

pleted at the South East Asia Graduate School of Theology. Butarbutar's primary objectives are to reconstruct the dispute over idol-food in Corinth and to interpret the function of Paul's 'defense' in 1 Cor 9 within the larger context of 8.1-11.1. Butarbutar also intends to demonstrate that the paradigm of self-denial presented in 1 Cor 9 maintains the potential today for disassembling any conflict in the contemporary church.

The book begins by considering the cause of the idol-food dispute in Corinth. Extensively interacting with Corinthian scholarship both past and present, Butarbutar rejects those interpretations which suggest the dispute was instigated by the entrance of extraneous doctrine or economic polarization. Instead Butarbutar attributes the impetus behind the dispute to the development of disproportionate societal boundaries. Thus, the 'weak' and 'strong' identified degrees of acculturation. Whereas the 'strong' recognized the insignificance of man-made idols and God's neutrality toward the consumption of idol-food at public feasts, the 'weak' resisted eating such meat, participating at such meals and preferred that the 'strong' abstain as well.

But such was no easy task for the Corinthians. Indebted largely to Bruce Winter's reconstruction of the Corinthian dispute, Butarbutar astutely argues that the maintenance of boundaries by Christians in Corinth was especially difficult due to the presence of the Imperial Cult and its prominence during the celebratory events surrounding the Isthmian Games, when idol-food was frequently on the menu. Moreover, because public honor depended largely upon patron-client ties, and support of the Imperial Cult affected one's patronage, refusal to participate in the cult and at related meals had severe social ramifications for the 'well to do'. As Butarbutar explains, 'Although [the Corinthians] may not have been forced to participate in the worship of the Imperial Cult... they themselves must have thought about their role in the city where the cult was being promoted. This would surely have caused them to think about their involvement in the activities associated with the worship of the cult, including dining, and about any food associated in one way or another with the worship of idols' (82-83).

Following from this reconstruction, Butarbutar investigates the purpose for Paul's 'defense' in 1 Cor 9. Whereas Butarbutar recognizes that Paul was rebutting (or anticipating) criticism for his refusal to receive financial support, he principally emphasizes the illustrative purpose of Paul's apologia; Paul's defense is primarily a paradigm to be imitated, rather than an argument for legitimacy and therefore is integral to the coherence of 8.1-11.1. Paul's analogy consisted of three components: 'forgoing rights' (9.4-18), 'self-enslavement' (9.19-23), and 'self-control' (9.24-27). Thus, Paul desired that the 'strong' Corinthians apply these virtues in their existing dispute. The book ends with a helpful example of the application of Paul's paradigm in a contemporary dispute within the Batak Christian Protestant Church, Indonesia. Herein Butarbutar testifies to the (re)unifying potential

of Paul's self-denying model for congregations today.

There is much to applaud in the book. Throughout Butarbutar demonstrates disciplined scholarship satisfactorily responding to his predecessors, while persuasively arguing his thesis. The book is very well researched, meticulously footnoted, and contains an impressive bibliography consisting of most influential works regarding 1 Corinthians. Moreover, in somewhat rare fashion Butarbutar manages to demonstrate the direct applicability of exegesis to the contemporary church.

Butarbutar's most original idea, however, is also his most unclear. Concerning the basis for Paul's refusal of support, Butarbutar explains, '[I]t is the kind of attitude that Paul brings to his gospel preaching that causes his refusal to exercise his rights to live off the gospel. It is therefore strictly a matter of perspective towards the gospel itself that makes Paul conduct his gospel proclamation in the way he has done' (163-164). Precisely what Butarbutar intends by 'attitude' and 'perspective' remains blurred; nowhere does he elaborate for the reader what it is that Paul perceived the gospel to be that would require its free proclamation. Presumably, Butarbutar suggests that Paul preached without recompense in order to experience self-denial and suffering firsthand. These features comprise the very nature of the cross and, for Butarbutar, the messenger must imitate the message. Although an intriguing theological insight, Butarbutar must expound here, especially concerning why Paul accepted support from some churches but not others, which Butarbutar comments upon only briefly (207-208).

Very few typos exist in the manuscript, but it should be mentioned that parts of the book read more smoothly than others. Awkward sentence constructions run throughout and Butarbutar frequently omits the definite and indefinite article when one or the other should appear (see the first paragraph, p. 30). But these criticisms in no way impede the overall strength of the book. Any scholar or student interested in the idol-food dispute, or any pastor seeking a biblical model for conflict solution, will find this volume a helpful companion.

*John K. Goodrich, Durham, England*

### *The Pauline Canon*

**Stanley E. Porter**

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#### SUMMARY

This collection of eight essays provides a fine introduction to the nature of the collection of Paul's letters in the New Testament. It examines the origin, the composition, the extent and the significance of the *Corpus Paulinum*. The nature of the questions addressed becomes apparent from the first quotation below. The essays reflect evangelical and non-evangelical approaches. It is the first volume in



a promising new series called Pauline Studies (PAST).

## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Diese Sammlung von acht Aufsätzen bietet eine gediegene Einführung in das Wesen der Sammlung der neutestamentlichen Paulusbriefe. Untersucht werden der Ursprung, die Komposition, der Umfang und die Bedeutung des *Corpus Paulinum*. Das Wesen der angesprochenen Fragen ist aus dem ersten Zitat unten ersichtlich. Die Aufsätze spiegeln evangelikale und nicht-evangelikale Ansätze wider. Der Band ist der erste in einer verheißungsvollen neuen Reihe namens Pauline Studies (PAST).

## RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage contient huit études et constitue une bonne introduction à la nature du recueil des lettres de Paul dans le Nouveau Testament. Il traite de l'origine, de la composition, de l'étendue et de la valeur du corpus paulinien. Les études reflètent des points de vue évangéliques et non évangéliques. C'est le premier volume d'une série sur Paul qui s'annonce prometteuse.

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The present volume is the first in a new series called *Pauline Studies* (PAST). Volume two is devoted to *Paul and His Opponents* (ed. S. E. Porter; PAST 2; Leiden: Brill, 2005; cf. my review in *Religion & Theology*, in print). Volume three addresses *Paul and His Theology* (PAST 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006). Further projected volumes will cover *Paul's World* (PAST 4, 2007) and *Paul: Jew, Greek, Roman* (PAST 5, 2008). Another series of five volumes has already been planned to extend the series further.

The exact number of letters of Paul in the New Testament has been a disputed issue in New Testament studies. While the canon contains thirteen letters ascribed to Paul and some scholars up to this date have defended the authenticity of all of them, most scholars only accept about seven of these letters as letters of Paul the apostle. But much more than that is at stake.

At the beginning Porter provides a short 'Introduction to the Study of the Pauline Canon' (1-3) starting with a list of the questions involved:

Did Paul write all of the letters ascribed to him in the NT? If he did, can we account for how these letters were preserved and compiled into the corpus that we now have? Did he write any other letters, of which we still have direct or indirect evidence, that are not in the canon but that bear examination? If we think that he did not write all of the letters, which ones did he write? How do we know that he did or did not write these letters? What criteria can we use to discuss this issue? For those that he did not write, how do we account for their having been written and included in what is now our canonical collection as found in the NT? How do we account for some of the problematic juxtapositions of ideas in the letters that we do have? If we think that Paul may have written some parts

of individual letters, but not all of them, how do we differentiate the parts that he wrote from the others? If Paul did not write all of the letters ascribed to him, what are the canonical, historical and even theological, implications of such a conclusion? (1)

Porter also introduces the essays of the volume. J. W. Aageson discusses 'The Pastoral Epistles, Apostolic Authority, and the Development of the Pauline Scriptures' (5-26). R. W. Wall examines 'The Function of the Pastoral Letters within the Pauline Canon of the NT: A Canonical Approach' (27-44). He gives a brief overview of the formation of the Pauline canon and applies a canonical approach to describe the function of the Pastoral epistles within the Pauline collection. Wall argues that 'only in consideration of this thirteen-letter whole, and not a fraction thereof, is a complete understanding of the Pauline regula fidei possible for Christian nurture' (36). Wall then describes the significance of the inclusion of the Pastorals with their ecclesiology and emphasis on the character of the Christian for the reconstruction of Paul's theology. Wall argues that 'the interpreter must steadfastly avoid the current practice of setting aside the three-letter collection of Pauline Pastorals as 'inauthentic' and accept their teaching as complementary for a holistic Pauline theology that is, in fact, authorized by the church's Scriptures' (37). The Pastorals function

to correct what I think is a dangerous tendency of the (especially) Protestant misreading of Paul, which demonizes good works as somehow subversive of the sinner's dependency on Christ's death for salvation. Further, the Pastorals' stress on the formation of a 'godly' character as the distinguishing mark of the faithful believer, who is then morally competent to perform 'good works', corrects another tendency of a (especially) Protestant misreading of Paul: namely the emphasis on teaching a saving orthodoxy to the exclusion of any instruction in a practical divinity that embodies confessed truth in the hard work of Christian charity and virtue. In this regard, too, the emphasis of the Pastorals brings a necessary balance to the whole of Scripture's Pauline teaching (44).

M.-É. Boismard's, 'Paul's Letter to the Laodiceans' (45-57, for the later extant Latin version see Harding's essay, 138f) suggests on the basis of many doublets in Colossians that the now lost letter to the Laodiceans of Col 4:16 has been incorporated into Colossians. The editor of the Pauline letter collection did not forget the letter to the Laodiceans, 'but combined it with the letter to the Colossians; consequently, it still exists, but in the form of *membra disiecta*, in a letter (Colossians) which we still possess. It was all the easier to do this since... the two letters were in part parallel and dealt with similar themes. The compiler thus fulfilled at the same time the wish expressed by Paul in Col 4:16: both letters were to be read by the same readers; that would be easier if they were combined to form a single letter' (45f). Boismard considers his reconstruction on the basis of Colossians as



an authentic letter of Paul.

In 'The Hellenistic Letter-formula and the Pauline Letter-scheme' (59-93), D. Dormeyer 'utilizes recent work in letter-form and rhetorical analysis (60-64) to explore issues of canon. He outlines several types of rhetorical techniques that are found in the individual letters and uses the criterion of these techniques to address questions of authorship and authenticity, and hence canonicity' (2f).

In 'When and How was the Pauline Canon Compiled?: An Assessment of Theories' (95-127) Porter surveys four theories on the origin of the Pauline canon. He distinguishes 'gradual collection' (argued by Zahn and Harnack), a 'lapsed interest' or Goodspeed-Knox's theory, a 'composite anti-Gnostic' or Schmithal's theory and a 'personal involvement' theory (Moule, Guthrie). Next Porter presents and critiques D. Trobisch's theory of the origin of the Pauline canon (*Paul's Letter Collection: Tracing the Origins*; Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1994). Finally he describes the common ground between such suggestions (the gathering of the Pauline corpus required personal involvement at some level, theories that require the least dissection of the individual letters have a better chance of being accepted as probable; the letters were probably gathered in a particular place):

In the light of the travelling possible during that time... it is not unlikely that someone could have gathered the letter collection that resulted (missing out some letters that were either no longer extant or thought not to be of value, perhaps because of their particularistic nature). It appears that such a process would have occurred early, resulting in the relative fixity of the contents of the manuscripts that contained Paul's letters and their order (123).

Porter suggests that Luke or Timothy could have been that compiler. Therefore, 'there is reasonable evidence so see the origin of the Pauline corpus during the latter part of Paul's life or shortly after his death, almost assuredly instigated by a close follower if not by Paul himself, and close examination of the early manuscripts with Paul's letters seems to endorse this hypothesis' (127).

In 'Disputed and Undisputed Letters of Paul' (129-68) M. Harding surveys a wider range of possible Pauline letters and writings, such as Hebrews, that have been suggested in the time of the ancient church as coming from Paul (129-36). Then Harding concentrates on the dispute over the thirteen-letter canon as we have it now. There are three categories of Pauline letters: undisputed, disputed and spurious letters. All Pauline letters outside the NT canon belong to this last category and they might be further categorised as non-canonical Pauline Pseudepigrapha. They consist of Laodiceans, 3 Corinthians and the collection of six letters of Paul to Seneca (138-44). Next Harding discusses pseudepigraphy in the early church (145-50); for a challenge of his claims see A. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung*

*im frühen Christentum*, WUNT II, 138 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001; cf. my review in NT 47, 2005, 91-93) and T. L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2004). Baum's volume seems to be unknown to Harding. Harding then describes the literary and theological integrity of the undisputed and disputed letters of Paul (150-61, for Harding their authors have moved away appreciably from the hermeneutic, theology, and vocabulary of the homologoumena, 167) and asks whether there are pseudepigrapha in the NT. He next presents and critiques the objections to the presence of pseudepigrapha in the NT. Unfortunately, Harding fails to interact with a number of evangelical contributions that argue the contrary with sound historical arguments.

The last two contributions argue that there are later interpolations in the extant letters of Paul. 'Rather than positing a disjunction between the letters being Pauline or not, they contend that criteria can be found by which it is possible to discuss individual interpolations within each of the letters' (3). The late J. C. O'Neill argues that 'Paul Wrote Some of All, but not All of Any' (169-88). W. O. Walker examines 'Interpolations in the Pauline Letters' (189-235). Walker distinguishes text-critical evidence, contextual evidence, linguistic and ideational, situational and comparative, motivational and locational evidence for interpolations and uses 1 Corinthians 14:34f as a test-case as it exhibits all eight of the possible types of evidence for interpolation. Walker emphasizes that 'any case for interpolation must be based upon the convergence of different lines of evidence, and conclusions must be qualified in light of the consistency and strength of the evidence' (235). The stimulating and well produced volume closes with an index of ancient sources and of modern authors (237-54).

Some issues related to the question of the Pauline canon and the authenticity of its letters are not (or not sufficiently) addressed: what are legitimate criteria for assessing authenticity? How convincing are arguments based on such a vague category as style? What influence did the secretaries and co-workers of Paul have on his letters? Does their influence account for some of the noticeable differences? Can different vocabulary and style in part be accounted for by traditions on which Paul drew? What differences may one expect between letters addressed to a community and letters addressed to individuals? Are any of Paul's letters addressed to individuals only?

Christoph Stenschke, Bergneustadt, Germany