

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Bray, Gerald. 1996. *Biblical interpretation: Past and present*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press.

This book presents a thorough summary of the history of hermeneutics from pre-Christian to modern times. It is guided by the supposition that the local church is the proper place for the reading, study, and application of the Scriptures rather than the academy. Although much modern scholarship is inaccessible and foreign to common Christians, and even pastors, there is yet a need for thoroughgoing scholarship to inform the ministry of the church. This book is therefore both academically respectable and broadly accessible to pastors, leaders, and members of local churches. Bray commences his work with a treatment of various issues proper to hermeneutics throughout the ages (divine revelation, the nature of the canon, the relationship of the text to the life of the church, and tensions inherent in the interpretation of the Bible). He then surveys the history of biblical interpretation in three parts: from ancient times to the dawn of critical study, from the dawn of critical study to the entrenchment of the historical-critical method, and various late-twentieth-century alternatives to that method. He concludes by outlining what he thinks will be the immediate future of biblical interpretation and thus briefly touches on issues of linguistics, text criticism, the historicity of the Bible, and the growing global dominance of the English language in biblical and theological studies. Each major chapter is organized into several sections: an outline of the period or subject, a summary of the major figures relevant to that period, concepts and issues relevant to that period, the major hermeneutical methods utilized in that period, and an explication of one or more biblical texts that most influenced or characterized that period. Bray's work follows well established lines and is therefore not novel, but it is a most-helpful summary of the history and complexities of biblical interpretation.

Brown, John. 2001 (1900). *Puritan preaching in England: A study of past and present*. Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers.

This book is a compilation of nine lectures on the subject of puritan preaching delivered by John Brown at the Yale Divinity School in October, 1899. It is thus of limited use in some respects, and yet it presents a lively and edifying account of the subject matter. He defines Puritan in the broad sense as those who have given more emphasis to the Scriptures in their life and preaching than to their various ecclesiastical traditions. Defined as such, he is compelled to begin his series of lectures with a consideration of the pre-protestant preachers Charles the Great, the "Preaching Friars," and John Wycliffe, each of whom, to some extent, made Protestantism and Puritanism possible. He then considers the ministries of such

leading lights as John Colet and the reformation preachers, the Cambridge Puritans, Thomas Goodwin, John Bunyan, and Richard Baxter, concluding with a treatment of the then contemporary ministries of Thomas Binney, Charles Spurgeon, R. W. Dale, and Alexander Maclaren. The common thread that weaves through this array of preachers and their ministries is that they possessed a fervor of devotion to God and a closeness of fellowship with him that was centered on the reading, study, memorization, and meditation upon Scripture. This lively attachment to God and his Word produced preaching ministries that were faithful to the Scriptures, instructive for the people of God, and full of the zeal that makes the Scriptures come alive. Indeed, the heart of Puritan preaching is the Word of God come alive in the midst of the people of God. This heart, rather than the particular manner of preparation and delivery, should characterize the modern pulpit as well.

Dockery, David. 1992. *Biblical interpretation then and now: Contemporary hermeneutics in the light of the early church*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker.

In this introductory work, Dockery offers a synthesis of the hermeneutical methods of the early church from Jesus to Augustine, from the first century to the fifth century. His concern is not so much to assess the relative accuracy of patristic interpretations in light of Scripture, nor to summarize the content of their thought, but to unearth the principles and methods that patristic exegetes utilized in order to interpret the Scriptures. Accordingly, although he references numerous leading lights from the early church, he focuses his attention on the representative works of Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, Chrysostom, Augustine, and Theodoret. He then seeks to relate his synthesis to contemporary hermeneutics, a feature that he considers somewhat unique to his work. While the synthesis is accurate, well-balanced, and helpful, Dockery's application of it to contemporary hermeneutics is brief and therefore fairly superficial. Nevertheless, the work of scholars and pastors alike will benefit from this book.

Goldsworthy, Graeme. 2006. "Part II: Challenges to evangelical hermeneutics." In *Gospel-centered hermeneutics: Foundations and principles of evangelical biblical interpretation*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

The thesis of this book is that the person and work of Jesus Christ provide not only the single focal point for proper hermeneutics but for all of reality. Therefore, an evangelical hermeneutic is gospel-driven in that it envisions Christ as the focal point of interpretation. Any hermeneutic that rejects, or otherwise forsakes, this central feature has ceased to be evangelical. The fundamental issue in evangelical hermeneutics, then, is not technique but submission to Christ and his Word. This claim does not eschew the need for extra-biblical disciplines or evidences, but it makes these things secondary to the miracle of new birth that comes by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. In the light of this supposition, the author devotes section two of his work to demonstrating the ease with which potential or

real crises can occur in the life of the church when the Christological locus is forgotten or forsaken. He surveys “the eclipse of the gospel” in eight different epochs or disciplines, for example, in the early church and in literary criticism. Although this section is by and large a treatment of secondary literature, it is a helpful and insightful summary of issues that impacted hermeneutics in times past and present.

Hall, Christopher A. 1998. *Reading Scripture with the church fathers*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity.

This book is both an introduction to how leading Christians from the first seven centuries of the church read the Bible and a guided invitation to read their works. Hall’s aim is to present the method and content of eight representative patristic fathers, four from the eastern church (Athanasius, Gregory of Nazianzus, Basil the Great, and John Chrysostom) and four from the western church (Ambrose, Jerome, Augustine, and Gregory the Great). He begins by pressing into the modern milieu in order to expose and diminish obstacles that stand in the way of fruitfully reading these ancient texts. He specifically identifies the issues of Enlightenment and postmodern hubris, as well as the Protestant overreaction against church tradition. The necessary response to these obstacles must be a humility that is self-critical and willing to listen to ancient authors on their own terms, in as much as that is possible. Hall then moves on to consider the works of the eight fathers listed above, followed by a treatment of the debate that arose between the schools of Alexandria and Antioch. He concludes by offering a middle way between the naïve acceptance of patristic methods and content, and the outright rejection of the same. Specifically, he encourages modern exegetes to follow the fathers in four ways: read the Bible holistically as one book in two testaments, read the Bible Christologically, read the Bible in community (both past and present), and read the Bible within the context of a life of prayer, worship, and spiritual formation. This work is an excellent introduction to the subject, and offers helpful insight for pastors and scholars alike.

Hauser, Alan J., and Duane F. Watson, eds. 2003-2009. *A history of biblical interpretation*. 2 Vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.

This multi-volume set (two more volumes are forthcoming) probes into the history of Jewish and Christian interpretation of the Tanak and the New Testament from a decidedly moderate-to-liberal point of view. The editors have included helpful summative essays at the beginning of each volume that survey the contents of that volume in some detail. The various chapters, then, are written by a variety of specialists and cover such diverse subjects as inter-textual exegesis, the Septuagint, the Targumim and Midrash, the formation of the canon, medieval exegesis in Jewish and Christian contexts, Eastern Orthodox exegesis, and Reformation exegesis in Catholic and Protestant communities. While these volumes are laudable and somewhat unique in their scope and erudition, the decidedly moderate-to-liberal

bent of the editors and authors renders them of limited use for advancement in the study of the interplay between interpretation and proclamation. Specifically, the disposition of the editors is that the canon of Scripture, in its development and transmission, is primarily, if not totally, the product of human effort and genius. Thus, they assert that there is an inherent diversity of meaning in the Scripture itself which leads them, for example, to affirm Marcion as one who saw what was actually present in Scripture. On the one hand, we may acknowledge that more conservative scholars at times downplay the impact that socio-cultural phenomena had on the formation and transmission of the canon, but on the other hand, we must reject the notion that these phenomena loomed so large in that process. God has indeed revealed himself through nature, the prophets, and preeminently in Christ (Ps 19:1-5; Heb 1:1-4), and he is thus primarily responsible for the revelation, reception, formation, and transmission of the canon. Fundamentally, the Bible is revelation rather than tradition. This we whole-heartedly affirm, and this the editors of these volumes seem to deny or at least ignore.

Larsen, David L. 1998. *The company of the preachers: A history of biblical preaching from the Old Testament to the modern era*. 2 Vols. Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic and Professional.

The focus of this two-volume work is on biblical preaching which Larsen defines as the explication and application of the content and purposes of the Bible, the living Word of God. This implies that biblical preaching is inextricably bound, in its aims, processes and outcomes, to the nature and character of the God who has revealed himself through the Word. Larsen rightly asserts that there is a crisis in preaching in our time, and thus he seeks to draw upon the vast resources of the history of preaching to instruct, correct, and inspire modern preachers to practice and promote lively expository preaching once again. He is unashamedly evangelical and places himself squarely in the flow of classical biblical Christianity. Thus, he asserts that the foundations of biblical preaching are the conviction that the Bible is indeed the living Word of God, that the Bible is designed to be proclaimed by those who are called of God to do so, and that the study of the history of preaching is necessary for any preaching ministry to flourish over time because it provides cautionary tales, ministry-shaping insights, and the hope that God will cause his Word to prosper in every age. Larsen commences his survey of history, then, with a treatment of preaching in the Old and New Testaments, a feature which is somewhat unique and refreshing. From there, he guides his readers on a journey through the history of preaching in the early church, the Middle Ages, the Reformation and Enlightenment, the Victorian Era, and the twentieth century. The final two chapters on the twentieth century, to which he devotes nearly two-hundred-fifty pages, are particularly impressive. As a whole, his presentation is thorough, insightful, readable, and likely to enflame the preaching ministries of all who will listen well and then take up this study on their own.

McKim, Donald A. 2007. *Dictionary of major biblical interpreters*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic.

This dictionary, formerly entitled *Historical Handbook of Major Biblical Interpreters* (1998), focuses on the work of many of the most significant biblical interpreters from Jesus to the beginning of the twenty-first century. More than one-hundred scholars contributed essays summarizing the life and works of approximately two-hundred persons who were included in the dictionary because they either made a novel contribution to, or left an indelible mark upon, the practice of biblical interpretation. This unique work begins with a one-hundred page prefatory essay that surveys the history of biblical interpretation. Composed by six scholars with various expertise, the essay is designed to bring coherence to the host of entries in the main body of the work by drawing the reader's attention to the issues, contributions, and movements that have characterized the various epochs of biblical interpretation. Accordingly, it offers a brief treatment of the patristic period, the Middle Ages, the reformation and post-reformation period, the enlightenment period, and the modern interpretive milieu in Europe and North America. The essay is understandably superficial but necessary and helpful in the context of this work.

O'Keefe, John J., and R. R. Reno. 2005. *Sanctified vision: An introduction to early Christian interpretation of the Bible*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins.

The aim of this book is to understand patristic exegesis on its own terms without making judgments about the correctness of their techniques or the truth value of their results. The chief difficulty in achieving this aim, the authors argue, is modern assumptions about the nature of texts, meaning, and interpretive practices. On the one hand, moderns assume that texts have referential meaning, that is, that every text points to an x outside of itself. Premodern readers, on the other hand, assume that the text is the x to which it refers, and thus they do not see the need to draw upon extra-biblical disciplines to establish the meaning and veracity of the biblical text. With this in mind, the authors probe into the Christocentric hermeneutic that dominated patristic exegesis, summarize three reading strategies that broadly characterized patristic exegesis (intensive, typological, and allegorical), and highlight the prominence of the rule of faith and spiritual disciplines in patristic exegesis. While the authors oversimplify, and at times misconstrue, the relationship between text and referent in the minds of patristic authors, their central thesis gets to the heart of patristic exegesis: to think in and through the Scriptures themselves, and intensively so, is to have a sanctified vision, and a sanctified vision is necessary for a right understanding of the Scripture and the purposes of God in Christ.

Silva, Moises. 1987. *Has the church misread the Bible? The history of interpretation in the light of current issues*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

This book is the first in a series on the subject of general hermeneutics, each of which seeks to contribute to the field by considering it in light of various relevant disciplines, specifically, philosophy, literary criticism, linguistics, history, science, and theology. It is assumed throughout the series that while one must be in right relationship with God in order to interpret the Scriptures well, this relationship does not guarantee a right reading thereof, and thus the need arises for interaction with extra-biblical disciplines. This inaugural volume, rather than touching on a particular discipline, seeks to highlight several tensions within the Scripture itself that have greatly affected the history of hermeneutics: Is the Bible divine or human? Is it literal or figurative? Is it clear or obscure? Is it relative or absolute? Silva asserts that the aim of modern exegetes ought to be the healthy preservation of these tensions rather than the artificial, or premature, resolution of them. The shadow of Origen looms large throughout this volume because it looms large throughout the history of hermeneutics, but Silva offers a balanced critique and affirmation of his life and work at various points. Silva's perspective on the history of hermeneutics is honest but fundamentally positive. He believes that God has, and will, guide and preserve his people by his Spirit and through his Word, no matter the difficulties inherent in the interpretation of ancient texts.

Smalley, Beryl. 1994. *The study of the Bible in the middle ages*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press.

The aim of this book is to show how, despite the predominance of the four-fold sense of Scripture as an exegetical assumption and method, the literal-historical sense of Scripture rose to prominence throughout the middle ages, from about A.D. 700 to about A.D. 1300. This is an advanced text and assumes that the reader possesses a more than rudimentary knowledge of medieval history and culture, church tradition and structure, and a basic knowledge of Latin, French, and German (Smalley often uses non-English terms and sentences without translating or explaining them). Smalley commences her fine work with a brief treatment of the patristic fathers who most influenced the middle ages, namely, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, and to a lesser extent Bede. She then analyzes the complex array of ideas, institutions and personalities as embodied in several circles throughout this period where biblical studies most flourished. She concludes that the literal-historical sense of Scripture rose to prominence in the later portions of this period because of the shift of exegetical locus from the congregation to the academy or the monastery, the influence of Aristotelian thought via Thomas Aquinas, the novel interest in the natural world and the development of various sciences related thereto, and the complex ebb and flow of the discovery and loss of vital and influential texts. She "predicts" that the following period (i.e., the Renaissance) will be characterized by the sharp rise of critical scholarship and the corollary suspicion of, and attack upon, mysticism. While Smalley is quick to point out the inadequacies of her work,

she has undoubtedly made a significant contribution to the understanding of the practice of hermeneutics in the Middle Ages.