

Foreword

THE READING OF SCRIPTURE for spiritual nurture has been a foundational practice in the Christian Church down the ages. It is a core element in most church services, through reading aloud and preaching on what has been read, and it is also widely practiced by people at home, often as a way of starting, and so framing, the day.

In recent years there has been a striking resurgence of interest in *lectio divina* as a way of reading Scripture spiritually. Although *lectio divina* is a particular practice within the history of the Catholic church, it represents an approach that many Christians have practiced who may have known nothing about *lectio divina* as such; what matters is that they have read carefully and prayerfully with a view to knowing God better. My impression of the literature about *lectio divina*, however, is that it tends to sit light to the questions raised about the origins and nature of the Bible by modern biblical and theological scholarship—not that it is hostile to such questions, but that it tends to bracket them out.

A distinctive strength of Angie Harvey's work is that she explicitly relates the spiritual reading of Scripture to some of the concerns of the scholarly academy. She thereby provides a resource that is especially valuable for those who take a formal course of biblical and theological study, and who want to know how this can enhance their use of Scripture for spiritual nurture.

On the one hand Harvey looks at resources in modern literary studies; and she also considers the approach to Scripture in two of the major theologians of the twentieth century, Karl Barth and Henri de Lubac, who represent the Protestant and Catholic wings of the Christian Church. On the other hand, she looks at the work of a leading contemporary biblical scholar, Ellen Davis, who seeks to bring together biblical scholarship and

spiritual significance, and Harvey carefully appraises the value of Davis's writings and the lessons to be learnt from them.

Harvey writes lucidly and accessibly, and provides us with a valuable resource for the better understanding and practice of the spiritual reading of Scripture today. I hope that my own delight in reading this book will be shared by many others.

—Walter Moberly

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