

ABSTRACTS AND CRITICAL BOOK REVIEWS

to carry out such a duty with an understanding that the Lord respect cultural values that is why the Scripture is written with a particular cultural context. The Lord will demonstrate His power through them as the surrounding culture responds, if they could undertake mission with a clear acknowledgment of the cultural world view of the people. Indeed the believer's heart for the advancement of God's mission should lead him or her to acquire the need strategies in entering certain unknown cultures. Mission in Africa need people with action oriented mind. People who attempts new things, takes initiative, and works toward something in the diversity of manners.

I recommend that every pastor, leader, teacher, particularly those interested in doing mission in Africa, should have a copy of *The Bible, Cultural Identity, and Missions* in his or her library. Also churches and institutional libraries should have copies to assist students and members to have access to this volume. Readers will find the rich insights and principles for reflection and review on cultural issues and mission strategies in Africa amidst the diversity that abounds from both within and outside. The volume will be beneficial to readers in the area of advancing the course of God and the church in Africa and those who seeks to develop their mission skills from a biblical and spiritual perspective in the African context. It is a major contribution to discourse in the Bible, culture, and missions as an area of study. I commend the editors and the contributing authors for such a work.

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Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction, by Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academics, 2016. 255 pp. ISBN-13: 978-0801097539. Softcover US\$24.99.

Over the years of scholarship, textual criticism has gradually become a major point of discourse and plays relatively a maximal role in the OT debate. Moreover, there has been a significant change in the implications for interpretation and discussion in the OT. In this volume—which is a second edition of Ellis R. Brotzman's book in 1994—Ellis R. Brotzman and Eric J. Tully, a senior professor of Old Testament at Tyndale Theological Seminary in the Netherlands and an assistant professor of Old Testament

and Semitic Languages at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School respectively expands and update the introductory issues in Old Testament criticism. They believe that an up-to-date appreciation and description of the OT textual issues should be known by the reader before he/she begins to exegete OT passages.

As serious studies in the OT Scripture requires a considerable knowledge of the practice and theory of textual criticism, this book introduces the reader to “the discipline of OT textual criticism in a practical, accessible way without oversimplifying matters” (p. 1) in this second edition. They simplify the complex and complicated theories of textual antiquity of the Old Testament to enhance easy read and understanding in this edition. This is because an appreciation of the vast array of variants, early ANE writings, and the principle of establishing the best OT text would make possible the study of the relation between the critical text problems and the Hebrew Bible’s intent to the reader. The authors assert that one cannot become a great exegete of the text if he/she refuse to practice textual criticism in biblical exegesis and interpretation, as the enterprise of “textual criticism gives us tools to correct manuscripts and establish the original text” (p. 4). They also affirm the traditional position on the transmission of the OT text that “the OT Scriptures were produced from the time of Moses to the time of Malachi, that is, from about 1400 BCE to around 400BC” (p. 21).

Aside the introduction and the conclusion sections which set the pace and summarizes the results of the study respectively, the book is outlined in eight chapters. Chapter one entails the writing in the ancient Near East—the Mesopotamian region. The writings explored includes: Sumerian, Akkadian, Egyptian, Alphabetic, and writing in the OT (in this case Hebrew and Aramaic). The history of each is survey from their first system of pictorial nature to their final forms. The authors justify their method and purpose by establishing the need for a better discourse and understanding between the OT text and the critical issues that comes with it. This is attained through a thorough analysis of some topics from the fields of text development and transmission.

While chapter two sums up the history of transmission of the text of the OT from the writing of the individual biblical books to the current period, chapter three presents the discourse of the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Samaritan Pentateuch, and the Masoretic Text—the most important Hebrew manuscript presently known. On the other hand, chapter four brings to bear some of the important ancient versions like the Greek Septuagint/LXX, the Aramaic Targums, the Syria Peshitta, and the Latin Vulgate. The contribution of these ancient versions are also emphasized in their relation to the study of the OT text.

In dealing with the how most original readings are determine, chapter five introduces on the critical apparatus and the layout of the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) and the Biblia Hebraica Quinta (BHQ). The notes from both the BHS and BHQ has become the base for textual work of Biblical Studies students. Chapter six also assess the inadvertent and intentional scribal changes introduced to the OT text from the previous generations and along the centuries. The Scribal errors are made up of those produced as a result of physical defects in ancient scrolls, the inadvertent errors are introduce into the text by scribes unknowingly, and intentional changes in the text result from scribes trying to supply text to suit their understanding of the passages. All these are thoroughly discussed with illustrated examples.

Chapter seven also looks at the internal and external evidences verified in establishing the principles of best text. And chapter eight gives a practical example of textual criticism using the book of Ruth as a paradigm. The authors' example of Ruth 4:2 show that the critical apparatus of the BHS noted as a postulates that the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint include *Boaz* as the subject of וְהָיָה . A look at the MT version of the verse shows that although the subject of the וְהָיָה may be to some extent ambiguous, the context points toward Boaz as the subject. This shows that both the Latin Vulgate and the Greek Septuagint provides explicit subject of וְהָיָה with "their tendency to make things more obvious" (p. 173), but "the MT is original and coherent" (p. 174).

Though the authors establish that "a whole series of unintentional variations *are* introduced into ancient OT manuscripts by the human frailties of the scribes" (p. 117, italic emphasis mine and supplied), they do not render the authority and inspiration of the Hebrew Bible void. Rather, they present interest in doing textual criticism to unearth the original wording of the OT—the correct use of Scripture.

In addressing textual differences OT textual criticism, the matters of OT tenet and the Hebrew text are convolutedly related with a good dichotomy between a text's achievement of its final literary form and the commencement of the text's process of transmission. Unlike the first edition, the second incorporate some of the critical issues proposed by Emmanuel Tov in his book *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible, 3rd ed.* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2012), and Ernst Würthwein in his volume *The Text of the Old Testament: An Introduction to the Biblia Hebraica, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 3rd ed.* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2014). Brotzman and Tully's discussion of these available works on the subject help our understanding of the development of the OT.

Currently, textual criticism and lexicography are somewhat interrelated that when a discourse of the former ignores the latter leaves the reader inadequately informed. This is lacking on this edition. Also whereas

the inductive approach to using BHS, as introduced by Brotzman and Tully, is of great value the reader, it may as well be intimidating due to the redundant materials that appears in its borders.

The textual criticism and analyses of the issues are apt for many Biblical scholars. If one wants to introduce students to the textual criticism of the OT and its logical exegetical conclusions, Brotzman and Tully's work is probably the best. Seminary students and scholars alike will immensely benefit from this volume. Of special importance is the authors' provision in the appendix of an English key to BHS which is a modification of Hans Peter Ruger's "An English Key to the Latin Words and Abbreviations and the Symbols of *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart, Germany: German Bible Society, 1985)." Above all, *Old Testament Textual Criticism: A Practical Introduction* offers a good and useful introductory resource to textual criticism for students of the OT with the basic knowledge of OT languages.

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The End of the Timeless God, by Ryan. T. Mullins. First edition. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2016. 248 pp. ISBN-978-0-19-875518-0. Hardcover US\$110.00.

Ryan T, Mullins has distinguished himself, at a tender age of 39, as a scholar in systematic theology and philosophy of religion. He earned his doctoral degree from the University of St Andrews in Philosophy of Religion. A prolific writer and a Fellow of Analytic Theology at the University of Notre Dame Center for Philosophy of Religion. Besides, he visits many campuses to teach or make presentations.

The book, *The End of a Timeless God*, is a must read for anyone who wants a cutting age scholarly discussion on the controverted subject of divine timelessness. The book is an academic product that has been produced alongside a series of scholarly books that utilize an analytical theological approach in their discussion. In *The End of a Timeless God*, Mullins is non-apologetic in his ferocious attack on divine timelessness. He argues for divine temporality by use of several perspectives in his book.

Mullins puts his focus on the concept of time as a thematic thread to argue for the option why timelessness should not be preferred against the temporality of God. Presentism and Creation are discussed in connection to the timeless God. Timelessness and its interplay with four dimensions of

