

## *Book Reviews*

### **Transcending Mission: The Eclipse of a Modern Tradition**

Michael W. Stroope

Downers Grove, IL, IVP Academic

2017, 457 pp., paperback, \$39.99

ISBN: 978-0-8308-5167-6

*Reviewed by Shawn P. Behan*

Michael W. Stroope's *Transcending Mission*, represents an investigation into an issue that has concerned him for much of his life, the confusion of the meaning of the language of mission. Decades as a missionary, PhD studies, and several more years teaching on the subject has left Stroope with a lack of clarity of what mission/missionary truly means. Thus, this book marks the conclusion to years of studying the language of mission and ultimately what he believes is the future direction of mission language.

Considering the multiple usage of the word mission, both inside and outside of the Church, the confusion over this language is something that many have identified before and is the starting ground for this investigation. Stroope takes a careful look at the biblical and historical usage of mission, seeing how modern users have justified its use through reading it into scriptural and historical records in order to connect modern mission with the larger Christian tradition. Ultimately, he shows that the word mission was not present in scripture, the early church, or any Christian history until modern times. He then ventures into the historical development of mission as a word for the activity we now associate with it – going to spread the Gospel among people who have not heard it before. He charts its

development out of the Crusades, through Ignatius and the Jesuits to the Modern Missionary Movement and today.

Ultimately, Stroope concludes that mission is a modern invention, one that we project into our Christian past in order to justify its present use. He argues that the Church would be better off forgetting the language of mission and its justification, for the more biblical and historical kingdom language. In this, he would strive for a recovery of the original meaning of pilgrim (one who ventures towards God in the inner life), and as pilgrims Christians are to bear witness to the hope and liberation that is only found in the kingdom reign of God. Thus, living out this kingdom rhetoric, the Church will begin to transcend mission and its confusing tradition as members of the kingdom and sojourners in the world.

While Stroope raises some interesting points and questions about the language of mission, he would have us replace confusing mission language with veiled kingdom language. It does not clarify the issue, but rather brings up a whole new set of issues. His evaluation of the biblical and historical records is a narrow and strictly literal reading, one that leaves very little room for any extrabiblical language – or at least extrabiblical language that developed after Constantine. He also critiques the single-mindedness of the history of Christianity that has been “missionized,” yet the history he tells of the development of mission language is just as single-minded as the one he critiques.

This book, while written well, only muddies the water of mission language further, and at worst could be seen as a rhetorical argument for the moratorium on missions. Outside of the well-versed missiologist who knows how to read and evaluate his argument, this book would complicate the further study and understanding of mission. Thus, while it might make for an interesting conversation partner for the missiology professor or PhD student, it would not be helpful to practitioners, pastors, or other seminary students.



## **The Lord is My Shepherd: Psalms to Accompany Us on Our Journey Through Aging**

Albert Micah Lewis

New York, NY: Paulist Press, Republished

2018, xvi, 153 pp., paperback, \$18.95

ISBN : 978-0-8091-5375-6

## **ONE: An Invitation to Those Who Seek**

Albert Micah Lewis

New York, NY: Paulist Press

2018, ix, 35 pp., hard cover, \$12.95

ISBN: 978-0-8091-0649-3

*Reviewed by Rabbi David J. Zucker, PhD*

Rabbi Dr. Albert Micah Lewis' recent publications *The Lord is My Shepherd*, and *ONE: An Invitation to Those Who Seek*, invite us to engage with God and God's place in our lives. The first book is specifically directed at a more senior population, as the subtitle indicates, *The Lord is My Shepherd: Psalms to Accompany Us on Our Journey through Aging*. Since the Psalms have also very much become part of Christianity's engagement with God, he offers this book to an interfaith audience. Taking three examples, Psalms 121 – "I Lift My Eyes," 23 – "Adonai is My Shepherd," and 98 – "Sing to Adonai a Song that is New," he directs his thoughts to people who are in their mature years, whether living at home, at a retirement community, or in long term care. Lewis characterizes the three examples as respectively a psalm of movement (121), of rest (23) and of rejoicing and pure exultation, of joy and reassurance (98). He carefully crafts his remarks to address seniors, showing how these ancient songs can easily speak to us today.

Each section divides into several parts. First, he presents the psalm itself as rendered in the 17<sup>th</sup> century so-called King James Version and then he offers his own idiomatic translation. A few pages of introduction to the psalm itself follow this, and then sentence-by-sentence he presents the psalm followed by some questions for further reflection. For example, building on the image of "I lift my eyes unto the mountains, (Asking) where will my help come from?" he poses some relevant queries: "What are your feelings when you are faced with a mountain of worry, and it feels like too much?" (9). Next comes a short prayer. Lewis encourages the reader to move beyond understandable self-pity, and to see the many ways in which God, and God's human partners are present in people's lives. Reflecting his career-long

interest in gerontology, he asks pertinent questions: “Do you resent needing the help of others? Do you find it hard to trust? What are some of the positive sides of accepting our neediness and learning to trust? Or taking joy in the gifts that others can give to us?” (19).

In the section on Psalm 23 he asks the person to reflect on these questions: “How, perhaps in spite of certain losses in your life, are your basic needs—physical, emotional, spiritual—being met? Who are your shepherds here?” (74). In the section for Psalm 98 he explains, “To say that aging is a challenge is an understatement. But as we age, we can find our own voices and songs, and we must make them heard—within the deepest recesses of our own hearts, by others, and by God. These utterances, however simple or profound, are what the Psalmist and God want us to express” (98). Throughout this book Lewis features the word Adonai for Lord, outside of the KJV translations. On the other hand, he uses masculine language such as “He,” “His” and “king,” when with some possible forethought, words like “sovereign” or “royalty” might have been possible.

In the second book *ONE: An Invitation to Those Who Seek*, Lewis successfully takes on a very difficult challenge: how to know God, and how to express one’s oneness with God, *in single syllable words*. Even the five divisions of the book are single syllables: Who Sent Me?; Build Me a House; The Soul; Pain and Loss; and God Speaks. Quoting from the book: “I have said my quest is ‘know God.’/ And here I have one clear thought:/ I know God as One:/ One who may be seen/ Through more than one lens:/ One who is not too high or low for me/ To reach/ Or to reach out to me” (10). In the final section, God explains, “And when I formed you,/ I knew true joy./ I was whole.” / “You and I are a pair,/ Each with our own work and joy./ I need you and you need me./ Of course/ there will be change and pain,/ Loss and gain,/ But know/ My joy is in your life,/ And your pain is mine, too.”/ ...”You must see with care/ And hear with the soul/ I gave you/” “In this way/ You will be you;/ The one you were meant to be .../ Like none else.”/ Then you will say—/ ‘I am who I am.’” (33-35).

These are thoughtful books, short and challenging, worthwhile reading and rereading.



## **Pentecostalism as a Christian Mystical Tradition**

Daniel Castelo

Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

2017, 214 pp., paperback, \$30.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-6956-2

*Review by Bud Simon*

Daniel Castelo, professor of dogmatic and constructive theology at Seattle Pacific University, has written a refreshing perspective that posits a theological framework for Pentecostalism using Christian mysticism. Academics, researchers, and students will find this book important because of the historical and theological background that identifies Pentecostalism as a continuation of Christian mystic tradition. Castelo seeks to appeal to the Pentecostal traditions across the spectrum of origins and in that vein points to the combination of theology and praxis in pursuit of God as the intersection at which mystical theology serves Pentecostal values.

The book invites the reader to rethink how Pentecostal theology has and will be developed by pursuing several key thoughts. First, it challenges the adequacy of typical evangelical methodology to develop Pentecostal theology. Second, the book demonstrates how Christian mysticism provides an appropriate foundation in which to develop Pentecostal thinking. Third, it examines the epistemological discontinuity between evangelicalism and Pentecostalism. The emphasis of Castelo's argument is that there is a strong sense of rationalism at work in American evangelicalism, something that excludes the mystical aspects of Pentecostalism. His discussion demonstrates the difficulty for an evangelical framework to identify with certain aspects of Pentecostal theology because of the rationalistic nature of evangelical faith.

Building on that discussion, Castelo addresses the methodology of Pentecostal theology by showing the deficiency of typical evangelical systematics to express the spiritual encounters that are normative for Pentecostals. Evangelical formulations typically focus on God in absolute terms in contrast to the relational and personal ways that Pentecostals identify with God in their theology. Christian mysticism is presented as a historical alternative that provides space for Pentecostal values to be stated in richer theological terms. He also discusses the inadequacy of an evangelical epistemology to clearly express Pentecostalism. Castelo acknowledges the overlap between evangelicals and Pentecostals but notes that the evangelical focus on empirical theological definitions makes it difficult to subsume Pentecostal

theology within that strain of the church. He demonstrates that Christian mysticism provides a better vehicle for expressions of experiential theology that are prevalent for Pentecostals.

One question that merits asking is why Castelo doesn't explore more deeply the influence of Methodism and other movements on present day Pentecostalism, a heritage that is well traced by Donald Dayton and others. In this book, Castelo's goal isn't to divorce Pentecostalism from a given heritage, but to find a better expression for its nascent theology. The point of his connecting Pentecostalism to mysticism is to establish church history as a theological foundation since both prioritize a spirituality of encounter with God. In other words, he doesn't deny that Methodism and other traditions are linked to Pentecostalism, but his discussion addresses how American evangelicalism fails to clearly express the essence of Pentecostal thinking because of key differences. But several issues remain ambiguously determined, including the fact that Wesleyan sanctification through the Holy Spirit aligns with Pentecostal experiences of the Holy Spirit. Castelo's efforts in this book are to appeal broadly to Pentecostals rather than to a specific denominational stream, even though personally he serves in a Free Methodist church. His goal is not to exclude evangelicals *per se*, but rather to point out that the rationalistic nature of American evangelicalism excludes the mystical aspects of Pentecostalism.

Overall the book builds a sound case which point towards Christian mysticism as a paradigm for Pentecostal theology. Castelo is adroit in explaining that Pentecostalism would profit through the use of a mystical theological framework to describe their experience rather than American evangelical constructs, and his book is recommended as a solid contribution to the study of Pentecostal theology which serves as an invitation to further dialogue.

### **Explorations in Asian Christianity: History, Theology, and Mission**

Scott W. Sunquist

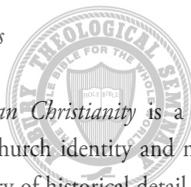
Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic

2017, 336 pp., paperback, \$45.00

ISBN: 978-0-8308-5100-3

*Reviewed by Zachariah S. Motts*

*Explorations in Asian Christianity* is a collection of essays on topics relevant to the trajectory of church identity and missionary involvement in Asia. Throughout, Sunquist's mastery of historical detail over geographical, cultural, and



chronological distances is impressive. Asian Christianity is an immense subject and no 336-page collection of essays can attempt to be comprehensive. Sunquist's work here, though, gives the reader important entry-points to larger conversations.

Sunquist is a historian, and the first sections in this book excel at orienting the reader to the historical context of Christianity in Asia. Sunquist carefully guides the reader through persecutions in Persia, over the Silk Road with the Nestorian Christians, and lingers over the rise and fall of Christian groups in China and Korea. For students of history, or those already familiar with Sunquist's work (i.e. Irvin and Sunquist's *History of the World Christian Movement*), a fascinating feature of these essays is the look into Sunquist's method. There is a thoughtful transparency in many of the essays concerning how he takes the threads of historical events and weaves them into a narrative. At one point, he answers the question of what he has learned through all of his studies by saying, "I have learned just how fragile Christianity is and yet how it has been central to the transformation of so many cultures. In other words, I have learned the paradox that Christianity is just a thin red thread running through history, and yet it is a major actor on the stage of world history" (93).

The latter essays are more eclectic close-ups divided into two sections on missiology and education. So, there are focused treatments of Protestant missionaries in Asia like Samuel Moffett, Julia Mateer, and Henry Luce; investigations of missionary strategies in Asia like the building of schools and the three-self movement; and essays that have a more geographical theme, exploring missionary work in Korea, the exchange of missionary ideas between Korea and China, and specifically the missiological importance of Shandong province in China. In the category of theology, there is a timely essay titled "Mission and Migration: An Introductory Theology." Here Sunquist notes that the modern mission movement has spent large amounts of energy working out theologies of mission, but is still only at the beginning of the discussion of where human migration fits into our theology. There are theologies written about why churches send people into the world, but these same churches seem theologically unprepared when the peoples of the world move into their neighborhood. Sunquist argues that the skills of translation and contextualization have given the church the ability to meet people at the "borderlands" where one group encounters another. Both mission and migration have created these borderland situations throughout church history. At times, churches have rejected borderlands through institutional stances like Christendom where "foreign elements were not engaged or received, nor their languages and cultures translated" (228). However, Sunquist's theology is that God's purposes, presence, and calling are often revealed in these borderland situations

where the church is given an opportunity to “retranslate, reexpress, and recentre the message” (229).

Throughout the book, Sunquist articulates Protestant evangelical/missionary concerns and themes without being narrow or exclusive. His broad appreciation of church history has given him respect and nuance when drawing on the many traditions of Christianity. Because of this, he is able to narrate Christian history in a way that is both supportive and critical of the modern missionary movement. He respects missionaries while not failing to note their feet of clay.

### **Saved by Faith and Hospitality**

Joshua W. Jipp

Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans

2017, 220 pp., paper, \$20.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7505-1

*Reviewed by Matthew Haugen*

The stranger is at the heart of the Christian faith, both in its identity and mission. The means and opportunity to disenfranchise and dehumanize the stranger is increasing in an era of globalization and individualization. Influenced by 1 Clement, Joshua W. Jipp’s *Saved by Faith and Hospitality* attempts to bring together many contemporary challenges, particularly those facing North American churches, into conversation with scriptural passages on hospitality to the stranger. The title is a corollary to faith producing work (James 2:14-26) - or at least producing hospitality according to Jipp. The church is predicated on God’s hospitality to his people, who then mediate his hospitality.

*Saved by Faith and Hospitality* is organized into two sections. The first section is on divine hospitality. It focuses on the *sacramental nature* in which God reveals himself to the church and the church is then made a sacrament to the stranger. Chapter 1 focuses on the restorative nature of meals and of identification with the stigmatized. Through these sacramental means, the people of God become both the recipients *and* the recapitulation of God’s hospitality. Chapter 2 focuses on ecclesial hospitality amidst diversity, particularly through the sacrament of Eucharist. Chapter 3 focuses on the meaning of humanity and the mission of the church, which is the mediating of God’s hospitality.

The last section is on human hospitality. It focuses on the *missional nature* of God to the church and, subsequently, the missional nature of the church to

the stranger. This section addresses challenges common to hospitality. Chapter 4 addresses tribalism. As guests and hosts of hospitality through Jesus, God's people join in God's hospitality in the world through interfaith friendship and the sharing of gifts from God. Chapter 5 addresses xenophobia. Having received the hospitality of God, the people of God, who are strangers themselves, are enabled to welcome and to dispense God's hospitality to the stranger. Chapter 6 addresses greed. God's people are to be known by mercy, mutual solidarity, and prophetic critique rather than self-interested consumerism.

*Saved by Faith and Hospitality* uniquely contributes to the field of hospitality in its synthesis of a wide array of ethical topics on hospitality with interdisciplinary materials (e.g. missiology, sociology, social psychology) and brings ancient texts into conversation with current challenges. The text is fairly organized, but the evidences to Jipp's arguments in the first section are a bit repetitive. The second section does not mention much about the deeper challenges to *expressing* hospitality as I had hoped. Given that North America is not monolithic, how might understanding the myriad of cultural forms and epistemic assumptions (cf. Paul Hiebert's *The Missiological Implications of Epistemological Shifts*) help the church to more effectively confront the common challenges that face human hospitality today in North America? Granted, he represents his own field of expertise in biblical studies and ethics well. Overall, this book substantially contributes to the growing conversation between biblical studies and intercultural studies as well as between academia and the church. I recommend this book to those interested in Christian ethics, contemporary missiology, sacramental theology, and biblical exegesis.

### **Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible**

Edited by Michael J. Gorman

Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic

2017, 464 pp., paper, \$34.99

ISBN: 978-0-8010-9839-0

*Reviewed by J. R. Wright*

*Scripture and Its Interpretation: A Global, Ecumenical Introduction to the Bible*, edited by the estimable Michael J. Gorman, contains essays authored by such equally estimable scholars as Joel B. Green, Craig S. Keener, and N. T. Wright (to name but a few). Gorman writes in the introduction that his purpose is to provide “a

global, ecumenical introduction to the Christian Bible and its interpretation across time and throughout various cultures” (xx). Thus, the volume provides insights from scholars across four major streams of Christian interpretation (Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, and Pentecostal), as well as insights both historical and contemporary. True to form, the contributors approach their task not merely as critics studying a historical artifact, but as “committed interpreters of scripture” (xxii), as one would expect from this particular publisher and these particular scholars.

*Scripture and Its Interpretation* consists of three main sections. Section 1 (“The Bible”) includes essays that examine the Bible from multiple perspectives (such as literary, geographical, historiographical, and archeological), which summarize the content of both canonical and non-canonical works, and which explore the formation and transmission of the Christian canon. Section 2 (“The Interpretation of the Bible in Various Traditions and Cultures”) provides an examination of modern critical theories, as well as hermeneutical perspectives from across a broad range of Christian traditions, including premodern, modern, postmodern, theological, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Pentecostal, African, African-American, Latino, Asian, and Asian-American interpretations. Finally, Section 3 (“The Bible and Contemporary Christian Existence”) contains essays that place the interpretation of scripture within the contexts of spirituality, Christian ethics, politics, community, and Christian mission. Each author provides a bibliography for further study at the close of each chapter, as well as helpful questions for summary contemplation.

This is a welcome volume for the beginning student of scripture. First-year seminarians, for example, will find the discussions lucid, informative, and useful as a launching point for serious biblical study. It could also serve well as an introductory text for Bible study within the church, as many laypersons are unfamiliar with the literary and historical backgrounds for the Bible and its interpretation. Particularly helpful are the examinations of hermeneutical approaches unfamiliar to Western Christians, as they properly situate the Bible within the global community, and within the multitude of voices that is the chorus of Christian interpretation. In these respects, the usefulness of the volume is readily apparent.

However, if the introductory nature of this work is one of its strengths, that nature is also its greatest weakness. To the more advanced student, the material within would seem elementary and preparatory. In this respect, a work such as Anthony Thiselton’s *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* easily replaces *Scripture and Its Interpretation*. Additionally, while the concluding section does contain insightful essays (some more so than others), it seems a bit superfluous and unconnected to Gorman’s overarching purpose. Therefore, as stated above, this is a welcome volume,

rich with valuable introductory information and global perspectives, even if its audience is inevitably limited, and even though it runs about fifty pages too long.

**So Great a Salvation: Soteriology in the Majority World**

Edited by Gene L. Green, Stephen T. Pardue, and K.K. Yeo

Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company

2017, 199 pp., paperback, \$22.00

ISBN: 978-0-8028-7274-6

*Reviewed by Bud Simon*

As the fourth book in the Majority World Theology Series, *So Great a Salvation*, edited by Green, Pardue and Yeo, makes a positive contribution to the discussion of global perspectives on soteriology. This work brings together authors from Botswana, China, Columbia, the Cree Nation of Canada, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Puerto Rico, and the United States. Yeo, one of the editors, introduces the topic of soteriology by discussing several traditional theories of salvation from church history and what “God saves” means in different biblical passages. He offers three hermeneutical frames for sin and salvation so as to lay the groundwork for the book’s discussion of global perspectives on soteriology.

Chapter One reviews Western soteriological traditions in broad strokes and suggests expanding the discussion of salvation to include creation and community. Chapter Two examines holistic salvation in the African context by naming several problems the continent faces, then proffers the pilgrim motif as an appropriate soteriological metaphor for the African church because such a theme unites cultural narratives with biblical aspects of salvation. Chapter Three addresses the challenges women face in the Pentecostal church of Botswana brought on by an orthopraxy that spiritualizes salvation to the exclusion of physical and social realities. The author places Luke 4:18-19 as the framework for multidimensional salvation through which greater egalitarianism can be encouraged. Chapter Four speaks broadly to Latin American soteriology in the Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, affirming that Liberation Theology recognizes the need for relational healing, freedom from oppression, and holistic salvation.

Chapter five expands on the soteriology of Latin American Liberation Theology by dialectically examining the materiality of what humanity needs salvation from. The author argues that Liberation Theology provides a robust biblical understanding of the anthropological role in salvation because it describes

the church's responsibility to provide relief from the machinations of injustice that oppress people. Chapter six uses a Canadian indigenous lens to interpret soteriology as a responsibility to reconcile. Such an interpretation harmonizes biblical salvation with indigenous spirituality by providing a paradigm for reconciliation with others, creation, tradition, and ethnic narratives. Chapter seven provides a Korean perspective on salvation as reconciliation with consideration given to sociopolitical dynamics. The biblical nature of salvation as reconciliation is applied to the Korean peninsula, encouraging peace and friendship in a highly charged context. Finally chapter eight examines salvation in Ecclesiastes by weaving redemptive motifs with the Asian Chinese values of pragmatism, morality, and diligence.

Several clear strengths in this volume on soteriology emerge from the authors' work. First, Western readers encounter new perspectives on salvation that they otherwise may not find in their journey. Second, the book provides snapshots into thinking in different areas of the world and the formative cultural aspects that shape theology. Third, the authors' diverse perspectives help to deepen an understanding of soteriology through the varied cultural lens.

However, there are several weaknesses that emerge in this volume. One apparent shortcoming from a Latin American perspective is the neglect of interaction with Pentecostal Evangelical soteriology. Latin American Pentecostalism has been growing exponentially for a century and as such a Pentecostal perspective merits discussion. Another weakness is that nationality, tribe, gender, denomination, education, and theological training shape specific soteriologies; therefore to suggest that they are representative of a continent is an oversimplification that ignores global cultural complexities. Even so, the editors of this volume provide a voice for the global community to inform soteriology and this book is recommended as a strong contribution on the topic, meriting engagement by serious students of theology and global Christianity.

### **Interpreting Old Testament Wisdom Literature**

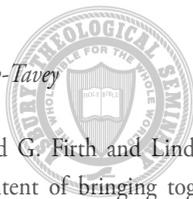
Edited by David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson

Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press

2017, 248 pp., paperback, \$30.00

ISBN: 978-0-8308-5178-2

*Reviewed by Michael Whitcomb-Tavey*



In this book, David G. Firth and Lindsay Wilson edited a collection of eleven papers, with the intent of bringing together a holistic understanding

of Old Testament wisdom literature. In fact, the main purpose of the book is to help the reader better interpret wisdom literature. Historically, many writers have attempted to write on such matters. However, although such writers were successful in their attempt, they mainly focused on one particular wisdom book. This edition provides a refreshing addition to these previous works because it broadens the scope in which wisdom literature is both understood and interpreted. Not only does it specifically focus on individual books of wisdom, but also focuses on how each wisdom book correlates with other books of wisdom, thereby helping the reader to better understand wisdom literature as a whole. In other words, this edition helps the reader to interpret wisdom literature from a canonical perspective.

The book is separated into three sections: “The Study of Wisdom Today,” “The Wisdom Literature,” and “Themes.” The first chapter is the sole chapter in the first section, helping to introduce the reader to a basic history of the study behind wisdom literature interpretation. The author of this chapter (Bartholomew) provides a simple, yet quite helpful, definition of wisdom literature: “...wisdom deals with how to navigate life ‘successfully.’” He also discusses such concepts as postmodernism, the relationship between wisdom and law, historical criticism, and source criticism, and how they have helped shape the study and interpretation of wisdom literature within the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries.

Section two devotes its content to the four undisputed books of wisdom within the Old Testament: Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. According to the writers, Proverbs understands the world through strict rules of causality, whereby every action has a specific consequence. As such, the righteous will prosper, and the wicked will suffer. Job, in response to this worldview, challenges such conceptions. Instead of a strict rule of causality, Job understands the world in more cosmic terms, whereby unseen factors influence the world, and whereby even the innocent and righteous can suffer. Ecclesiastes also challenges the causality worldview, understands the world via observations, and presents the reader with a pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic perspective of life. The difficulty lays in discerning which parts are pessimistic, realistic, and optimistic, and how each one of these specific elements relate to each other. Lastly, Song of Songs is a wisdom text that deals with one specific category of life: relationship and marriage.

The last section addresses specific themes found within wisdom literature, and how these themes function in the wider context of the Old Testament corpus. Among this section, chapters are devoted to unique topics, such as addressing the ways in which Ruth might be considered as wisdom literature, how wisdom literature, or its specific elements, function within the contents of the *Nevi'im*, and how wisdom literature helps shape Biblical theology. It also questions if certain

portions of the Psalms should be read as wisdom literature, and how the concept of “retribution” plays a very significant role in the books of wisdom. The last chapter in this section is quite intriguing, dealing with the aspects of Divine absence, and how those aspects help shape wisdom literature as a whole, as well as provide a unique way of interpreting it.

This edition, although extremely helpful, is not without its shortcomings however. The edition seems to have been written from a strictly canonical Christian point of view. Very little attention is given to it from a canonical Jewish point of view. As such, it fails to fully explore all the dimensions of wisdom literature, and its possible interpretation(s). Specifically, it does not address the relationship between wisdom literature and the *Ketuvim*. How does wisdom literature correlate with the *Ketuvim*, and how can one better understand wisdom literature because of that correlation? Since wisdom literature is written within the confines of the *Ketuvim*, such questions are begging to be answered.

This edition provides a unique and fresh way to understand and interpret wisdom literature. It addresses the topic from a canonical perspective. Despite one significant shortcoming, the edition is extremely insightful, and will provide teachers, students, pastors, non-pastors, and others with an acute understanding of each wisdom text, how each wisdom text functions in correlation with each other, the major themes present in wisdom literature, and the major themes of wisdom elements throughout the contents of the Old Testament. Indeed, one should meet this edition with both avidity and alacrity of reading.

