

necessarily identified with what an author actually wrote). Holmes is surely correct that terminological precision is needed, yet it seems to this reviewer that reports of the death of the original text are greatly exaggerated. Fifth, Daniel Wallace includes a spirited critique of the Majority Text theory, which holds that the best reading for any given variant is most likely the reading that is preserved in the majority of manuscripts.

Even those not particularly interested personally in textual criticism must be aware of the importance of the discipline, since our access to ancient books (including the New Testament) comes through the process and tools of textual criticism. An important aspect of the Reformation was the return *ad fontes*, most notably to Scripture itself in the original languages. Virtually concurrent with Luther's nailing of the ninety-five theses was Erasmus's first published edition of the Greek New Testament (1516). The last five hundred years have witnessed numerous editions of the Greek New Testament, but they are all possible because scholars are applying the tools of textual criticism to the array of evidence we have. Our knowledge of the text of the New Testament has only grown since the days of the Reformation. We should therefore be thankful that we do indeed find God's singular care and providence in preserving for us the text of the New Testament, just as we can also be thankful for those who have dedicated so much of their lives to investigating these matters so thoroughly. We can likewise be grateful to have so much fruit from their labors gathered together in one volume as we endeavor to give the text of the New Testament the careful attention it deserves.

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C. Clifton Black. *Reading Scripture with the Saints*. Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2014. Pp. xxvi + 263.

C. Clifton Black, who teaches New Testament at Princeton Theological Seminary and is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, specializes in the study of the Gospels, Mark in particular. By engaging with the recent renewal of interest in theological interpretation and the history of the interpretation of the Bible, he intends in *Reading Scripture with the Saints* to build bridges between academia and the church.

With the historical-critical method, a strict separation between exegesis and theology was established, but lately a new movement of theological

interpretation has arisen that seeks to overcome this chasm. Werner Kümmel, in his seminal *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problem*, could already speak of a “new emphasis on theological interpretation” in relation to Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann, but recent years have seen an intensification of the reading of the New Testament and the Bible theologically, as evidenced by numerous recent publications and the creation of the *Journal of Theological Interpretation*. Black wants to contribute to this renewal of theological interpretation, and indeed he asserts that “we now stand amidst the happy renaissance of a more deliberately theological interpretation of Scripture” (p. 15).

Most of the chapters of the book have been published separately as articles, and the genesis of the work explains its somewhat fragmented character. Black’s work considers a variety of interpreters through the ages, and the author compares his exposition to a series of galleries in a museum (p. 4).

Black acknowledges that he uses the word *saint* in an unconventional way (pp. 4–5). For readers familiar with the standard account of the history of biblical interpretation, Augustine (ch. 3), Thomas Aquinas (ch. 6), and Martin Luther (ch. 7) are familiar faces; yet by including Benedict’s rule (ch. 4) and the hymnody of Charles Wesley (ch. 9) in his own account, the author walks on less trodden paths. The most surprising selection of saints, however, is among the early moderns included: William Shakespeare (ch. 8), George Washington, and Abraham Lincoln (ch. 10)—the two presidential speeches discussed by Black are reproduced at the end of the book.

While most chapters focus on individual biblical interpreters, a few chapters offer a broader picture and define principles for theological interpretation. Chapter 2, for instance, proposes a Trinitarian approach, formulates ten theses, and presents Qohelet as a test case. In a balanced way, Black suggests reintegrating the Trinity into theological interpretation—in his discussion, he mentions the influential 1994 article by the Lutheran theologian David Yeago, “The New Testament and Nicene Dogma” (p. 10). Black advocates in his fifth thesis “a less sectarian, more comprehensive, and arguably less problematic framework” (p. 19), one in keeping with the ecumenical character of the current renewal of theological interpretation in a postmodern context. For example, Stephen Fowl, who wrote the foreword to *Reading Scripture*, teaches at Loyola University Maryland; evangelicals are also involved (see, e.g., the helpful *Introducing Theological Interpretation of Scripture: Recovering a Christian Practice* [2008] by Daniel Treier of Wheaton College). The reinjection of theology into biblical exegesis is certainly beneficial and welcome, as is a rediscovery of the history of biblical interpretation; however, room should be made for theological formulations

beyond the Trinity, and theological interpretation should spark individual traditions, such as the Reformed tradition, to explore anew the link between the Bible and the confessions.

At the end of chapter 2, Black illustrates his Trinitarian approach by applying it to Qohelet or Ecclesiastes. His proposal is to read the book in light of the definition of the triune God given by the traditional rule of faith (going back to the church fathers), rather than deriving the Trinity from the text. This approach is fitting, given the paucity of theological statements in Ecclesiastes. While the chapter presents not much about the Trinity per se, it does offer some great insights, such as, “Scripturally considered, Qohelet is Ephesians 1:3–14 turned inside-out” (p. 32). What is veiled, the mystery, in Qohelet is fully revealed in Ephesians, including the triune God. Further, Black distinguishes his approach from that of Brevard Childs in this way: “I am less interested in Scripture’s final, canonical shape than in God’s lively and forever surprising triune shape” (p. 34).

Interactions with later parts of Black’s book help to clarify the relation between the Bible and doctrine, and to shed additional light on the interpretation of Ecclesiastes. From Augustine’s exposition of 1 John the author concludes that interpretation is about “transformation, not information” (p. 45). Applied to Ecclesiastes, one can argue that this ancient wisdom is a truly powerful deterrent to trusting in earthly realities, but one should not too quickly put a wedge between transformation and information. Moreover, Black usefully uncovers Aquinas’s multifaceted, patristically grounded exegesis of John’s prologue, but we should perhaps not so quickly brush off Aquinas’s assumption “that the Bible may serve as an all-purpose doctrinal sourcebook” (p. 102). Back to Ecclesiastes, one can hardly derive the doctrine of the Trinity from this book. However, it has much to teach us about creation, the fall, and human existence; thus, it assists us in broadening our theological reflections beyond the Trinity.

The ten theses and the book as a whole also address the relationship between theological interpretation and the academic study of the Bible. On the one hand, Black leaves room for non-Christian, nontheological interpreters of the Bible; in other words, the Bible is a book open to all to interpret (thesis four, pp. 18–19). While rejecting the assumptions of Ernst Troeltsch’s historicism, Black integrates historical criticism as part of theological interpretation (thesis seven, pp. 22–25). Thus, he does not advocate an ahistorical/acritical theological reading. Further, there is in his mind no rupture “between scholarly and devotional reading” (thesis ten, p. 27).

On the other hand, Black attempts to rehabilitate traditional theological reading of the Bible. In chapter 5, Black compares and contrasts modern

interpretations of Jesus's transfiguration with those of the church fathers and the medievals. He both notes some of the shortcomings of the historical-critical method and acknowledges that even premoderns do at times distort Scripture, but he also notes that "distortion of biblical meaning is not the exclusive province of pre-Enlightenment interpretation, as a brief visit to any meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature should verify" (p. 83). His discussion concludes that ancient interpreters "were wiser in their perception that what God *ultimately* wants from us is not better scholarship, but us scholars ourselves" (p. 85). Likewise, at the end of the book, he makes a final pitch for traditional theological interpretation as a coherent reading valuable for the church (pp. 197–99).

Black's proposal for theological interpretation entails a personal relationship with God and deep spirituality. In his ninth thesis, he describes our relationship to Scripture as part of a love relationship to God (pp. 26–27). Erasmus, whom we commemorate in this issue of *Unio cum Christo*, argues in the introduction to his 1516 New Testament that Scripture ought to be valued more than any human letters; Erasmus's hint at Scripture as love letter concords with Black's proposal. Black also transposes Benedict's advice for community life to counsel on how to read the Bible (pp. 51–67). Thus, Benedictine spirituality is put to the service of Bible study in the church with emphases on listening, humility, mutual submission, and so on. Moreover, drawing upon his own ecclesiastical tradition, the author examines Charles Wesley's biblical interpretation as reflected in his hymns, in particular two based on the parable of the Good Samaritan (pp. 143–67). It illustrates how worship and interpretation are intertwined and how hymns can enrich our understanding of the Bible.

A few more words can be added on Wesley's hymnic interpretation of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Black reproduces the two hymns on the parable with Scripture references in the margins and admits that "Wesley's familiarity with scripture was greater than [his]" (p. 150, n. 14). We discern at the outset an understanding of the parable in light of the whole of Scripture. Black also underscores the Holy Spirit's illumination in Wesley's interpretive approach (pp. 147–49). However, Wesley's interpretation is christological, as he identifies the Good Samaritan with Christ in the following words "From heaven to earth he comes, / ... / Upon himself my nature takes, / And all my sins assumes" (p. 160). We cannot do full justice to the rich interpretation contained in these two hymns, but let us just note additionally that one ends on a moral note, a call to Christians to be merciful, and the other concludes with a prayer for Christ's care (pp. 161–62). Observe in passing that some Wesleyan emphasis emerges, with a refutation of

“Calvin’s doctrine of irresistible grace” and the “insistence on human repentance as prerequisite for God’s forgiveness” (p. 164). Finally, in contrast to the historical-critical approach to the parables that wishes to see only a single point in each parable, Wesley’s openness to allegory challenges one to read the parables in a more nuanced and rich way (pp. 165–66).

In his treatment of Aquinas and Luther, Black expands on matters of method as well. He explores the sophisticated exegetical approach Aquinas uses in the exposition of John 1:1–14, finding that the commentary draws explanations of words from various church fathers, refutes heresies, appeals to other Scriptures, and provides summary statements (pp. 90–91). Despite some reservations, Black views Aquinas as a model of exposition (p. 103) and concludes that anyone who does not explore his or her “rich exegetical heritage [beyond] the nineteenth century is an orphan” (p. 104). Next, Black compares three different expositions of Psalm 51 by Luther, which enables him to trace the development of Luther’s exegetical method in continuity and discontinuity with the Middle-Ages (pp. 121–22). In the process, key Reformation themes emerge: sin, justification, grace, and so on. Thus, both Aquinas and Luther contribute to exegetical method.

In chapter 8, Black explores two monuments of English culture (p. 132), the King James Version and Shakespeare. He does not give an exposition of Shakespeare’s interpretation of the Bible, but rather compares one play, *King Lear*, with the Book of Job. The independence of the two makes their similarities all the more intriguing (p. 130). Black explores the themes of injustice and tragedy (p. 134–36) and the disruption of language in both (pp. 136–39). In conclusion, he notes that Shakespeare communicates to ordinary people (pp. 198–99) and thus helps to communicate the message of the Bible.

Washington’s and Lincoln’s speeches likewise speak not to academicians, but to the people. The author compares Washington’s farewell (1796), the first president’s expression of concern for the future of the young republic, to ancient and to biblical *Abschiedsreden* (farewell speeches) and to New Testament ethical codes (pp. 172, 174). Following the analysis of Mark Noll, Black asserts that Lincoln’s second inaugural (1865) offers a surprisingly deep analysis of providence in the context of the Civil War (p. 190), even greater than the reflections of theologians such as Charles Hodge (p. 187). Black’s final assessment is balanced and helpful: while both statesmen are strong on a providential reading of history, their understanding of Christology is rather weak (p. 193). Though issues such as democracy, slavery, and war are certainly relevant for an international audience, Black’s reflection could be expanded and enriched by including non-Western texts that relate the Bible to political issues.

All in all, the essays in *Reading Scripture with the Saints* offer varied, well-documented, and stimulating reflections on how to read the Bible theologically in the church. Though not in agreement with every single idea offered here, the present reviewer finds this journey into the past of the larger tradition of the church greatly rewarding.

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John W. de Gruchy. *John Calvin: Christian Humanist and Evangelical Reformer*. Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2013. Pp. 240.

Following on the five hundredth anniversary of John Calvin's birth, this book by theologian John W. de Gruchy attempts to restate Calvin's legacy in positive terms for the twenty-first century. De Gruchy points to the legacy of Calvin's Christian humanism to counter the caricature that Calvin was a grim moralist with a tyrannical God, to counter both Christian fundamentalism and secularism, to provide a transforming force that helps oppose the evils of slavery and apartheid, and to encourage struggles for liberation and transformation. His understandings of the weaknesses and strengths of Calvinist legacy were learned in the years of apartheid in South Africa and through his own wide study of modern Reformed theology. Without doubt, these understandings of Calvinism have also been shaped by his continuing interaction with Reformed theology in broader ecumenical conversations since the end of apartheid. This book on John Calvin was first published in South Africa in 2009 and is now reissued for a wider audience with Cascade books.

Early in the book de Gruchy sets up the following contrast: "Calvin, Calvinism and Reformed seem at first sight synonyms for dour, dull, puritanical and iconoclastic, quite the opposite of what Christian humanism is about" (p. 14). He notes that this picture of Calvinism is a caricature, but also that "it contains sufficient truth to keep sticking" (p. 14). To counter the part of this caricature that "keeps sticking," de Gruchy notes about Calvinism that "there is much to retrieve and celebrate that is of importance for the ecumenical Church and global society in the twenty-first century." At this point he points to the many stories from *Reformed World*, the journal of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, in which the "Reformed family of Churches are rethinking, restating and seeking to embody the Reformed faith tradition in the new millennium" (p. 14, n. 7).

The book is presented in two parts, the first sketching Calvin among the Reformers and the second exploring key themes in Calvin's legacy. Key to