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One of the best features of this first volume is the happy co-operation of three Peter Martyr scholars: McLelland, who translated Martyr's "Theses for Debate" from the years 1543–45; Di Gangi, the translator of Martyr's "Exposition of the Apostles' Creed" and of his "Schism and the True Church"; and Philip McNair, who wrote a brief biography of Peter Martyr Vermigli. Taken together this co-operative undertaking gives scholars and students alike a readable English text of three of Martyr's early works and the best available contemporary expertise on his life and times.

The volume begins with Martyr's first publication after the inner turmoil from which he seems to have emerged in the late summer of 1542 when, at the height of his powers as a churchman and scholar, he took leave of his native city, declaring himself "free from hypocrisy by the grace of Christ." Within fourteen months of his departure from Italy Peter Martyr published, in Italian, "A Plain Exposition of the Twelve Articles of the Apostles' Creed."

During the ensuing five years at Strasbourg he lectured on several books of the Old Testament and engaged in the reform activities undertaken in that city by Bucer, Capito, and Zell, in co-operation with the City Council. "Theses for Debate: Propositions from Genesis" (1543), "Propositions from Exodus" (1545) and "Propositions from Leviticus" (1547), are some of the fruits of his labors during those years.

The final tract selected by the editors for this first volume in the Peter Martyr Library is the scholium "Of Schism" from Martyr's commentary on 2 Kings. Although chronologically it belongs to his Zurich years and comes from 1562, the section fits well within the scope of the present volume. The excerpt is an apologia for "true religion" which is based on Scripture and is informed by sound patristic authors. Throughout its pages Martyr upholds the marks of the church which are true preaching of the word of God, the right administration of the two sacraments instituted by Christ, and Christian discipline.

The picture which emerges from reading Peter Martyr's "Early Writings on Creed, Scripture and Church" is that of an erudite scholar, who occupied a respected place among reformers of the early modern period and well deserves to be read alongside their writings. As an added bonus the discerning reader may catch a glimpse of the interplay between this Italian humanist scholar and the Northern context in which he came to live and work.

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Interpretation and Bible: Essays on Truth in Literature. **By Sean McEvenue. Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1994. ISBN 0-8146-5036-8. Pp. 187.**

McEvenue is cordial, yet firm: interpretation includes more than the "objective" tasks of "literary" criticism, which we all have come to appreciate and trust—at

least discriminatingly. Questions regarding the multifaceted reality affirmed by texts (truth claims) cannot be properly understood when reduced to "subjective" wrangling ill-suited to academic comportments of "objectivity." Nor is the centripetal poise satisfying in its attempt to legitimate the subjective as objective through repressed appeals to "a world 'outside' our world" (93). Truth, for McEvenue, is centrifugal, and is expressed elementally in texts. It is subjective in the sense that it intends to include a personal perspective and evaluation of reality as understood by the "speaker" of a text (12, 27–30).

In this fine collection of essays, written over a decade or so, McEvenue develops what appears to be a peculiar line of reader-response criticism, with special reference to the cognitional theory and theological method of Canadian philosopher-theologian Bernard Lonergan (1904–1984). The importance of Lonergan for McEvenue lies primarily in "his rehabilitation...of that crucial human act whereby we affirm truth" (5), namely, reflective understanding (judgment) or, to use Cardinal Newman's phrase, illative sense. In terms of literary expression, in the context of which authoritative texts like the Bible are to be situated, such judgments are communicated non-theoretically, effecting the occasional psychic jolt we experience when reading texts of classic worth. Our reactions, McEvenue argues, are roused not so much by the imagined "ideas" or "doctrines" of texts that have helped shape Western civilization, as they are by their subliminal voices or foundational stances. Legitimate, then, to the critical "objective" task of biblical scholarship is the elicitation of this textual "horizon" (*Weltanschauung*) in the face of reticent meanings (*Wirkungsgeschichte*), which often rob the reader of participant joy.

Particularly alluring is McEvenue's suave treatment of various biblical traditions (i.e., within the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament) and poetic expressions outside the sacred canon (e.g., Carl Sandburg's "Fog," T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," and a fascinating reported speech of a nineteenth-century Indian chief, Keesh-ke-mun, "Englishman!"), all of which represent a multiform preoccupation with truth, "an authentic affirmation of reality" (8). McEvenue is especially critical of current hermeneutical trends which, in his view, obfuscate the elemental meaning of texts by exaggerating the limitations of the historical-critical method, and which, as a consequence, dismiss, through an excessive display of sophistication (*sophisma*), any meaningful discussion of a book's relation to its author (historic context). The contentious notion of authorial "intention" behind or beyond the text—available to us perhaps from other sources—is not, we are assured, being reinstated. Rather, he posits an interconnectedness that secures "author" to "text" in promenade-like union; in McEvenue's words, "the author *as* expressed in the text" (41, emphasis added). Indeed, one becomes an author, relatively speaking, through expression, whether in the inevitable mode of ideational mediation or in the energic mode of contingent innovation.

This position allows McEvenue to conceive a fourfold relation crucial to interpretation in close proximity to Lonergan's "four main aspects" of understanding a text (*Method in Theology*, 1972). All of these relations are analytic differentiations of a unitary, compact process we instinctively perform when reading texts in a responsible fashion—instinctively, that is, since the time of Friedrich

Schleiermacher, Wilhelm Dilthey, Julius Wellhausen, Hermann Gunkel, Ferdinand de Saussure, and many others. The "first" of these relations (*relations internal to the work*) we allude to above in the shadow or controversy of the "second" relation (*of a book to its author*). In this way, McEvenue shows a critical appreciation of traditional methods given to events and community meanings that motivate/shape/provide the subject matter about which an author intends to write, and also an appreciation of more or less current approaches that understand meaning to lie within the closure of a text.

The "third" relation (*of a book to its reader*) marks a shift in emphasis from the role of author-text to that of the reader, even though the text itself implicates the rules of competent readership. Among the myriad necessities of responsible biblical reading, McEvenue mentions the academically suspect desire-for-an-authentic-relationship-with-God. "[The Bible] demands a spiritually sensitive reader" (107). The objection that faith is not something to be taught in the university is countered by examples of celebrated faithfilled poets such as Milton and Blake. "Such authors simply cannot be fully understood by a reader whose psyche has not been opened up to this dimension. Any more than Wordsworth can be fully understood by a reader who has no sense of nature" (19).

The "fourth," and final, relation to which McEvenue draws our attention is that *of a book to its subject matter.* A qualitative distinction is made between authors' "knowledge" of a specific realm of meaning which they attempt to objectify and the historical advantage of future readers, who have a better conceptual grasp of that object than the authors themselves. (This insight can be traced back to Immanuel Kant's first *Critique.*) However, when the subject matter is God, or a person, the situation is complicated by the fact that this kind of knowledge "is a psychic reality which transcends conceptualization and reasoned judgment" (44). Thus, while our understanding of Amos-the-text probably exceeds that of Amos himself, not to mention the speculative complexities of its subject matter (God), it is unlikely that we will "know" as much about God as Amos did. Knowledge here is of a peculiar sort: knowledge as "holiness or authenticity, namely, conversion, love, gift of God (grace)" (44).

McEvenue's principal aim is to discriminate the elemental meanings of biblical texts from acquired conceptualized meanings of historically effected consciousness (*wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewußtsein*). Methodologically, it is diachronic, but in a qualified, perhaps unwitting sense. For instance, elemental ("original") meanings, though subliminally extant in texts themselves, are usually procured in the awareness of a philosophically developed culture. (McEvenue is far too generous when he states that it is quite "possible" for obtuse readers not to experience the appropriate subliminal effects of texts [29].) Indeed, the power which effective meaning exercises over us is assumed by McEvenue's intriguing hermeneutical question that invites us to *foundational* interaction: In what realm of meaning does the author-text expect revelation/salvation/meaning to occur?

Interpretation and Bible is at once sophisticated and basic; sophisticated in its lucid development of Lonergan's interpretation theory, basic in its desire to engage the religious burden of biblical texts unabashedly. Although McEvenue's largely depreciative reading of figures such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jacques

Derrida, and Michel Foucault is rather surprising, he shows himself to be a very capable thinker ready to brave the heights of truth wherever its unveiling is being dared. Those interested in homiletics will find the book particularly useful in its numerous unearthings of sundry elemental meanings from well-worn biblical passages. Both the scandalous and the inspirational are woven together in nuptial union, celebrating the biblical vision of God "as transcending all limits, as wild and out of control" (10).

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***Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction*. Ed. Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza. New York: Crossroad, 1993. ISBN 0-8245-1381-9. Pp v+397.**

Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Introduction is the first volume of a projected two-volume feminist commentary on the bible. It aims at addressing the "ambivalent relationship" which women as marginalized people have to the bible (x). According to Elisabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza (editor), the goal of the volume is to "empower readers for the tasks of engaging in critical analysis [of scripture] and for developing a different sociohistorical and theo-ethical imagination" (xi).

As organizing principles for feminist biblical study and specifically for this project, Schüssler-Fiorenza advocates a *hermeneutics of suspicion* and a *hermeneutics of re-vision* (11). The former attempts to identify patriarchal crimes in the text by "carefully tracing [their] clues and imprints...in order to prevent further hurt and violations" (11). By contrast, a hermeneutics of re-vision "searches texts for values and visions that can nurture those who live in subjection and authorize their struggles for liberation and transformation" (11). Many of the contributors to this volume take up these two hermeneutical keys in their essays.

Searching the Scriptures takes seriously its heritage of biblical scholarship. Schüssler-Fiorenza attempts to contextualize the book in an ever-growing but still little-recognized tradition of feminist biblical study—she describes the book as the daughter of Elizabeth Cady-Stanton's *The Woman's Bible* (8). Since this tradition has included work from "diverse locations and divergent traditions" (x), Schüssler-Fiorenza encourages those involved in feminist scholarship to transcend the boundaries of white, North-American and European thinking. They must "adopt a feminist hermeneutical perspective" which takes seriously not only problems of gender, but also of race, class, ethnicity and other structures of oppression (x). Schüssler-Fiorenza has sought out contributors from different geographical areas who address different cultural issues of interpretation. In addition, the book specifically attempts to treat the subjects of perspective, sociohistorical location, method and communication.

Part one, "Charting Interpretation from Different Sociohistorical Location," presents a brief, multicultural history of feminist biblical interpretation. This section contains a number of essays from various racial and cultural perspectives: Caucasian (American), African-American (womanist), Asian-American, African,