

Biblical Interpretation and Analytic Reflection

Darren Sarisky
University of Oxford

Abstract: Analytic skills can contribute to the development of a biblical hermeneutic in two ways, by refining the formulation of a theological hermeneutic, and by illuminating how problematic hermeneutical presuppositions have in some cases become part of exegetical practice. The contribution that analytic skills can make to the enterprise of biblical interpretation need not be vitiated by a common criticism of analytic modes of engaging with texts, namely, that they tend toward being ahistorical, though the objection deserves to be considered carefully.

I. Introduction

The fundamental task of all systematic theology, regardless of the degree to which particular theologians avail themselves of analytic skills, is to articulate Christian doctrines so as to explore the logical interconnections between them and to expound the Christian faith as comprehensively as possible. As John Webster writes, highlighting these two desiderata, “Systematic theology attempts a conceptual articulation of Christian claims about God and everything else in relation to God, characterized by comprehensiveness and coherence” (Webster 2007, 2). Consider coherence first. Systematic theology refers to discourse whose purpose is not only simply stating Christian beliefs, but exploring how they relate to one another: it is about the logic of Christian beliefs (Kelsey 2009, 28). In asking what a given doctrinal affirmation implies or presupposes, and thinking about how doctrines thus support one another in a framework that has a certain integrity, theologians treat any single doctrinal topic as if it were a piece of a jigsaw puzzle: each item of belief “reflects its orientation towards others as parts of a larger pattern” and “displays by its very shape its trajectory towards linkage” (Williams 2001, 1). By the nature of the case, this drive to determine how doctrines relate to one another within a system links up with the effort to present Christian doctrine with maximal scope. The consideration of a single locus cannot take place in isolation but expands ever outwards to others. Systematic theology “seeks to present Christian teaching as a unified whole; even though particular exercises in the genre ... may restrict themselves to only one or other element of Christian doctrine, they have an eye for its place in the entire corpus” (Webster 2007, 2).

Journal of Analytic Theology, Vol. 6, May 2018

10.12978/jat.2018-6.030013180024a

© 2018 Darren Sarisky • © 2018 Journal of Analytic Theology

In going about these two interrelated tasks, systematic theology presents its results in a particular form, by abstractive reflection on its sources together with an effort to schematize them into synthetic concepts. The sense in which this cogitation is abstractive needs careful specification. It does not mean that the more direct and practical Christian claims are left behind or discarded, but rather that their teaching is summarized in a highly concentrated form. The concepts that are central to systematic theology aim to provide an illuminating, high-level reading of their sources, a map that guides doctrinal thinkers through a particular territory because it provides them with a layout of the whole, highlighting its major features and relating them to one another. “Systematic theological concepts (Trinity, election, providence, incarnation, regeneration, and so on) function as shorthand which enables more deliberate, reflective apprehension than can be had from the more immediate bearers of Christian claims such as scripture” (Webster 2007, 9). While these concepts often have roots in the Bible, because of the nature of systematic theology, they are inevitably transformed as they enter into this sort of discourse: a biblical concept’s “systematic deployment involves a measure of generalization and regularization as concepts are put to work in different contexts and for different purposes than those in which they originally functioned (‘justification’ is a good example here)” (Webster 2007, 9). Biblical texts are often more obviously occasional than works of systematic theology as well as having less of a concern for comprehensiveness in their teaching. The main energy within biblical texts is usually directed toward exhortation, polemic, and didactic purposes, not to exploring “speculative entailments” of teaching, such as those that confessions about God’s operation in the economy of salvation have for a doctrine of God (Webster 2007, 3). Biblical texts feed into systematic theology, but theology in its modern sense has as its goal offering a conceptual paraphrase of such material.

Systematic theological proposals are answerable to a set of norms—these are often listed as Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason—and the criterion of reason is especially important for this essay. More specifically, it is reasoning as it manifests itself in the analytic philosophical tradition that is important here.¹ How does analytic philosophy operate? Analytic philosophers work in a certain style: they seek to formulate their reasoning so that their core affirmations, or the skeletal outline of their case, could in principle enter into the structure of an argument that may be set out via formal logic; they prioritize precision of statement, transparency of meaning, and the logical coherence of all the beliefs under examination; they write with an austerity of style that eschews non-literal language unless it seems indispensable for making a point; they tend to break down complex concepts as much as possible, with the result that they are resolved into more rudimentary elements

¹ According to the useful mapping of theological options by Hans Frei in his *Types of Christian Theology* (1992, 28-55), philosophy plays a role in four of his five types of theology: those in which more generic philosophical resources dominate specifically Christian material, both of those in which philosophy and doctrinal content correlate with one another and exist in harmony, and those in which philosophical concepts subordinate themselves to tradition-specific theological doctrine. It is only the last of the five types that aims to dispense with philosophy entirely. Hence, the vast majority of theologies recognize some role for philosophy. Yet for the examples that Frei surveys, it is the continental tradition of philosophy that has exercised the lion’s share of influence.

that are themselves clear and distinct; finally, they move by way of conceptual analysis toward proposals that can cope as well as possible with potential counter-examples (Rea 2009, 4-6).² They also tackle a recognizable set of topics, such as the nature and limits of knowledge, ethical questions, the meaning of causation, and so on (Rea 2009, 4-5). Analytic philosophers and theologians who employ skills associated with the analytic tradition do more than classical systematic theologians to consider the *possibility* that a certain theological doctrine might prove to be logically coherent. That said, certain figures working in the analytic tradition see Christian analytic reflection as thinking that is bound by cardinal Christian doctrines, as reflection “committed to a broad but specific way of looking at humankind and the world and God” that is the way it is “by virtue of being Christian” (Plantinga 1984, 271). For their part, classical systematicians tend to take it as a given that a doctrine exists in a more or less set form; they then try to work out how it fits with other received views. The differences here should not be trivialized, but there exists substantial convergence between classical systematic theologians and analytic thinkers who operate within a relatively defined doctrinal space.³

For those who bring analytic skill to the theological task, how would this work when applied to a specific theological topic, the interpretation of the Bible? Can the skills that analytic work cultivates be useful here? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to frame it in a more specific form. What is the utility of analytical acumen toward reading the Bible understood as Christian Scripture? Interpretation of the Bible as Scripture means working on the basis of a doctrine of Scripture, rather than setting doctrine aside for the sake of a reading that is untrammelled by doctrinal commitments. Reflecting the interrelation between a hermeneutic of the Bible and a doctrinal understanding of it, Webster states, “We need to figure out what the text is in order to figure out what to do with it; and we determine what Scripture is by understanding its role in God’s self-communication to creatures” (Webster 2012, 116). This is a clear example of thinking about biblical interpretation in a systematic theological way, for reflection on reading is intricately linked to other doctrines, especially a doctrine of Scripture, but also a doctrine of God and (perhaps more indirectly) a theological anthropology. These doctrinal commitments may make a difference to reading by sponsoring interpretations that operate in canonical, rather than simply historical, context; they may also motivate readers to be deferential and trusting in their stance toward the biblical text. Because interpretation stands at a nexus of other doctrines, one might call this not just a biblical hermeneutic but a theological hermeneutic of the Bible. Expounding a comprehensive doctrine of Scripture falls outside the scope of this essay; the focus here is on reading in a way that is Christianly specific because of the doctrinal commitments that are presupposed. The usefulness of analytic thought for this project is the topic of part II.

Consideration of this question is incomplete without facing up to an important objection to the prospect of using analytic skills within reflection on interpretation, and this leads to the discussion in part III below. The most pertinent objection is that

² I have put my own gloss on Rea’s characterization of the analytic rhetorical style.

³ There are useful wider reflections on the relationship between analytic philosophy and analytic theology in Baker-Hytch (2016), Stump (2013), and Wood (2014, 45-47).

hermeneutical ability is not a characteristic part of an analytic's skill set. The charge is often quite a bit stronger than that, claiming that there is something in the analytic impulse that results in texts being treated in an ahistorical manner, one incompatible with the conscientious and respectful reading that a theologian ought to give to Scripture. Alan Torrance signals something of what is at stake as he wonders whether there may be a tendency for analytic theologians to read Scripture in an assimilative way, divesting the Bible of qualities they find puzzling and transforming its message into something that is easier to manage. He makes his point vividly and forcefully: "For the Christian, analytic theology is obliged to engage with a book that is full of metaphor, rhetorical plays, and the semantic shifting of everyday concepts, not to mention the kind of counterintuitive claims and hermeneutical dilemmas that would cause most analytic philosophers to turn to drink" (Torrance 2013, 31). If analytics may well be tempted to convert biblical language into something with which they are more comfortable, perhaps the analytical tendency should be kept away from the biblical text, as analytic thinking would only undermine theological hermeneutics. This is indeed an important objection to consider, yet it need not undermine the usefulness of analytic skills for thinking about biblical interpretation. Though it by no means aspires to present a complete summary of all that analytic theologians do, this essay will consider some of the pertinent aspects of how analytics handle texts in order to respond to this objection.

II. The Contribution of Analytic Reflection to Theological Hermeneutics

There are two fundamental ways in which philosophical insights can feed into theological reflection: by criticizing problematic views and by shaping constructive formulations of a theological hermeneutic of the Bible. Eleonore Stump provides an illustration of the critical value that analytic skill has with her essay "Visits to the Sepulcher and Biblical Exegesis" (Stump 2009), in which she uses her analytic abilities to expose some of the methodological assumptions of Raymond Brown's classic commentary on John's Gospel. In his preface, Brown announces that "we live at a time when a considerable degree of objectivity has been reached in biblical scholarship," meaning that it is widely accepted that interpreters must distinguish strictly between the intention of a biblical author and the theological import that the subsequent history of religious reflection has found in the author's words, lest they read the latter back into the former (Brown 1995, vi). In this usage, interpretive "objectivity" implies taut attention to the historical context of a biblical passage and a corresponding refusal to allow theological preconceptions to sway interpretive deliberations toward readings the interpreter favors because they align with his own personal beliefs. If Brown proceeds "objectively," readers of his commentary should expect to find that the strategies of interpretation he uses do not depend upon any substantive theological commitments. What then *does* his methodology presuppose? It is just here that Stump's work is valuable, for she aims to distill his operative assumptions. She explains that she intends to "reflect philosophically on the

presuppositions” with which Brown works, and to consider “whether they must or even can be acceptable to everyone” (Stump 2009, 243).

As Stump shows, interpreting the text against the background of its history of origin means dissolving the canonical form of the text into more primitive narrative units, those which do not possess the tensions or aporiae that a careful reader can spot in the text as it stands. This process of dissection and reconstruction presupposes, first, that earlier forms of the stories, which eventually entered into the Bible, were free of tensions, though when several of these narratives were combined together by an editor or editors, such difficulties were generated. Brown’s approach to the Gospel requires assembling, as best one can, these rudimentary narratives out of the raw material that exists in the canonical form of John’s Gospel. Brown’s methodology also assumes, second, that earlier stories are more likely to reflect reality accurately; thus this approach to the text takes it that the reality in question was simple in the sense of lacking tension or elements that are hard to reconcile with one another (Stump 2009, 258-259). The second assumption is never argued for by Brown, and it would seem that his commitment to “objectivity,” maximizing as it does the work done by beliefs that all rational people supposedly share, means that he cannot mount an argument in favor of this aspect of his methodology. The thesis that reality itself is simple in the sense of tension-free could well be labeled metaphysical, and thus would have a similar status to the field of theology from which Brown explicitly distances himself: it is likely that a full consensus could not be gathered around this proposal. With her exploration of the medieval play *Visitatio Sepulchri*, Stump shows that Brown’s way of handling these challenging aspects of the text is not the only possible response to them. The play is a rich dramatic depiction of the empty tomb narrative whose author assumed that the reality standing behind the biblical text could have contained within itself the complexities found in the text.⁴ In sum, Stump uses her analytical skill to distill out of Brown’s commentary an implicit assumption about the reality that stands behind John’s Gospel: this view is not defended with argumentation, perhaps it could not be, and Stump shows its questionable status by performing a genealogical subversion on it in offering an example of a way of interpreting John’s Gospel that rejects this key assumption.⁵

⁴ The play is an attempt to harmonize the various New Testament accounts of the empty tomb. Brown objects that the effort to harmonize does violence to the text of the Bible (Brown 2008, 972). Yet Stump understandably counters that Brown’s own procedure of decomposing the canonical texts into the various narrative sub-units, out of which it may have been previously composed, does at least as much violence to the text (2009, 260).

⁵ Stump contends that Brown’s dissection hermeneutic rests on a whole set of further assumptions as well: (1) the editors or evangelists freely changed the narrative material that they inherited, removing things and also making major additions of their own; yet (2) editors were slavishly deferential to accounts they received, to the point that they allowed inconsistent details to remain without seeking to reconcile them; (3) earlier accounts are more likely to be accurate witnesses than later ones, so there is a drive to discover the earliest layer of gospel tradition (Stump 2009, 255). She contends that history cannot provide warrant for these presuppositions, as we cannot demonstrate conclusively that we in fact possess the earliest forms of the relevant stories and that they conform to the stated patterns. Moreover, there are philosophical problems with these principles; for instance, there is no small amount of tension between the first and second theses—at least as much as Brown

What is the value of all of this for a theological hermeneutic of the Bible? It is important for interpreters to arrive at a cursive reading of the biblical text in its final canonical form. Because a doctrine of Scripture says something theological about the whole Bible, it motivates readers to engage the texts so as to follow their narratives, arguments, poetry, and so on as they unfold. While a reading of a biblical text should by all means inquire into the text's pre-history, doing so ought not entirely undermine the literary integrity of the text. Stump serves biblical hermeneutics by questioning a hermeneutic that vitiates the text's literary coherence. She demonstrates that Brown's methodology is not in any way clearly incumbent upon all readers, but is rather without a firm basis and is indeed questionable by virtue of not being the only way to handle the aspects of the text that motivate Brown's process of decomposition. While Brown touts his approach as objective, and thus not contingent on questionable particularistic assumptions, Stump's contribution is demonstrating what Brown's methodological commitments are and some of the ways in which they might be challenged. Stump's analysis thus opens things up by shining a light on presuppositions that would otherwise remain concealed. While she is less clear about the way forward—she is sympathetic to the hermeneutic of the play, but she acknowledges that its process of harmonization is not without its drawbacks (Stump 2009, 254, 260-261)—there is certainly worth in her critical insights.⁶

Analytical skill can also contribute constructively to theological hermeneutics. It is worth considering two examples. First, there is worth in the way that Richard Swinburne uses philosophy of language to clarify the difference between statements the Bible is making and the presuppositions of those statements. The particular contribution of analytic philosophy here comes in demonstrating how the statement being made is not tied too closely to the presuppositions in which it is couched: these accompanying assumptions can be false, even while the statement the text is making remains true. Swinburne contends that what renders presuppositions detachable from the statements that utilize them is a set of communicative conventions on which there is agreement across an entire culture about what a speaker or writer intends to communicate (Swinburne 1992, 30). This becomes useful in interpreting biblical

finds within the Gospel of John itself. For further historical and philosophical objections to the theses, as well as alternative formulations of some of the points, see Stump (2009, 255-258).

⁶ Stump's work is by no means the only example of analytical philosophical thinking that can serve to critique inadequate doctrines of Scripture and approaches to interpretation. A further instance—one that has already had a significant amount of influence on the contemporary discussion and so can be handled more briefly—is Nicholas Wolterstorff's use of speech-act philosophy (see Wolterstorff [1995]). Because (very conservative) doctrines of Scripture sometimes fall into treating the Bible as a stock of propositions whose purpose is to make known that which would otherwise be unknown, there is worth in Wolterstorff demonstrating that the many different sorts of discourse that exist in the Bible should not all be reduced to propositional content. While a command, a promise, or a warning may well reveal something about the speaker who issues it, it is not the case that all of these speech-acts can properly be treated as the communication of information and nothing more. Several theologians have acknowledged that views of the Bible need to be corrected when they fail to see speech as a mode of action: see, for instance, Vanhoozer (1998) and Webster (2001, 71-72), the former being quite sanguine about explicating a doctrine of the Bible with the aid of speech-act philosophy, while the latter is wary of grounding an understanding of biblical language in any philosophical framework, and thus restricts himself to acknowledging the critical force of Wolterstorff's work.

verses such as Psalm 113:3, which charges readers to praise the name of the Lord from the rising to the setting of the sun. Though the changing position of the sun in the sky is actually due to the rotation of the earth around the sun, not the movement of the sun in relation to a stationary planet earth, the text still successfully encourages readers to praise God *always*, not only for a limited period of the day. The point that the author intended to make can be expressed in different ways—with or without ancient cosmological assumptions—and is thus separable from the form of the command that includes this (false) background belief. Because this is so, and because readers of a certain culture are in the habit of discerning the point that a speaker is trying to make, even when false assumptions are used to make it, there is a fairly firm distinction here between what is said and what is thereby presupposed. (Though Swinburne does not go this route, another possible way to handle a text such as this, apart from the strategy of seeing it as making false assumptions, would be to say that the author is speaking phenomenologically, or in the way that things appear. In this case, analytical acumen may still have value in that it would help to clarify the working of phenomenological language over against an idiom that aims for strict accuracy and factuality at all times.)

Once again here, analytic skill makes a contribution to hermeneutics. Philosophy contributes to biblical interpretation by clarifying the way in which the Bible is (and is not) making claims. It distinguishes more precisely than other disciplines probably could what the difference is between the main statements the Bible is making and the common assumptions of a particular culture that help to get that message across in a convenient and intelligible way. This is something that readers of the Bible who operate with doctrinal commitments need to understand, as they engage texts that originated from distant contexts for the sake of nourishing their faith in the present. What philosophy does is to give an account of how this happens *in principle*. Swinburne very reasonably assigns to biblical scholars the task of learning in detail the specific conventions that different societies had about issues that impinge on interpretation (see the comments on pseudepigraphy in Swinburne 1992, 172). It will be biblical scholars more than philosophers who can provide the best account of what the regnant assumptions of different cultures were at particular times and places. The more specific information about particular cultures will aid in interpreting passages of the Bible in light of the general principle of how the Bible expresses meaning. This generic point from the philosophy of language need not trigger worries that the scheme Swinburne applies to the Bible is too general—i.e., stripped of theological content—and that it constrains theological affirmations that one might want to make about the text (though one could argue that that concern is appropriate with reference to other aspects of his thinking). That is not a problem here, for it would be strange to say that the Bible and its interpretation are constrained by a conception of presuppositions that allows the text to speak in a way that is *not* determined by the cultural presuppositions with which it comes.⁷

⁷ One way of exploring this point further would be to say that God accommodates himself to the forms of belief that are regnant in the culture where he first reveals himself so that he might be understood by people there. In unpacking this position, there would be room for using analytic skill

A second example of a positive contribution to theological hermeneutics comes from Alvin Plantinga. His work on different modes of biblical interpretation offers the raw material for making connections between a doctrine of Scripture and an adjacent theological issue, the identity of the reader of the Bible. Toward the conclusion of his three-volume series on warrant, Plantinga draws a fundamental contrast between what he calls Traditional Biblical Commentary and Historical Biblical Criticism, with a view toward asking whether the latter undercuts the warrant attaching to Christian belief. What is Historical Biblical Criticism (HBC), and why might it be thought to refute Christianity as Christianity has been construed traditionally? The briefest definition of HBC is that it is a broad rubric for any hermeneutic that “brackets or prescind[s] from what is known by faith and aims to proceed ‘scientifically,’ strictly on the basis of reason” (Plantinga 2000, 375). It is often the case that scholars operating with this orientation make claims that run counter to traditional Christian beliefs; for instance, a study of the “historical Jesus” is unlikely to conclude that the man Jesus was in fact God incarnate, the second person of the Trinity (Plantinga 2000, 375). Yet Plantinga argues that HBC does not really *show* Christianity to be erroneous; rather, it assumes that and builds it into its methodology from the beginning, thus not providing any reason for Christians to surrender the beliefs they hold.

There are some questions worth raising about this. Plantinga examines several varieties of HBC, those that deny the possibility of miracles, those that do not depend on any metaphysical commitments (either ones consistent with Christianity or opposed to it), and those that fit neither of the first two categories but still hold that interpretation should be informed only by the deliverances of reason (Plantinga 2000, 390-399). The typology is somewhat abstract. It seems to be more of a set of logically possible approaches as much as it is a charting of actual hermeneutical frameworks that scholars put into practice: most of the discussion of the first type is taken up with interpreting principles Ernst Troeltsch articulated, but the essay in which he puts them forward is never quoted in considering various ways to take his ideas; the label for the second position on the typology (“Duhemian”) is one that would be foreign to most biblical scholars, being the name for a natural scientist who advocated keeping one’s metaphysical views at arm’s length in scientific work; the figure who represents the final position is not quoted at all in discussion of it. Why associate these figures with the three positions if such figures are only loosely linked to them, as in the first and third cases, or are not especially influential within biblical interpretation, as in the second case? There is, in addition, another way to question the typology. In actual practice, there exists only a blurry line between real embodiments of HBC and Traditional Biblical Commentary (TBC), an approach that builds faith commitments into its methodology, for religiously committed people often rightly, and without intellectual compromise, profit from making use of scholarship that either is or is informed by HBC (Gordon 2003, 84-88).⁸ Despite these

to consider how divine accommodation affects the truth claim being made or the propositions expressed by the biblical text.

⁸ Plantinga is aware that not every actual scholar fits neatly into his categories, yet he speaks almost as if his way of dividing up approaches is based on something more important than the principles

limitations, Plantinga does one thing very well indeed, for he identifies a basic issue that he can discuss with extra depth and clarity because he has given extensive consideration to the full range of issues in epistemology in his three-monograph series.

He sees especially clearly that one of the defining features of HBC—and this feature would arguably be retained even if the typology were not so abstract—is that the reader of the Bible is understood as utilizing reason alone, and her reading cannot be shaped by the guidance of any religious tradition or her participation in an ecclesial community (Plantinga 2000, 386). To see what can be established regarding the Bible by reason alone means invoking the cognitive faculties active in “ordinary history,” which Plantinga lists as “perception, testimony, reason taken in the sense of a priori intuition together with deductive or probabilistic reasoning, Reid’s sympathy, by which we discern the thoughts and feelings of another, and so on...” (Plantinga 2000, 386). What are categorically excluded here are the deliverances of faith. The significance of these comments for a theological project is that they suggest that just as TBC sees the Bible itself in a theological light,⁹ it also sees the reader of the Bible theologically, as one who can and should respond to the Bible’s message in faith. That is to say, there is a systematic connection between how the text of the Bible is understood and how the reader is construed. Part of the theologian’s task is to make just these sorts of connections, and Plantinga assists with that by shedding light on how these different conceptions of the reader operate and undergird programs of interpretation. Thereby, Plantinga illuminates what a theological hermeneutic is, a way of reading the Bible that operates with theological commitments regarding both the text and the reader.

In summary, what kind of value can the analytic style of thinking have for reflection on reading the Bible as Scripture? The first example surveyed in this section illustrates how analytic thinking can identify problematic presuppositions embedded in one influential approach to interpretation. More positively, the other examples show how analytic skill can clarify the way in which the Bible makes the claims that it does, and how it can help to demonstrate the way a doctrine of Scripture connects with the closely related theological locus of the interpreter of Scripture. To say that analytic reason can do these things is not to make an invidious comparison, to say that other disciplines are utterly incapable of doing anything like this. It is, rather, to say that analytic thinking has a contribution to make because of its style of reflection and the topics it typically addresses. Stump uses the analytic style to tease out and render explicit and systematic the hermeneutical assumptions that in Brown lurk somewhere beneath the surface. She clarifies, spells out, and questions assumptions that would otherwise be less than fully explicit. While the discipline of systematic theology aims for a certain sort of clarity—Webster commends the aim of “conceptual transparency, which enables a more penetrating understanding of the

one sees in the embodied hermeneutics of various biblical scholars. See Plantinga (2000, 399).

There is at least a risk of this sounding rather condescending.

⁹ For TBC, the Bible is authoritative and trustworthy as a guide to faith and morals, a book with God as its principal author, and a text whose meaning is not precisely identical with the intention of its human author because of the priority of divine authorship. TBC is defined according to those three observations on the text (Plantinga 2000, 383-385).

primary modes of Christian articulation of the gospel” (Webster 2007, 10)—the sort of clarity Stump offers is less about mapping out the Christian message with conceptual tools than about lucidity with respect to key dialectical moves. She makes a valuable contribution in so doing. For their parts, Plantinga and Swinburne bring insights from epistemology and philosophy of language, respectively, to bear upon the topic of biblical interpretation, both to good effect. Analytic reflection thus offers useful insights for formulating a theological hermeneutic, and theologians ignore these ideas to their detriment.

It is necessary to register two limits upon the conclusion that has just been reached. First, the exploration above aims to be indicative or illustrative of what analytic ability can do; it does not seek to provide a comprehensive cataloging of every noteworthy contribution that analytic skill has or might potentially make. A survey of telling examples is sufficient to show the *kind* of contribution the analytic impulse can make. That is all that this section of the essay seeks to accomplish. Second, though analytic skill is shared by analytic philosophers and analytic theologians, this part of the argument focused on insights to be found in analytic philosophers who are considering the Bible. Analytic theology is so new at present that what has emerged from its discussion of the Bible is a few targeted contributions concerning specific figures or doctrines (for example, Crisp 2009b; McCall 2009).¹⁰ A working premise of this section has been that, for the moment anyway, the most probing treatment of issues on a larger scale is located on the philosophical side of a complex interaction between philosophy and theology.

The following section moves on from the question of whether the analytic style of reflection can assist in thinking *about* biblical interpretation, and asks whether it has value when applied more directly *to* the Bible itself. In so doing, the next section wrestles with a major critique of analytic theology.

III. Does Analytic Reflection Present a Problem for Interpretation?

Critics of analytic thinking often charge—and even defenders of its usefulness register this objection as one which deserves to be taken seriously—that when analytics engage texts, they often do not pay close attention to the historical context within which the works were composed and had their first life, and this leads any interpretations they offer to become loose and generally unreliable as a representation of the meaning of those texts (Rea 2009, 21-22; Crisp 2009a, 50; Coakley 2009, 280, 282; Oliver 2010, 466-468; Cross 2010, 459-460; Torrance 2013,

¹⁰ I acknowledge a terminological complexity here. Though it might be possible to consider Richard Swinburne an analytic theologian, I treat him as a philosopher simply because the label *analytic theology* is relatively new and therefore has been applied by some to his work only recently. This judgment is corrigible, however, and if Swinburne counts as an analytic theologian, then it would follow that quite substantial work on the topic of the Bible has existed within analytic theology for almost three decades.

36-39; cf. Stump 2010, 23-30).¹¹ There is a pungent version of this critique in an essay by Simon Oliver, who contends that continental philosophy does a better job than does analytic philosophy of recognizing the importance of historical background for the meaning of theological terms. He is worth quoting at length:

In this tradition [i.e., the continental], genealogy is an important part of philosophical method. There are a variety of such genealogical approaches, demonstrated in thinkers as diverse as Nietzsche and Foucault. The key point, however, is simple: concepts have histories. They therefore have genealogies which have to be traced in order that our understanding of those concepts, and the rationalities which formed them, might best be understood. As such, history is determinative of concepts, or at least indicative of the *meaning* of concepts. In so far as Christian doctrine is conceptually formed, tracing the genealogy of concepts is part-and-parcel of tracing the genealogy of doctrine. ... The history of doctrines—and the concepts which form them—is surely determinative of, or at least indicative of, our understanding of the *meaning* of doctrines, and it is meaning and the complex business of interpretation which are of such fundamental concern to theologians. (Oliver 2010, 466-467)

Referring to the genealogical work of Nietzsche and Foucault is probably not the best way to make this point. They typically undertake genealogical reflection in order to show that the way key concepts are understood at present is not the way they have always been understood, and thus we ought not take utterly for granted the current configuration of these concepts and the forms of life associated with them.¹² Genealogy in this sense is usually thus in the service of subverting an idea or a practice, and it is not clear that that should be of central importance here. This point aside, the thrust of what Oliver says is this: if it is necessary to be acquainted with an idea's historical setting in order to understand it properly, and if analytic thinkers give history short shrift, then will they not systematically misunderstand the ideas they discuss? A further question is to what extent a tendency to abstract ideas out of their historical milieu is really of the *essence* of analytic reflection. Is it inherently linked to the analytic style of thinking? Or is it an incidental failing that might be corrected? Finally, what does all of this mean for the contribution that analytic reflection might make to theological hermeneutics? Could the positive contribution outlined in the previous section be undercut by the problem being discussed in the present section? It is necessary to consider this other side of the ledger in order to reach a balanced assessment of the relationship between analytic thinking and theological hermeneutics.

¹¹ In the discussion below of Gadamer, there is also some consideration, though mostly at an implicit level, of the related charge that it is necessary to consider the historical conditioning of the interpreter of texts, not only of the texts themselves.

¹² On Judeo-Christian morality, see Nietzsche (2008); on sex and gender, see Foucault (1988).

A useful way to pursue this question is by turning to Hans-Georg Gadamer to explore further the role of history in the interpretation of texts as this relates to the analytic style of thinking. For Gadamer, in order to understand a written text, a reader must grasp the fundamental question the text was designed to answer (Gadamer 2004, 363).¹³ Doing so requires that interpreters not limit themselves to attending to the words on the page; they should pay close attention to the text, of course, but they should also delve into what lies behind the text in order to become familiar with the work's milieu. This is the way to understand "the *horizon of the question* within which the sense of the text is determined" (Gadamer 2004, 363). Becoming immersed within the wider dialogue of which any given text is a part is not essentially an exercise in antiquarian understanding, though it necessitates coming to know something about the past. The question any text aims to address has an afterlife and thus impinges on the present. Textual hermeneutics goes beyond mere reconstruction of the text's composition and initial reception because the reader comes to understand the question it answers *in her own terms*, in categories that mean something to her, and in relation to questions that are living and pressing for her, not only for others who lived elsewhere and long ago (Gadamer 2004, 365-363). In this way the horizon of the text comes together with the horizon of the interpreter within the process of reading.

Because of the way Gadamer sees the reader's obligations, the meaning of the language in which all understanding occurs is, crucially, never entirely available and utterly transparent even to the language user, precisely because any unit of language is intermeshed in a sprawling wider dialogue that is ongoing and indeterminate in scope. That Gadamer illustrates the nature of language by means of Augustine's trinitarian theology—ideas that have had an influence within Western thinking about both God and language—is an outworking in his own writing of his commitment to understand ideas by means of engaging in the discussions that have given them the shape they currently possess. On Augustine's view, the incarnate Son proceeds from the Father, and is identical with the one from whom he proceeds not in person but in nature, since both are divine. The Son reveals his Father to humanity by taking on flesh and coming among human beings; yet the Father's identity is not reduced to that of the Son. The parallel with language is that the inner word within the mind is consubstantial with thought in the same way that the Son is with the Father (Gadamer 2004, 418-422): the inner word (something that natural language expresses, though not perfectly) reveals thought, yet it only asymptotically approaches it in its fullness, with the temporal dimension of thinking resonating with the continual procession of the Son from the Father. This is a rather complex comparison that surely baffled secular readers of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*. But the upshot of this for the nature of language is not entirely elusive. Jean Grondin offers a helpful summary of Gadamer's key point:

The words we use cannot themselves exhaust what we have "in mind"—that is, the dialogue that we are. The inner word "behind" what is said refers to none other than this dialogue, this rootedness of

¹³ My reading of Gadamer is indebted to Weinsheimer (1985) and especially Grondin (1994).

language in our questioning and to us questionable existence, a dialogue which no proposition can wholly capture: “What is stated is not everything. The unsaid is what first makes what is stated into a word that can reach us” (Grondin 1994, 119).

The basic charge that emerges from this engagement with Gadamer relates to the limits upon how much clarity analytics can secure. Utter transparency of meaning, in which all terms have been explicitly defined and every presupposition has been spelled out is a chimera; more than that, the drive to minimize the number of primitive concepts used in analysis—where primitive concept means one not given a definition in terms of any other concept used in the analysis—can only proceed so far, eventually needing to acknowledge the dependency of the whole analysis on a fuller linguistic ecosystem not marked by technical precision. This is what is behind Gadamer’s approving comments on R. G. Collingwood’s observation about the limits of analytic philosophy: “In particular the practice that Collingwood found in English universities of discussing ‘statements,’ though perhaps good practice for sharpening one’s intelligence, obviously failed to take account of the historicity that is part of all understanding. Collingwood argues thus: We can understand a text only when we have understood the question to which it is an answer” (Gadamer 2004, 363).

The fundamental critique here needs to be split into two parts, only one of which is of central concern for this essay. First, Gadamer’s stress on the necessity of taking part in a broad-ranging dialogue might be taken as an objection against the way that analytics *use* language to express their own arguments for whatever conclusion they are advocating. If Gadamer is right, this would not entail that there is no value in what analytics do—note how Collingwood appreciates the way that discussing propositions in analytic mode hones one’s critical intelligence—but it would indicate that analytics may need to do more than they often do to acknowledge how the language they utilize, in their effort to achieve as much clarity as possible, reposes upon a network of ideas that influence what is stated in ways that defy being spelled out in an explicit manner.¹⁴ Yet an analytic’s own use of language is not the main concern here.

There is a second way to formulate a critique with the aid of Gadamer that is more pertinent to the issue of theological hermeneutics. What is in focus in this section is the critique that typical analytic practice does not reflect the dynamics of the language that analytics try to *understand* when they engage with texts. On the one hand, many of the proposals that analytic philosophers make do not emerge from, or at least do not centrally concern, the exegesis of texts. Yet, on the other hand, the objection that deserves a response is that when analytics do engage with texts—and of course the biblical text is of primary concern at present—what they do of necessity fails to give an accurate representation of how the language of those texts actually operates. In sum, the criticism is that the desire for clarity or transparency in the

¹⁴ Stump (2010, 373-374) provides a deeply impressive example of a work that acknowledges how its analytic reflection depends in a certain way on other material, in this case a set of careful readings of biblical narratives that she contends provide something that would be hard to derive from analytic work alone.

analytic sense undercuts the acquisition of meaning from the biblical text because the impetus toward clarity entails attempting to make everything that a unit of language is doing utterly explicit and fully unpacked, while understanding the words in question requires delving into the origin of that language, immersing oneself in a conversation that opens up a vast range of questions, both ancient and modern, all the while acknowledging the contingency of a text's meaning on issues that are understood only inchoately. This essay's proposal that analytic reflection has value for formulating a theological hermeneutic needs to take the measure of this criticism.

First off, it is worth observing that, while analytics receive criticism for not reading texts with a view toward ascertaining their meaning, in many cases that is not what they are trying to do in the first place. Very often they simply have a different aim when making recourse to a text: finding a sort of mental stimulation, arguments they might ruminate on and perhaps modify significantly in search of a convincing case for a certain conclusion. This is the way that Alvin Plantinga handles Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, whose argument Plantinga finds less than compelling, despite the major influence of Kant's thinking on academic culture generally. What Plantinga ultimately wants is not the most precise and accurate formulation he can muster of Kant's intention; instead, he wants good arguments, which he may or may not find in Kant—he concludes in the end that neither any possible reading of Kant, nor anything even in the neighborhood of Kant's argumentation, provides reason for the view that it is impossible to think about God because the categories that are native to the mind do not apply to him (Plantinga 2000, 30). Plantinga does cite Kant's text, and he also references some of the vast amount of secondary literature on it, but in the process of thinking through his key question, he states and restates that his aim is to find a compelling argument in Kant, or to modify the materials Kant provides in order to determine whether thinking about God is actually impossible (Plantinga 2000, 9, 10, 14, 16, 19, 21-23, 29, 30). When Plantinga moves to altering Kant's argument to see if a different version of it gives him the conclusion Kant aims to establish, he transposes the whole discussion into a very clearly analytic idiom, which is distinguishable from Kant's own style of presentation (Plantinga 2000, 22-23). Here there are the numbered propositional premises that connect in a way that might be formalized according to the constraints of formal logic. Plantinga operates in this way not because he lacks awareness of the dynamics of Kant's own language, but because he is trying out his own thought experiment that, as he himself acknowledges emphatically and repeatedly, has drifted some way from Kant's intention.¹⁵ It would be inappropriate to accuse this example of analytic textual practice of being a deficient attempt to seek meaning, as it is not any attempt whatsoever to seek meaning. It is something basically different in kind.

¹⁵ For another example, consider how Saul Kripke characterizes his stance toward Ludwig Wittgenstein: "I suspect ... that to attempt to present Wittgenstein's argument precisely is to some extent to falsify it. Probably many of my formulations and recastings of the argument are done in a way Wittgenstein would not himself approve. So the present paper should be thought of as expounding neither 'Wittgenstein's' argument nor 'Kripke's': rather Wittgenstein's argument as it struck Kripke, as it presented a problem for him." See Kripke (1982, 5).

To consider it hermeneutically problematic is thus a category mistake.¹⁶ Analytics do indeed reflect on the subject matter of texts, and they often make reference to texts, but their purpose is often not to provide exegesis of them.

Analytics very often handle texts in this way, which Jay Rosenberg characterizes as not Apollonian but rather Dionysian. There is a fundamentally scholarly impulse behind the Apollonian approach, for it “is marked by an especially close reading of the text, philological attention to nuances of interpretation, a careful tracing of intellectual influences, and a continuous awareness of the broader historical, cultural, and socio-political setting within which the work developed and emerged” (Rosenberg 2005, 2). There is often an assumption here that there is a hiatus between the milieu of the text and that of any present-day interpreter. Apollonian reading is not what Plantinga is doing.

By contrast, the Dionysian approach to texts turns to them in order to see whether they offer tools for thinking about an issue of concern to the interpreter. The impetus behind this type of engagement is more immediately reflective, beginning to elide or at least to relativize the differences in historical situation between the reader of the text and the situation of its genesis. Rosenberg explains again, saying that this approach assumes the author being read “is intelligently and creatively responding to a problem-space which transcends its historical setting. His [i.e., the author’s] insights, strategies, and at least some of his positive theses thus both can and should be preserved, adapted, and reformulated to shed light on those problems as they have reemerged within the contemporary philosophical dialectic” (Rosenberg 2005, 2). This process of adaptation and reformulation is often governed by a principle of charity, meaning that authors should be read, not so as to most closely approximate their actual intention in writing, but in the way that makes their views most plausible (according to this particular philosopher’s criteria for plausibility!), with the result that textual interpretation is brought almost immediately into relation with contemporary criteria for assessing beliefs. This is roughly the way Plantinga is handling Kant: he wants to try and think with him, or at least to assess the merit in Kant’s concern that claiming knowledge of God outstrips the cognitive abilities human beings possess, and so he considers ways to make Kant’s argument stronger than it is in the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself (though he still finds that new argument lacking). Perhaps it would be best to divide Dionysian readings into two sorts: one that begins with an assumption that an author does indeed provide resources with which to think, modifying details as necessary to produce a fully compelling argument, and another in which an author engages with a source with a view toward demonstrating that the arguments it provides, or even something related to them, essentially fail. Analytics reading in a Dionysian way will tend to convert the material with which they start into more standard analytical fare, if it began life in another form, for they are seeking reasons that they might believe something, and their characteristic form of reasoning qua analytic is analytic in orientation.

¹⁶ My point is not to accuse Oliver of making such a category mistake. He is obviously not discussing the specific case of Plantinga’s interpretation of Kant. My intention is to say that it is possible to reach a more nuanced judgment about analytic styles of engaging with texts if one surveys in more detail examples of analytic readings of important written works.

The claim here is that analytics *often* read in a Dionysian mode and that Plantinga's engagement with Kant counts as an illustration. But is there something in the analytic style of thinking that *of necessity* leads to a certain sort of reading? If so, what sort of interpretation? In order to answer these questions, recall what analytic thinking consists of as summarized in Rea's account of analytic style. And imagine that the task to which this thinking is applied is producing an interpretation of the Bible. Anyone operating in this style will produce an interpretation that meets one of Gadamer's criteria for reading but not the other. In this imagined procedure, the yield of scriptural texts would presumably be formulated in an outline of points that could in principle be fed into a formal logical scheme. In addition, any claims within the Bible that may initially seem imprecise or unclear according to analytic standards will need to go through a process of refinement, so that they are sufficiently clear and distinct in meaning (the only alternative being to avoid them). There are, of course, many metaphors in the biblical text, including those used to describe God; since analytics present their reflection in an austere style that avoids metaphors, perhaps texts containing them will need to be reformulated into literal language. Any complex concepts will need to be resolved, as much as possible, into their constituent elements. And, finally, the drive of the overall reading will be to move in a conceptual direction: the interpretation will tend toward a conceptual paraphrase of the diverse literary genres that are found within the Bible. Such a reading will certainly formulate the material within the biblical text in terms that are meaningful to the (analytic) reader herself. The question the text is dealing with will in fact be one that resonates with the reader, and thus one of Gadamer's criteria for good reading is met. But, at the same time, the other criterion—ascertaining what the question is in the text's milieu that the text is trying to answer—is unlikely to be met by going through the steps just outlined. There is certainly no directive to immerse oneself in the wider dialogue of which the text is a part, and the whole energy of the process is rather to reshape the material found in the text into something more refined, more conceptual, and generally more fitting with analytic discourse. A transformational reading along these lines is inevitable if the task is to read in accord with the five norms of analytic style.¹⁷

In order to fulfill the criterion from Gadamer that the thought experiment fails to satisfy, it is necessary to begin a reading of the Bible in a more Apollonian way. Gaining some knowledge of the text's historical milieu will allow interpreters to

¹⁷ Let me be clear in what I am and am not claiming here. The point is not that every time an analytic philosopher or theologian engages with a Scriptural text, this is the result. Instead, my claim is that insofar as an analytic thinker is following the principles Rea lays out, and is thus being true to analytic form as Rea sees it, this is the result when the text being interpreted is the Bible—a work that is itself quite different from analytic discourse. It is possible, however, to marry Dionysian and Apollonian ways of engaging texts. Kevin Hector's book on modern theology, which is published in a series dedicated to analytic theology, is a good example of that marriage (though of course it deals mainly with key modern theological figures rather than with the Bible directly). Hector explains that he aims to write with precision, clarity, and rigor, and he incorporates many insights from analytic philosophers (2015, ix-x). But he does all of this while also considering the discourse context from which the works originally emerged, as well as how these theologians' views developed over time, and what their own goals were. There is more in what follows on how scholarship and reflection should relate in the case of the Bible specifically.

understand something of the broader dialogue in which the text takes part. Reading the Bible ought to start by attending closely to the words present in the text, and it ought to construe those words against the backdrop of their original historical situation and their literary environment within the canon, all with a view toward understanding their subject matter via the text. The reason that interpretation cannot begin without doing these things is simply that this is what grasping textual content requires. Readers who move too quickly to reflection on the deliverances of the text risk missing out on seeing what those deliverances actually are. (There is a related risk in what Plantinga is doing with Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, but it is at least minimized if he has done enough work to understand Kant's intention, and if his own arguments do indeed improve the argument so that what is being tested is the strongest conceivable case for the conclusion it reaches.) For any theologian who wants to venture theological proposals that adhere to the Bible, readings of it must start in an essentially Apollonian way. The key is that there is some separation of the task of understanding the text and reflecting on it,¹⁸ that being the only way to ensure that enough energy is devoted to the first task, which serves as the precondition of the second.

Analytics will find it profitable to engage in dialogue with biblical scholars who focus on providing cursive readings of the biblical text.¹⁹ There is already in the literature on analytic theology calls for analytic theologians to draw upon biblical scholars who read in this fashion (McCall 2015, 78-81). In addition, there are a number of examples of analytic theologians who are incorporating the results of Apollonian biblical scholarship into their reflective projects. One example comes from Wolterstorff, who attends to the text of Joshua closely and catches the narrative flow before using philosophical categories to ask about the justice of what appear to be divine commands to commit violence (2011, 246-247).²⁰ There are already, then, signs that analytics are separating (to some degree) the act of reading and reflection in this way.²¹

¹⁸ The proposal here does not make an absolute division between exegesis and theology for two reasons: first, because it calls upon readers to interpret so as to engage the subject matter of the text and, second, because it considers canonical context a valid backdrop for interpretation. John Barton challenges all those who (as he sees it) fail to segregate as fully as possible their own theological beliefs from the process of ascertaining textual meaning (2007, 137-186). With the definition of theological hermeneutics that I venture above—reading the Bible in light of theological commitments, such as a doctrine of Scripture—I am signaling that I adhere to different methodological ideals. Yet, my concern that the impulse to cogitate on the text not skip over the necessary step of reading it closely indicates that I do operate with a certain kind of distinction between reading and reflection. For a fuller explanation than is possible here, see my monograph *Theological Reading of the Bible*, which is forthcoming from Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ This is in line with Swinburne's suggestion, mentioned above in the exposition of his position, on how philosophers and biblical scholars might cooperate.

²⁰ As a further example, Paul Griffiths might be considered an analytic theologian, and his commentary on Song of Songs evinces some analytical skill, but it provides a close reading of the text and does not assimilate the Bible to an analytic idiom (Griffiths 2011). Hasker provides another illustration of the broad pattern (2013, 177-184).

²¹ How does the insistence above on listening carefully to the Bible, with the assistance of scholarship, relate to Stump's objection to historical biblical scholarship (2010, 30-32)? Stump's criticisms are significant, but they are directed to approaches which insist that historical context is

Having attended to the biblical text, theologians with analytical skills can and indeed should utilize them in reflecting on the material they have understood. After the text has been understood in relation to the question it seeks to answer, it ought to be understood in terms that make sense to the reader—in this case a reader with analytic thinking skills. Hasker provides a useful example. Once he has, through a brief exegesis, arrived at the view that Jesus was worshipped by early Jews who adhered to an uncompromising monotheism and included Jesus within the identity of God, he goes on in a more clearly analytic fashion to consider questions in a metaphysical register about the sense in which the Father and Son (and Spirit) are divine persons (Hasker 2013, 177-202). The work of analytic reasoning is to reflect on givens that are received from a more scholarly engagement with the Bible and the Christian tradition, not to establish initially how to read texts. Making such connections, and thinking in a more conceptual mode, is something reason can indeed do so as to contribute to the theological task. Reason can serve theology, while not lording it over other theological norms, which are also operative in the formulation of theological proposals. For Scripture to serve as a norm, it must express its own message and exert its own communicative force; readers must attend to its message and not assimilate it to a foreign idiom, whether that be an analytic one or something else.²² Reason may assist in the work of biblical exegesis by adjudicating between alternative readings of texts. But this means inquiring into how well a potential interpretation fits with the original historical context, with the literary context, and with the subject matter toward which the biblical text is a signifier. Reason's role within exegesis ought not mean modifying the substantive content of the text. Readers of the text must respect the alterity of its voice enough to allow it to speak.²³ Then the work of reflection and conceptual reiteration ought to commence.²⁴

the *only* relevant context that can inform the interpretation of a text. My view is that both historical and literary contexts are important, as is reading with reference to the subject matter of the text. Hence, my view on the proper constraints of interpretation is not the type of view that Stump criticizes.

²² It is not only analytic theologians who need to ensure that they follow this directive. Classical systematic theologians also need to exercise a similar caution in their engagement with texts.

²³ There will, no doubt, be a fine line in practice between analytic reflection on the Bible's claims and changing their substantive content. Hasker's analytic reflections on his exegesis of New Testament Christology involve him in feeding the conclusion of his exegesis into an argument (formalized according to the protocols of formal logic) that combines a single Christological premise with other theses in an effort to consider the wider complex of trinitarian belief. The move is thus less about clarifying a discrete affirmation than it is about exploring the broader implications a Christological affirmation has for the Christian doctrine of God. See Hasker (2013, 201). A complicating factor, which relates to the point above that ascertaining the sense of the text will proceed best if every effort is made to do that prior to engaging in reflective consideration of the issues it raises, is that readers may return to the text with new interpretive questions that have been influenced by their cogitation on the text. Hence, there is inevitably a certain circularity to the process.

²⁴ The suggestion here is similar to but also different from John Webster's distinction between exegetical and dogmatic reasoning. "Exegetical reasoning" refers simply to "reading the Bible, the intelligent (and therefore spiritual) act of following the words of the text" (Webster 2012, 130). This means generating an understanding of the literal sense of the text and grasping its message. Dogmatic reasoning operates in tandem with exegetical reasoning. Webster explains: "Cursive representation leads to conceptual representation, which abstracts from the textual surface by creating generalized or summary concepts and ordering them topically. This makes easier swift,

IV. Conclusion

In conclusion: analytic skill can contribute to theological hermeneutics, both positively by refining the formulation of a hermeneutic for the Bible, and negatively by illuminating how presuppositions that deserve to be reconsidered have worked their way into some established forms of interpretive practice. The contribution that the analytic style of reflection can make to the theological enterprise need not be vitiated by the common criticism that analytics operate in an ahistorical way, so long as they put forth some effort to read biblical texts against the backdrop of their history (as well as with a concern for their subject matter and literary context) and engage in conversation with others who do so. Analytic thinking has already made important contributions to reflection on the interpretation of the Bible. As analytic philosophy and theology progress in the present and into the future, there is every reason to hope that even more fruitful work will come into circulation.²⁵

non-laborious and non-repetitive access to the text's matter" (2012, 131). My claim is that analytic reasoning may also follow exegetical reasoning and contribute to the task of theological reflection.

²⁵ I appreciate bibliographical suggestions and the opportunity to discuss this material with several friends: Max Baker-Hytch, Matthew Benton, Nathan Eubank, Charles Mathewes, John Saladino, Scott Williams, William Wood, and Philip Ziegler.

Bibliography

- Baker-Hytch, Max. 2016. "Analytic Theology and Analytic Philosophy of Religion: What's the Difference?" *Journal of Analytic Theology* 4:347-361.
- Barton, John. 2007. *The Nature of Biblical Criticism*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Brown, Raymond E. 1995, 2008. *The Gospel according to John*. 2 vols, The Anchor Yale Bible. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Coakley, Sarah. 2009. "Dark Contemplation and Epistemic Transformation: The Analytic Theologian Re-Meets Teresa of Ávila." In *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crisp, Oliver. 2009a. "On Analytic Theology." In *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crisp, Thomas. 2009b. "On Believing that the Scriptures are Divinely Inspired." In *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Cross, Richard. 2010. "Analytic Theology." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12:452-463.
- Foucault, Michel. 1988. *The History of Sexuality*. 3 vols. New York: Vintage Books.
- Frei, Hans W. 1992. *Types of Christian Theology*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Gadamer, Hans Georg. 2004. *Truth and Method*. Translated by Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall. 2nd ed. London: Continuum.
- Gordon, Robert P. 2003. "A Warranted Version of Historical Biblical Criticism? A Response to Alvin Plantinga." In *"Behind" the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation*, edited by Craig G. Bartholomew, C. Stephen Evans, Mary Healy and Murray Rae. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Griffiths, Paul J. 2011. *Song of Songs*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids: Brazos.
- Grondin, Jean. 1994. *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Yale Studies in Hermeneutics. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Hasker, William. 2013. *Metaphysics and the Tri-personal God*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hector, Kevin. 2015. *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and the Conditions of Mineness*, Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kelsey, David H. 2009. *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology*. Vol. 1. Louisville: Westminster John Knox.
- Kripke, Saul A. 1982. *Wittgenstein on Rules and Private Language: An Elementary Exposition*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- McCall, Thomas H. 2009. "On Understanding Scripture as the Word of God." In *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- McCall, Thomas H. 2015. *An Invitation to Analytic Christian Theology*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.

- Nietzsche, Friedrich. 2008. *On the Genealogy of Morals: A Polemic*, World's Classics. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Oliver, Simon. 2010. "Analytic Theology." *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 12:464-475.
- Plantinga, Alvin. 1984. "Advice to Christian Philosophers." *Faith and Philosophy* 1: 253-71.
- Plantinga, Alvin. 2000. *Warranted Christian Belief*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rea, Michael C. 2009. "Introduction." In *Analytic Theology: New Essays in the Philosophy of Theology*, edited by Oliver Crisp and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rosenberg, Jay F. 2005. *Accessing Kant: A Relaxed Introduction to the Critique of Pure Reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stump, Eleonore. 2009. "Visits to the Sepulcher and Biblical Exegesis." In *Oxford Readings in Philosophical Theology*, edited by Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stump, Eleonore. 2010. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stump, Eleonore. 2013. "Athens and Jerusalem: The Relationship of Philosophy and Theology." *Journal of Analytic Theology* 1:45-59.
- Swinburne, Richard. 1992. *Revelation: From Metaphor to Analogy*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Torrance, Alan J. 2013. "Analytic Theology and the Reconciled Mind: The Significance of History." *Journal of Analytic Theology* 1:30-44.
- Vanhoozer, Kevin J. 1998. *Is There a Meaning in this Text?: The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Webster, John. 2012. "Biblical Reasoning." In *The Domain of the Word: Scripture and Theological Reason*. London: Bloomsbury T. & T. Clark.
- Webster, John. 2007. "Introduction: Systematic Theology." In *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology*, edited by John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain R. Torrance. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Webster, John. 2001. "Hermeneutics in Modern Theology: Some Doctrinal Reflections." In *Word and Church: Essays in Christian Dogmatics*. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.
- Weinsheimer, Joel. 1985. *Gadamer's Hermeneutics: A Reading of Truth and Method*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Williams, A. N. 2011. *The Architecture of Theology: Structure, System, and Ratio*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. 1995. *Divine Discourse: Philosophical Reflections on the Claim that God Speaks*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolterstorff, Nicholas. 2011. "Reading Joshua." In *Divine Evil?: The Moral Character of the God of Abraham*, edited by Michael Bergmann, Michael J. Murray and Michael C. Rea. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wood, William. 2014. "Analytic Theology as a Way of Life." *Journal of Analytic Theology* 2:43-60.