

for him was never intended to give him an opportunity to make his case. All they wanted was a public recantation that would also serve as a warning to others who may have had heretical tendencies.

Fudge fully acknowledges the pursuit of his study was not to determine whether Jan Hus's trial was based on truth and justice as some of the admirers of Jan Hus may be inclined to think, since many of them saw his trial and treatment as unjust and based on lies. Fudge's narrow definition of what is legal at times does not encompass truth and justice. Fudge's aim here is about what was legal according to the definition of that time and place. I was of the opinion that such legality, as it was being pursued by the church, would be based on truth and justice, but the trial of Jan Hus, as described by Fudge, seems to put aside justice and truth as important elements in the quest for legality. Can this case be considered legitimate and legal when the path to Hus's conviction is strewn with lies, perjuries, and bribes? If the path to the desired outcome is crooked, can the ultimate outcome be accepted as legitimate?

My major concern with Fudge's book is his narrow definition of what he considers "legal." While I may agree with his definition based on the legal precedence of the time, one must keep in mind that Hus was not simply being persecuted by a secular court. Jan Hus was a member of the Christian church, God's earthly representative that should supposedly base its decisions on justice and truth. The betrayal, treatment, and punishment of Jan Hus were clearly at odds with the principles of the Bible and against justice, truth, and mercy. Jan Hus, a deeply pious and morally upright priest, whose major aim was to rebuke the church of its many sins and call the church back to the teachings and practices of Jesus Christ, revealed how far removed the church was from these principles. Corruption, avarice, immorality, licentiousness, greed, secularism, materialism, and the unquenchable thirst for power had almost engulfed the church and its leaders, so that Hus's call for reform, like so many others before him, had to be crushed at all cost. Jan Hus remains a beloved and revered figure, while his detractors and critics are forgotten and left upon the dustbin of history. History has judged both groups, and Jan Hus has come out on the right side of history.

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Graves, Michael. *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture: What the Early Church Can Teach Us*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014. 201 pp. Paperback, \$24.00.

Since the Reformation of the sixteenth century, Christians have given much of their attention to issues of biblical interpretation. When the questions raised about the legitimacy of the clergy were applied to their interpretation of Scripture during and after the Reformation, a revolution in textual criticism and biblical historicism soon developed to the point that the supernatural foundation of Christian Scripture was seriously questioned. As a product of this hermeneutic of suspicion, the assumption that the Bible was inspired by God has been relegated to a secondary position in biblical studies. Michael

Graves's *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* argues that this was not so in the early centuries of Christianity. The importance of this study should not be underestimated. Recent works on hermeneutics have highlighted how assumptions about inspiration and revelation have shaped Christian traditions and the reading of Scripture and how the understanding of divine inspiration is foundational to biblical interpretation (see Fernando Canale, *Back to Revelation-Inspiration: Searching for the Cognitive Foundation of Christian Theology in a Postmodern World* [Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2001]).

Although the study of early church figures has been a major field in Catholic tradition, Protestants in the United States have also spent considerable energy reflecting on the writings of ancient Christian theologians. Phillip Schaff's laborious effort in guiding a team of scholars to translate into English, annotate, and comment on major ancient Christian texts was foundational to much recent historical study in the United States. Building on the textual work of Schaff and his team, a generation of English-speaking scholars started to write about how Scripture was handled by the first Christians, and soon, books on early church biblical interpretation were written in a more popular style. The major argumentation in books such as David Dockery's *Biblical Interpretation Then and Now* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1992) is that early Christian biblical interpreters were divided in two neat categories, those of Antioch (textual literalists), and those of Alexandria (spiritual allegorists). However, this divide does not do justice to the complex matrix of early Christian views on the interpretation of Scripture.

In the last two decades more informed and balanced studies have reached the public, demonstrating the complex world of ancient biblical interpretation. The important work of Frances Young, *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002), a small article about Patristic Biblical Interpretation by the same author in the *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005], 566–71), and J. Gribomont's entry on "Scripture, Holy" in the *Encyclopedia of Ancient Christianity* (3 vols. [Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014], 3:511–14), give a more nuanced picture of how Scripture was read by Christian theologians in the past. But as far as I know no work available to the general public has elaborated specifically on the implications of how the doctrine of divine inspiration has shaped the interpretation of Scripture in ancient times. Building on his expertise concerning Jerome's usage of Scripture, Graves's new work aims to discern how the early church read Scripture through their understanding of inspiration.

The purpose of the book is already subtly suggested by the title, *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture*. Graves does not divorce how early Christians understood inspiration from how they interpreted the Bible. Therefore, the reader should not expect a treatise on how the early church understood inspiration broadly. His approach sees an intimate connection between inspiration and interpretation in which one informs the other. The author successfully traces the "logical implications of biblical inspiration. In

other words: What is true of Scripture as a result of its being inspired? What should divine inspiration *cause us to expect* from Scripture?" (2, emphasis mine).

Through these questions, Graves shows that the basic assumption of early Christian interpreters was that the Bible, both Hebrew (OT) and Greek (NT) Scriptures, was a product of divine intervention. This belief was foundational to their way of reading the Book in contrast to other books. This is quite different from the predominant assumptions of modern biblical scholarship, which tend to ignore the supernatural claims of the Bible in order to understand Scripture as scholars would understand any other work of literature produced by humans.

Although ancient Christian writers were unanimous in their belief that Scripture was divine, the consequences of this assumption varied, as explained by the author. Despite the variety of opinions, Graves has tried to show how the common belief in divine inspiration shaped the Christian reflection on Scripture in its first five centuries of existence. In order to make sense of the ancient Christian approach to the Bible, he presents their ideas through twenty principles divided in five chapters. Hence, this is neither a chronological assessment of ancient biblical interpretation nor a geographical one (Antioch and Alexandria).

There is much to be commended in this arrangement. Although the principles are closely connected to one another and could have been organized differently, as he recognized, they are helpful for reference and for logical apprehension. Before the elaboration of the twenty principles, Graves introduced the subject of biblical inspiration by reviewing basic biblical texts about that subject as well as the way in which ancient readers generally approached ancient texts. In the final chapter (ch. 7), he gives his summary and lessons we can learn from the early church.

These are the titles of the five chapters under which Graves organizes the twenty principles of interpretation: the "Usefulness" of Scripture (ch. 2), "The Spiritual and Supernatural Dimension" of Scripture (ch. 3), "Modes of Expression" in Scripture (ch. 4), "Historicity and Factuality" in Scripture (ch. 5), and "Agreement with Truth" (ch. 6).

The major contribution of *The Inspiration and Interpretation of Scripture* is to induce its readers to reflect on the importance of the doctrine of divine intervention in the production of Scripture through easy-to-follow principles. The choice of dividing such a complex issue into twenty principles is a great help. Graves's numbering system for each principle inside each chapter makes the book very useful for consultation and for teaching purposes. Although Graves divides the book into clear topical sections that can be read alone, readers should note their connectivity. For example, there is a close connection between principle 3 ("Scripture Solves Every Problem That We Might Put to It") and principle 15 ("Scripture Is Not in Conflict with 'Pagan' Learning"). There are obvious connections between principle 2 ("Every Detail of Scripture Is Meaningful"), principle 10 ("The Etymologies of Words in Scripture Convey Meaning"), principle 13 ("Events Narrated in the Bible Actually Happened"), and principle 14 ("Scripture Does Not Have Any Errors in Its

Facts”). All these principles result from the belief that since God does not err, His language is perfect; and because Scripture is divinely inspired, every single word is truthful.

Another positive characteristic of Graves’s work is that he first describes how ancient interpreters understood Scripture, then, in the end, he gives his brief evaluation suggesting a few points of reflection. Graves should also be commended for his way of describing the discussion of ancient Christian hermeneutics. As I read the book, I could easily relate their struggle and argumentation with current issues in Christianity. The similarity of today’s logic and that of the past makes the book relevant and current. Although this is not the main goal of the book, twenty-first century readers can learn many things about how to interpret Scripture as the author unfolds what divine inspiration entailed for the ancient Christian reading of the Bible. In addition, this exercise of trying to see things as the early church saw them could help Christianity today in its struggle with naturalistic tendencies in the reading of Scripture. The understanding that God was involved in the production of the Bible changed the ancient Christian perspective on reality, and Graves does us a great favor in reintroducing this foundational assumption of divine inspiration to current students of Scripture.

What I would have appreciated in a book such as this one, is more background information to help the reader see why the church fathers said what they did about Scripture. In the introduction, Graves does a great job of describing the Greco-Roman and Jewish universe from which Christianity originated; and he does occasionally include the outsider perspective on the issue, as in his discussion of virtue (35–36). Yet, in the majority of the discussion on the twenty principles, a corresponding historical background is missing, which would have been valuable, especially for a non-expert reader. I offer this critique as one who wishes to use this book in an introductory class to biblical interpretation, since it describes well and succinctly the major issues of Christian hermeneutics with an easy format of twenty principles.

I also have a few questions related to some of the language the author uses in describing ancient interpretative methods. On p. 51, Graves affirms that “Christians looked to the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) for moral guidance, not ritual laws.” I wonder if this is the case. Categorical phrases such as this risk oversimplification. I would like to give just one example of how this situation might be interpreted otherwise. Many of the church’s liturgical practices, particularly related to church governance, were derived from a reflection on the laws found in the Hebrew Scriptures and not in the NT, such as the function of bishops in light of the priesthood described in the Pentateuch (see Arnold Ehrhardt, *The Apostolic Succession in the First Two Centuries of the Church* [Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth, 1953]). This is an important, but often neglected, aspect of Christian interpretation, probably because of the widely held view that Christianity departed from its Hebrew roots early in its history. While this position is not fully adopted by Graves, the statement quoted above seems to lead in that direction. One might see this tendency also in his usage of the terms supernatural, spiritual, allegorical, typological,

and figurative in contrast to natural, literal, physical, and historical. He seems to use these terms in opposition to each other without properly defining them. And this may lead some readers to misunderstand how these terms were used in different ways by the early church and today, as he affirms in p. 49. For example, in the introduction to chapter 6, Graves writes, “whereas the previous chapter dealt with the claims of Scripture in relation to the physical world (facts and history), the present chapter addresses the truthfulness of Scripture in relation to its spiritual subject matter” (106). Does Graves or did the church fathers consider the Bible to be “spiritual subject matter” and not physical “facts” or “history”? Here ontological presuppositions about God play a significant role in defining these terms. Because of the impact this has on the main theme of Graves’s book, it should have been better explained.

What I enjoy when reading books about the history of ideas is observing trajectories, in this particular case, historical movements of ideas regarding biblical interpretation. Reading Graves’s history of biblical interpretation, I could see some tendencies in patristic exegesis. First, 2 Cor 3 seems to be the most important passage that shaped ancient Christian hermeneutical principles. Second, the relationship between the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Scriptures seems central to all debates, thus the importance of 2 Cor 3. Third, Origen is the most influential interpreter in Christianity, for he is the one who laid the systematic foundation of how to read the Hebrew Scriptures in relation to the NT (see 51, 125). This influence can be traced through Augustine and John Cassian who became influential interpreters in the Middle Ages (47, 53). Fourth, Philo had a strong influence on Christian hermeneutics, which brings into question the frequently used dichotomy of Antioch (literalistic) and Alexandria (allegorical) to frame the history of ancient biblical interpretation. Seen through the broader lens of divine inspiration, this division is almost irrelevant for tracing the trajectories of Christian biblical hermeneutics. And finally, the Christological principle of seeing Jesus typologically represented in the Hebrew Scriptures suggests that from its inception, Christianity was a prophetic movement that read prophecies historically. The historical interpretation of prophecy is hardly practiced anymore today, but this comparison with the early church puts into question just how Christian some modern approaches to Scripture are.

In conclusion, what can the early church teach us about biblical interpretation? Graves’s history shows that there was not just one way in which Christians exegeted the details of Scripture, but there was an attitude of awe toward sacred writings that shaped how ancient Christians lived. These factors were not only present in early Christianity but also in the rabbinic literature produced in the same period. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, there was a need to reinterpret “Moses,” or God’s promises, in lieu of this catastrophe. Of course, the responses the traditions gave were very different. Yet their attitude toward the sacred text was similar, as well as the influence of the prophet Ezekiel in the construction of an exilic ideology. Exilic because the Messiah was still to come and both groups found it necessary to make sense of God’s presence or rather, his absence (Dalit Rom-Shiloni, “Ezekiel

as the Voice of the Exiles and Constructor of Exilic Ideology,” *HUCA* 76 [2005]:1–45). What is remarkable about their attitude toward sacred writings in a time of crisis is that instead of questioning their validity when things did not happen as they expected, they immersed themselves in the words they believed were from God and struggled with their difficulties. In a moment of crisis God said, “Son of man, feed your stomach and fill your body with this scroll” (Ezek 3:3 NASB). Many struggling Christians today are trying to find divine direction for their lives by listening to sermons which may or may not be biblically grounded. Graves in his book gave us a glimpse of how early Christians filled their minds with God’s word, and this can be a reminder for modern-day Christians to do the same.

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Higton, Mike, and Jim Fodor, eds. *The Routledge Companion to the Practice of Christian Theology*. New York: Routledge, 2015. xii + 450 pp. Hardcover, \$240.00.

The Routledge Companion to the Practice of Christian Theology is different from other books on theological methodology focusing on scientific principles, rules, and procedures. Instead, it characterizes as a practice shaped by a community which sets canons of excellence for theological activity. The editors—Mike Higton, professor of theology and ministry at Durham University; and Jim Fodor, professor of theology and ethics at St. Bonaventure University—together with twenty-one other contributing authors, have provided a useful text that feels like tips from experienced theologians to a new generation of practitioners in training. The *Companion* maps a variety of virtues in terms of practices that have bearing on what makes one a good practitioner of theology. In this way, it brings virtuous and pragmatic insights to the components of the quadrilateral—reason, scripture, tradition, and experience—without the further claim of ordering, balancing, or prioritizing the relationship between these sources (5).

Part I has six chapters and is devoted to “Reason” taken as a social activity seeking for a settlement in an ongoing, iterative, unpredictable negotiation (10). In order to be theological, this negotiation takes into consideration the subject matter of theology—God—and theology’s continuous revising of human speech about him in the light of the interaction between the Christian church and other secular constituencies. The concern at the outset is to use many different forms of theological language (e.g., sermons, orations, novels, systematic treatment, and even silence) to portray a higher-order world of meaning that is connected to the bodily experience of the reasoner (24). It progresses to a portrayal of practicing theological argumentation in times when there is a plurality of traditions and authorities with the goal of identifying the ontology (description of reality) and logic (rules of inferences) assumed in the structure of the argument. This analysis will enable clarity in engaging many conversations within a tradition or in the public square.