

the Bible and literature

The following books provide a range of material on the relationship between the Bible and literature written in English. CASE welcomes reviews and comments on these books. They are presented for reflection, education and critical analysis—not as a canon of must-reads. Please read with your eyes open and brain engaged!

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the Bible and literature

Frye, Northrop, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, Harvest/HJB, New York, 1982. Seminal work on the way literature is shaped by biblical imagery, typology and narrative structure.

Alter, Robert, and Frank Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, Fontana, London, 1987. A comprehensive assessment of the literary qualities of the Bible, including essays on literary character of sacred texts.

Ryken, Leland, and Tremper Longman III, *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1993. Evangelical 'alternative' to Alter and Kermode's volume.

Ryken, Leland, James C. Wilhoit and Tremper Longman III, *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, IVP. Leceister, 1998. Valuable resource for understanding biblical language and literary forms and styles.

Jeffrey, David Lyle, *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1992. Wonderful resource collecting literature around the themes, characters, imagery and teachings of the Bible.

christianity and literary theory and criticism

Barratt, David, Roger Pooley and Leland Ryken, *The Discerning Reader: Christian perspectives on literature and theory*, Apollos, Leicester, 1995. Assorted essays offering Christian assessments of literary theories, texts and genres.

Cunningham, Valentine, *In the Reading Gaol: postmodernity, texts, and history*, Blackwell, Oxford, 1994. Sceptic of the sceptics, Cunningham takes down Derrida, de Man and others as he uncovers postmodernity's 'parasitic dependence' on the Bible and its theology.

Edwards, Michael, *Towards a Christian poetics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1984. Uses the Fall as the basis for understanding how literature operates.

Fiddes, Paul, *Freedom and Limit: a Dialogue between Literature and Christian Doctrine*, Mercer Uni Press, Macon, 1999. Acute discussion of the tension between doctrine and freedom of the imagination, including chapters on specific texts.

The Promised End: Eschatology in Theology and Literature, Blackwell, Oxford, 2000. A watershed critical work on the importance of eschatology for understanding literature. Fiddes is Professor of Theology at Oxford.

Gallagher, Susan V, and Roger Lundin, *Literature through the eyes of faith*, Harper & Row, San Francisco, 1989. Easy to read introduction to the issues for Christians.

Jeffrey, David Lyle, *People of the Book: Christian Identity and Literary Culture*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996. Difficult but enlightening account of the importance of the Bible to literary culture across centuries.

Ritchie, Daniel E, *Reconstructing Literature in an Ideological Age: a Biblical Poetics and Literary Studies from Milton to Burke*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996. Detailed and persuasive defence of the Bible as the key to literary study.

Ryken, Leland. *Realms of Gold: The Classics in Christian perspective*, Harold Shaw, Wheaton, 1991. *Triumphs of the Imagination: Literature in Christian perspective*. IVP, Downer's Grove, 1979. Both books contain chapters offering Christian appraisal of key texts in the Western tradition.

The Christian imagination: essays on literature and the arts, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1981. Classic essays on Christianity and the arts, including C. S. Lewis and T. S. Eliot.

The Liberated Imagination: Thinking Christianly about the arts. Harold Shaw, Wheaton, 1989. Ryken's theory of the arts as a creative response to God.

Walhout, Clarence, and Leland Ryken, eds. *Contemporary Literary Theory: A Christian appraisal*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. Essays on literary theories, from deconstruction to psychoanalysis to reader-response criticism.

specific studies

Adams, James Luther, and Wilson Yates, eds., *The Grotesque in Art and Literature: theological reflections*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1997. Detailed study of the religious meaning of the grotesque across various literary genres and artforms.

Lundin, Roger, *Emily Dickinson and the Art of Belief*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1998. Sensitive biography exploring the place of the Bible in the poetry and life of this 'honest doubter'.

on the web

The most comprehensive web-based bibliography (updated regularly) is found at English Literature and Religion is at the University of Maryland website: www.inform.umd.edu/ENGL/englfac/WPeterson/ELR/elr.htm

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