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Prophecy and Discernment, by R.W.L. Moberly

Paul J. Fitzgerald S.J.

Fairfield University, pfitzgerald@fairfield.edu

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when Jesus' ministry begins to fail at Nazareth (243). The typos in the few Hebrew words quoted in the book are distracting (e.g., 230–31), but overall this volume exhibits the highest level of scholarship. At the same time, for the non-specialist, the introductory sections at the beginning of each chapter precisely delineate H.'s goals. She concludes each chapter with creative analyses of each further step of her exegetical analysis rather than with simple summaries. Her concluding chapter sketches some fascinating hints for analyzing the rest of the Gospel. This is the best monograph on the Gospel of Mark that I have read in a decade. I cannot wait to hear more from this original thinker!

Saint Vincent Archabbey, Latrobe, Penn. ELLIOTT C. MALONEY, O.S.B.

PROPHECY AND DISCERNMENT. By R. W. L. Moberly. Cambridge Studies in Christian Doctrine. New York: Cambridge University, 2006. Pp. xvi + 281. \$80.

Throughout their religious histories, the occasional Israelite or Christian has claimed the mantel of the prophet, that is, they have spoken with a more-than-human authority, insisting that they were relaying God's judgments and instructions to the people. On the people's side, of course, lies the perennial challenge of discerning a self-proclaimed prophet's truth or falsity. Building on his own past scholarship, and in dialogue with an impressive array of scholarly peers, Moberly searches for universally valid criteria for such discernment, gleaned from both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures. That this is a central concern for the Christian is undeniable, for Christianity is built on the belief that God is self-revelatory, and that this self-revelation is worked through human agency—ultimately through the Christ whose divinity is made manifest through his humanity. Yet too, history recounts many religious hoaxes and charlatans. How, then, do we judge which prophets speak with God's voice? As 1 John puts it, we must "test the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world" (4:1).

M. wants to develop an overarching theology of biblical prophecy. He attempts thereby to avoid two standard contemporary treatments of the topic: (1) psychological or sociological explorations of the phenomenon (e.g., reading "inner-prophetic" rivalries simply as political struggles) that abandon the questions of theological truth altogether; or (2), if they venture to make truth claims, a confined treatment of single prophets in isolated and unique historical contexts. In his theology M. seeks universal criteria equally valid for discerning biblical and subsequent, even contemporary, religious prophecy. He roots prophecy theologically in the divine initiative whereby God acts to reconfigure human priorities, both socially and personally, in accord with God's unfolding plan (be this called the in-breaking Reign of God, salvation history, or whatever). The criteria for whether this in-breaking is truly happening are two, one social and one personal. (1) True prophetic denunciation of unjust social structures must

contain, besides possible if imprecise descriptions of future ruin, a corrective course of action, usually described as some form of collective conversion towards a holier communal path. Further, the true prophet (2) must display that this same call to integrity is at work in the prophet's own life—that he or she is also undergoing conversion in a powerful and palpable manner. As M. describes them, true prophets are not perfect people. Rather, they are well advanced in the process of personal conversion toward a state of greater—and possibly even great—integrity before God.

To fill out his study, M. examines several figures, from the relatively obscure Micaiah ben Imlah (1 Kg. 22:1–38) to the well-studied Jeremiah and Paul of Tarsus. Relying on Jeremiah, he constructs the basic contours of his paradigm: God calls the prophet whose growing integrity of heart is a consequence of his or her having stood in the presence of the divine; God commissions the prophet to speak, calling the people to conversion and warning them of the consequences of failure to do so. In every case, human fallibility remains active. For fame, for gain, or simply out of mischief a false prophet tells the people what they want to hear; but even a true prophet can fall through complacency and corruption, becoming deaf to God's words. The possibility exists of turning away from God in personal moral failure, and such turning is the root of all personal and social sin. Prophetic activity is corrective, for it is invitational, relational, and engaging, seeking collective conversion. M. masterfully lays out the criteria as found in the texts examined. Still, I would have appreciated a deeper examination of the communal discernment, that is, a deeper examination of communal as well as personal processes of turning around our collective living.

The conflict between Micaiah and King Ahab allows M. to observe that “God is the searching presence who seeks to penetrate human self-will and thereby transform human life through the purifying processes of grace and goodness” (127). Paul and John allow M. to name the implicit criterion of grace and goodness that he relies upon throughout—and especially to name Christ as the full measure of individual and collective human holiness. True prophets display in word and deed a purity of heart radically open to the Father, in the pattern of Christ, and for the good of all. Graduate students and academic theologians will profit from this theological exploration of ongoing prophetic in-breaking proclaimed to be of God.

Santa Clara University

PAUL FITZGERALD, S.J.

EASTERN CHRISTIANITY. Edited by Michael Angold. *Cambridge History of Christianity* 5. New York: Cambridge University, 2006. Pp. xx + 722. \$180.

This massive work, one of nine projected volumes, covers the Eastern Christian period from the late Middle Ages (ca. AD 1000) to the close of the second millennium. In all, 22 authors (15 men and 7 women), mostly British and American plus two from Greece and one each from France and Australia, contribute to this scholarly reference collection. The 24 chapters