

The New Testament sub-units are treated in Section Three, and all four essays brim with useful interpretative help. These include (1) the four-fold Gospel (Greg Lanier); (2) Acts and the Catholic Epistles (Darian Lockett); (3) the Pauline corpus (Randolph Richards); and (4) Revelation (Küllü Töniste).

Ched Spellman's essay, "Hermeneutical Reflections on Canonical Sub-Collections: Retrospect and Prospect," is the lone article in Section Four. Spellman "examines several concepts native to canon studies, including the context of canon, the coherence of canonical intentionality, the notion of canon-consciousness, and the relevance of the biblical canon to the task of biblical theology" (3). His closing sentence well summarizes his chapter and the book as a whole: "In my view, the canonical approach in general and the analysis of canonical sub-collections in particular have a strategic role to play within the broader field of Old and New Testament studies" (329).

Oh, that I had more space to give favorite quotations from this book! While the high price might cause hesitation for the parsimonious, the value gained from the insights therein will replace those doubts with appreciation. I highly recommend *Canon Formation*.

Jon Pratt
Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MN

Five Views on the New Testament Canon, edited by Stanley E. Porter and Benjamin P. Laird. Grand Rapids: Kregel Academic, 2022. 280 pp. \$24.99.

When I took my first teaching post nearly thirty years ago, I was assigned to teach New Testament Introduction. As I sought to find a textbook on the formation and theology of the NT canon, my choices were so limited that I chose to cover the subject in my lectures without assigning a text on the subject. Thankfully, the situation has dramatically improved.

Five Views on the New Testament Canon (FVNTC) provides perspectives on this vital subject from a unique array of scholars: (1) Darian Lockett from Talbot School of Theology supports the conservative Evangelical perspective; (2) David Nienhuis from Seattle Pacific University and Seminary supports the progressive Evangelical perspective; (3) Jason BeDuhn from Northern Arizona University supports the liberal Protestant perspective; (4) Ian Boxall from The Catholic University of America supports the Roman Catholic perspective; and (5) George Parzenios from Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology supports the Orthodox perspective.

How can such a diversity of perspectives on the canon provide a meaningful and productive discussion? Answer: by relying on the responses to three canon questions provided by the editors of this project.

Stanley Porter, who is president and dean at McMaster Divinity College, has edited over 80 books and written 28, has teamed up with Benjamin Laird, associate professor of biblical studies at the John W. Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University, to accomplish this goal for a fruitful canon dialogue.

The book follows a straightforward structure: (1) an introductory chapter that lays out the three canon questions the editors want the contributors to answer (What are the *historical factors* that led to the formation and recognition of the canon? What is the basis of the *canon's authority*? and What are the *hermeneutical implications* of the canon?); (2) one chapter each (approximately 30 pages in length) by the five main scholars in which they answer these questions; (3) a response chapter from each one (approximately 12 pages in length) in which they "evaluate and reflect upon the ways their colleagues have addressed [the three] questions" (37); and (4) a concluding chapter by the editors. Two indexes, one for names and one for Scripture and ancient sources, are also provided.

FVNTC is well written, and the editors and publisher have done an admirable job of preparing a very readable book. But the greatest contribution of the book is not showing readers the five perspectives on the three canon questions they have been asked to answer. Rather, the most significant value comes from the editors' introductory and concluding chapters. The chapters on each of the five perspectives along with their respective responses actually serve as a kind of foil for the material found in the opening and closing of the book.

The introduction gives a brief history of canon discussion showing that there was little to no treatment of the issue prior to the middle of the nineteenth century. Porter and Laird proceed to give names and titles of the significant studies on canon from 1850–present (though the omission of Ridderbos and Kruger is puzzling). They follow the historical survey with a 12-page section on major issues in the canon debate. Here they helpfully discuss five debated areas regarding canon composition: (1) the biblical authors' self-understanding; (2) the major factors which prompted the formation of the canon; (3) the process involved in the canon's formation; (4) the question of authorship and apostolic authority; and (5) the hermeneutical significance of the canon, especially related to how the canonical writings are arranged. Finally, they reveal *FVNTC's* format by giving the three main questions they have asked the contributors to address regarding history, authority, and hermeneutics. Also, the editors remind us that the five viewpoints named in the book are only representative of each particular group which is why they used the indefinite article "a" in the title of each of the main chapters (e.g., "A Roman Catholic Perspective").

The concluding chapter is divided into three main sections. First, the editors offer a discussion of the common ground all five scholars share (254–55). These include: (1) the NT canon consists of 27 books; (2) it is highly likely that the canonical books were first grouped together in sub-collections before coming together in the formal list of 27;

- (3) human involvement occurred at some stage in the process; and
 (4) the NT canon has a normative value and function in the church.

Second, points of contention are provided (260–64). These points ultimately boil down to the distinction between the conservative evangelical view and the other four over two issues: recognition versus determination and intrinsic versus extrinsic value. The conservative evangelical view believes that the individual books of the NT have intrinsic canonical value because they are inspired and that canonical formation becomes a “process of discovery and discernment of what is already the case, canonical authentication and recognition, rather than a process of emergence and development and then recognition” (261). On the other end of the spectrum the other four views, especially the Orthodox and Roman Catholic, believe that “the process by which the canonical text came to be was one that involved non-canonical criteria...revolving around a variety of historical factors within the life of the Christian church” (261). That is, all four of these models argue for a historically determined rather than intrinsically recognized model of canonicity.

Third, Porter and Laird survey the primary historical sources that help give insight into the canon’s formation and early reception (265–79). There are three broad areas: patristic writings, biblical manuscripts, and canonical lists. This section is particularly helpful, and the editors provide an abundance of secondary resources for further study.

FVNTC allows the reader to see some of the significant differences between various approaches to the formation of the NT canon, and the reader can learn much by seeing how each of the five contributors answers the questions related to history, authority, and hermeneutics in canon studies. But the introductory and concluding chapters are where the real jewels are found. Here we find helpful material on the history of canon studies, debated issues related to the canon, and available resources for studying this subject, and it is primarily on the basis of these chapters that I recommend it.

Jon Pratt
 Central Baptist Theological Seminary, Plymouth, MN

New Testament Theology, by Eckhard J. Schnabel. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2023. 1,224 pp. \$69.99.

Eckhard Schnabel (PhD, The University of Aberdeen) is the Mary Fench Rockefeller Distinguished Professor of New Testament at Gordon Conwell Seminary, where he has taught since 2012. He previously taught at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School from 1998 to 2012 and at several schools in Europe before that.

This book consists of a total of 26 chapters in six parts. The first part is titled “History, Faith, and Theology.” It consists of three