushed back to the one who showed us what love is in the first place.

Ryken's writing is rich in theology and practicality. He places quotes from Puritan Thomas Vincent alongside stories of his own children's expressions of love to both clarify and display what Christ's love looks like in the Christian's life. Far too often when we discuss or write about love, especially the love of God, we tend to either be fully wrapped up in our emotions or completely ostracized from them. Ryken, however, makes it clear that love is both affective and practical. He also does well to explain that each of us will experience and exhibit the love of God in a variety of ways.

We live in an age where love is equated with permissive laxity when it comes to morality and behavior. Ryken is intentional in clarifying that, although the love of God is personal, "True love always stands in conformity to the commands of Christ" (79). In stating this truth, the counter-cultural reality of God's love is highlighted. Ryken never points to culture, he doesn't address any hot topics or moral debates. His intent throughout the book is clearly to address our hearts and help us do exactly what the title suggests, to love Jesus more, which means following His commands.

The study guide in the back of the book provides a quick overview of each chapter and a few discussion questions, which seem to be ideal for small group discussion and personal reflection. These are written to probe at the heart of the reader, making the scriptural truths discussed both personal and practical. I have already suggested this book to one friend who has found the book and accompanying study guide useful in their ministry. It seems to me that any time spent pondering the

question of how to love Jesus more, especially with a friend such as Ryken, is time well spent.

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***Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Re-presentation.* By David M. Allen. Tubingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008. 277 pp., \$90.00. Sewn Paper. ISBN – 13: 978-3161495663.**

The first time I taught a class on the book of Hebrews, I was not thoroughly acquainted with the secondary literature on the book. I was only a few feet deep in the swift stream of scholarly discussions.

That semester, I was also teaching a course on the Pentateuch. This experience left a deep impression on my understanding of the writer's argument in the letter. As we worked through the textual strategies of the Pentateuch as a book in the morning, we often came across those same texts, themes, and theological conclusions in the afternoon Hebrews course. There were a few students in both courses, and we agreed that it was sometimes difficult to remember which class we were supposed to be in. In short, the intensive reading and discussion of the Pentateuch and the letter to the Hebrews created an intertextual force field that gave me a line of sight across the terrain of the biblical canon.

In the Hebrews course, we kept returning again and again to the final chapters of Deuteronomy. In particular, we kept hearing hints of the melody line from the so-called song of Moses (Deut 32) as we worked through Hebrews. Several times throughout the semester, I thought, someone needs to write a high-level monograph on the relationship between Hebrews and Deuteronomy, with at least an initial focus on the song of Moses.

Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews

Thus and so, I was pleased to come across David M. Allen's book, *Deuteronomy and Exhortation in Hebrews: A Study in Narrative Representation*. In this reworking of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Edinburgh, Allen examines the relationship between the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy and the New Testament letter to the Hebrews.

Recognizing the avalanche of secondary literature on the New Testament's use of the Old Testament, Allen pursues a specific avenue of inquiry: "the way in which an individual OT book functions corporately within the letter" (4). So, Allen examines the use of Deuteronomy in the letter, "attempting to discern how the latter's various OT motifs might contribute to a 'Deuteronomic' reading of the letter" (4). Allen's approach is "intertextual in a broad, though not unlimited sense" (15). He limits his scope to "that exchange between the textual worlds created by Deuteronomy and Hebrews" (15). In particular, Allen argues that it is "perfectly possible that the author's choice of OT materials (quotations, allusions, echoes, characters, themes, et al.) are not merely an apologetic or coincidental proof texts, but rather corporately reconstruct a familiar OT narrative that serves the author's hortatory purpose" (4).

This statement indicates two areas that make Allen's study a unique contribution. First, Allen examines the use of individual citations of Deuteronomy but also couples that with an analysis of the impact of the book as a whole on the writer's argument. Second, Allen seeks to uncover the effect and impact of Deuteronomy on the exhortation sections of the letter. Following broadly George Guthrie's insight that there are discernible strands of both exposition and exhortation in the letter, Allen assesses the use of the Old Testament in these particular sections (12-15). These exhortation sections sometimes do not receive as much intertextual analysis as the exposition sections (e.g., the Christological development of Heb 1:1-14).

In his study of Deuteronomy, as well, Allen focuses on the "Deuteronomic paraenetic material" that has a "life of its own distinct from the legal corpus" (13). Allen argues in this regard that "the vast majority of connections between the two texts are found within their respective hortatory material" (13).

Accordingly, one of Allen's central contributions is to bring together a close study of the use of the Old Testament in the letter (with an emphasis on the book of Deuteronomy) with an extended analysis of the exhortation sections of both writings.

Relating the Letter to the Hebrews and the Book of Deuteronomy

As Allen notes early on, Hebrews and Deuteronomy share some striking parallels (5):

- Both texts appeal to past events/history as grounds for action in the present.
- Both invest the land motif with a soteriological character, and define apostasy in terms of the failure to enter that land.
- Both are sermonic or homiletic in character and appeal for attention to the spoken word.
- Both climax in discourse focused around two mountains, with cursing and blessing motifs prominent in each montage.
- Likewise, each one explicates a covenant that marks the end of the Mosaic era and a consequent change in leadership to a figure named Ἰησοῦς.

"Such surface similarities," Allen insists, "are actually symptoms of, or signposts to, a Deuteronomistic reading of Hebrews" (5). Allen treats Deuteronomy as a compositional whole that includes Deut 1-34, recognizing that "this was the textual form likely available to the NT writers" (9). Further, the "Deuteronomistic posture" is one that accounts for "the narrative's dominant pre-entry perspective" (10, Allen adds, "however 'fictitious' this might be"). The book's final form perspective is "the Moab, pre-entry handover moment of the discourse" (10). The implied audience of Deuteronomy, then, "stand at the threshold of entry into the land and await the prophesied blessing or curse which would subsequently accompany life within it" (10).

For Allen, this whole-book perspective of Deuteronomy is what should impact a reading of Hebrews. To demonstrate the reality of this inner-biblical connection, Allen examines the various ties that bind these books together. In chapter two, Allen provides a study of the text and function of the Song of Moses in Deut 32. This is a strategic text within

the scope of Deuteronomy, and it also has an “independent existence” as a well-cited and often “sung” text in the history of Israel/Judaism.

In chapter three, Allen examines the Deuteronomic quotations, strong allusions, echoes, and narrative allusions in Hebrews. He identifies 6 quotations, 6 strong allusions, 5-6 echoes, and 3 narrative allusions to the text of Deuteronomy. The song of Moses in Deut 32 is referred to at least 8 times. Moses’ song, though, also provides a particularly prominent theological and conceptual backdrop to the exhortation sections of the letter. As Allen writes, “this impressive and consistent textual use of Deuteronomy suggests that Hebrews has reflected upon its source text’s narrative situation in order both to shape its hortatory purpose and to articulate evocatively the consequences of apostasy” (109).

Alongside these strong textual links, there are also a number of other features that coordinate Deuteronomy and Hebrews. In chapter four, Allen highlights three major themes that are prominent in both texts: the centrality of “covenant,” the blessing/cursing imagery, and the focus and appeal to the “land.” In chapter five, Allen uncovers the “homiletical affinities” between Hebrews and Deuteronomy (156ff). The homiletic shaping of Hebrews indicates that “its argument mirrors that of its Deuteronomic source” (198). The story of Deuteronomy, then, is “replayed within the [New Covenant] context of Hebrews” (198).

In chapter six, Allen brings his argument to a climax by examining “re-presentation” in both Deuteronomy and Hebrews. After laying the exegetical (Ch. 3), thematic (Ch. 4), and rhetorical (Ch. 5) groundwork, Allen here constructs his climactic intertextual insight.

The book of Deuteronomy, and in particular Deut 28-34, is designed to interpret and “re-present” Israel’s history. This re-presentation is for the purpose of persuading contemporary readers that the Mosaic covenant is obsolete and a new covenant is needed. The audience, then, is poised on the threshold of an entirely new way of relating to God as his covenant people. The “situational relationship” between the respective audiences is “the common Deuteronomy-Hebrews thread, with both audiences positioned at the critical moment of decision at the threshold of their inheritance” (203).

Accordingly, Hebrews not only cites and draws themes from Deuteronomy. Rather, Hebrews appropriates an entire complex of features (audience, purpose, literary type, and method) from

Deuteronomy. The frequent engagement with the final chapters of Deuteronomy is not an accident; rather, “it happens consistently through the letter’s hortatory material, gives collective explanatory power to the epistle’s admonitions, and in toto composes a perspective of new covenant handover at the threshold of the land” (225).

In other words, these two books share a wide interpretive horizon, and they invite their readers to join them there.

The “Deuteronomic Posture” of Hebrews

After demonstrating the large volume of intertextual exchange between Hebrew and Deuteronomy, Allen is able to argue that the “Deuteronomic posture” is the “unifying narrative for the letter’s exhortations” (225). Allen summarizes the import of this connection:

The frequent textual citation of Deuteronomy, the replication of key themes such as covenant and land, the adoption of the Song and its association with the end of the Mosaic era all point to an overarching representation of the Deuteronomic choice between life and death, apostasy and faithfulness, blessing and curse. Deuteronomy’s paraenesis becomes Hebrews’ paraenesis.

Hebrews, therefore, does not just use Deuteronomy; it becomes a new Deuteronomy and challenges its predecessor’s contemporary hegemony. By undertaking this intertextual engagement with Deuteronomy, the epistle’s writer transfers his audience away from their allegiance to an outdated, redundant Sinai existence, dons Mosaic garments and addresses them afresh on the plains of Moab. Within Hebrews’ new covenant situation, the exhortation to “Choose Life” remains as pressing as ever.

For good reason, Allen’s volume has impacted the discussion of Hebrews’ use of the Old Testament. As noted above, Allen’s work provides a fresh impetus for interpreters to consider the role of the Pentateuch’s narratives in the coherence and artistry of the exhortation sections of the letter.

Further, in addition to the helpful exegesis of intertextual links, the most important contribution of this work is the way it is able to account for the non-citational uses of Deuteronomy within the letter.

Allen’s overarching thesis and many of his textual connections still need to be examined, re-evaluated, and further developed; however,

he has skillfully set these two biblical books in relation to one another and has compellingly demonstrated that this particular construal is not arbitrary but rather a profoundly text-immanent feature.

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***The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement.* By Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, Michael A. G. Haykin. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2015. ix + 352 pp. \$49.99. Hardcover. ISBN-13: 978-1433673757.¹**

If I could, I would love to find and sit with the 21st century Baptist equivalent of the Inklings. Regularly meeting with gifted colleagues at a local coffee shop (this is the Baptist version of course) sharing recent thoughts and research, all for mutual instruction and edification. Reading *The Baptist Story* by Drs. Chute, Finn, and Haykin in many ways accomplished this dream for me. In this volume these brothers have presented readers with a timeless textbook that I hope will be read widely and by many.

The Baptist Story is a much needed textbook as due to many of the reasons the authors provide in their introduction, as most other attempts at a Baptist history text are virtually unusable in a classroom setting. Some texts are dated, some are marred by ideological or political agendas and blind spots, and some are simply deficient — either too broad or too narrow. *The Baptist Story* is a conscious attempt to provide an accessible and helpful text for introducing students and readers to the story of the Baptists in history — and I cannot commend it highly enough.

¹ This review first appeared at Books at a Glance on August 17, 2015: <http://booksataglance.com/book-reviews/the-baptist-story-from-english-sect-to-global-movement-by-anthony-l-chute-nathan-a-finn-and-michael-a-g-haykin>

The authors take time in their introduction to state clearly the parameters they have established for themselves. The eschewing of footnotes and the inclusion of recommended readings that will actually benefit the student are just two of the ways the authors have endeavored to make this volume user-friendly for students, not historians. In addition, they have an accurate appreciation of what they can do and have done stating that this volume is “a collation and updating of many stories, one that itself will need to be updated in the future” (3). The authors write with refreshing conviction and humility and yet attempt not to use “history to pressure others into confirming to a particular position” but rather, “provide a history that informs the reader of how Baptists have reached their conclusions” (6).

Were I to have the honor of sitting down with these Baptist Inkings and given the invitation to share my thoughts on their work, I would have much to say, and I can only imagine how enjoyable the time and conversation would be for all. However, for the purposes of this space and the recognition that the reader just might not be as much of a Baptist history enthusiast as the few of us that exist, I will limit my thoughts to five commendations, one critique, and one request.

First, in addition to the above strengths, *The Baptist Story* is truly a work that will help students. The authors state, “We have structured several sections of this book based on questions that students commonly ask and we have included areas of personal interest that we have not found in other textbooks” (4). From beginning to end, the authors deliver on this student-friendly approach. It is a book that is as enjoyable to read as it is informative.

Second, by design the authors are able to provide more detail, interesting and curious anecdotes, and biographical information in the early chapters, but as the book and Baptists expand, the opportunity to continue to include such helpful devices is lost due to the need to attempt to give an adequate portrait of Baptists in their various forms and locations. While, I think the volume would be stronger if such devices were included throughout, this approach does make for a strong foundational first section.

Third, the authors also have made a conscious and fair attempt to explain and explore the role Africans and African Americans have played in Baptist history. Their exposition of events and doctrinal ramifications from the slave trade through the Civil Rights era is

exceptional and heretofore unmatched in a comprehensive history of the Baptist tradition.

Fourth, when reviewing the Southern Baptist Convention's first adoption of the Baptist Faith and Message in 1925, the authors note that "Southern Baptists ironically were far more confessional at their founding [in 1845] than they were in 1925" (249). They rightly have in mind that early Southern Baptists saw no need for a national confession, not because they were anti-confessional as some 20th century Baptists would assert, but rather because all of the churches in that era had adopted and used confessions at the local level.

Fifth, the authors deftly treat the contemporary era with great care — a challenging task for any historian writing about his own context. This is one of the first Baptist histories that has the opportunity to treat W.A. Criswell, Adrian Rogers, Carl F. H. Henry, and Chuck Colson since their passing and *The Baptist Story* is all the better for it. Their contemporary era section is forthright but not polemical or agenda driven. In short, these are chapters I will gladly ask my students to read when looking for answers or help.

Finally, in terms of my one critique, I think this volume has a deficiency in the authors' decision not to address more the Anabaptist Movement or its contribution (at whatever level) to the larger Baptist story. In the Church History courses most students will take in companion to their Baptist history course, the Anabaptists will either receive brief mention at best or often no mention at all. So, if they are not covered in discussions related to Baptist history, when will they receive adequate study? I think they are missing an important opportunity for a textbook of this scope and potential influence.

In their introduction and "Anabaptist Similarities" section in the first chapter, the authors explain well why they have made the decision to focus on "connectedness" more than "indebtedness," with regard to their brief treatment of the Radical Reformers, but I disagree with their basis of determining what is a connected group. While it is true there is no verifiable historical connection between the European Anabaptists and the rest of the Baptist tradition, this does not mean there is no connection at all or that the Baptists are merely indebted to the Anabaptists. As G. H. Williams, W. R. Estep, Timothy George, and James Leo Garrett have noted in their works, the Anabaptists have much light to shed on the development of doctrine among the latter Baptist

tradition. When one reads the authors' fine concluding chapter in *The Baptist Story*, one sees that the Anabaptists share many, if not all of the same commonalities, or distinctives that the authors of *The Baptist Story* have concluded best represent the Baptist tradition. Furthermore, the very biblical texts that the Anabaptists used and were convinced by to adopt practices such as believer's baptism and a regenerate church are the very same texts that motivated Baptists from England, America and beyond. This doctrinal and biblical connection is far more important than any historical connection and it is what distinguishes the Anabaptists as worthy of focus in a Baptist history textbook as opposed to other Christian groups to which the Baptists are merely indebted (i.e. the Elizabethan Puritan Tradition).

My one request for future editions it would be to reframe the scope of the project as rooted in the Reformation. That is, *The Baptist Story: From Reformation Dissenters to Global Movement*. Ideally, the new edition would contain a single introductory section that reviews and clarifies further the Anabaptist landscape, emphasizes their preparatory contributions toward religious liberty, believer's baptism, regenerate church membership, and provides some biographical examples of the lives of Hubmaier, the Swiss & South German beginnings, Michael Sattler, the Schleithem Confession, and Pilgrim Marpeck.

The Baptist Story is a wonderfully engaging introduction to the work of God among people in Baptist churches. As a professor who teaches a Baptist history course, what a joy it is to read and commend the valuable work here produced by some of the finest Baptist history Inklings in our day. May the churches and the nations benefit from the telling.

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