

John's Gospel.

The final section of the volume includes the afterlife of the Gospels and looks at the Gospels and doctrinal development (Frances Young), the Gospels and the lives of saints and martyrs (David Matzko McCarthy), the Gospels and spirituality/worship (Gordon Mursell), and the Gospels and morality/politics (Scott Bader-Saye).

Overall this is a sound volume with good introductions to the Gospels and it covers material not always included in most Gospel introductions.

Michael F. Bird,
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Introduction to Modern Theology. Trajectories in the German Tradition

John E. Wilson

Louisville/London: Westminster John Knox, 2007

Pp. 286 + x; p/b; £16.99; 978-0664228620

SUMMARY

John Wilson shares insights into the history of modern theology won from years of teaching. Centred on the German tradition, and focussed on explicating seminal texts, Wilson's history provides a series of insightful portraits of leading Protestant theologians and their work in conversation with the key philosophical developments which so greatly effected theology in the 19th and 20th centuries.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

John Wilson gibt Anteil an seinen Einsichten in die Geschichte der modernen Theologie, die sich auf jahrelanger Lehrerfahrung stützen. Wilsons Geschichte bietet eine Reihe aufschlussreicher Portraits führender protestantischer Theologen und ihrer Werke im Gespräch mit philosophischen Schlüsselentwicklungen, die im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert die Theologie stark beeinflussten. Er widmet seine besondere Aufmerksamkeit der deutschen Tradition und konzentriert sich auf die Erläuterung wegweisender Texte.

RÉSUMÉ

John Wilson montre ce que l'on peut apprendre de l'histoire de la théologie moderne en mettant à profit son expérience de nombreuses années d'enseignement. Il s'intéresse principalement à la tradition allemande et procède par l'explication de textes. Il livre une série de portraits de théologiens protestants éminents et expose leur œuvre de façon éclairante en la mettant en rapport avec les courants de pensée philosophiques qui ont grandement influencé la théologie des XIX^e et XX^e siècles.

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The fruit of decades of teaching in the area of the history of modern theology, Wilson's textbook delivers what the title suggests, namely a concise introduction to the main currents of 19th and 20th century German

language theology. The focus is further narrowed almost exclusively to Protestant figures and trends (with Karl Rahner as perhaps the sole exception) though widened by the inclusion of a number of English speaking theologians significantly influenced by this German trajectory, e.g., Emerson, James, Rauschenbusch, Niebuhr, King. Wilson organises his presentation around key figures, providing in each case very brief biographical and bibliographical notes before expositing one or more representative texts. These concise expositions are the core of the book and its signal strength. Wilson's aim in each case is to provide a summary discussion of the central arguments of these particular figures and texts and to highlight their connections with the wider story of theological development across these centuries. The text is helpfully cross-referenced throughout in the service of this end. Footnotes usefully indicate the standard editions of primary texts and leading secondary literature.

Wilson devotes the first third of his book to the 'formative period' of German Idealism. Key works and arguments of Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Schleiermacher and other related figures are explicated here. The focus is upon questions concerning the scope of reason, the nature of knowledge, the 'absolute' and its relation to contingency, and the idea of 'religion' and its relation to *Wissenschaft*. The expositions of the leading figures are quite detailed, and though technical at times, are always clear and concise. For Wilson, these philosophical struggles of the first half of the 19th century are decisive, for they generate the *problématique* of all 'modern' German theology, as well as providing the predominating categories by which the theological tradition will negotiate the challenge of modernity for the next two hundred years.

The six chapters which compose the remaining two-thirds of the work are in the main chronologically arranged. Discussion of several leading proponents of the theology of 'mediation' (chapter 3) is followed by exposition of a longer list of 'Ritschlian' and liberal theologians reaching as far into the 20th century as Fritz Buri (chapter 4). Brief treatments of Kähler and Overbeck (chapter 5) set the stage for a more extended presentation of the work of Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Ebeling and Bonhoeffer under the rubric of 'Dialectical Theology' (chapter 6). The penultimate chapter considers the 'post-liberal' theologies of Tillich, Reinhold and H. Richard Niebuhr and King. The book's final chapter is devoted to comment upon some leading German theologians of the post-World War II period, including Sölle, Moltmann, Pannenberg and Jüngel.

Wilson's aim of offering a responsible, annotated chronicle of the progress of German Protestant theology of the past two centuries is well achieved and students of this period will be well served by the entrée the book affords into the theological conversation of modernity. It is a shame that the author's modesty precluded him advancing any explicit and overarching judgments about the course of this history, a modesty signalled most clearly by the absence of a summary conclusion to the

work. Of course, the choice of figures and texts and the character of their exposition itself constitutes a series of analytical-historiographical judgments about what is really going on in the course of this intellectual history. Such judgments can be read off, for example, Wilson's decision to relate this history without reference to contemporary developments in Roman Catholic theology, as well as his reticence regarding the resurgence of confessional Lutheranism in the early 20th c. (Holl, Elert, Althaus). They are also decisively displayed in the prominence Wilson gives to philosophical – and even more narrowly epistemic – matters in the story of modern theology, rather than, for instance, to developments in biblical scholarship, the social sciences, or the rapidly shifting socio-cultural circumstances of the churches and academies of Germany and America. Readers of these fine expositions would have been greatly aided by provision of a direct and extended account of the historiographical principles with which the author has worked in connecting them all together.

Philip G. Ziegler

Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament
(Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche
Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche
141)

Jan van der Watt (editor)

Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006, 645 pp., €148, hard-
cover, ISBN 978-3-11-018973-5

SUMMARY

This collection of essays connects the field of ethics with that of 'ethos' and 'identity'. Personal and social identity is recognized here as the basis and motivation for ethics. Ethos involves those concrete actions that define a particular community based on their ethics. A noteworthy element of this volume is its scope – every book of the New Testament is treated (except Jude). Although the collection is weak in the area of clearly defining its methodology for analyzing identity and ethos, it is a sign of the times that scholarship must recognize the interconnectedness of 'theology' and 'ethics' in the NT. This book paves the way for more work on the significance of identity formation in the NT documents.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Im Versuch, einen nuancierteren Ansatz im Bereich neutestamentlicher Ethik zu bieten, verbindet diese Artikelsammlung das Gebiet der Ethik mit dem von „Ethos“ und „Identität“. Persönliche und soziale Identität werden hier als Grundlage und Motivation für Ethik anerkannt. Ethos beinhaltet diejenigen konkreten Handlungen, die eine bestimmte Gemeinschaft auf der Grundlage ihrer Ethik definieren. Ein bemerkenswertes Element dieses Bandes ist die Bandbreite – jedes Buch des Neuen Testaments wird abgedeckt (außer Judas). Auch wenn die Sammlung

im Blick auf die klare Definition der Methodologie schwächelt, mit der Identität und Ethos analysiert werden, so ist es doch ein Zeichen der Zeit, dass die Wissenschaft die gegenseitige Verbundenheit von „Theologie“ und „Ethik“ im NT anerkennen muss. Dieses Buch bereitet den Weg für weitere Arbeiten zur Bedeutung von Identitätsbildung in den NT-Dokumenten.

RÉSUMÉ

Cette collection d'articles vise à produire une approche nuancée de l'éthique du Nouveau Testament en abordant ce sujet sous l'angle de l'«ethos» et de l'«identité». La question de l'identité personnelle et sociale est ici considérée comme la base et la motivation de l'éthique. L'ethos comporte les actions concrètes qui déterminent l'identité d'une communauté particulière en fonction de son éthique. L'étendue du champ couvert par cet ouvrage mérite d'être signalée : chaque livre du Nouveau Testament reçoit un traitement (à l'exception de Jude). L'ouvrage pêche par manque d'une méthodologie clairement définie pour analyser l'identité et l'ethos, mais on peut discerner un signe des temps dans la reconnaissance par la recherche académique des liens étroits entre la théologie et l'éthique dans le Nouveau Testament. Ce livre ouvre la voie de la recherche sur l'importance de la formation de l'identité dans les textes du Nouveau Testament.

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The subject of New Testament ethics has seen a flurry of interest in the last couple of decades with contributions from expert scholars such as Richard Hays, Frank Matera, Wayne Meeks, John Barclay, and Brian Rosner. There are a number of reasons for the burgeoning attention from NT scholars. In recent years there have been attempts to integrate further the fragmented and estranged disciplines of theology, ethics, and biblical studies. Also, the weight of modern ethical concerns (the environment, sexual ethics, violence, poverty, etc...) has driven some to turn to the NT for answers. And scholars with an interest in social history or the social-sciences (such as A. Malherbe) have made more recent attempts to compare the social ethics of the Greco-Roman world with that of the earliest Christians.

But studying 'the' ethics of the New Testament has always been tricky business. This presumes (1) that there is *one* primary orientation towards morality in the NT and (2) that it is best described with the term 'ethics'. The modern scholarly consensus is that this approach is misguided regarding both of these. In an attempt to provide a more nuanced approach to the subject, this collection of essays (originally papers from two conference at the University of Pretoria) connects the field of ethics with that of 'ethos' and 'identity'. This method of analysis recognizes that identity 'provides the basis, the motivation for...ethics' (p. 474) and that this is expressed through 'specific, unique, and repetitive actions of a particular group' (= 'ethos', p. v).

This volume is unique in other ways as well. Firstly,