

Nevertheless, Kirk consistently sheds new light both on Paul's approach to death in his letters and on how later authors depicted Paul's death. His approach is suggestive for future studies, and the prose is pleasant to read in addition to being well-informed. This book is warmly recommended for all those with a scholarly interest in Paul, his reflections on his death, and how those who received Paul understood him.

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The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary. By Albert Vanhoye. Mahwah, NJ: Paulist, 2015, v + 266 pp., \$34.95 paper.

Cardinal Albert Vanhoye, S.J., who served for many years as Professor of Scripture at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, is no novice when it comes to the book of Hebrews. Besides his numerous journal articles, he has written several books on Hebrews, including: *La structure littéraire de l'épître aux Hébreux* (2nd ed.; Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1976); *Situation du Christ: Hébreux 1–2* (LD 58; Paris: Cerf, 1969); *Prêtres anciens, prêtre nouveau selon le Nouveau Testament* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980), *La lettre aux Hébreux: Jésus-Christ, médiateur d'une nouvelle alliance* (Paris: Desclée, 2002), and *L'Épître aux Hébreux: Un prêtre différent* (Paris: Editions Gabalda, 2010).

The Letter to the Hebrews is divided into two parts, "Introduction" (pp. 1–50) and "Commentary" (pp. 51–242). Vanhoye's "Introduction" provides a concise interaction with several topics: "Literary Genre: Letter? Homily?" (pp. 1–2), "Doctrinal Content: A Treatise on Christology" (pp. 2–5), "Who is the Author of the Homily" (pp. 6–11), "For Whom was this Homily Written" (pp. 12–13), "Where was the Preacher Active" (pp. 13–14), "Date of the Letter" (pp. 14–15), and "Structure of the Homily" (pp. 15–20). He argues that Barnabas wrote this homily from Italy to a Christian community in Greece or Asia Minor, which Paul endorsed with a concluding note just prior to his martyrdom around AD 66–67. Embracing a sixteenth-century exegete's suggestion (that of Estius), Vanhoye believes Paul may have "effectively guaranteed the value of this letter, despite the novelty of its doctrine" by writing the conclusion (13:19, 22–25). Attached to the introduction is "Text of the Letter Annotated," which is Vanhoye's interpretive translation for the Letter to the Hebrews (pp. 21–50).

Naturally, the majority of *The Letter to the Hebrews* is an explanation of Hebrews. Excluding the "Exordium (1:1–4)" (pp. 53–58) and the "Solemn Conclusion (13:20–25)" (pp. 230–38), Vanhoye divides the Letter to the Hebrews into five units: "The Situation of Christ (1:5–2:18)" (pp. 59–82), "A Trustworthy and Merciful High Priest (3:1–5:10)" (pp. 83–106), "Priceless Value of the Priesthood and Sacrifice of Christ (5:11–10:39)" (pp. 107–76), "Faith and Endurance Full of Hope (11:1–12:13)" (pp. 177–204), and "Pursuing Straight Paths (12:14–13:19)" (pp. 205–29). Vanhoye's fivefold division parallels those found in the critical commentaries by Harold Attridge, William Lane, and Paul Ellingworth—all of whose works

Vanhoye lists in his bibliography (pp. 243–45). One might assume their influence on his structural outline were it not for Vanhoye’s own previous work in *La structure littéraire de l’épître aux Hébreux*.

Vanhoye’s commentary is an expositional commentary similar in length to Homer Kent’s *The Epistle to the Hebrews: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1972) and Victor C. Pfitzner’s *Hebrews* (ANTC; Nashville: Abingdon, 1997). Yet Vanhoye’s commentary differs from Kent’s and Pfitzner’s in two ways. First, Vanhoye opens each subdivision with an overview and an English translation before his exposition of the passage. While Vanhoye indents phrases and clauses throughout all of his translations, he does so with no explanation, expecting the reader to discern the significance of his interpretive indentations. Nevertheless, Vanhoye does not leave the reader guessing about OT quotes or allusions to OT verses, events, and figures. They are clearly cited with the translation, and they are a nice feature. A second difference is Vanhoye’s minimal to non-existent interaction with others in dealing with interpretive challenges. References to other sources are conspicuously missing. For instance, when discussing the blood of Jesus offered in the heavenly tent (9:11–12), Vanhoye notes that “some exegetes imagine that here the author is describing a ceremony of the offering of blood performed by Jesus on his arrival in heaven” (p. 143). Who are these exegetes? Are they included in Vanhoye’s bibliography? One can only imagine. So while he identifies a limited number of sources in the “Bibliography” (pp. 243–45), there is no evidence anywhere in his commentary of his consulting those contemporary sources. He does, however, credit two older commentators: Gulielmus Estius and John Chrysostom (pp. 145, 149). Once in a while, Vanhoye appeals to a few commentators in footnotes who are not listed in his bibliography (p. 144 nn. 1 and 2).

Throughout the commentary, Greek words are transliterated with English translation. His lexical interactions are often intriguing on at least two levels. First when a Greek term appears in the LXX, Vanhoye at times offers interesting alternative translations. For instance, he explains that, while the author of Hebrews uses the Greek word *diathēkē* for “covenant” as it appears in the Septuagint, “the etymological sense of this word,” says Vanhoye, “is ‘disposition’ but its most frequent use is ‘last disposition,’ that is to say, ‘testament.’” Thus he concludes that a more appropriate translation for *diathēkē* in Heb 9:15 is “covenant-testament” (p. 150). Unfortunately, no validation is provided. Second, Vanhoye highlights when the same Greek word appears more than once in Hebrews. For instance, *hypostasis* appears three times and is translated three different ways: “substance” in Heb 1:3, “position” in Heb 3:14, and “possessing” in Heb 11:1 (p. 179). His reference to Moulton and Milligan for *hypostasis* is a welcomed sight, but a person with no background in Greek tools would be left asking about the identity of Moulton and Milligan. Furthermore, the work is not listed among his short list of sources or in a footnote. It might have proven more helpful to reference BDAG’s entry (1040.1b). Yet he does reference BDAG in one of his infrequent footnotes (p. 196 n. 3) for his discussion of *archēgos*, where Vanhoye draws attention to the two usages of the noun to describe Jesus as “pioneer” (2:10) and “accomplisher” (12:2). So, on the one hand, Vanhoye’s transliteration may benefit a non-Greek audience, but, on the

other hand, his appeal to Greek lexical sources assumes some awareness of NT Greek and Greek tools.

As to Vanhoye's interpretation of Hebrews, he often offers an idea that forces you to stop and think for a moment before moving on to the next interpretation. On more than one occasion, Vanhoye demonstrates how the author of Hebrews advances an OT discussion. For instance, in Heb 4:16 he underscores the author's exhortation by describing it as "audacious." He then explains why the author's exhortation "Let us approach" is audacious. It is "a radical change in the religious situation with respect to the Old Testament, in which it was strictly forbidden 'to approach' (cf. Exod 24:2; Num 3:10, 38; Lev 16:2)" (p. 97). Similarly with regard to describing the different sacrifices in the OT for "faults committed 'by mistake' (Lev 4:2, 13; Num 15:22–29) and those committed 'deliberately' (Num 15:30–31)," Vanhoye rightly highlights that in the NT "the distinction disappears." These kinds of discussions are succinct, well documented with OT citations, and helpful. Nevertheless, in his discussion about the misplacement of the altar of incense in Heb 9:3–4, he avoids the problem by saying that the issue is "secondary and so there is no need to dwell on it" (pp. 137–38). So while Vanhoye does not shy away from interacting with OT subjects in Hebrews, he majors on the majors as would be expected in an expositional commentary.

Finally, there are times when Vanhoye, offers interpretations that are classic. In much the same way he appeals to Tertullian to support Barnabas as the author of Hebrews (p. 11 n. 2) and Estius to support his argument for a Pauline ending (p. 10), he cites John Chrysostom to explain the interpretation of "tent" or "perfect tent" of Heb 9:11: "'The tent' designates the flesh of Christ, the human body of Christ" (pp. 145). "To speak of the human body as a tent," says Vanhoye as a means of supporting Chrysostom, "is not rare in the Bible (see Wis 9:15; Isa 38:12; 2 Cor 5:1–4; 2 Pet 1:13, 14) and, besides, the Fourth Gospel says that Jesus was speaking 'of the sanctuary of his body' (John 2:21)." So while he offers interpretations that are somewhat distinctive, he does a poor job interacting with contemporary commentators with whom he differs. Therefore, while there are nuggets of items that are thought-provoking and helpful, there are disappointments as well.

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Letters from the Pillar Apostles: The Formation of the Catholic Epistles as a Canonical Collection. By Darian R. Lockett. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2017, xviii + 255 pp., \$33.00 paper.

Although the Catholic Epistles have traditionally received less scholarly attention than other NT writings, the publication of several recent works on these epistles is a positive indication of increased interest. In addition to a number of commentaries and theological studies, several recent publications explore various canonical issues relating to the Catholic Epistles. These writings include *Not by Paul Alone: The Formation of the Catholic Epistle Collection and the Christian Canon*, by David

p. cm.â€”(The Pillar New Testament commentary). Includes bibliographical references and indexes. ISBN 978-0-8028-3729-5 (cloth: alk. paper).
My first serious encounter with the Letter to the Hebrews occurred in a missionary context some years ago when I was invited to teach this â€”word of exhortationâ€”™ to a senior class of theological students. It proved to be a rewarding experienceâ€”even a spiritual milestoneâ€”though I suspect that my teaching in that cross-cultural context left much to be desired. Not long afterwards, I found myself in the classroom of Professor F. F. Bruce at the University of Manchester, where he lectured on Hebrews, having written his New International Commentary on the letter some years earlier. Letter to the Hebrews, New Testament letter traditionally attributed to St. Paul the Apostle but now widely believed to be the work of another Jewish Christian, perhaps one of Paulâ€™s associates. The letter was composed sometime during the latter half of the 1st century and is the 19th book of the New Testament canon.
Encyclopaedia Britannica's editors oversee subject areas in which they have extensive knowledge, whether from years of experience gained by working on that content or via study for an advanced degree. See Article History. Letter to the Hebrews, also called Epistle to the Hebrews, abbreviation Hebrews, anonymous New Testament letter traditionally attributed to St. Paul the Apostle but now widely believed to be the work of another Jewish Christian. A verse-by-verse commentary on The Book Of Hebrews, from the author of 'The Jesus Discovery'. Learn...
See more of The Letter to the Hebrews - a Commentary on Facebook. Log In. or. Create New Account. See more of The Letter to the Hebrews - a Commentary on Facebook. Log In. Forgotten account? or. Create New Account. Not Now.
Dr Bradford has ministered at Christian conferences in the UK, the USA and New Zealand. He was also an NHS Commissioner for the London Borough of Southwark, and a sportâ€™s doctor to Blackheath Rugby Club, the worldâ€™s oldest open rugby club. He is married to Gloria, a sign language interpreter, with four grown-up children, all with active faith. See more. The Letter to the Hebrews - a Commentary. 15 August 2019
The author of the letter to the Hebrews wrote his letter before then. From what is in the book we could argue that the *Jews were still carrying on the *temple ceremonies in *Jerusalem. We know that the *Romans destroyed the *temple in AD 70.
The way the author has written the book is not like any other book in the New Testament. We call it a letter, but it does not start like one. It does finish like a letter, but the author does not give us his name. The writer knows the readers and is eager to see them again (13:19, 23). He thinks well of them (6:9), but they should by now have been able to teach (5:12). Written for theologians and graduate students in New Testament studies, The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary exegetes the entire letter verse by verse, paying attention to relevant issues for theology and spiritual life. Most remarkably, it explains why this "letter" is really a homily written by a preacher who must have delivered it several times in different
Written for theologians and graduate students in New Testament studies, The Letter to the Hebrews: A New Commentary exegetes the entire letter verse by verse, paying attention to relevant issues for theology and spiritua