

An interesting survey of ancient pagan attitudes to illness and death (26-34) shows how close to death they lived. Life expectancy was under 30. In order to escape death people had recourse first to doctors, then to the gods, and then, most practically, to magicians. Magic (34-39) was omnipresent in the desire to stave off death. Illness was routinely attributed to magical interference and so had to be combated by magical means.

The study of Jesus' healings and exorcisms against this background takes up most of the book. The author is determined by one means or another to find 'death' present in every such episode. Exorcisms relate to death because the possessing spirits were the daimones, understood to be the ghosts of the dead returning to haunt the living (55-64; it was here that I felt particularly how alien this Graeco-Roman view was to the Jewish setting of the NT, where I find no such view of the nature of possession and exorcism). Diseases we regard as minor (e.g. 'fever') were seen as killers, so that to cure a fever was in effect to raise the dead. Leprosy was a 'living death'; so was paralysis, in which death had invaded the body. A menstrual problem probably involves barrenness, and so a sort of death. And so on! The discussion of each pericope includes a section on how 'death' is present in that patient's case ('albeit with varying degrees of certainty', 271), until I found myself suspecting that the author 'doth protest too much'. Was it not possible to be ill or afflicted without thinking of death all the time? Apparently not.

The author takes us through the whole Gospel of Mark, focusing in detail on the pericopes that include the suppliants, but feeling the need to say something about every pericope even where it has nothing to contribute directly to his thesis. I could not see the point of this, since the comments on such passages were inevitably brief and unremarkable. In the 'suppliant' passages he first looks at the angle 'Text to (implied) reader', then separately at '(Actual) Reader to text'. The former section largely retells the story, with focus on the feelings evoked in the reader. It is in the latter that the interesting material is found, drawing on the author's impressive knowledge of the Graeco-Roman context, in particular his knowledge of medical texts as well as magic. There are useful and quite surprising discussions of ancient pagan views of death (178-190) and of immortality (260-268). But there is also a worrying degree of speculation, e.g. as to whether Jairus' daughter had been killed by 'love magic gone wrong' (162-4) when there seems no basis in the text for supposing a magical dimension, or on whether Antipas thought that Jesus was a magician who had raised John's spirit in order to use its power (191-2).

There's a lot for most of us to learn from this book, and it opens up fascinating insights into ancient thought and culture. But how far it will help in the task of gospel exegesis is less clear to me.

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The Cambridge Companion to St Paul

James D. G. Dunn (ed.)

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SUMMARY

An Introduction by the editor and eighteen chapters by famous Pauline scholars cover a wide range of fields: from the historical background of the epistles to Paul's life and to thematic treatments of his teaching. In four parts the following themes are dealt with: 1. Paul's life and work; 2. Paul's letters; 3. Paul's theology; 4. St Paul (his history of effect). As regards authorship, most contributors differentiate between undisputed Pauline letters and deuteropauline epistles, but a welcome caution is exercised by most of them when pointing to the hypothetical character of these views. The monograph as a whole is a good textbook, presenting all the main views of present day Pauline scholarship.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Eine Einleitung des Herausgebers und achtzehn Kapitel von bekannten Pauluskennern decken ein weites Feld ab: von den historischen Hintergründen der Briefe über das Leben des Paulus bis hin zu thematischen Abhandlungen über seine Lehre. In vier Teilen werden die folgenden Themen behandelt: 1. Paulus' Leben und Werk. 2. Paulus' Briefe. 3. Paulus' Theologie. 4. St. Paulus (Wirkungsgeschichte). Im Hinblick auf die Autorenfrage unterscheiden die meisten Beiträge zwischen unangefochtenen Paulusbrieffen und deuteropaulinischen Briefen, aber eine willkommene Vorsicht wird von den meisten hinsichtlich des hypothetischen Charakters der Ansichten signalisiert. Die Monographie ist aufs Ganze gesehen ein gutes Textbuch, in dem alle wichtigen Ansichten der gegenwärtigen Paulusforschung präsentiert werden.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet ouvrage comporte une introduction par l'éditeur suivie de dix-huit chapitres rédigés par des spécialistes renommés de la littérature paulinienne et couvrant des domaines divers : l'arrière plan historique des lettres de Paul, la vie de l'apôtre, des thèmes de son enseignement. Il se compose de quatre parties : 1. la vie et l'œuvre de Paul ; 2. les lettres de Paul ; 3. sa théologie ; 4. l'impact de son ministère. Pour ce qui concerne l'authenticité des lettres qui lui sont attribuées, la grande majorité des auteurs distingue les lettres incontestablement reconnues comme étant de Paul, et les épîtres deutéro-pauliniennes, mais la plupart manifeste une heureuse prudence en soulignant le caractère hypothétique de ces opinions. On a là un bon manuel, présentant les points de vue principaux que l'on rencontre chez les spécialistes actuels de l'apôtre Paul.

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The excellent Cambridge Companion series of the recent years has been enriched by a new volume on the apostle Paul. An Introduction by the editor and eighteen chap-

ters by famous Pauline scholars cover a wide range of fields: from the historical background of the epistles to Paul's life and to thematic treatments of his teaching. The material is conveniently arranged in four parts: 1. Paul's life and work (chs. 1-2); 2. Paul's letters (3-10); 3. Paul's theology (11-15); 4. St Paul (chs. 16-18 dealing with Paul's history of effect). A Glossary explaining the main notions used in the book (e.g. antinomianism, Gnosticism, glossolalia, etc.) as well as the clear presentation of the chapters ensure that interested lay readership and beginning students will find a good introduction into Pauline scholarship in this work. It is a good summary about the present day status of research, but accessible to non-specialists as well. Each chapter is concluded by end-notes where references to further literature can be found.

The Introduction offers a short history of Pauline scholarship. Dunn presents the thesis of Baur, the main questions posed by the History of Religions School and even the New Perspective on Paul. Over against the alleged influence of Gnosticism on Paul's christology, he rightly emphasizes that "no extant version of the Gnostic Redeemer myth predates Christianity" (p. 8). Dunn also offers a good response to E. P. Sanders's thesis that Paul's response to legalistic Judaism was "essentially confused", by arguing that "Paul was reacting primarily against the exclusivism which he himself had previously fought to maintain" (10).

Chapter one covers "Paul's life" (written by Klaus Haacker) on the basis of Acts and the letters of Paul as the main sources. Haacker counters some hypotheses that have been very influential until the last third of the last century, e.g. the view that Paul had to fight a war on two fronts (p. 29). Chapter two (by Stephen Barton) is entitled "Paul as missionary and pastor". The main biblical texts are presented in a thematic way using the metaphors Paul used of his own ministry, e.g. metaphors of representation, agricultural metaphors, architectural metaphors and metaphors of kinship. It is emphasized that Paul addressed primarily the household, "a critical part of the network of structures, roles, and relations that made up the larger city-state" (45).

In the second part of the companion, the scholars who present the main content of the Pauline epistles are often authors of a commentary on the very letter. While dealing with the typical introductory matters, i.e. authorship, date, and addressees of the letters, they summarize the main theological messages of the relevant letter as well. As regards authorship, most contributors differentiate between undisputed Pauline letters and deuterio-Pauline epistles, but a welcome caution is exercised by most of them when pointing to the hypothetical character of the theses concerning non-Pauline authorship.

Let it suffice to point to but a few of the many introductory or exegetical observations of the contributors of this part. Margaret Mitchell argues for the hypothesis that 2 Thessalonians was written by a follower of Paul, but she acknowledges that it remains a still debated

hypothesis (59). Bruce Longenecker argues that we should not approach the letter to the Galatians as it is often done, i.e. focussing only on the issue of the law. Rather, the backbone of the letter is Christian lifestyle (66), and a centrality of the cross in the Christian's life: a "cruciform existence" (73). Jerome Murphy-O'Connor presents the content of the Corinthian epistles by giving short exegetical remarks interpreting the most important verses. His exegesis is often too conclusive; in a textbook it would be better to leave more interpretative possibilities open. For example, he argues that 1 Cor. 14:34-35 was in all probability not written by Paul (82). He maintains that 2 Cor. 10-13 as a separate letter was written later than 2 Cor 1-9, and bad news between the two caused the change of tone in chapter 10 (p. 88).

It is understandable that each author may have his or her own historical reconstruction of Paul's life. It is a conspicuous difference when on two subsequent pages we can read that Murphy-O'Connor holds that Romans was written during the winter of AD 55-56 (p. 90), and Robert Jewett writes that Romans was sent in the spring of CE 57 (p. 91). Jewett offers a presentation of Romans mainly on the basis of the anthesis of honour and shame. He argues that chapter 16 (with the exception of a few verses) was part of the original letter of Paul to the Romans.

Concerning the remaining letters, we may say that the short presentations reflect the present day majority view on introductory matters (e.g. the thesis concerning the deuterio-Pauline authorship). To name but a few examples, the authors raise the possibility that Colossians was written by "someone closely associated with" Paul (p. 119); the hypothesis of an Ephesian imprisonment of Paul is recommended (p. 127); Ephesians may have been written after Paul's death (p. 135); the same is argued for the Pastoral Epistles (p. 144). When reading these views as parts of a textbook, it should be remembered that good arguments can be marshalled for a Pauline authorship, as it is done in some recent commentaries as well as textbooks (see e.g. Carson, Moo and Morris: *An Introduction to the New Testament* [1993] and George Knight III: *The Pastoral Epistles: A Commentary on the Greek Text*. NIGTC [1992], both works sadly missing from the Select Bibliography).

Parts three and four provide useful articles on important themes. Each chapter is written by a scholar who has already published major contributions to the relevant topic. For example, Graham Stanton argues for the centrality of the theme of justification in Paul's theology (p. 180); Larry Hurtado writes on Paul's christology, arguing for an early and strong devotion to Christ within a monotheistic stance (p. 187).

Writing on Paul's ecclesiology, Luke Timothy Johnson mentions that "there are strong reasons for accepting all thirteen letters attributed to Paul as authored by him" (p. 199). When discussing the relationship between Israel and the Church, Johnson argues that the experience of Jesus' resurrection "put Paul in a state of cognitive dis-

sonance God is capable of acting outside God's own scriptural precedents" (202). Alan Segal's chapter on Paul's Jewish presuppositions begins while Brian Rosner's summary of Paul's ethics concludes this very good part of the monograph.

The final part of the book draws the lines of Paul's history of effect from the second century (e.g. Calvin Roetzel's well balanced presentation of Marcion is to be commended) through "Paul's enduring legacy" (by Robert Morgan) to contemporary perspectives on Paul (by Ben Witherington). The monograph as a whole is a good textbook, presenting all the main views of present day Pauline scholarship. The majority of the contributions are fair in mentioning alternative solutions; yet the reader should know that most of the "solutions" offered are open to criticism, and on certain aspects (e.g. the introductory matters mentioned above) a more traditional view can be argued for.

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Thomas and Tatian: The Relationship between the Gospel of Thomas and the Diatessaron

Nicholas Perrin

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Atlanta, 2002, xii + 216 pp. p/b, \$29.95, ISBN 1-58983-045-8

SUMMARY

Perrin offers an original thesis that the Gospel of Thomas comes from the last quarter of the second century and was dependent on Tatians Diatessaron. Most of the book is taken up with establishing that the Gospel of Thomas was originally composed in Syriac and that almost every saying is linked to its adjacent sayings by catchwords, which Perrin reconstructs in Syriac. The problem with these reconstructions is that Perrin allows himself too much licence in reconstruction and consequently many of the catchwords can result from scholarly imagination. In its present form the argument cannot be said to be sustained.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Perrin bietet eine neue These an: das Thomasevangelium sei im letzten Viertel des zweiten Jahrhunderts entstanden und abhängig von Tatians Diatessaron. Ein Großteil des Buches versucht zu zeigen, dass das Thomasevangelium ursprünglich in syrisch verfasst wurde und dass fast jeder Spruch mit den angrenzenden Sprüchen über Stichworte verbunden ist, die Perrin auf syrisch rekonstruiert. Das Problem dieser Rekonstruktionen ist, dass Perrin sich zuviel Freiheit in der Rekonstruktion erlaubt, so dass viele der Stichworte der wissenschaftlichen Einbildungskraft zu entstammen scheinen. In seiner gegenwärtigen Form kann das Argument nicht als schlüssig gelten.

RÉSUMÉ

Perrin défend une thèse originale : l'évangile de Thomas

daterait du dernier quart du II^e siècle et serait dépendant du *Diatessaron* de Tatien. La majeure partie de son ouvrage vise à établir que l'évangile de Thomas a d'abord été rédigé en syriaque et que presque toutes ses unités sont liées aux unités adjacentes par des mots crochets, dont Perrin cherche à retrouver l'original en syriaque. Il s'accorde cependant beaucoup trop de liberté dans ces reconstructions ; ainsi, beaucoup de ces mots crochets ne sont peut-être que le résultat de l'imagination du chercheur. Telle qu'elle se présente ici, l'argumentation ne convainc pas.

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At a time when much of the energy spent investigating the Gospel of Thomas comes from those persuaded that it is a significant early historical source about Jesus, this book stands out as somewhat distinct. Perrin argues that, rather than being a first century or even mid-second century composition, the Gospel of Thomas actually comes from the late second century since it had Tatian's Diatessaron (composed ca. AD 172) as one of its sources. If correct, this thesis obviously has rather wide-ranging implications.

The Introduction explores the contemporary importance ascribed to the Gospel of Thomas; ch. 1 uses linguistic evidence to argue that the Gospel of Thomas was originally composed in Syriac, rather than Coptic or Greek; ch. 2 introduces the notion that the Gospel of Thomas, rather than being a relatively unstructured collection of sayings, is in fact structured by a series of Syriac catchwords (Stichwörter) that link adjacent sayings – catchwords that do not work in Greek or Coptic; ch. 3 produces a circumstantial and literary argument that the Gospel of Thomas was dependent on the Diatessaron.

Perrin's argument is simple, but involves a wealth of technical linguistic detail. Right at the heart of the book is the table of catchwords (pp. 57–155), consisting of a continuous English text of the Gospel of Thomas, followed by columns of partial text or reconstructed text in Coptic, Greek and Syriac, respectively. The conclusion is that while Coptic has 269 catchwords and Greek 263, Syriac has 502 (p. 155). '[T]he quantitative evidence points decisively in the direction of Syriac composition. ... Even if a third of the Stichwörter adduced in the chart were called into question (I believe the challenge remains for the one wishing to discount any one of them), the evidence would still favor a Syriac text' (p. 156).

Though this conclusion may seem impressively supported, in fact recurring problems in his reconstructions considerably reduce its support. Firstly, the reconstructions are not straightforward. Thus from the Coptic word 'earth' (saying 9) and the Coptic word 'world' (saying 10) he reconstructs the Syriac word 'earth', despite the fact that Syriac has a perfectly good word for 'world' (pp. 65-66). When it suits Perrin to render Coptic 'world' by Syriac 'earth' it is so rendered (p. 78), but on other occasions the Coptic word 'world' is rendered by Syriac 'world' (p. 83). The author is thus selecting the