



The Lord Is Good: Seeking the God of the Psalter (SCDS)
Available January 30, 2018
 \$27, 224 pages, paperback
 978-0-8308-4883-6

In this volume in IVP Academic's Studies in Christian Doctrine and Scripture series, Christopher R. J. Holmes explores the divine attribute of God's goodness through a theological interpretation of the Psalter that engages with the church's rich tradition, including Augustine and Barth, but especially Aquinas. He contends that in the very depths of God's being, God is goodness itself and that goodness is preeminent among the divine attributes.

Leading us in this journey through the Psalms and the church's tradition, Holmes helps us to understand what it means to make that simple affirmation: God is good.

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"Intellectually robust and theologically astute"

"Christopher Holmes has already published a number of excellent books, and this one is the best yet. With a contemplative depth that mirrors the depth of his sources, he engages the psalms as a guide for constructively retrieving the Christian tradition's witness to God's goodness. Testifying to the goodness of God, this book places Holmes among the handful of living theologians whose books should be read by anyone doing Christian theology today."

—**Matthew Levering**, James N. and Mary D. Perry Jr. Chair of Theology at Mundelein Seminary

"Hard to put this down. Elegant and clear in expression, charitable in exchange, at points poetic, and always with direct application to lived Christian life. Christopher Holmes writes in a genre of deep and generous learning coupled with keen spiritual insight. A wise look at a theme absolutely central to who God is and how he is toward us. The Psalter is an especially well-chosen area to take us on his journey of discovery."

—**Christopher Seitz**, senior professor of biblical interpretation at Wycliffe College in the University of Toronto

"Many have sought to identify the essential message of the Psalms. Christopher Holmes ably defends his contention that it's the deceptively simple claim that 'the Lord is good.' It's deceptively simple because once he begins to expound its meaning, he leads us to a deep understanding of the nature of God in his being, actions, character, commands, and as Trinity. Furthermore, it leads to a profound consideration of God's relation to his creation and to us as fallen human creatures. Like an intrepid explorer, Holmes probes the terrain in conversation with the theological greats, from Augustine to Barth and beyond, but especially in conversation with Thomas Aquinas. Intellectually robust and theologically astute, this is a book that is also spiritually enriching and devotionally stimulating. Careful study of it will lead its readers to see hidden depths in the book of Psalms and, even more significantly, to encounter the God who is good."

—**Derek Tidball**, former principal of the London School of Theology, author of *The Voices of the New Testament*, series editor for the Bible Speaks Today Bible Themes Series

"God is good, but how much more can we really say once we've said that? Holmes manages to say quite a lot more about it in this unique study, an extended conceptual gloss on the psalms with help from Augustine, Aquinas, Barth, and Sonderegger, among others. Crammed with suggestive ideas, well-resourced from the great tradition, and deeply edifying in tone and intent, this book reinstalls divine goodness at the center of theological concerns."

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ENDORSEMENTS

—**Fred Sanders**, professor of theology at Biola University

“Biblical exegesis and speculative theology need each other. Christopher Holmes demonstrates as much in this gem of theological engagement with the psalms. Joining the chorus of Neo-Thomist enthusiasts, Holmes offers a compelling and hopeful account of God’s goodness—an account whose aim is to draw the Christian toward prayer and praise. The distinction between essential and relational attributes provides a set of theological and critical tools for coming to terms with Scripture’s plain sense. Readers who desire an able guide through the terrain of classic Christian metaphysics, Barthian misgivings about this tradition, and theological interpretation will welcome this volume.”

—**Mark S. Gignilliat**, Beeson Divinity School, Samford University

“In this important book, Christopher Holmes shows us how the Psalms, especially when read with the help of St. Thomas’s commentary, reveal to us the spiritual and theological necessity of reflecting upon God’s attributes—particularly simplicity, perfection and, above all, goodness. He shows us that such reflection is vital for a truly Christian understanding of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus the book constitutes a significant challenge to those criticisms of Thomas Aquinas premised upon the mistaken belief that theology can only begin with God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and indicates how misplaced are the related suspicions of supposedly metaphysical or natural theological accounts of God expressed variously by more than a few leading theologians since Karl Barth. This book displays not only broad and careful scholarship, intellectual rigor, and constructive resourcefulness but also is a theology for today in the tradition of Thomas himself: practiced in contemplative mode, the product of spiritual wisdom gained from prayerful reading of the sacred page, and written with the sanctification of the faithful in mind.”

—**Nicholas M. Healy**, professor of theology and religious studies at St. John’s University