

believes Philemon to be authentically Pauline. According to Wilson the heresy that precipitated Colossians stands in a trajectory somewhere between Judaism and Gnosticism.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Kommentar von Robert McL. Wilson ist eine fachlich versierte, aber lesbare Analyse des Kolosser- und Philemonbriefs, die dem Text, dem Hintergrund und den Argumentationsgängen dieser Briefe die gebührende Aufmerksamkeit schenkt. Der Autor bringt gute Überblicke über die wissenschaftliche Exegese und hebt die Schätze des Textes mit gelehrter Präzision. Wilson hält den Kolosserbrief für pseudonym, aber nicht für eine Fälschung, und er glaubt, dass der Philemonbrief ein authentischer Paulusbrief ist. Nach Wilson steht die Häresie, die den Kolosserbrief hervorrief, irgendwo zwischen Judentum und Gnosis.

RÉSUMÉ

Ce commentaire sur les épîtres aux Colossiens et à Philémon est une analyse technique mais accessible qui prête toute l'attention voulue au texte, à son arrière-plan et aux arguments de ces lettres. L'auteur fait de bonnes présentations de l'état de la recherche et explique le texte avec une précision érudite. Wilson considère que l'épître aux Colossiens est pseudonymique sans toutefois être une contrefaçon, et pense que l'épître à Philémon est authentique. Il considère que l'hérésie à laquelle répond l'épître aux Colossiens se situe quelque part sur un chemin qui va du judaïsme au gnosticisme.

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Robert McL. Wilson is well qualified to writing a commentary on Colossians given his forty years of expertise on writing about Gnosticism and the obvious echoes of Gnostic terminology in Colossians. The introduction includes discussion about the city of Colossae and the close link between Philemon and Colossians. On authorship, Wilson acknowledges the split among English-speaking scholars as to whether or not Colossians is authentically Pauline. In his view the 'letter was written not so very long after Paul's death, by some disciple who sought to apply his master's teaching to meet a new and dangerous situation which he saw developing' (p. 59). Determinative for this view is the apparent differences in style, language and content in comparison to the accepted Pauline letters. At the same time Wilson is adamant that Colossians is not a fraud or forgery since writing under a false name was not thought reprehensible by ancient writing standards. He thinks the author was honestly and sincerely trying to develop and carry further the teachings of Paul to a new situation (pp. 11-12). Although one thing we can say in response is that falsely attributing literature to an apostle was unanimously censured in the early church (e.g. Tertullian, *De Baptismo* 17). Wilson also thinks Ephesians as being post-Pauline and dependent on Colossians. With regards to the Colossian heresy, Wilson contends that it has both Jewish and Gnostic elements (possibly other sources as well such as magic or mysticism) but it is impossible

to be any more specific than that. Here we would have appreciated Wilson at least having an educated guess at the root cause of the heresy even if it was speculative. This would comport with Wilson's own adage that a commentary should be about telling people what one actually thinks (p. x). Rather than summarize the entire commentary I intend in what follows to highlight Wilson's analysis of a few well known passages. Wilson takes Col. 1.15-20 as an early Christian hymn taken up by the author, though the author might himself be responsible for its composition. The hymn and the teaching that it tries to confute is not gnostic, rather, it seeks to correct a deficient view of Christ and so proclaim the pre-eminence and superiority of the Son. The background of the hymn lies in a mixture of Wisdom-Logos and Adam/Christ elements. In regards to Col. 2.11-12, Wilson understands circumcision in the OT to point to circumcision of the heart, but thinks that Paul's view is that true circumcision is experienced in baptism. He understands the 'word of Christ' in Col. 3.16 to denote the gospel about Christ and the word which he spoke. The *Haus-tafel* of Col. 3.18-4.1 shows the author urging a view of Christian households that are part and parcel of family life in the ancient world the differentiation from Graeco-Roman household codes is that the Christian expression are orientated around the 'Lord'. Wilson accepts the authenticity of Philemon and prefers the theory of Paul writing from Ephesus. Regarding slavery, Wilson notes that the Christian failure to condemn the practice was because slavery was simply part of the social and economic tiers of the Mediterranean world. He mentions OT rules about slavery and points out how the NT set our principles which were eventually to lead to the abolition of slavery. The impetus to abolish slavery in both the Roman empire and in the Americas found roots in the teaching of Paul (e.g. Gal. 3.28; Col. 3.11). In sum, Wilson has produced a technical but eminently readable commentary on Colossians and Philemon and he is sympathetic to the worldview and arguments of the author whom he regards as writing Scripture.

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The Nature of New Testament Theology:

**Christopher Rowland and
Christopher Tuckett**

Oxford: Blackwell, 2006, xii + 314 pp.,
£19.99, pb, ISBN 1-4051-1174-7

SUMMARY

This volume is a collection of essays on New Testament Theology in honour of Robert Morgan. It pays particular attention to the challenges of doing New Testament Theology, it raises hermeneutical questions about New Testament Theology, and articulates the relationship between exegesis, systematic theology, pastoral theology, and New

Testament Theology. Most authors are generally positive about the possibility of doing New Testament Theology and they propose innovative ways in which one can construct a coherent theological message from the diverse writings of the New Testament.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Dieser Band ist eine Artikelsammlung zur neutestamentlichen Theologie zu Ehren von Robert Morgan. Besondere Aufmerksamkeit kommt den Herausforderungen zu, neutestamentliche Theologie zu betreiben. Hermeneutische Fragen zur neutestamentlichen Theologie werden aufgeworfen, ebenso auch die Beziehung zwischen Exegese, systematischer Theologie, Pastoraltheologie und der Theologie des Neuen Testaments. Die meisten Autoren sehen die Möglichkeit des Betreibens neutestamentlicher Theologie im allgemeinen positiv und sie schlagen innovative Wege vor, auf denen man eine kohärente theologische Botschaft aus den verschiedenen NT-Schriften konstruieren kann.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ensemble d'essais sur la théologie du Nouveau Testament est dédié à Robert Morgan. Les auteurs s'intéressent tout particulièrement aux difficultés que peut rencontrer l'élaboration d'une théologie du Nouveau Testament, à des questions herméneutiques touchant à cette entreprise, et ils tentent d'articuler ensemble l'exégèse, la théologie systématique, la théologie pastorale et la théologie du Nouveau Testament. La plupart des auteurs considèrent qu'il est possible d'élaborer une théologie du Nouveau Testament et ils proposent de nouvelles manières de construire un message théologique cohérent à partir des divers écrits du Nouveau Testament.

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This book is collection of essays in honour of Robert Morgan. Its purpose is to offer an up-to-date guide to discussion on the discipline of New Testament Theology (NTT).

The opening essay by John Ashton "History and Theology in New Testament Studies" surveys the problem trying to integrate history and theology. John Barton "Biblical Theology: An Old Testament Perspective" wrestles with the issue of how to balance historical exegesis and theological interpretation as understood from his background in the Hebrew Bible. He prefers the two-stage approach of J.P. Gabler (history then theology) as opposed to the canonical approach of B.S. Childs (interpreting Scripture for theology).

Adela Yarbro Collins tackles the subject of "Apocalypticism and New Testament Theology" including a selective history of how NT Theologians have situated apocalypticism in their theologies and surveying theological exegesis of the book of Revelation. She concludes that NTT requires a holistic approach that places the text in a conceptual framework conducive to the interpreter's theology while not contradicting the results of historical study. Philip Esler sets forth a case for a socio-theological

hermeneutic in his chapter "New Testament Interpretation as Interpersonal Communion". Esler's social-scientific approach suggests some interesting ways in which modern persons can be in communion with the authors of the NT and so traverse the historical and cultural distance that separates them.

The "Nature of New Testament Theology" is addressed by Morna Hooker and argues that theological reflection on the New Testament is justified by the New Testament authors who themselves had begun a process of theological reflection. This is illustrated with specific reference to Christology in the New Testament. Luke Timothy Johnson, in probably the most interesting essay of the collection, addressed "Does a Theology of the Canonical Gospels Make Sense?" He notes the differences between John and the Synoptics and the differences between the Synoptics themselves and he takes that to imply that a theology "of" the Gospels is almost impossible. He goes on to list ten significant shared characteristics of the canonical gospels and contends that such distinctives are not found in the apocryphal Gospels. Rather than articulate a theology "of" the canonical Gospels he thinks it better to ask what kind of theology does the canonical tradition support and what kind theology is incompatible with it.

Leander E. Keck discusses "Paul in New Testament Theology: Some Preliminary Remarks" and looks at the problems of doing theology with Paul, Paul's theological articulation of the gospel, and how Paul relates to the theologies of the wider New Testament. Ulrich Luz's offering is "The Contribution of Reception History to a Theology of the New Testament". This study defines the difference between *Wirkungsgeschichte* and "reception history" and how "reception history" illuminates the task and horizons of biblical interpretation.

Margaret MacDonald tackles the subject of "Women in Early Christianity: The Challenge to a New Testament Theology". She identifies the engagement of feminists with theology and the challenges they bring to the theological discipline such as correcting inaccurate views of women in antiquity, engaging with modern concerns of the interpretation of NT texts, recovering female voices in the NT, and reconsidering how representations of women is influenced by style, genre and literary conventions. John Muddiman addresses "Deutero-Paulinism, and Pseudonymity and the Canon" the purpose of which is to demonstrate the role that post-Pauline writings can serve in a NTT. Muddiman refutes the idea that Ephesians and the Pastorals reflect an early Catholicism and advocates that the pseudo-Pauline writings testify to Paul's continuing influence. Heikki Räisänen applies the Wredean approach to NTT in "Towards an Alternative to New Testament Theology". He uses personal eschatology in the NT as an example (i.e. resurrection), and plots the development and diversity within the NT on the subject.

Perspectives on practical theology and NTT are offered by Christopher Rowland and Zoë Bennett in their

essay, "Action is the Life of All New Testament Theology and Practical Theology" who show how Scripture can be illuminated through the practice of theological reflection. Gerd Theissen discusses sociology and NTT in his essay "Theory of Primitive Christian Religion and New Testament Theology". Christopher Tuckett takes up a topic of Robert Morgan in "Does the 'Historical Jesus' belong within a 'New Testament Theology'?" He concludes that Jesus must play an essential role in any theological process.

In a stimulating essay, "The Gospel of John and New Testament Theology" Francis Watson contests the naïveté of John's so-called naïve docetism. The shorter and longer endings of the Fourth Gospel exhibit a dialectic tension between faith and apostolic testimony. German scholar Michael Wolter engages the topic of "The Theology of the Cross and the Quest for a Doctrinal Norm" in light of Paul's *theologia crucis* and Wolter suggests that all Christian theologies rest on an interpretation of the cross as integral to God's saving act. Finally, the relationship between Christian doctrine and NTT is explicated by Frances Young in his essay "The Trinity and the New Testament".

In summary, this is a helpful volume that raises several pertinent points about the nature and method of NTT.

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***Looking For Life:
The Role of 'Theo-Ethical Reasoning' in Paul's
Religion***

***(Journal for the Study of the New Testament
Supplement Series 291)***

John G. Lewis

London: T & T Clark International, 2005, x + 297
pp., £65.00, hb, ISBN 05670-42723

SUMMARY

This well-presented monograph on the relationship between theology and ethics in Paul's letters began life as a 2004 Oxford dissertation under the direction of Robert Morgan and it seeks to challenge several certain widely-held views regarding Paul's theology and ethics.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette monographie sur la relation entre la théologie et l'éthique dans les lettres de Paul est bien présentée. C'est le fruit d'un travail de recherche en vue d'une thèse de doctorat sous la direction de Robert Morgan à Oxford. L'auteur conteste certaines opinions largement répandues sur la théologie et l'éthique de l'apôtre Paul.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese gut geschriebene Monographie zur Beziehung zwischen Theologie und Ethik in den paulinischen Briefen wurde 2004 als Dissertation in Oxford geboren und versucht, mehrere weithin als gesichert geltende Ansichten

über paulinische Theologie und Ethik herauszufordern.

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This book challenges the adequacy of three interrelated topics of mainstream Protestant Pauline interpretation. Lewis maintains that interpreters regularly: (1) make a distinction between theology and ethics in the letters of Paul; (2) stress Paul's oral preaching as the primary vehicle for gospel proclamation and divine revelation; and (3) deny that Paul engages in reasoned, ethical reflection (p. 1). Lewis argues that Paul sought to integrate, rather than separate Christian theology with Christian ethics (p. 1). More specifically, Lewis argues that Paul consistently engaged in reasoned theological and ethical reflection and that the apostle's "theo-ethical reasoning" was grounded in his revelatory experience of the risen Christ (p. 2).

Chapter 1 (pp. 1-35) offers a remarkably comprehensive and interesting discussion of the problem of ethics in Paul. After a detailed review of the various solutions to the problem, Lewis introduces his alternative solution. The chapter closes with a discussion on the limitations of the study, and how data was selected for inclusion. The most significant contribution of this chapter is in Lewis' clear and concise presentation of the various opinions regarding the relationship between Paul's theology and ethics. This useful critique of recent scholarly approaches regarding this matter is carefully documented, well organized, and would benefit anyone interested in how scholars understand the important relationship between Pauline theology and ethics.

Chapters 2, 3, and 4 (pp. 36-204) assess the coherence and consistency of the thesis argument by way of an exegetical study of two of Paul's letters -- 1 Corinthians and Galatians. As a way of demonstrating the pervasive nature of Paul's theo-ethical reasoning, Lewis, examines the unfolding rhetorical argument of each of these letters from beginning to end. More specifically, chapter 2 (pp. 36-82) is an exegesis of 1 Cor. 1.1-4.21. Here, Lewis seeks to show how Paul's theo-ethical reasoning became the conceptual framework for the community practice of spiritual discernment. Chapter 3 (pp. 83-145) is an examination of 1 Cor. 5.1-16.24. Here, Lewis seeks to show how Paul engaged in theo-ethical reasoning in order to address specific behavioral issues. Chapter 4 (pp. 146-204) similarly shows how Paul engages in reasoned theological and ethical reflection throughout his letter to the Galatians.

Chapter 5 contains a summary of Lewis' findings. The book ends by identifying connections that exist between modern moral philosophy or discourse (communicative) ethics, and the role reasoned theological ethical reflection plays in the community life of the church.

By way of appraisal, it is worth affirming that this monograph represents an important contribution to the study of Pauline theology and ethics. Dr. Lewis offers new insights and corrects a number of misunderstandings on how Paul's theology relates to his ethics. Perhaps