

lives and families of Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. This includes an honest assessment of both the strengths and weaknesses of the biblical characters.

The work demonstrates an excellent and thorough discussion of the language of the text throughout. Mathews carefully illustrates the intricacies and nuances of the Hebrew, such as the meanings and interpretations of words, word plays, and structure, as well as the themes, motifs, and critical issues that derive from them. Moreover, he frequently includes excurses that are helpful and timely to the discussion. The author presents a comprehensive analysis of the scholarship and critical issues related to the study of Genesis. He underscores the value of archeology and highlights its importance to the understanding and validation of the text.

Most major sections of the commentary begin with a section entitled "Composition." Here Mathews discusses the compositional questions and identifies the primary views, traditions, theories, and literary issues pertinent to that pericope. Next, the author addresses the questions with clear and compelling analysis. He deftly debunks the theories and assumptions against a unified composition of the text. For example, Mathews includes a detailed discussion of the Documentary Hypothesis and addresses each issue before presenting his own cogent justification for "an author responsible for the whole" (87).

One of the strongest assets of this work is Mathews's consistent and convincing representation of the maximalist view of the witness of the Hebrew text. He clearly maintains that historicity is vital to the interpretational truth of scripture, contending that "it is indefensible theologically that the faith of the Fathers is viable even if the Fathers were only a literary construct" (26).

Though clearly a scholarly work, this book is not without practical application for the church and Christians today. Additionally, the frequent footnotes and selected bibliography provide ample resources for those craving additional study.

In the end, Mathews passionately and persuasively argues for what many have considered the untenable positions of the inerrancy of the text, unity of authorship, and historicity of the characters and narratives. Students, teachers, pastors, and anyone interested in the study of scripture should add this book to their libraries and benefit from its instruction.

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***God's Greater Glory: The Exalted God of Scripture and the Christian Faith.* By Bruce A. Ware. Wheaton: Crossway, 2004. 241 pages. Softcover, \$17.99.**

Is God's control of the events of this world exhaustive and meticulous?
Is God's control of good and evil symmetrical, or is God's control of evil

somehow different from God's control of good? If God *does* control all events in this world exhaustively and meticulously, then are humans responsible for their actions? These are just some of the questions that Bruce Ware poses at the outset of *God's Greater Glory*.

While these questions might cause the reader to think that *God's Greater Glory* is simply a work on Providence, in reality, Bruce Ware is concerned with presenting a complete picture of God's relation to and involvement with the world. Interacting with traditions ranging from classical theism to Open Theism and Process Theology, Ware sets out to chart a course that he hopes will be more faithful to the scriptures than these other alternatives. For example, Ware rejects or redefines certain elements of classical theism, such as God's timelessness and impassibility (chapter 5), which he believes fail to reflect accurately the loving and responsive God portrayed in scripture. Process theology and Open Theism are found to be both biblically and theologically inadequate explanations of God's relationship to the world.

Ware's position, which he characterizes as being within the "broad Reformed tradition" (63), shares many features with other Reformed works on this same subject. For example, he argues that humans have compatibilist freedom as opposed to libertarian freedom. He also argues that God exercises exhaustive and meticulous control over all events in creation, including the actions of God's moral creatures.

It is when Ware departs from the Reformed tradition that we find the unique elements of his position. Readers will see this most clearly in Ware's adoption of a "compatibilist middle knowledge" position (113–15). God knows not only what his creatures *will* do in any situation but God also knows what we *would* do were our natures or situations different. With this knowledge God can bring about various influences in our lives such that we necessarily choose to act in the way that God intends. Ware's middle knowledge position differs significantly from the traditional Molinist position in that Ware insists that the libertarian freedom on which Molinist middle knowledge is based proves to be untenable (112). However, the question whether Ware's "compatibilist middle knowledge is truly *middle* knowledge is perhaps an issue yet to be fully resolved. Ware is aware of the question and offers a response to a recent charge that his position is not truly a *middle* knowledge position at all (115, n. 10).

God's Greater Glory is a useful addition to the discussion of God's overall relation to the world as well as the narrower issue of God's providential governance of creation. The penetrating questions with which the book begins and the seriousness with which Ware treats them are reason enough to own this work. That being said, this reviewer must ask whether Ware has departed too quickly from certain commitments characteristic of classical theism. Are the objections to classical theism that are raised by Open Theists and Process Theologians truly objections to the classical tradition or are they objections to a caricature of that tradition? Ever since Adolf Von Harnack made the charge that much of the classical Christian tradition was little more than Greek metaphysics imposed upon the simple message of Jesus, classical theism has been the

object of suspicion. This reviewer fears that that suspicion may be operative in Ware's treatment of certain doctrines. To be fair, Ware clearly states that his first priority is to be biblical. However, his attitude towards classical theism seems to be based upon the assumption that those within the classical tradition were not equally interested in being biblical.

God's Greater Glory is not an unbiased treatment of what has always been a controversial set of issues. However, one would have to look far and wide to find an unbiased book on this subject. As long as the reader is aware of the perspective from which Ware is arguing, *God's Greater Glory* will prove to be a useful addition to his or her library.

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Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity. 2 volumes. By Charles Kannengiesser. Leiden: Brill, 2004. Vol. 1: xxxiv + 1-669. Vol. 2: xii + 670-1496. Hardcover, \$339.00.

Charles Kannengiesser, Professor in the Department of Theological Studies at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, and renown scholar of early Christian thought, has in his senior years bequeathed to the growing numbers gravitating to patristics a monumental work as creative in conception as it is timely for a large niche of current interest. The author's chosen term "handbook" suggests some modesty. In fact, Johannes Quasten's four volume *Patrology* (1950-1977) is the comparison that comes to mind, though the present work is not an updating of that more comprehensive and general reference work. The *Handbook* spanned a decade in preparation. Its purpose is to provide "easy access" to patristic treatment of scripture, the central documents of the early Christian church (11-12).

Kannengiesser's creative conception merits brief comments for navigation by the prospective buyer, or more likely borrower, of these volumes. Following the usual introductory materials, the layout is in two unequal parts, "General Considerations" in four chapters of history of scholarship and Jewish and Greco-Roman background (23-373) and "Historical Survey" with ten chapters of Christian writers and writings extending to the eighth century (375-1473). Interspersed through the chapters are sixteen "Special Contributions," constituting a third of the entire work, by other scholars. The ingenuity in the architecture of the work is indicated by entries on surprising topics, "Rabbinic Literature," and complementary ones, "Patristic Exegesis of the Books of the Bible." The latter is of particular interest. It serves as a chapter in itself, Chapter IV, and was co-authored by two distinguished patristics scholars, Catholic professor, Cistercian Father David L. Balás, and Baptist professor, D. Jeffrey Bingham.

Kannengiesser quietly shows keen insight into current needs and interests in choosing the niche of patristic exegesis. His career has spanned a period in which attention to patristics has increased signifi-