

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Although one of the Prophets in what Christians call the ‘Old Testament’, Isaiah has been known in the Church from early times as ‘more evangelist than prophet’, and the Book of Isaiah as the ‘Fifth Gospel’. This is because he has played a unique role in all kinds of context, from the cult of the Virgin Mary to anti-Jewish polemic, from mediaeval passion iconography to twentieth-century Christian feminism and liberation theology. Jerome (c.342–420), one of the most influential figures in the history of the Bible, introduces him as follows: ‘... he should be called an evangelist rather than a prophet because he describes all the mysteries¹ of Christ and the Church so clearly that you would think he is composing a history of what has already happened rather than prophesying about what is to come.’² He is obviously referring to passages like 9:6 where the birth of the Son of David is described as having already happened (‘For to us a child has been born ...’), or chapter 53 where the events of the passion are not foretold as elsewhere in the prophets, but recounted in the past tense (‘he was despised and rejected ...’).

A much used early twelfth-century manuscript of Jerome’s *Commentary on Isaiah* in Durham Cathedral Library has a miniature which nicely illustrates his perception of Isaiah (Plate 1). It shows Isaiah at the top with a scroll in each hand: one carries the verse associated with him more than any other in the mediaeval Church (*Ecce virgo concipiet* ... ‘Behold a virgin will conceive ...’ 7:14), while the other has some apocalyptic words from 24:16 (*secretum meum mihi, secretum meum mihi, vae mihi..!* ‘my secret is with me, my secret is with me: woe is me!’). Jerome is looking up at him and saying, according to the

¹ Some manuscripts have *ministeria* ‘functions, activities’ instead of *mysteria*.

² Prologue to translation of Isaiah in *Biblia Sacra iuxta Vulgatam versionem*, 2nd ed. by R. Weber (Stuttgart 1975), Vol. II, p. 1096.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

legend on his scroll: *Dic tu Isaias, dic testimonium Christi* 'Go on, Isaiah, tell them about Christ!'³ But he goes further. He tells us we should also expect to find in the book of Isaiah instruction in physics, ethics and logic: 'whatever there is in Sacred Scripture, whatever the human tongue can express and the minds of mortals understand, is contained in that book'.⁴

Jerome's assessment of Isaiah is typical, and is echoed throughout Christian literature. Augustine (354–430), for example, once asked his bishop for advice on vacation reading, and the bishop (Ambrose) prescribed Isaiah 'because, I believe, he is more plainly a foreteller of the Gospel and of the calling of the Gentiles than are the others'.⁵ Isidore of Seville (560–636)⁶ and the influential thirteenth-century exegete Hugh of St Cher describe Isaiah in similar terms. Examples from Eastern Christianity include John Chrysostom (c.347–407), who called him 'the prophet with the loudest voice' (*megalophonotatos*),⁷ and a seventh-century Syriac Bible manuscript in which Isaiah is introduced as 'the most highly praised of the Prophets'.⁸

In mediaeval mystery plays he regularly figures as the prophet who, more than any other, recognizes the Messiah. In a procession of foretellers of Christ in the York Cycle, for example, he is the only prophet, coming after Adam and Eve and before Symeon and John the Baptist. His function is to announce that his prophecy in 9:1–2 ('The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light') is fulfilled: 'Now I see this light ...'⁹ He plays a similar role in the corresponding sequence in the Chester Cycle.¹⁰ In the prologue to Isaiah in the *Wycliffe Bible* (c. 1397) he is 'not oneli a profete, but more, a Gospellere', and a seventeenth-century commentator tells us he was known then as the 'fifth evangelist'.¹¹ An eighteenth-century Family Bible introduces Isaiah in very similar language: 'Isaiah is always called the Evangelical Prophet because he speaks more clearly of Christ and his Church than any of the others and describes

³ Cf. Sawyer, 'My secret is with me', pp. 308f.

⁴ Prologue to his *Commentary on Isaiah: CCSL* 73, pp. 1–2.

⁵ Conf. 9,5 (1.276).

⁶ *Isaias formam evangelistarum et apostolorum expressit qui universa sacramenta Christi, non quasi futura, sed quam praesentia praedicavit: PL* 83, p. 114.

⁷ Diestel, *Geschichte*, p. 136.

⁸ *Vetus Testamentum Syriace* 111,1 Liber Isaiaae, p. 1.

⁹ *The York Plays*, ed. R. Beadle, London, 1982, pp. 332–3.

¹⁰ *The Chester Mystery Plays*, ed. D. Mills, p. 304.

¹¹ Poole, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Vol. 2, p. 326.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

3

the glories of the Gospel Dispensation in language so elevated that nothing can exceed it.¹²

In the language of twentieth-century theological discourse, the contribution of scripture to Christian morality can be summarized in the list 'Moses, Isaiah, Jesus and Paul'.¹³ The Catholic writer and journalist Paul Johnson puts it in terms not unlike those of some of his Christian predecessors: 'Isaiah was not only the most remarkable of the prophets, he was by far the greatest writer in the Old Testament. He was evidently a magnificent preacher ... and his words remained among the most popular of all the holy writings. The early Jews loved his sparkling prose with its brilliant images, many of which have since passed into the literature of all civilized nations. But more important than the language was the thought: Isaiah was pushing humanity towards new moral discoveries'.¹⁴

The pages devoted to Isaiah in the *Oxford Dictionary of Quotations*¹⁵ further demonstrate the extent of his influence beyond his immediate Christian context within the Church, on English literature and western European culture in general. Messianic titles like 'Immanuel' (7:14), 'Prince of Peace' (9:6) and 'the Key of David' (22:22) that have become an integral part of Christian vocabulary, are Isaianic, as are such universally familiar expressions as 'swords into ploughshares' (2:4), 'the wolf dwelling with the lamb' (11:6–9), 'a voice crying in the wilderness' (40:3), 'a man of sorrows' (53:3), 'a light to the nations' (42:6; 49:6), 'good news to the poor' (61:1) and 'a new heaven and a new earth' (65:17). 'My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples' (56:7) is inscribed over the entrance to churches,¹⁶ and Isaiah also gave us proverbs like 'There is no peace for the wicked' (48:22; 57:21).

John Bunyan chose the name 'Beulah' from Isaiah 62:4 for 'the land beyond the valley of the Shadow of Death' from which pilgrims could see the Heavenly City,¹⁷ and Milton's description of Satan's fall from heaven in Book 1 of *Paradise Lost* was inspired by the mocking lament over the death of the King of Babylon in Isaiah 14.¹⁸ Lilith, Adam's first wife and a literary model for radical feminists, also has her scriptural roots in Isaiah (cf. 34:1).¹⁹ Handel's *Messiah* is largely

¹² Ed. Benjamin Kennicott, Dublin 1793.

¹³ M. Wilcs, *Faith and the Mystery of God*, p. 107.

¹⁴ Johnson, *History of the Jews*, p. 74.

¹⁵ Second edition (Oxford 1953), pp. 52–5.

¹⁶ The Priory Church in Lancaster is one example.

¹⁷ *Pilgrim's Progress*, Part 2.

¹⁸ See p. 160.

¹⁹ See pp. 216–19.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

based on excerpts from chapters 9, 34, 40, 52, 53 and 60, while Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and Brahms' *German Requiem* contain some other memorable settings of Isaiah.²⁰ It has provided Christian artists with many of their favourite images, including the ox and the ass of the nativity scene (1:3), the six-winged seraphim (6:2–3), the 'Jesse tree' (11:1–2), the 'peaceable kingdom' (11:6–9), the 'good shepherd' (40:11), the 'man of sorrows' (53:3), and the 'winepress' (63:3). Significantly one of the few modern scholars to comment on the special role of Isaiah in the formation of Christian doctrine is an art historian.²¹

Possibly this special popularity of the book of Isaiah among Christians, and some of their distinctive interpretations of it, go back to Jesus himself, a view nicely expressed to me once by the late Brian Redhead. His answer to the question of why Isaiah had been so central to Christianity, was that he thought it was because Jesus had been 'brought up on Isaiah', in the same way that he himself had been 'brought up on *The Old Curiosity Shop*', because it was just about the only book in the house when he was a child. The seventeenth-century French artist Charles Le Brun (1619–1690) charmingly illustrates this possibility in *The Holy Family in Egypt*, where Jesus is being taught to read, by his mother incidentally, from a Hebrew scroll of Isaiah (Plate 2).²² Ernest Renan in his *Vie de Jésus* (1863) also comments on the special role of Isaiah in Jesus' education.²³ There certainly are good arguments for the view that it was Jesus himself who found in Isaiah a special source of inspiration or enlightenment,²⁴ and laid the foundations for an Isaiah-based Christianity.

But another reason for the prominence of Isaiah in early Christianity is simply that Isaiah seems always to have had a peculiarly prominent place in Jewish Bible use too,²⁵ so that his popularity in a first-century Jewish sect is only to be expected. In our earliest reference to a Jewish 'canon' of scripture, Isaiah takes pride of place (Sir. Prologue; 49:17–25). He is noticeably prominent among the Dead Sea Scrolls, in both the scriptural and the sectarian texts.²⁶ In

²⁰ See pp. 171–175.

²¹ Réau, *Iconographie*, Vol. II, 1, p. 366; cf. M. Salmi, *La Pittura di Piero della Francesca* (Novara 1959), p. 68; Pickering, *Literature and Art*, pp. 274f, note 2; P. D. Hanson, 'Third Isaiah' (*Reading and Preaching the Book of Isaiah*, ed. C. R. Seitz), pp. 96f.: 'the Book of Isaiah, that book that is of such central importance to Christian faith from the time of the early disciples down to the present'.

²² The Hebrew is clearly legible in the version in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge: Catalogue by J. W. Goodison and D. Sutton (1960), pp. 181–2, no. 339.

²³ E. Renan, *Vie de Jésus*, p. 28.

²⁴ See pp. 23–25.

²⁵ See also pp. 103–105.

²⁶ See below, p. 24.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

5

mediaeval Jewish lectionaries, which no doubt to a great extent reflect ancient practice, about half the *haftaroth* (readings from the Prophets) come from Isaiah, including the 'Consolation' readings from 40–61.²⁷

This partly explains why Isaiah played such a disturbing role, especially during the Middle Ages, in anti-Jewish polemic.²⁸ Over and over again we find the Church choosing texts from Isaiah to prove how misguided the Jews are, and to authorize attitudes of arrogance and hostility towards them. It was precisely because Isaiah was such a popular text in both traditions that the Church's 'christification'²⁹ of Isaiah had such tragic consequences for the Jews.

A study of Isaiah in the history of Judaism would probably be just as revealing as the present study. Since the nineteenth century, for example, Zionists have made much use of Isaiah, as can be seen from the number of works of modern Jewish literature and music based on Isaianic themes, and also from the names given to many of the Jewish settlements in Israel, including one of the first, called Rishon le-Tzion 'first to Zion' (Isa.41:27).³⁰ Several monuments erected since the Second World War bear inscriptions from Isaiah, including the Holocaust Memorial in Jerusalem, Yad va-Shem (Isa.56:5).³¹ More recently the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin chose words from Isaiah 57:19 to express his commitment to peace at the historic meeting with Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington on 14 September 1993: 'Peace, peace to the far and the near, says the Lord'. It would be interesting to examine this more thoroughly.

But 'Isaiah in Judaism' would have to be a study in its own right, quite separate from 'Isaiah in the Church'.³² For one thing, unlike traditional Christian uses of Isaiah which are based for the most part on Greek or Syriac or Latin or German or English translations, Jewish traditions are almost all much more closely related to the original Hebrew text or its ancient Jewish Aramaic translation, the Targum. A study of Jewish interpretations of Isaiah, like that of A. Neubauer and S.R. Driver, *The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah*

²⁷ See *JE*, vol.6, pp. 136–7; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, pp. 143–9.

²⁸ See chapter 6.

²⁹ Cf. Diestel, *Geschichte*, p. 369: 'Christologisierung der Prophetie'.

³⁰ See also pp.103–5. ³¹ See pp. 104–5.

³² See most recently the superb article on 'Jewish Exegesis' by Raphael Loewe in *DBI*, pp. 346–54.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

According to the Jewish Interpreters, begins and ends in a totally different world from a study of Isaiah in the Church.

Another point at which the study of the Bible in Judaism and the study, like the present one, of the Bible in the Church, would diverge, and one that cannot be stressed too much, is that, since the very beginning, Isaiah has been as much part of Christian scripture as the Gospels and Paul. The original anti-Jewish distinction between one part of scripture, the 'Jewish part', invidiously labelled the 'Old Testament', and another, labelled the 'New Testament', has led to misunderstandings and prejudices both about Judaism and about scripture, and, like other racist and sexist language, would be better dropped from the vocabulary of the Church.³³ The 'Prophets', including Isaiah, are in no way more 'Jewish' than the Gospels. The Gospels are Jewish through and through and the Prophets, especially in their ancient Greek version, were from the beginning at least as much part of Christian scripture as of the Jewish Bible.

It is important, although something that is rarely practised, to keep the study of Christian scripture, in which Isaiah is a 'Fifth Gospel', separate from the study of the Hebrew Bible in Jewish tradition. Christianity and Judaism are separate religions.³⁴ As soon as our attention shifts away from ancient Israel, where the roots of both Judaism and Christianity are equally to be found, and into the Common Era, then it is confusing to try to study both religious traditions at the same time. This practice, which has been widespread in institutions where Christian theology and Biblical studies are taught, has the inevitable result that Judaism suffers twice over, by, on the one hand, being identified with the 'religion of the Hebrew Bible' or 'ancient Israelite religion' (with supersessionist implications), and, on the other, being treated as 'background to the New Testament'.³⁵ The focus throughout then is on 'Isaiah in the Church'. Jewish responses to what Christians have done with Isaiah will be considered, and a chapter is devoted to the ugly story of Isaiah and Christian antisemitism. But a study of Isaiah's role in the history of Judaism must be kept separate, and awaits the undivided scholarly attention of someone better qualified than the present writer.

³³ Cf. Sawyer, 'Combating prejudices', pp. 269-78.

³⁴ Cf. Neusner, *Jews and Christians. The Myth of a Common Tradition*.

³⁵ Cf. Levenson, *The Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament and Historical Criticism. Jews and Christians in Biblical Study*; K. Stendahl, 'Antisemitism'; Sawyer, 'Combating prejudices about the Bible and Judaism', pp. 269f.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

7

'Isaiah in Islam' is also a separate story. It too would require specialist treatment. The Arabic form of his name is Sha'ya, and Muslim writers from Tabari (died 923) on, were familiar with his role in the stories of Sennacherib's invasion and Hezekiah's illness.³⁶ In both Jewish and Muslim tradition, incidentally, Isaiah is remembered as an intensely unpopular prophet, not afraid to speak out against his own people, who suffered martyrdom at the hands of his enemies. There is a hint in al-Baydawi's influential thirteenth-century commentary on the Qur'an, that he may have had some special significance in Islamic tradition as well, which the other prophets did not have. In a comment on Sura 17:4 Baydawi states that the two sins committed by the Israelites were (1) the murder of Sha'ya ibn Amaşya (=Isaiah) and (2) the murder of Zechariah and John the Baptist, and the intention to kill Jesus.³⁷ In a similar way in Christian tradition Isaiah keeps company with Moses, David, Jesus and Paul, rather than the other 'Old Testament prophets'.

Our concern here is the story of Isaiah in the history of Christianity. It is one part of the story of how Christians down the ages have used the Bible: in popular hymns and preaching, in art and music and literature, in the attitudes and assumptions of ordinary people and in official pronouncements and scholarly commentaries. There have been many studies of this from Ludwig Diestel's nineteenth-century work on 'the Old Testament in the Christian Church' to more recent titles such as *The Bible in the Sixteenth Century*,³⁸ *The Bible in Scottish Life and Literature*³⁹ and *The Bible and its Readers*.⁴⁰ Christopher Hill's *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* dramatically records how central a role scripture can play, as self-help manual, oracle, source of courage, alternative law-book and the like, in major social and political developments.⁴¹ 'The ancient and mediaeval career' of a particular biblical text (Genesis 1:28) is the subject of another recent example.⁴² On the particular question of the influence of the Bible on English literature, two new publications have just appeared, an invaluable reference work entitled *A Dictionary of Biblical Tradition in English Literature*,⁴³ and a fascinating anthology with the title *Chapters*

³⁶ Cf. *EJ*, Vol. 9, cols. 67–8.

³⁷ *Encyclopedia of Islam*, Vol. 4 (London 1934), p. 343.

³⁸ Ed. Steinmetz, 1990. ³⁹ Ed. Wright, 1988.

⁴⁰ Edd. Beuken, Freyne and Weiler, 1991.

⁴¹ Hill, *The English Bible and the Seventeenth-Century Revolution* (1993).

⁴² Cohen, 'Be Fertile and Increase; Fill the Earth and Master It' (1989).

⁴³ *DBTEL*.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

*into Verse. Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible.*⁴⁴ From these and other publications it is obvious that many of the examples investigated here in relation to one book can be paralleled in the history of the interpretation of other books of the Bible.

But the unique contribution of Isaiah to the life and work of the Church, in all these different spheres of activity, is something that has not been fully investigated until now. Whatever the reason for its early prominence, the popularity of the Book of Isaiah and the special role which it has played in the history of the Church and western culture, make it an ideal case study for a history of biblical interpretation. The story is all the more fascinating because it has been so much neglected. A study of the use made of texts from Isaiah by theologians like Augustine and Luther, composers like Byrd, Bach, Handel and Brahms, artists, hymn-writers, preachers and politicians, as well as in official pronouncements of the Church such as the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5), reveals a great deal both about the meaning of scripture and about the history of Christianity.

Most of the commentaries on Isaiah written over the last 200 or 300 years – and there are hundreds of them – have little or nothing to say about the uses made of him by Christians down the centuries. With a few notable exceptions, P.-E. Bonnard, *Le Second Isaïe* (1972), for example, who gives some space to popular and influential Christian uses of Isaiah, and Brevard Childs' *Exodus* (London 1974), commentaries are reluctant to include the history of interpretation systematically. What the 'experts', with their overarching concern for historical critical material, have been doing with Isaiah in their commentaries, often has little or nothing to do with what the rest of the world has been doing with him, and still does, in literature, art, music, worship and politics. For most modern biblical experts, including the majority of those who have written commentaries on Isaiah, I think it is true to say, the role of Isaiah in Christian tradition is of marginal interest, and scarcely worthy of serious scholarly attention. Their sole concern has been with the original meaning of the original text: anything later than that is rejected as at best unimportant, at worst pious rubbish. If anything, they want their main contribution to the study of the Bible to be a corrective one, explicitly rejecting what people believe about it: 'Ah, but that is not

⁴⁴ Atwan and Wieder, *Chapters into Verse* (1993).

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

Introduction

9

what the original Hebrew meant!' The almost universally held perception of Isaiah, with which we began, as unique among the Prophets in the history of western culture, means nothing to them.

The introduction to Isaiah in the prestigious *New Jerome Biblical Commentary*⁴⁵ is typical. There are none of the superlatives of the older commentaries: instead the bulk of the introduction centres on historical and literary critical issues which read very much like the introduction to any other book of the Bible. Nor does the introduction to Isaiah in the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible make any mention of his special role in the Church,⁴⁶ despite its confessional format and its claim to be acceptable to all the major Christian Churches, Protestant, Anglican, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox.⁴⁷ Even in a brief 'history of interpretation' of Isaiah by a leading British scholar, mention is made of its status as 'one of the foremost writings of the OT for the early Christian Church', but the highest praise is reserved for 'the brilliant philological and linguistic insights of W. Gesenius in his commentary of 1829' and 'the pioneering work of B. Duhm published in 1892'.⁴⁸

The last fifteen or twenty years, however, have seen a distinct change in this situation. There are signs of a new interest among biblical experts in the history of interpretation.⁴⁹ This is evident, for example, in recent publications and research projects on the Second Temple Period, in particular on what was happening to scripture in that period, such as M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* and J. Barton, *Oracles of God. Perceptions of Ancient Prophecy in Israel after the Exile*. There is also the impetus given to the study of ancient sectarian uses of scripture by the Dead Sea Scrolls and the Nag Hammadi texts.

We may note also how the Greek Septuagint, the Aramaic Targumim, the Syriac Peshitta, the Latin Vulgate and other ancient versions of the Bible, are now more than ever before being studied as literature in their own right: not only as sources for reconstructing the original Hebrew text but also as evidence for how scripture was interpreted in various ancient contexts.⁵⁰ These constitute, for

⁴⁵ R. E. Brown, S.S., J. A. Fitzmyer, S.J. and R. E. Murphy, O.Carm., edd. (London 1990), pp. 229–30, 329–32.

⁴⁶ *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, edd. B. M. Metzger and R. E. Murphy (Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 866.

⁴⁷ *New Oxford Annotated Bible*, p. x. ⁴⁸ *DBI*, p. 328.

⁴⁹ Sawyer, 'History of Interpretation', *DBI*, pp. 316–20.

⁵⁰ Cf. Muraoka, 'Bible translation: the ancient versions', p. 350.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-56596-7 - The Fifth Gospel: Isaiah in the History of Christianity

John F. A. Sawyer

Excerpt

[More information](#)

biblical experts, something of an intermediate stage in the history of interpretation, bridging the gap between the ancient near east and later mediaeval and modern contexts. So we find a senior Biblical scholar moving from a critical commentary on Jeremiah, whose exclusive aim is to get as close as possible to the original words of the prophet,⁵¹ to a study of five *Selected Christian Hebraists*, from Andrew of St Victor (died 1175) to the nineteenth-century Scotsman Alexander Geddes.⁵²

Recent developments in what are loosely termed 'literary approaches' to the Bible have also been influential. Rhetorical criticism, canonical criticism, *Redaktionsgeschichte* and structuralism share with 'pre-critical' commentators like Jerome and Rashi an interest in the text as it stands, so that questions about the meaning of the text may come before questions about who wrote it and when, and what were their sources. For that kind of question, the centuries of Jewish and Christian exegetical tradition are a treasure-house of useful insights because these are the questions asked in the pre-critical age as well.⁵³

The literary critics' concept of 'intratextuality' to a significant extent overlaps one of the main hermeneutical principles of earlier religious interpreters, namely, to work within the text as a closed corpus and use one passage of scripture to interpret another.⁵⁴ This type of semantic activity was highly developed in the pre-critical age, especially where readers knew the whole text of the Bible well, if not by heart. One of the most remarkable developments of recent years is the matching up of modern literary and semantic analysis of the biblical text with more amateurish ancient and mediaeval interpretations. Occasionally a modern interpreter discovers that he or she has come to the same conclusion as Jerome or Isidore of Seville. The reason why this does not happen more often is of course that few biblical experts are really familiar with, or interested in, the Christian exegetical tradition. It happens more often in Jewish Studies because Jewish scholars tend to be better acquainted with their (rabbinic and mediaeval) sources than Christians are with theirs. My own experience is that just as much light is often thrown on our texts, if not

⁵¹ McKane, *Jeremiah. Vol. 1* (1986).

⁵² McKane, *Selected Christian Hebraists* (1989).

⁵³ Sawyer, 'A change of emphasis in the study of the Prophets' (1982).

⁵⁴ Cf. Brett, 'Intratextuality', *DBI*, pp. 320-1.