
Is the “other half” of Christian history and theology neglected or even ignored in current theological scholarship? Although John C. England acknowledges the growth of writings on Asian Christianity and theologies of Asia, he endeavors, like an archaeologist, to unearth the treasures—largely unknown materials for the history, arts, ecumenism, and indigenous theologies of Asian Christianity (vii)—that cover the span from the third century to the twentieth century in fewer than four hundred pages. After attempting “to reconstruct a map of early and medieval Christianity in Asia and the diverse stories of the Christian movement it represents” in chapters 1 and 2 (4), England pays particular attention to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries when discussing the dynamic interaction between Western missionaries and the indigenous population (chapter 4). Furthermore, he draws attention to early Christian art (chapter 3), recognizing “this largely unknown history of creativity in expressing the Christian Gospel from within Asian cultures” that is less visible in books of this genre (82).

The main argument of the book is that there is still a gap in the study and production of Asian history and theology—even partial approaches labelled “Asian” struggle against the dominance of Western paradigms, where they “reflect an obviously western orientation in both methodology and interpretation” (103). The author works tirelessly and often repetitively to highlight neglected histories and theological movements that receive inadequate attention in current theological curricula not only in the West but also in Asia.

This work follows from England’s earlier contributions to the study of Asian Christianity, especially in ecumenical history and theology. His experience in theological education since 1969 suggests that this work is not birthed out of mere academic curiosity but rather is a lifelong quest
to amplify the voices from Asia. Hence, it is unsurprising that when he elaborates on theological method in chapters 5 and 6, England lifts up what he terms as “contextualizing/incarnational theology” that is “not shaped primarily by doctrinal or devotional beliefs and practices. It is rather their aspirations for a quality of human life in community…which determines the questions to the Gospel” (121). He believes that “an obsession with systematic and philosophical forms in doing theology… [had] displaced earlier patterns for doing of ‘theology’ and hidden the incarnational and transformative dimensions of much Asian reflection and writing” (122).

Overall, particularly in the selection of eight “watershed” theologians (chapter 8), England lays out primarily “ecumenical” contributions as an Asian corrective to the “Western” paradigm that is often church-centric and downplays the human, secular, and indigenous, depending on the respective contexts from which these theologies emerge. For England, the foundational way of doing theology in Asia centers on the human life of Jesus. This approach requires us “[to] see our histories as ‘the story’ of human response to the Spirit’s movement—‘the discernment of God’s presence in history’…to recognize the dynamic of such a movement wherever the marks of Jesus’ ‘life-with-others may be discerned” (134).

The strength of this book is seen in England’s passion and determination to retrieve the lost treasures of ecumenical Asian theology and history. He provides a bird’s-eye view of history, movements, methods, and theologians through an ecumenical lens. Familiar names such as Shoki Coe, D.T. Niles, and M.M. Thomas are in his hall of fame of “watershed theologians,” but he also includes lesser-known theologians such as the pioneering Korean woman theologian Sun-Ai Lee Park and the Filipino Horacio de la Costa from the Roman Catholic tradition. Although his corrective intervention is welcome, especially his highlighting of voices often regarded as at the margins of the institutional church but associated with the wider twentieth-century ecumenical movement, theologians might question whether England’s framing and proposals might be too detached from the institutional church or display a tendency to romanticize noninstitutional theological contributions. Nonetheless, England provides a wide range and survey of thinkers and movements whom he values for their “prophetic” and “liberative” contributions into which theological students and interested scholars can delve more deeply.
The limitation of the book is most glaring when England elaborates his vision of both the past and how he envisions a possible future that could chart a way forward for Asian church histories and theologies—the ultimate aim in Part Two of the book. England’s prose at times is muddled or even lost with the names that read like a genealogical list from the Bible (especially Part Two, chapter 3). The book is full of names and bibliographies for the student interested in delving more deeply. Perhaps a Master’s thesis or a PhD dissertation might be awaiting them. However, England seems unable to sharpen his persuasiveness to bring the reader along in his quest because often one is either lost in the woods or flying too fast with him through his ambitious survey.

The eclectic organization of the chapters and the content could partially be explained by the fact that the book is a collection of articles, notes, and surveys all rolled into one. Perhaps further editorial decisions could have tightened the book’s scope and central arguments. Others might have noticed the neglect of interaction with counter-voices discussing the trajectory of Asian theologies, such as Simon Chan’s *Grassroots Asian Theology: Thinking the Faith from the Ground Up* (2014) or Hwa Yung’s *Mangoes and Banana: The Quest for an Authentic Asian Christian Theology* (2009). An interesting exception is buried in a footnote in which England briefly engages Indonesian theologian Joas Adiprasetya on a debate over the extent to which Asian theologies prioritize “text” (179); for more, the reader would need to be patient and labor through the footnotes to benefit from England’s more critical engagement with other scholars.

Admittedly, as the book’s subtitle already forewarns us, this is a collection of introductions rather than a critical study. England’s contribution continues from the previous trajectory of contextual theologies with an Asian focus on the twentieth century, but it also complements the increasing production of knowledge in the current field of study such as World Christianity, as well as other publications on theology from what is now termed the Majority World. In recent years, multi-authored volumes such as *The Oxford Handbook of Christianity in Asia* (2014), *Christianity in South and Central Asia* (2019) in the Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity series, and *Christianity in East and Southeast Asia* (2020) seem to reflect perspectives that might problematize a rigid Western and non-Western binary.
In the unprecedented collective experience of humanity impacted by a global pandemic and climate crisis, we are even more conscious of how interconnected we are in our world. Some have announced that we might be at “the dawn of the Asian century” when the West or the rest of the world will look to Asia for leadership. To what extent historians and theologians in Asia will rise up to the challenge remains an open question. Part of the answer would include following England’s exhortation to dig deeply to discover the treasures of the past, but we need to engage critically in reframing our theological interpretations and constructions in a fast-changing “new normal” since the pandemic. And this requires us not only to have the capacity to fly and be ever flying in our theologizing, but also to land and root ourselves in the ecclesial and earthly realities, and then fly again.

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The advent of the Enlightenment era made Christians in the West suspicious of the spirit realm. A Western New Testament professor who served in the Philippines admits, “I had never really questioned the reality of these biblical accounts of demonization. I believed them to be true! On the other hand, my own world-view and mentality simply would not let me admit that these spirit-world phenomena were ‘real’ in our world today” (Michael Andress, “An Experience with Demon Possession: A Case Study,” *Philippine Journal of Religious Studies* 2 [1996]: 2). Even Samantha Miller pronounces at the outset of this book, “The realm of the demonic is something that a lot of the modern, Western church (excluding the more charismatic branches) is uncomfortable with” (1). Christians outside Western Christianity, however, take the spirit world seriously. The existence of demons, angels, miracles, and healings are not alien to the worldviews
of Asians despite their cultural diversity. In short, they do not draw a clear line of demarcation between the natural and the supernatural realms.

This latest volume of IVP’s New Explorations in Theology is very relevant to the global church. In this review, I will summarize the book and explore its relevance to Asia. The numerous endorsements this book received from historical theologians and historians from different Christian traditions (Catholic, Lutheran, Radical Orthodoxy, and others) show its importance. As such, a careful study of this volume may provide an introduction to patristic thought on demonology. Interestingly, unlike the systematic theology books in the West that distinguish theology proper, anthropology, soteriology, and so on, this monograph delineates the inextricable relationship between anthropology, demonology, and soteriology. According to Miller, the anthropology of John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407 CE) shapes his demonology and soteriology. One cannot disconnect them as a distinct doctrine for the sake of having a “system.”

Miller notes that Chrysostomian scholars neglect Chrysostom’s view of the spirit world. Hence, she attempts to provide a sketch of Chrysostom’s demonology and its relationship to self-determination and soteriology. Chapters 1 and 2 present the backdrop that influences the formation of Chrysostom’s demonology. Miller shows that the concept of daimon is ambiguous in ancient society. Some pagans understood daimones as theoi, some perceived them as the spirits of the dead, and the Jews assumed they are evil spirits. Though perspectives on principalities and powers in the early fourth century are not monolithic, the unquestionable belief is that demons exist and are capable of interfering with human lives.

The early Christians considered demons as the enemies of God. These evil spirits seek to harm, which results in fear and anxieties. For example, Chrysostom’s congregation did not only believe in the existence of demons, they were also afraid that evil spirits might attack them by inflicting sickness, death, and poverty. “It is this fear, and its resulting lack of understanding and trust in the gospel, that Chrysostom would address” (45). In many of his sermons, Chrysostom reminded his congregation to be vigilant. The purpose is not to cause anxiety but to encourage his listeners to live a virtuous life. Also, he urged them to stay courageous because demons could not inflict suffering without God’s permission. This is important because, as Miller notes, for Chrysostom, evil spirits are useful
in the Christian life. “The devil, if you would understand, is even useful to us—if we use him correctly—and he helps us and we gain great things, not ordinary things. And this we demonstrated from Job” (74).

Early Christian demonology was closely connected with Jewish demonology. For the Jews, the activities of evil spirits intend to harm people and induce fear. As for the origins of the devil and demons, Miller explains two pieces of Jewish literature. One is the “the watchers myth” found in I Enoch 6-11, including Genesis 6:2; the other is the Greek Life of Adam and Eve 12-17, which espouses the devil’s envy of Adam (13).

According to Chrysostom, demons and the devil had proairesis (will), but they failed to use this faculty properly. Consequently, they became fallen angels who fell prior to the creation of the world. Chrysostom’s understanding of virtue and proairesis does not exist in a vacuum. Chapter 3 deals with the origin of these two concepts in Chrysostom. They came from Aristotle and Epictetus, who contended that every human being, too, has a proairesis. Consequently, Chrysostom educated his congregation that demons cannot cause them to sin because they have this innate ability (proairesis) to refuse temptations.

Chapters 4 and 5 contain Chrysostom’s anthropology and soteriology. Miller explains the connection between virtue (part of anthropology) and soteriology and shows that the relationship between these two is essential in Chrysostom’s demonology, given his assertion that demons aim to undermine the salvation of Christians. For instance, he argued that the devil could harm a person only if that individual succumbed to temptation, making her or his proairesis lean toward darkness. Chrysostom believed that humans are not totally depraved or good; it depends on how they utilize their proairesis. Chrysostom’s anthropology is quite different from Augustine’s doctrine of total depravity and Pelagius’s assertion of the goodness of humanity. For Chrysostom, “Salvation is a cooperative venture between God and the human being wherein God’s work is sufficient, all-encompassing, and primary, but salvation also requires something of the human. God’s work is the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and human contribution is a virtuous life” (9).

As an Asian, I find this book to be an excellent conversational partner with Asian works on the spirit realm such as Wonsuk Ma, “‘In Jesus’ Name!’ Power Encounter from an Asian Pentecostal Perspective,” in Principalities

As a Filipino student of theology, I find it fascinating that one of the important concepts in this book, proairesis, has a resemblance to Filipino personhood. According to Miller, proairesis is “a faculty of the soul that is an ability to choose” (4). This is similar to the Filipino concept of loob, the relational center of human consciousness. Both refer to the dynamic aspect of personhood. Miller also notes that some Christians today still think that demons are the cause of a person’s suffering—which is similar to how many Filipinos think. Thus, Filipinos in the Cordillera (Northern Luzon, Philippines, where I came from) practice atang to appease and bless the anitos (unseen beings).

I also find it significant that Miller brings out the implications of Chrysostom for the two movements, namely, the prosperity gospel and deliverance theology, that are now widespread in Asia. For these reasons, I think it is good that Asian scholars such as Simon Chan, Wonsuk Ma, Mona Bias, Timoteo Gener, and others endorse this book since they live in cultures that do not see the spirit realm as dubious.

Overall, this is an excellent book, especially for those interested in the theology of the spirit world of late antiquity. The volume will prove helpful for Christians in the West seeking to understand Asian primal worldviews.
Miller’s engagement with Chrysostom and his context connects Christians today to their rich heritage.

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Elaine Wei-Fun Goh, *Cross-Textual Reading of Ecclesiastes with the Analects: In Search of Political Wisdom in a Disordered Word* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), xiv + 212 pp., 978-1-5326-8149-3, $27.00, paperback.

Elaine Goh has written a knowledgeable and interesting book on a cross-reading of Ecclesiastes and the Analects. The book is divided into four main chapters. Chapter 1 is an introductory chapter in which Goh seeks to demonstrate that cross-culture reading is legitimate because biblical wisdom itself participates in cross-culture engagement with the wider world of the ancient Near East. Key concepts and the scope of research are then defined. This is followed by a preliminary introduction of eight passages in Ecclesiastes and the relevant passages from the Analects, all related to the theme of political wisdom. A history of research in cross-textual reading rounds up the chapter. Chapters 2 and 3 present detailed analyses of the passages in the two ancient books. The approach is historical-critical in that the passages are interpreted in light of their cultural-historical contexts.

In my opinion, chapter 4 is the most interesting as it is the *raison d’être* of such a study. Similarities and differences between Ecclesiastes and the Analects on a range of themes such as the need for order, the need for justice and righteousness, the merging of pedagogics and politics, political leadership, political behavior, political rhetoric, and religious consciousness in politics are discussed. According to Goh, Ecclesiastes brings to the conversation a theological dimension that is lacking in the Analects. To Qoheleth, God is almighty and will judge the wicked. In the meantime, humans should behave prudently toward authority to avoid trouble, work within the political structure, and use their ability to influence political decision. At the same time, Ecclesiastes does not prize wisdom as absolutely as the Analects, viewing it as conditional and transient. Unlike Ecclesiastes, the Analects is more proactive in challenging destructive power in the socio-
political world. According to the Analects, virtuous governance is the ideal of political rule, humanness is its essence, morality is its power, propriety is its tool, and righteousness is its motive or attitude (168). Finally, these insights are applied to the Malaysian context. According to both ancient texts, although the political establishment may be oppressive and unjust, it is necessary. The management expertise emphasized by the Analects as well as a God-fearing motive emphasized by Ecclesiastes are both needed for meaningful survival in the socio-political world today. Edifying human endeavor, informed by both ancient texts, should be practiced among Chinese churches.

This is not an easy topic to research on as it entails mastery of two ancient texts. The analyses of Ecclesiastes are careful and erudite and, as far as I can see, the same is true of the Analects. I agree with Goh that cross-temporal study of these books is meaningful to Chinese Christians because the books are involved in the formation of their identities. It is a common practice to interpret the Old Testament in light of the greater context of the ancient Near East. In dealing with wisdom literature, which is usually understood as being derived from human observations and assessments of life rather than divine revelation, there is no good reason why the context should not be broadened further to include wisdom from other cultures. Such reading would enrich one’s reading of each text and result in new insights. The choice of Ecclesiastes is also unsurprising. In my own experience, Chinese students feel more affinity with it than with the Torah, or even with wisdom books such as Proverbs and Job.

Despite my appreciation for the book, I do have two quibbles with Goh. First, the assumption that Ecclesiastes is a Christian text that could be appropriated by Christians in the same way as the Analects vis-à-vis Confucianism needs a bit more nuance. Actually, the only Christian in the dialogue is Goh and, perhaps, the readers (but this is not a given either). Moreover, the historical-critical approach used in the interpretation does not yield an overtly Christian reading. More accurately, it is a snapshot of early Second Temple Judaism. A bit more hermeneutical and/or theological justification is in order.

A second related point is that the comparison of the Analects with Ecclesiastes is not a comparison of equals since the former occupies a more central role in Confucianism than Ecclesiastes does in Christianity
or Judaism. A more equitable comparison would be with the gospels or the Letter to the Romans for Christianity and the Torah for Judaism. This is the case even if we limit our consideration to the three wisdom books in the Old Testament. One reason given for the choice of Ecclesiastes is that its political aspect has not been explored (12). This is as good a reason as any. Nevertheless, the implications of comparing a text on the fringe of Christianity and Judaism with a text at the heart of Confucianism should be addressed.

In conclusion, I find the book informative and insightful. Although the contents are not simple, they are presented in a clear, understandable manner. Goh has made a valuable contribution to cross-textual studies, especially cross-textual studies involving the Bible and Chinese traditions, and this book deserves to be included in any institutional and personal library.

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What is the state of Christian thought and practice in the Majority World? This is not an easy question to answer, for it requires extensive research into what Christian thinkers are saying and doing over a huge and diverse expanse of the world. Graham Joseph Hill has done us an important service by collating, in this book, voices from twenty-five Christian scholars and pastors in the Majority World on the topic of “missional ecclesiology.” We find, naturally, representatives from the continents of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. The reader gets a pleasant surprise, however, when they discover the inclusion of the voices of people groups not usually covered in surveys of majority-world Christianity: Indigenous peoples, African Americans, Diaspora Christians, and the people of the Caribbean, Oceania, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. After presenting these twenty-five voices, Hill, in the second part of the book, sets out what he sees to be
key themes in the ecclesiology of the “global missional community.” He proposes, at the end, that the church in our age needs to undergo a “Conformation.” This is the process of being conformed more and more to the image of the “incarnate, crucified, resurrected, and glorified Christ” (318).

The first four pages of this book contain numerous commendations of the work from scholars and leaders from various parts of the world. They are well deserved. It is difficult to think of another work on ecclesiology that offers a more diverse range of perspectives from the Majority World. These are voices the church needs to hear today. We owe Hill a debt of gratitude for bringing them to our attention.

There are, however, significant shortcomings that render this book less useful than it could be. One word that repeatedly occurs to this reader is “fragmentation.” One finds fragmentation in the first section of the book, where the views of the twenty-five scholars and pastors are presented. Each chapter in this first section is divided into two main portions. The first portion introduces the thought of each thinker, one at a time. One then arrives at the second portion (uniformly entitled “Contributions to Missional Ecclesiology”), hoping to find the scholars described earlier interacting with one another, with the fruits of such interaction distilled for the reader. Disappointment sets in, however, when one discovers that the second portion of each chapter continues to treat the contributions of each scholar on his or her own. It is, in fact, best seen as a continuation of the individual descriptions given in the first portion.

This lack of interaction and integration leaves the reader puzzled in several ways. In some of the chapters, the thinkers surveyed differ significantly in their approaches. In chapter 2 (“African Voices”), for example, the organizational theories for managing a church (I think this is the best description for it) promoted by pastor Oscar Muriu are placed side by side with the profound macro-perspective on world Christianity presented by Lamin Sanneh. Why were these two figures chosen? What is there in common between their approaches? Are there any meaningful points of contact at all? There are also instances where apparent contradictions appear in the approaches of the thinkers described in the same chapter. For example, in the chapter on “Asian Voices,” the ecclesiology of Simon Chan, which emphasizes strict adherence to ancient church tradition, is
discussed alongside that of Yong-jo Ha, who seems to have developed his views of the church de novo from the Bible. What does (to paraphrase the church father Tertullian) Chan have to do with Ha? One wishes for a far more substantial attempt at linking ideas, drawing out common themes, analyzing differences, and even critiquing the positions of the thinkers surveyed. As it stands, we get almost hermetically sealed individual portraits of twenty-five thinkers in the Majority World.

What about the second part of the book, which sets out key themes in “missional ecclesiology”? Do we find the sought-for integration and analysis there? The answer is no. We arrive, in fact, at the most profound instance of fragmentation: the inexplicable gulf between the two main sections of the book. After describing the views of the twenty-five scholars and pastors in the first section of the book with effusive praise, it remains a mystery why Hill does not depend more significantly on their contributions in his construction of the key themes in the second section. Apart from a few scattered references, the twenty-five are not heard from again. The bulk of the second section comes across as Hill setting forth his own approach, relying primarily on his reading and interpretation of various scriptural texts. The two sections of the book are so detached that they can be read on their own, without substantially affecting our understanding of their content.

The fragmentation that characterizes this book has one major effect: It presents the Christianity of the Majority World as largely reactive in nature. Most of the thinkers covered seem to be involved in the “deconstruction” of Christianity. They seek to rid the faith of the undesirable aspects it has gained as a result of its long sojourn in the West, including philosophical dualism, a fragmented view of life, misogyny, lack of ecological awareness, notions of racial, cultural, and national superiority, and the desire to perpetuate colonial domination. The purging of these debilitating stains from the faith is, of course, an important task. But the reader is left wondering whether equally significant efforts have been made in “constructing” alternative faces of Christianity. Has it largely been a “ground-clearing exercise” so far? Do we, from the works of the thinkers surveyed, have the rough outlines of what a majority-world ecclesiology looks like, or at least tentative trajectories of where it might be heading? Is there progress in coming up with a theology as deep and extensive as what
one finds in Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa Theologica* or Karl Barth’s *Church Dogmatics*? A more substantial attempt at integrating the contents of the book would have given clearer answers to these pressing questions.

Hill is to be commended for giving us a handy introduction to the thought and practices of scholars and pastors from the various regions of the Majority World, some of whom are not often mentioned in surveys of majority-world Christianity. In doing so, he has made future exploration of these thinkers much easier for us. This book is therefore best seen as a starting point—one that invites its readers to continue the challenging, yet crucial, journey of studying, presenting, analyzing, evaluating, and constructing majority-world Christianity.

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For anyone working within the field of wisdom traditions of the Old Testament, Donn Morgan is a familiar name. He has published *Wisdom in the Old Testament Traditions* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1981), *The Making of Sages: Biblical Wisdom and Contemporary Culture* (Horsham: PA, Trinity, 2002), and many wide-ranging scholarly articles on Old Testament wisdom and traditions. In addition, he was a well-recognized Old Testament professor and, for a number of years, dean and president of the Church Divinity School of the Pacific, Berkeley, California. Morgan utilizes his profound understanding of the wisdom of the Hebrew Bible to edit and drive the composition of the book *The Oxford Handbook of Writings of the Hebrew Bible*.

Exploring the Writings of the Hebrew Bible is a daunting task for anyone, including skilled scholars. Many scholarly works on the Writings are individually composed and tend to focus on a limited selected thematic issue. This is not the case with *The Oxford Handbook of Writings of the Hebrew Bible*. 
As the title suggests and as stated in the preface, the publication of this volume seeks to serve as a reference resource for scholars on the Writings of the Hebrew Bible. The book provides a significant contribution to a history of religion and interpretation of what scholars call the Axial Age. Three dimensions characterize the exploration of the book: (1) postexilic creation, (2) diversity of literature collection, and (3) Scripture and a canonical division of the Hebrew Bible.

The twenty-eight different scholars contributing to *The Oxford Handbook of Writings of the Hebrew Bible* bring diverse refreshing perspectives. Each scholar deals with the task at hand to bring to view valuable insights and/or the import of the individual books of the Writings. Although there are distinguishable differences in their discussions, the scholars assume a postexilic composition of the Writings. Besides, they share a historical-critical approach as a hermeneutical base.

In the first chapter, Morgan observes the rationale and mandate for further exploration of the Writings. He points to the wide use of the Writings in “different religious and cultural contexts” (4), and their value and import that assumes a universal character (4). Thus, he lays out the justification for the entire volume.

Lester L. Grabbe opines that the biblical text, including the Writings, is mainly a secondary source (21). As an example, he claims that the Greek 1 Esd is the original text of the book of Ezra. His view is thought-provoking to scholars who hold a different view regarding the primacy of the Hebrew Bible above extrabiblical materials. Timothy H. Lim explores the arguments that place the Writings in the Hellenistic Roman period (33). Furthermore, he notes the challenge of why, for example, the book of Daniel, although prophetic, is placed among the Writings. He also discusses the significance of the order of the book of the Writings and the different lists evinced in historical documents. Benjamin D. Gordon focuses on the import of archaeology of the postexilic period as informative of the emergence of the Writings. Mark A. Leuchter considers the Aaronide and Levite traditions as a binary that gives rise to the content and composition of the Writings (78).

Bennie H. Reynolds III’s chapter on “Apocalyptic Visions and Revisions of the End in the Writings” discusses the significance of the unique genre, the apocalypse, in the Writings. He identifies time as the most important element in the apocalypse and assumes the *ex-eventu* hypothesis for the
apocalyptic prophecies of the book of Daniel, among others (101). In the final analysis, the milieu of the apocalypses is the postexilic period.

The book also gives attention to the postexilic prose and poetic traditions, as evinced in the contributions of Thomas M. Bolin and S. E. Gillingham. The prose traditions of the Writings are regarded as nothing more than the creative composition of early Judaism (128). The six books (namely, Psalms, Lamentations, Job, Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes) are classified as poetic and postexilic works that evolved over a long period (145). The poetic tradition impacts types of performances, including liturgy, theater, the church, the synagogue and/or classroom (146), which imparts to the Writings their universal value.

Individual books that comprise the Writings are given expert exploration by a specific scholar, each in the context of the entire corpus of the Writings. Some of the discussions end with practical application to the church context (196-197).

Lawrence H. Schiffman discusses the relation between the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Writings. He notes their use by the Qumran community (except the book of Esther), which evolved over a period of time (325). Schiffman espouses a minority view that regards a sense of canon at Qumran (325). Examining the Writings in light of the Qumran manuscripts, he concludes that the Writings were authoritative and valued by the Qumran community (340).

Various elements are brought to the fore regarding the Writings. The key role played by the Writings in the survival of Judaism and Christianity after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE is noted by Jon L. Berquist in the chapter “Nascent Judaism: The Writings and the History of Religions” (354). The Handbook brings into dialogue the interaction of the Writings with other religions, such as Archie Chi-Chung Lee’s discussion of Confucius’ Analects. A number of essays discuss the origins of the Writings and their adoption into the canon of Scripture. Lee Martin McDonald offers historical arguments regarding the reception of the Writings. Timothy J. Stone devotes his chapter to the shape and function of the Writings in the Hebrew Bible. Alan Cooper discusses three aspects of the Jewish reception of the Writings. The function of the ecclesiological wisdom of the Writings for the Christian Church is underscored by Mark W. Elliott in “The Writings in the Christian Bible.”
Morgan’s concluding essay emphasizes the contribution made by the division of the Writings to “the Hebrew canon and biblical interpretation” (463). In addition, he stresses the Writings as a repository of literature that witnesses to different communities. The Writings are used for worship and continue to have relevance that makes a difference.

The contributors to this handbook provide both deep and broad explorations of the Writings in the context of the Hebrew Bible. The book meets the target it sets at the beginning and provides a good starting point for further examination of the Writings. It also contains new insights for the advanced reader. Each of the contributors has done diligent work to set the bar high for future studies on the Writings.

Of course, some anticipated elements that a reader expects to find but are missing need to be noted. First, while it is well noted that the Maccabean hypothesis is popularly held for the composition of the book of Daniel, the minority voice that advocates the Persian hypothesis deserves attention. The book makes no mention of the Persian hypothesis in its discussion of the apocalypse of Daniel, for example. Consequently, the numerical symbolism of the book of Daniel receives no elaborate explanation on how conclusions are arrived at. A more comprehensive discussion that incorporates the aforementioned would have been helpful.

Second, the inclusion of some chapters on textual criticism and the Writings would have added to the forceful discussion of extrabiblical materials, such as on the Dead Sea Scrolls. Although some of the chapters mention elements of textual criticism, a more focused in-depth study of this topic would add further insights. Third, while the book delivers what it promises, a dialogue that brings the discussion to the rest of the Hebrew Bible would be helpful to highlight the place and value of the Writings in the Hebrew corpus.

Overall, the Handbook displays a high standard of precise scholarship. Although one may not be persuaded by some of its assumptions, it offers a refreshing look at the Writings of the Hebrew Bible. The above critique, however, should not dissuade anyone from the book. It merits the attention of serious scholars.

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