

knowledge over against those of empire. Also, although the book of Daniel advocates nonviolent forms of resistance, Portier-Young's discussion of Dan 11: 32, 34 will fail to convince some readers that Daniel's conception of resistance is exclusively nonviolent. These minor weaknesses notwithstanding, this is an excellent book, which should be read by any serious student of Second Temple Judaism. It would make a wonderful textbook for a seminary or graduate course on apocalyptic literature.

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Issues in Contemporary Christian Thought: A Fortress Introduction

by Duane Olson

Fortress, Minneapolis, 2011. 296 pp. \$25.00.
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"THE THESIS OF THIS BOOK," Duane Olson writes, "is that the developments of modernity are decisive for contemporary self-understanding" (p. ix). Olson's thesis is admirably carried through in a somewhat distinctive introductory textbook suitable for college courses and perhaps adult education in churches. It is distinctive because of its extraordinary accessibility and economy of presentation; there is a lot of material packed into this relatively small volume.

Olson begins by laying out the historical backdrop of contemporary theology, focusing on the development of autonomous reason during the Enlightenment and the ensuing challenges of biblical criticism. He suggests that responses to these developments were

momentous for carving out the possible niches for contemporary theological reflection and offers a typology of such responses: biblical literalism (which rejects historical criticism), theological literalism (which accepts historical criticism but maintains adherence to traditional doctrines), and theological reinterpretation. The middle of the book covers three groupings of classical theological loci (God and creation, Christ and historical providence, and anthropology and eschatology) in terms of these three perspectives. Finally, Olson tackles four contemporary topics (Christianity and other religions, feminism, homosexuality, and the natural environment), once again offering sensitive and accessible accounts of the various positions taken by "literalists" and "reinterpreters." Appended to the book are suggestions for further reading and a glossary.

This book is not an academic monograph advancing and defending original claims. It clearly targets beginning students, and is free of excessive annotation and technical jargon. It is also, perhaps, a little thin on nuance and subtle distinctions between views. Many readers will find his typology of "biblical literalist," "theological literalist," and "reinterpreter" a little clunky and perhaps misleading. Olson seems intentionally to avoid potentially unhelpful words like "liberal" and "conservative," but it is not clear that a word like "literalist" is much better. Is "literalist" the best way to characterize Barth's position *vis-à-vis* classical liberalism, for example? Teachers will need to make their own judgments about the importance of subtle nuances in comparison with the need to communicate the broader sense of the field to beginning students. Olson's book fulfills the latter quite well, and his selection and treatment of contemporary

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issues is judicious as well as admirably clear and fair.

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