reverence for life implicit in the instructions for "reverent slaughter" (202) of animals in Deut 12, I think he could have gone even further in noting here the language of divine concession, with an implicit divine preference for total abstinence from nonsacrificial slaughter of animals. Finally, Vogt’s discussion of the nature of “righteousness” (Heb. tsedeq) in the OT focuses almost entirely upon the definition of tsedeq as “conformity to a norm,” and does not indicate the existence of the ongoing debate in OT scholarship over the meaning of this word and the insistence of many scholars that tsedeq must be defined in terms of personal relationship and not conformity to a norm.

Aside from these few minor suggestions for improvement of the work, I commend Vogt for his penetrating analysis of Deuteronomy, which provides a needed corrective to the scholarly consensus and presents in bold relief the core concerns of Deuteronomic theology—the supremacy of YHWH and the central and continuing role of Torah in the life of the covenant community.

Andrews University


In his book The End of Memory, Miroslav Volf continues his extended theological engagement with central Christian themes of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The syntax of this wider theological framework, lucidly articulated in his earlier works Exclusion or Embrace? and Free of Charge, is here skillfully wielded in dealing with the issue of memories of wrongdoing suffered. Volf, in constructing his argument, deftly engages a wide range of interlocutors, with Elie Wiesel’s reflections on the saving character of remembering arguably assuming the center stage. One should note from the outset that the book title conveys a word play that in many ways summarizes the central theme of this fine work. First, we are concerned with the end of memory in the sense of its telos, its purpose. In other words, we ask why it is that we need to remember at all, and what it is that constitutes rightful remembering. Second, the question is raised whether there is any moral justifiability in envisioning the end of memory in terms of an ultimate or penultimate terminus, as in forgetting and letting go.

In examining the textured nature of human remembering, Volf makes it clear that memories in themselves are “dangerously underdetermined” (34). They have the potential to “restore health and dignity, protect, and prompt the pursuit of justice” (39), but also to fuel deep-seated resentments and impede personal well-being. That is why it is incumbent on us to remember rightly, which, for Volf, means foremost to remember truthfully. This is an essential step in dealing with memories of wrongdoing suffered, as “truthfulness is a form of justice and an indispensable precondition for reconciliation” (59). Such truthful recollection is also indispensable for inner healing, as only truthful memories “give access to the event with which peace needs to be made” (75). The search for peace, however, does not belie the fact that some memories of wrong suffered are essentially irredeemable and thereby resistant to meaningful incorporation into narrative self-construction.

While Volf never tires in underscoring the decisive praxial component of remembering, inviting us to acts of solidarity and struggle for justice, he is equally insistent in cautioning against conducting such struggles in an unjust way. Such exigency for proper balancing is ostensibly based on the regulative ideas of the Exodus and Passion narratives that are, in turn, mediated through the formal aspects of identity, community, future, and God. Three things clearly emerge from Volf’s delineation of the
Christian metanarrative. First, we are led to recognize that the “grace of God . . . extends to every human being” (118). Second, “in the memory of the passion we honor victims even while extending grace to perpetrators” (118). Third, it points to a path of reconciliation of the wronged and wrongdoers.

The third part of the book turns to the question of how we can properly and justifiably speak of the end of memory in the sense of fully forgetting or not-coming-to-mind. Building on divergent defenders of forgetting—Dante, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud—Volf defends the notion that forgetting and self-identity are not incommensurable terms. The last two chapters develop this theme at some length, stating the conditions brought about by the eschatological transition that makes the reality of nonremembering justifiable on moral and existential grounds, and as such does not present an abdication of responsibility or an exemplification of cheap forgiveness. This future eschatological nonremembrance is morally justifiable only insofar as it is derived from the ultimate apokaphysis and acknowledgment of all wrongs brought about by the coming of God.

A couple of observations are necessary in evaluating the merits of Volf’s proposal. As noted above, Volf’s discussion of memory is squarely situated within the spiritual geography of God’s trinitarian history. For Volf, Christianity is, at its core, an ontology of ecstatic love, a revelation of God as the self-diffusive Good manifested through the nonviolent and self-giving hospitality of the crucified Christ. God is first a giver and forgiver who invites us to pattern our lives after his own while living in a graceless and often violent world. That is why Volf’s work so strongly rests on an incessant insistence to situate our lives theologically. Concomitantly, he directs our gaze to those practices of the Christian faith that make no sense unless we really believe that God exists. Volf, when all is said and done, is a theologian who simply wants us to live out the radical demands of the gospel. His is a theology of discipleship, and it is in such light that his engagement with memories of wrong suffered needs to be understood. Herein is unquestionably one of the reasons why his theology has a decidedly autobiographical character. While some less charitable critics might see such rhetorical strategy as manifest self-indulgence, this certainly is not the case. As in other successful forms of autobiographical theology, perhaps most prominently embodied in Augustine’s Confessions, personal elements here truly enliven the discursive plane with a strong existential pathos that contributes to, rather than detracts from, conceptual clarity.

While it is hard to argue with the overall argument of the book, there are specific instances where one would wish to probe the discussion a bit more. For example, Volf engages the question of whether memories can ever be regarded as truthful (47-49). Although his point about the need for truthfulness is well taken—he clearly distances himself here from the postmodern deconstruction of the reality principle—I remained unconvinced about the argument he marshals in support of his position. The fragility of human memory that recent developments in neuroscience so vividly underscore, certainly merits a more robust and detailed response than what is offered here. Also, one might take issue with some stylistic features of his work. Volf most definitely has an uncanny deftness for articulating complex matters in an easily accessible way. He adroitly navigates intricate issues, while at the same time wearing his exemplary erudition lightly. In a strange way, however, his summaries and repetitions of main points often obfuscate the flow of argument. One sometimes loses track of different classifications and hints of matters to be discussed.

In conclusion, Volf’s work is, without doubt, an important achievement whose
theological depth and practical implication cannot be overemphasized. One can easily imagine multiple contexts and arenas in which his theological proposal could stir significant resonances. Volf succeeds in offering us a book that covers wider swaths of theological reflection—apologetics, public theology, constructive theology, ethics, and practical theology—without sounding overbearing. Not only is his theology imminently preachable—a characteristic he shares with his former mentor and friend Jürgen Moltmann—but also one that challenges us toward transformative engagement.

Andrews University

ANTE JERONCIC


Rather than a new book, this publication is the second part of a manuscript whose first segment appeared in 2004. That section featured 170 pages of general introduction and bibliography, as well as a commentary on most of the first 15 chapters of the book of Proverbs (Prov 1:1–15:29). Frequent cross references with sections covered in the first publication emphasize the fact that Waltke's Proverbs 15–31 is part of a united whole that runs through 1,282 pages, plus 68 pages of preliminary material. Omitting no vital feature, the work concludes with four indices, totaling 53 pages, on subjects dealt with, authors cited, Scripture references, and selected Hebrew words and phrases. The now fully published study, over 25 years in the making, eminently honors NICOT's stated goal of sharing with people of faith "biblical scholarship of the highest quality" (1:xix). The editors could hardly have chosen a better scholar for this work on Proverbs. Waltke is respected for his authority in Hebrew syntax and biblical exegesis, seasoned by long years in OT studies, inclusive of wisdom literature, and particularly convinced of the divine and spiritual character of the OT's preeminent text of wisdom sayings.

It cannot be overlooked that the first verse treated in this second volume is Prov 15:30, a fact immediately illustrative of the innovative care Waltke applies to his commentary. Though he has slighted chapter conventions, the decision, more significantly, argues conspicuously against some interpreters' string-of-beads approach to Prov 10–31, and in favor of the intentional, organized, and syntactically connected character of the sentence literature here treated. For Waltke, the last four verses in Prov 15 (vv. 30-33), replete with close linkages of sound and sense, provide a unique beginning to the prologue (15:30–16:15) of Section B (15:30–22:16) of the first Solomonic collection (10:1–22:16). Waltke entitles this prologue "The Dance Between Humanity, the Lord, and His King."

At times, in the surfeit of linguistic, exegetical, and theological goodness Waltke serves up, philological competence, literary familiarity, strong faith in the book's godliness, and unapologetic imagination may combine to give us excess. Waltke dedicates elaborate attention to connections syllabic and morphemic as marked by assonance and syllibance, and synonyms such as YHWH (Prov 16:1—9) over against melek in Prov 16:10–15. He notes conceptual linkages that mark themselves in multiple ways, including such features as metonymy; e.g., Prov 20:27, where he believes nismâ (breath, spirit) stands for "words." At the lowest level, he finds structural connections through janus verses: Prov 21:9, on the contentious wife, joins units on how the wicked pursue wealth (21:4–8) and how the righteous triumph over the wicked (v. 10-18). At more complex levels, there is, for instance, chiasm (e.g., Prov 30:1–6; 466). Typological interpretations explain connections at the intertextual level, across OT books, and in the