

BOOK REVIEW

Anthony C. Thiselton, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics: Collected Works with New Essays* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006). xvi + 827 pp. Hdbk. US\$85.00.

Thiselton on Hermeneutics is a collection of some of the best essays written by Anthony C. Thiselton in his impressive career. Ranging as far back as 1970, these essays trace Thiselton's advance as a scholar and the development of a number of the key hermeneutical concepts that he has been pivotal in establishing.

Out of the forty-one essays, nearly one quarter are published for the first time in this volume. The essays are arranged in seven categories that provide the overall structure for the collection: (1) situating the subject, (2) hermeneutics and speech-act theory, (3) hermeneutics, semantics and conceptual grammar, (4) lexicography, exegesis and reception history, (5) parables, narrative-worlds and reader-response theories, (6) philosophy, language, theology and postmodernity and (7) hermeneutics, history and theology.

The sheer number of articles in this work prohibits a detailed examination and summary of each one. Instead, I am going to focus on Thiselton's evaluations of his work in the retrospective articles closing each section in the volume. These retrospective essays comprise the majority of the new essays in the collection, and are arguably the most valuable part of the book because they provide an opportunity for Thiselton to evaluate his work and contribution to a particular field.

Thiselton begins each retrospective essay by situating his work within the field, and generally invokes a larger frame of reference, often involving a multi-disciplinary perspective. This approach is particularly evident in his appraisal of his speech-act theory. Thiselton also outlines some of the gaps in his own work (and that of others) in each field, and provides a critique of various theories that he considers to be detrimental to the advance of that area of research. Further, there are a

couple of essays in which Thiselton says he wishes he had pursued a specific line of thought or evaluated a particular theory in more depth.

Thiselton also proposes some potentially fruitful avenues for future scholarship and indicates a few scholars and their work that have potential to provide new insights in the field of hermeneutics. These comments are particularly exciting because here Thiselton expresses his ideas regarding the future of his discipline.

Overall, these essays are very candid and insightful, and provide a unique perspective from a scholar who has made a large contribution to his field of study. These essays are most valuable in their ability to pair a synthesis of a specific topic with a forward-looking perspective.

Another good feature of this collection as a whole is the summary at the beginning of each article. Thiselton begins each article with a brief synopsis of its contents, outlining what he hopes the article will accomplish and some of the background information needed to best understand it. These summaries focus the reader's attention and help provide a structure for the evaluation of each article.

Another of the main strengths of this volume is the interrelatedness of the articles and various sections. Even though the book is divided into seven parts, there is continuity of theme, topic and ideas throughout. Even more helpful is the fact that Thiselton makes reference to other articles in the volume, directing the reader to a specific spot or article for further discussion.

With a collection of solid essays from such a reputable scholar as Thiselton, it is usually hard to find anything major to criticize. This work is no exception. There are very few areas of Thiselton's work that have not received attention. One criticism, however, would be that the book lacks a Scripture index and bibliography. These tools would have been helpful for the reader to gain access to specific information quickly, without having to scan through such a large book.

Nevertheless, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* is an excellent resource. Not only does it bring together a number of Thiselton's essays that might otherwise be hard to locate, it also contains his own valuable reflections on his work. Overall, *Thiselton on Hermeneutics* is a must for any biblical scholar remotely interested in hermeneutics and the lexical and linguistic study of the Bible.

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