

22) and adds a section for contextualized forms of interpretation, which introduces readings such as Latino/a, women's, and African American approaches to biblical interpretation (22–24). He further adds “Rule of thumb 19: Don’t just use (or worse: ignore) technical terms. Define them,” in which he directs the reader to accessible resources for the technical vocabulary of biblical scholarship. Brown concludes with a new appendix of suggestions for beginning the academic study of the Bible, including some useful questions to ask the text and helpful resources to consult.

The criticisms of Brown’s volume are limited. In “Rule of thumb 4: A translation is only as good as its translator,” for example, Brown provides four very practical tips for students to consider when working with translations. It would have been helpful, however, to nuance his representation of “good” and “bad” translations with the acknowledgment that the different approaches to translation (e.g., formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence) and the different goals of the translators contribute to the different kinds of translations. Also, Brown’s citation of scholarship is now dated. For example, Brown writes, “Wellhausen demonstrated that the books we currently know as the Hebrew Bible were formed by the combinations of four earlier sources” (6). Not only does Brown overlook the substantive challenges to the traditionally defined Documentary Hypothesis prior to the 2000 publication of the first edition, but he also implies that this model applied to the whole HB, which could prove confusing to his audience, who will later find him discussing it only within the context of Pentateuchal scholarship.

These criticisms aside, Brown’s volume remains well organized and succinctly written. The practical and accessible nature of *What They Don’t Tell You* makes it an excellent resource for both introductory students and interested non-specialists.

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From Despair to Faith: The Spirituality of Søren Kierkegaard, by CHRISTOPHER B. BARNETT. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014. xiii + 215pp. \$39.00.

One of the joys of studying Kierkegaard is the versatility of his writings. As the range of the secondary literature attests, Kierkegaard is at once a philosopher, theologian, prose stylist, and cultural, social, and ecclesial critic. *From Despair to Faith* is the most recent of a swelling stream of scholarship that brings to the fore Kierkegaard the spiritual writer. Drawing from a wide array of Kierkegaard’s writings, Barnett offers an exposition of Kierkegaard’s spirituality that is brief and accessible without compromising substantive analysis and a subtle sensitivity to issues in Kierkegaard scholarship.

The first three chapters deal with background issues regarding Kierkegaard as a spiritual writer. Chapter 1 portrays Kierkegaard as a spiritual writer by highlighting the pietist influence on him in terms of his ecclesial formation in the local Moravian community and intellectual formation through pivotal pietist and, by extension, Catholic spiritual writers. Chapter 2 sketches Kierkegaard’s theological anthropology in terms of a person’s growth towards union with God, akin to the doctrine of deification common among spiritual writers. Chapter 3 explores the aesthetic dimension of Kierkegaard’s own authorship. Drawing on the work of Jean-Luc Marion, Barnett

distinguishes between “idols” and “icons” of faith and employs that heuristic to demonstrate the ways Kierkegaard uses vivid aesthetic imagery as icons to point beyond the images themselves toward the divine realities they signify, but cannot contain.

The first three chapters function as a prolegomenon to the extensive final two chapters, which focus on the substance of Kierkegaard’s spirituality. Drawing from his discussion of the aesthetic “icons” of Kierkegaard’s authorship in chapter 3, Barnett divides his substantive exposition of Kierkegaard’s spirituality into two “icons” of faith: (1) the natural world and (2) the Bible, or biblical figures and illustrations. In these chapters Barnett traces out in detail the kinds of images in nature and the Bible that Kierkegaard employs to map out features of the spiritual life and move his reader toward the ideal fulfillment of “transparent rest in God” (128).

Kierkegaard has often been read as a writer who puts spiritual or existential insight to the service of philosophical questions. Barnett suggests this process is backward. He argues that Kierkegaard is a writer who uses philosophical insight in the service of spiritual or existential aims. The goal of reason, for Kierkegaard, is to lead us toward greater personal and corporate unity with God. This core thesis comes out especially in the way Barnett demonstrates how Kierkegaard’s writings methodically employ images and ideas as icons of faith, pointing the readers beyond themselves as “a means toward religious and, with it, existential fulfillment” (81).

Barnett does an admirable job backing up his reading of Kierkegaard with numerous quotations from Kierkegaard’s works although the quotations are so numerous they sometimes hinder the clarity of the prose. A more substantive hindrance to the book’s accessibility is its need for a stronger organizational structure. Barnett’s analysis of natural and biblical icons presents Kierkegaard’s spirituality in pieces. A linear presentation of Kierkegaard’s spirituality would provide a clearer perspective. The book would also benefit from more sustained attention to Kierkegaard’s place in Christian spirituality. Barnett’s sparse comparison of Kierkegaard to two prominent figures, Bernard of Clairvaux and Meister Eckhart, in the first chapter and the brief connections to other spiritual writers made elsewhere work less to make any substantive point and more to leave the reader wondering what real connections Kierkegaard has to the history of Christian spirituality.

This book provides an excellent and innovative entry point into Kierkegaard’s spirituality. Barnett’s Kierkegaard emerges as a spiritual writer at once in debt to the various traditions of Christian spirituality in the West and yet original in the way he adopts unique categories to provide a complex and compelling narrative of the self’s journey to God.

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The Collected Sermons of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, ed. by ISABEL BEST. Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012. 214 pp. \$29.95.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer has captured a great deal of attention in recent years, partly because of the attentive work of Fortress to publish Bonhoeffer’s corpus of work in English. Of course, the foundation is a seventeen-volume translation of the critical