

schooling in Ireland, 1660–1690), and Liam Chambers (on the Irish Jesuit College in Poitiers, 1674–1782).

These volumes, among other recent studies, are further testament to the renaissance in the study of early modern Catholicism which is evident for some years now. They deserve a place on the shelves of all institutional libraries, and in the personal libraries of all serious scholars in this field of study.

The Bible in the Early Irish Church, A.D. 550 to 850. By Martin McNamara with assistance from Michael T. Martin. *Commentaria* Vol. 13. Leiden: Brill, 2022. Pp. xiv + 339. Price €164.82 (hbk). ISBN 978-90-04-51213-9.

Reviewed by: NEIL XAVIER O'DONOGHUE, *St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth*

Martin McNamara is the acknowledged expert on the early Irish Church's relationship to the Bible and this book is a distillation of a lifetime of study. It aims to summarize this relationship from 550 to 850 A.D. Over the last century the identification of Irish Biblical works has grown greatly. McNamara gathers together material on such Irish and 'Irish-affiliated' works, dealing with both well-known and lesser-known texts and also indicating many avenues for future study. Against those who claim that 'the early Irish Church did not produce Bible commentaries,' this study proposes that, in fact, there were many such texts that were present in 'monasteries, school and classrooms of Continental Europe' (p. 1).

McNamara starts his work by introducing readers to the early Irish Bible scholars who can be identified today (both those working in Ireland itself and those based in Continental Europe). This is particularly helpful as there is as yet no useful catalogue of such authors, as exists for other British and European areas. The period saw many different examples of exegesis or treatment of biblical texts with various names, including, including 'Expositio, Commentarius (or *Commentarium*), *Tractatus*, *Ennaratio*, *Glossa*, *Eclogiae*, or *Pauca*' (p. 32). As literacy accompanied the Christianization of Ireland, it is of little surprise that the texts of the Bible became widely influential in the composition of both Latin and vernacular texts in the Irish context.

Given the place of monasticism in the early Irish Church, there is a clear early emphasis on different manners of interpreting the Psalms. McNamara outlines how Irish authors sometimes interpreted the Psalms 'to bring out the meaning of the original text' (p. 93). Other examples follow the Antiochene tradition that sees the prophecy of Christ being limited to four Psalms (Pss. 2, 8, 44 and 109 according to the Vulgate numbering). Other authors understand the Psalms as prophesying the life of Christ and yet others understand them as having a Davidic interpretation that principally deals with King David as the recognized author of the Psalms. He gives special attention to the oldest Irish Psalter, the early seventh-century *Cathach* manuscript ascribed to St Columcille/Columba and currently in the Royal Irish Academy. Other chapters are dedicated to Apponius's Commentary on the *Canticle of Canticles* and Josephus Scottus's *Abbreviatio commentarii Hieronymi in Isaiam*. Chapter nine on the background to Irish Gospel Texts is a

particularly helpful synthesis of the current scholarship on this important aspect of the Bible in the early Irish Church, an area that McNamara himself has published on extensively.

Interesting relationships between the Irish material and similar material from a wider European context is explored. At times, Ireland seems to be fully within the international flow of biblical scholarship and on occasion the Irish material seems to be at the origin of traditions that find their way into the wider international interpretation of the Bible. While it is helpful to consider the Irish material in its insular particularity, it is perhaps more important to see the Irish Church as part of a wider Christian world. In addition to students of the early Irish Church, students of Western Christendom's relationship with the Bible in the second half of the first millennium will benefit from considering the material outline in this volume.

In 1972 McNamara wrote an article entitled 'A Plea for Hiberno-Latin Biblical Studies' in the pages of this journal (*ITQ* 39 (1972): pp. 337–53). Here he indicated 'the extent of the known Irish material on biblical exegesis.' Then he called for scholars to work so that 'this entire body of exegetical material be speedily made available, first in preliminary publications and after in critical editions' (p. 211). This book, published almost 50 years later, is a testament to a life fruitfully dedicated to this subject. Much work has been published, much remains to be researched. Yet no future student of this subject can afford to ignore this monograph with its most helpful bibliography, indexes and appendixes which admirably lay out the state of current research.

Godsends: From Default Atheism to the Surprise of Revelation. By William Desmond. Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2021. Pp. 326. Price \$75 (hbk). ISBN 978-0268201579.

Reviewed by: GAVEN KERR, *St Patrick's Pontifical University, Maynooth*

Godsends draws together some of Desmond's previous work along with new material written specially for this book in order to present a volume whose unifying theme is that being porous to divine revelation in the form of the godsend. By way of an introduction Desmond introduces the notion of companioning between philosophy and theology. In such an arrangement it is not the case that one excludes the other or exercises dominance over the other; rather there is a between space wherein a porosity of the one to the other can occur. With this in mind, Desmond articulates a kind of Augustinian companioning that involves a move from the exterior to the interior, and from the inferior to the superior. These ought not to be understood in a univocalizing sense whereby the move from the one to the other is seen to exclude the other. Desmond's anticipation is that in these moves there is opened a space porous to the sacred.

Chapter one, 'Default Atheism' considers atheism as a postulated presupposition within contemporary philosophy that loses sight of the companioning between philosophy and theology. As a default such atheism is unreflective but guides the kind of philosophical praxis within which one can legitimately engage. Desmond sees philosophy as