

understandable idiom. In a time of great turmoil and uncertainty about the survival of their country's independence, these first readers eagerly want to return to Christianity as the source of the life of their nation.

Exactly five hundred years after the publication of Luther's New Testament in vernacular German (1522), this translation also exemplifies the need of every tongue and nation to hear God's word in their own language (Acts 2:7–11) despite conservative resistance and a false appeal to "tradition" (in fact, "traditionalism"). Of course, no translation of the Bible as such is perfect. Necessary revisions or adjustments here and there will certainly take place in time when new editions are published. The public addressed during the abovementioned presentations was invited to make remarks or deliver informed criticisms (based on solid arguments, not mere reading habits).

The next step is, of course, to complete the translation of the Old Testament and eventually publish the whole Bible. The committee of Christians for Armenia is committed to achieving this goal, which will take a few more years. Completing the translation of the Pentateuch is already well on its way. It might be published in a proof edition before the end of 2024. Needless to say, ensuring that adequate financial backing will enable the costs of this long-term enterprise to be covered remains a priority for this committee. While significant pledges have already been received, a fund destined to cover the eventual printing costs needs to be established without delay.

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Ps 119:105).

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Gerald Bray. *How the Church Fathers Read the Bible: A Short Introduction*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham, 2022.

Interest in the church fathers and studies focusing on how they interpreted the Bible have undergone a renaissance in recent years. It is not uncommon to find an increasing number of studies on biblical hermeneutics today that invoke the precedent of church tradition, not least the ancient church. However, the past is a foreign land, and finding one's way in the labyrinthine field of patristics studies can be daunting. While nothing can replace a deep dive into the primary sources, Gerald Bray has offered a wide-angle lens on

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patristic biblical interpretation for those new to the field, as well as a helpful assessment and review for those who already have some exposure.

Chapter 1 broaches the question “What Is Patristic Biblical Interpretation?,” and here Bray makes the important observation that the Bible was central to the fathers and we must appreciate that we are to understand them in their own time (5–6). Bray covers translation and canonical issues, and important topics such as the Alexandrian/Antiochene distinctives in biblical interpretation. Here, and elsewhere, he notes Origen’s massive influence on the interpretation of the Bible (e.g., 38).

Chapter 2 (“The Clash of Worldviews”) considers Christian interpretation in dialogue with Judaism and affirms a more “traditional” view of allegory and typology. Whereas typology is rooted in history, allegory (which Bray compares to astrology) assumes that the text is meant to be read metaphorically (e.g., 60, 101–2). Here, Bray focuses on four core convictions of early Christian biblical interpretation: monotheism, creation, theodicy, and eschatology. He also addresses Christianity in light of Greco-Roman religion and argues (apparently departing from some recent contributions to the field) that “patristic Christianity was far from being Neoplatonic in content or in inspiration” (82).

Chapter 3 addresses the four senses of biblical interpretation, which are indebted to Origen’s three senses (bodily, moral, and spiritual), along with John Cassian’s anagogical sense. Chapter 4 (“The Search for Consensus”) discusses different approaches to the complex issue of allegorical interpretation and looks at Tyconius’s seven rules of interpretation (famously used by Augustine in *On Christian Doctrine*).

Chapter 5 provides case studies of ten biblical passages: five from the Old Testament and five from the New Testament. The selection here includes foundational texts (e.g., Gen 1:26–27) and controversial texts (e.g., 1 Sam 28:13–14; Rev 20:1–6). Bray illustrates the difficulties and approaches taken and suggests his own way forward through the difficulties. Consistent with the design of many recent Lexham volumes, the book concludes with seven theses summarizing the book’s argument.

Bray has provided a thirty-thousand-foot overview of key issues and figures in the field of biblical interpretation that will be useful for those coming to the field for the first time and suggestive of some ways forward. The book is written in a simple, conversational manner, with a minimum of footnotes (and no highly technical footnotes). Bray helpfully reminds us that we should neither discount the fathers’ interpretations nor follow them blindly. He also argues that we may well find that we follow their conclusions without following their exegesis (156). This may seem to be a disconnect, and some

would say it must be both—and (that is, we must follow their exegesis if we follow their conclusions), but Bray reminds us of the limitations the fathers labored under and the better exegetical tools we have at our disposal today. Even so, we have much to learn from the fathers' approach. Bray does a fine job sketching the culture of the fathers and the complexities of their thought. This would not be the only book one needs to read on patristic biblical interpretation, but it will find a place as a simple, nontechnical overview.

Though they were not Bray's main focus, some of his passing assessments are unpersuasive. For example, he states that the Gospels are translations and seems to suggest the need to get behind the Gospels to determine original Aramaic words (23–24). But surely, the Gospels as we have them are the inspired texts, and though we may be curious as to what (or whether) Aramaic terms lie behind the text, the texts as we have them are the objects of our study. Furthermore, it is not altogether clear that the codex was preferred over the scroll for convenience (26); scholarship remains divided on the “why” of the codex's adoption among early Christians.

This is not a book that provides exhaustive, detailed discussions of the issues. It is a primer. But therein lies the beauty of a concise book like this one, which is designed to help open up the sometimes strange world of the church fathers to readers today. Yet we should not stop with what Bray himself says; we should read the sources ourselves—especially the Source they sought to explain.

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Leonardo De Chirico. *Same Words, Different Worlds: Do Roman Catholics and Evangelicals Believe the Same Gospel?* London: Inter-Varsity Press, 2021.

If our theology is partly biography, it is not difficult to understand why evangelicals in traditionally Protestant countries look at Roman Catholicism differently from those who come from Latin culture. Our experience does not come from books or distant friends. We were born in Roman Catholic families, and many of our friends still consider themselves Catholics. Why, then, are evangelicals and Catholics closer in the United States of America, Great Britain, and Central and Northern Europe while there is such confrontation in Latin America, Spain, and Italy? The answer you usually hear from evangelicals who have not been Catholic before is that Roman Catholicism is different in every country. Leonardo De Chirico has another