

authorship, *Sitz im Leben*) with regard to the book of Deuteronomy, he vigorously engages with scholars on the level of critical assumptions regarding documentary sources (JEDP), and in the end his critique lends support for a basic unity in the text of Deuteronomy, and a life-setting at the time of Israel's transition from wilderness wandering to settlement in the Promised Land. Careful attention is given to the three main scholarly approaches toward the structure of the final form of Deuteronomy—superscriptions (markers used to introduce Moses' speeches), covenant/treaty form (paralleling the ANE suzerainty treaties), and literary concentricity (ABCB'A' pattern). Vogt shows how each of these approaches has in common an emphasis upon the supremacy of YHWH and the crucial importance of *Torah*, which suggests that these themes may indeed be regarded as central in the theology of Deuteronomy as a whole.

I am convinced that Vogt's basic thesis and the major contours of his argumentation are sound. In my view, there are, however, a few areas where his presentation might have been strengthened. First, although Vogt does pay some attention to the covenant/treaty structural features in the book, he views the suzerainty covenant/treaty as "a sub-structure of the book, not the primary structure" (27). By minimizing the importance of the suzerainty covenant/treaty structure and giving it only passing attention in his analysis, Vogt has not been able to develop the powerful theological implications emerging from this structure, especially the reality of grace (the historical prologue) that precedes law (the covenant stipulations) and provides the motivation of gratitude in the hearts of the worshipers to obey *Torah*.

Second, while rightly castigating other scholars for their tendency "to equate noncorporeality and invisibility with absence" (122), Vogt does not escape his own critique when he equates divine invisibility with noncorporeality (132, 135). Deuteronomy 4 states that no divine "form" was seen by the people, but this does not necessarily imply (as Vogt seems to suggest) that the deity has no form (cf., e.g., Exod 33:20–23; John 5:37). Third, in discussing the priority of worship in the structure of Deut 12–26 (197–200), Vogt does not give enough attention to the work of Steven Kaufman, who, in my view, has convincingly shown that this section of the book treats successively each of the ten commandments.

Fourth, although Vogt rightly recognizes the emphasis in Deuteronomy upon reverence for life implicit in the instructions for "reverent slaughter" (202) of animals in Deut 12, I think he could have gone even further in noting here the language of divine concession, with an implicit divine preference for total abstinence from nonsacrificial slaughter of animals. Finally, Vogt's discussion of the nature of "righteousness" (Heb. *tsedeq*) in the OT focuses almost entirely upon the definition of *tsedeq* as "conformity to a norm," and does not indicate the existence of the ongoing debate in OT scholarship over the meaning of this word and the insistence of many scholars that *tsedeq* must be defined in terms of personal relationship and not conformity to a norm.

Aside from these few minor suggestions for improvement of the work, I commend Vogt for his penetrating analysis of Deuteronomy, which provides a needed corrective to the scholarly consensus and presents in bold relief the core concerns of Deuteronomic theology—the supremacy of YHWH and the central and continuing role of *Torah* in the life of the covenant community.

Andrews University

RICHARD M. DAVIDSON

Volf, Miroslav. *The End of Memory: Remembering Rightly in a Violent World*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006. 241 pp. Hardcover, \$22.00.

In his book *The End of Memory*, Miroslav Volf continues his extended theological engagement with central Christian themes of grace, forgiveness, and reconciliation. The syntax of this wider theological framework, lucidly articulated in his earlier works *Exclusion or Embrace?* and *Free of Charge*, is here skillfully wielded in dealing with the issue of memories of wrongdoing suffered. Volf, in constructing his argument, delectably engages a wide range of interlocutors, with Elie Wiesel's reflections on the saving character of remembering arguably assuming the center stage. One should note from the outset that the book title conveys a word play that in many ways summarizes the central theme of this fine work. First, we are concerned with the end of memory in the sense of its *telos*, its purpose. In other words, we ask why it is that we need to remember at all, and what it is that constitutes rightful remembering. Second, the question is raised whether there is any moral justifiability in envisioning the end of memory in terms of an ultimate or penultimate *terminus*, as in forgetting and letting go.

In examining the textured nature of human remembering, Volf makes it clear that memories in themselves are "dangerously underdetermined" (34). They have the potential to "restore health and dignity, protect, and prompt the pursuit of justice" (39), but also to fuel deep-seated resentments and impede personal well-being. That is why it is incumbent on us to remember rightly, which, for Volf, means foremost to remember truthfully. This is an essential step in dealing with memories of wrongdoing suffered, as "truthfulness is a form of justice and an indispensable precondition for reconciliation" (59). Such truthful recollection is also indispensable for inner healing, as only truthful memories "give access to the event with which peace needs to be made" (75). The search for peace, however, does not belie the fact that some memories of wrong suffered are essentially irredeemable and thereby resistant to meaningful incorporation into narrative self-construction.

While Volf never tires in underscoring the decisive praxietal component of remembering, inviting us to acts of solidarity and struggle for justice, he is equally insistent in cautioning against conducting such struggles in an unjust way. Such exigency for proper balancing is ostensibly based on the regulative ideas of the Exodus and Passion narratives that are, in turn, mediated through the formal aspects of identity, community, future, and God. Three things clearly emerge from Volf's delineation of the Christian metanarrative. First, we are led to recognize that the "grace of God . . . extends to every human being" (118). Second, "in the memory of the passion we honor victims even while extending grace to perpetrators" (118). Third, it points to a path of reconciliation of the wronged and wrongdoers.

The third part of the book turns to the question of how we can properly and justifiably speak of the end of memory in the sense of fully forgetting or not-coming-to-mind. Building on divergent defenders of forgetting—Dante, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Sigmund Freud—Volf defends the notion that forgetting and self-identity are not incommensurable terms. The last two chapters develop this theme at some length, stating the conditions brought about by the eschatological transition that makes the reality of nonremembering justifiable on moral and existential grounds, and as such does not present an abdication of responsibility or an exemplification of cheap forgiveness. This future eschatological nonremembrance is morally justifiable only insofar as it is derived from the ultimate *apokalyptosis* and acknowledgment of all wrongs brought about by the coming of God.

A couple of observations are necessary in evaluating the merits of Volf's proposal. As noted above, Volf's discussion of memory is squarely situated within the spiritual geography of God's trinitarian history. For Volf, Christianity is, at its core, an ontology of ecstatic love, a revelation of God as the self-diffusive Good manifested

through the nonviolent and self-giving hospitality of the crucified Christ. God is first a giver and forgiver who invites us to pattern our lives after his own while living in a graceless and often violent world. That is why Volf's work so strongly rests on an incessant insistence to situate our lives theologically. Concomitantly, he directs our gaze to those practices of the Christian faith that make no sense unless we really believe that God exists. Volf, when all is said and done, is a theologian who simply wants us to live out the radical demands of the gospel. His is a theology of discipleship, and it is in such light that his engagement with memories of wrong suffered needs to be understood. Herein is unquestionably one of the reasons why his theology has a decidedly autobiographical character. While some less charitable critics might see such rhetorical strategy as manifest self-indulgence, this certainly is not the case. As in other successful forms of autobiographical theology, perhaps most prominently embodied in Augustine's *Confessions*, personal elements here truly enliven the discursive plane with a strong existential pathos that contributes to, rather than detracts from, conceptual clarity.

While it is hard to argue with the overall argument of the book, there are specific instances where one would wish to probe the discussion a bit more. For example, Volf engages the question of whether memories can ever be regarded as truthful (47-49). Although his point about the need for truthfulness is well taken—he clearly distances himself here from the postmodern deconstruction of the reality principle—I remained unconvinced about the argument he marshals in support of his position. The fragility of human memory that recent developments in neuroscience so vividly underscore, certainly merits a more robust and detailed response than what is offered here. Also, one might take issue with some stylistic features of his work. Volf most definitely has an uncanny deftness for articulating complex matters in an easily accessible way. He adroitly navigates intricate issues, while at the same time wearing his exemplary erudition lightly. In a strange way, however, his summaries and repetitions of main points often obfuscate the flow of argument. One sometimes loses track of different classifications and hints of matters to be discussed.

In conclusion, Volf's work is, without doubt, an important achievement whose theological depth and practical implication cannot be overemphasized. One can easily imagine multiple contexts and arenas in which his theological proposal could stir significant resonances. Volf succeeds in offering us a book that covers wider swaths of theological reflection—apologetics, public theology, constructive theology, ethics, and practical theology—without sounding overbearing. Not only is his theology imminently preachable—a characteristic he shares with his former mentor and friend Jürgen Moltmann—but also one that challenges us toward transformatory engagement.

Andrews University

ANTE JERONCIC

Waltke, Bruce K. *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15–31*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005. xxxiii + 589 pp. Hardcover, \$50.00.

Rather than a new book, this publication is the second part of a manuscript whose first segment appeared in 2004. That section featured 170 pages of general introduction and bibliography, as well as a commentary on most of the first 15 chapters of the book of Proverbs (Prov 1:1–15:29). Frequent cross references with sections covered in the first publication emphasize the fact that Waltke's *Proverbs 15–31* is part of a united whole that runs through 1,282 pages, plus 68 pages of preliminary material. Omitting no vital feature, the work concludes with four indices, totaling 53 pages, on subjects dealt with,