

Ecclesiastes: A Reflective Exposition. By Thomas Miersma. Jenison, MI: Reformed Free, 2022, 246 pp., \$27.95.

Thomas Miersma's *Ecclesiastes: A Reflective Exposition* is exactly what the title implies. It is not a technical commentary or even a popular-level commentary, at least not in the traditional sense. It does not treat interpretive issues and does not engage in exegetical details. Rather, it reads much like a reflective homily, with a decidedly Reformed and Christocentric perspective on the contents of Ecclesiastes. Following the KJV, the author organizes his reflective exposition chapter by chapter, with further breakdown organized by content-based units. Beginning with a full-text quote of the KJV, he then adds a reflective commentary on each content unit before moving forward to the next unit. Chapter breaks follow the standard chapter divisions of the book of Ecclesiastes.

Miersma does not heavily source his exposition; footnote citations are minimal and there is no bibliography or author index. The handful of sources referenced relate primarily to full-text usage of dated articles from the *Standard Bearer* publication. Indeed, the second and third chapters of his "Introduction to the Book of Ecclesiastes" are simply reproductions of past articles written by Cornelius C. Hanko and George Ophoff. Perhaps the intention behind this was to emphasize the timeless nature of the content of Ecclesiastes. However, with introductory matters as the focus of these chapters (the question of Solomonic authorship and the theological questions raised by the book), it does seem that consultation with contemporary scholarship rather than reproductions of dated material is warranted.

After a brief introduction (composed of three chapters, two of which are the reproductions of *Standard Bearer* articles), the remaining twelve chapters offer reflective commentary following the contents of the twelve chapters of Ecclesiastes. Within the commentary, Solomon is referenced by name as the author (rather than "Qohelet"), and the background of Solomon's life therefore takes precedence in framing out the historical setting for the text. Interestingly, while affirming a Solomonic context, Miersma takes a decidedly positive approach to the teachings of the "Preacher," with the spiritual virtues of Solomon's wisdom emphasized over his downfall. In the reflective commentary, the words of the Preacher direct the reader to spiritually edifying truths that ultimately point to Christ.

Miersma frequently uses helpful cross-references in his commentary. Most of these are from Genesis, Psalms, and Romans. The author is correct in finding in Genesis a theological foundation for the dilemmas observed by Solomon. He is also correct in bringing the reader forward to Romans, with particular attention given to chapter 8. Indeed, the only solution to the consequences of sin and corruption come through Christ and not through wisdom alone. This is crucial to Miersma's reflections; the wisdom of Solomon in Ecclesiastes is a "spiritual wisdom," and this wisdom points to Christ. It is through this assumption that a Christocentric reading of Ecclesiastes is established.

In terms of strengths, there is much to commend in this commentary, especially if the reader's expectations align with the intentions set by the author. The reflective commentary uses cross-referencing from both OT and NT, bolstering

the support for a “spiritual wisdom” in Ecclesiastes that connects the thinking of Solomon with that of the rest of Scripture. Usually these connections are valid in principle, even if they may strain exegetical relevance. Additionally, the exposition reads consistently, with an equal amount of attention given to the whole text of Ecclesiastes, never getting very deep, but also not being trite or shallow. Perhaps the greatest strength of the book is the spiritual sense of reflection, where one comes away with a positive understanding of Solomon’s wisdom supported by the redemptive trajectory of Scripture.

While many will appreciate Miersma’s work, there are weaknesses. Though the emphasis on spiritual wisdom has some merit (especially in correlation to books like James), there is little sensitivity in the exposition to the theological concerns of OT wisdom literature in general or Ecclesiastes in particular. Within the commentary, questions concerning the theological interests of OT wisdom literature are rarely explored or asked. Additionally, there is minimal evaluation of key Hebrew words, repeated themes, or literary subgenres used throughout the book. Proper understanding of the manner in which certain words and phrases function within the rhetoric of Qohelet is essential to the interpretation of this book. While assuming a spiritual understanding, little is done to establish an interpretive basis for critical terms within the text or to explore interpretive options for the most prominent themes within the book.

As a reflective exposition, Miersma’s work provides a helpful resource for those who lean toward a spiritual reading of Ecclesiastes. For those who are exploring the text of Ecclesiastes while looking for exegetically supported options for the difficult interpretive questions that the book raises, Miersma’s reflective exposition may be less helpful. Used as a companion to more technical commentaries, reading this “reflective exposition” may nonetheless prove insightful.

Richard Alan Fuhr Jr

John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, Liberty University, Lynchburg, VA

The T&T Clark Handbook of Septuagint Research. Edited by William A. Ross and W. Edward Glenny. New York: T&T Clark, 2021, xxv + 486 pp., \$175.00.

Septuagint research is a growing and vibrant academic domain with a wide scope of methods, interests, and interdisciplinary engagement. This volume by William Ross and Edward Glenny illustrates the insights, trends, and developments currently taking place in Septuagint research, portraying the wide range of current and future research possibilities for the field.

The work opens with a preface, a forward, and a formal introduction, each of which states in a general way the rationale, aims, and contributions of the present volume. At the outset, Ross and Glenny note that this handbook functions as “a complementary resource to James K. Aitken’s *T&T Clark Companion to the Septuagint* (2015b), which provides a book-by-book overview of the [Septuagint] corpus” (p. xii). In contrast to this complementary volume, the rationale for the *Handbook* is as follows: “at the time of publication, there is still no resource comparable to this