found in the Catholic and Common Lectionaries. Editor and patristics scholar Holmes provides a succinct but very informative introductory essay on the origin and makeup of the lectionary and an eloquent rationale for the value of the patristic materials. The content of the volume provides references to the gospel selections and offers the patristic selections without commentary—but they are certainly able to speak for themselves.


The author, a professor emeritus of New Testament at Murdoch University in Perth, Australia, has done much of his scholarly work on the topic of sexuality in the New Testament and the first-century world. This volume, the fifth he has produced on this subject, is a substantial work, a thorough, detailed study of sexuality and sexual attitudes as reflected in the various writings of the New Testament. The volume begins with a survey of sexuality in ancient Jewish and Greco-Roman cultures—an essential context for understanding the New Testament materials. He then focuses on the gospel texts concerning adultery and divorce, followed by an extensive consideration of Paul’s perspectives on these matters. Loader also gives special attention to the key issues of divorce, same sex relationships, and celibacy in the overall New Testament materials. In every instance he provides measured and balanced analysis of the evidence, showing that the New Testament perspectives were strongly influenced by Jewish tradition, by practical pastoral considerations, and by an eschatology that assumed that sexual activity was not part of the world to come. This is a valuable resource for anyone concerned about this important topic area.


The question of the formation of the canon of Scripture has received increasing attention in biblical scholarship, particularly in view of the current interest in early extra-canonical writings and the nature of their relationship to the New Testament materials. McDonald is professor emeritus of New Testament at Acadia Divinity School in Nova Scotia and has written extensively on this topic. This volume is intended for the literate lay reader and provides a clearly explained account of the origin and nature of the biblical literature and how and why the canon of Scripture was formed—and why there are various versions of it among Jewish and Christian traditions. Although McDonald’s own Baptist tradition is detectable in some of his theological observations about the Bible, readers will find here a dispassionate and reliable overview of the canonical process.


This study of Paul’s theology joins a growing body of literature that discerns an anti-Roman, anti-imperial cast to the writings of the New Testament. Here the specific focus is on Paul’s first letter to the Thessalonians, which is probably the earliest New Testament text to be written. Míguez is a biblical scholar and an Argentine
missionary pastor and political activist who has personally been engaged with and has suffered from oppressive civil powers. Paul, in his view, confronts Rome’s hegemony and oppressive power by reminding his readers of an alternate universe under God’s sovereignty that eschews violence and challenges Rome’s exploitation. As such, Paul’s eschatological perspective evident in 1 Thessalonians is not a mere theological construct or utopian thinking but a powerful strategy of hope worth reflecting on today.


This collection of previously published essays on various aspects of Paul’s letter to the Galatians comes from the hand of Jerome Murphy-O’Connor, OP, one of the world’s foremost Pauline scholars and long-time Professor at the École Biblique in Jerusalem. While this volume does not claim to cover all the issues associated with the interpretation of Galatians, nevertheless the reader will be informed on the fundamental questions regarding this, one of Paul’s most important letters: the location and context of the Galatian community, Paul’s core theology, and especially the development of his Christology triggered by the threats to his mission by Judaizers in Galatia. A valuable feature of this collection is that the author adds a “postscript” to each essay, tracking subsequent developments and reflections on his original publication.


This is the first of a four-part set of volumes on the gospels. Spanish theologian and biblical scholar José Pagola presents a powerful and distinctive “commentary” on the pastoral theology of Matthew’s gospel. This is not a technical, verse-by-verse commentary but a passionate reading of the gospel, concentrating on key passages in sequence, offering a succinct and insightful analysis of the text under consideration and a drawing out of its implications for Christian discipleship today. The purpose of the gospels, Pagola contends, was to give the Christian reader an encounter with the person and message of Jesus. This dynamic exposition of Matthew surely facilitates that purpose.


Well known for his informed and skillful reflections on the relationship of science and religion, John Polkinghorne offers here what he terms a “reconnaissance” of the Bible “for those who are seeking a careful and thoughtful engagement with the Bible in their quest for a truthful understanding of the ways of God and the nature of spiritual reality . . .” (p. x). This is an apt description of this superbly written work. It offers a wonderful exposition of the origin and nature of the Scriptures and the function of the Bible in a life of adult faith, including the interplay of the human and divine factors in the Scriptures, the person and mission of Jesus as presented in