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From the Editor

The Expository Times *Lecture*

TO mark the coming of the editorial office to New College, Edinburgh, the Faculty of Divinity (as it was then) and T&T Clark (as it was then) co-hosted *The Expository Times* Lecture in June 2002. Happily, Professor James Dunn, who holds the Lightfoot Chair in the University of Durham, accepted the invitation to deliver this lecture and in so doing conferred a signal honour on the Journal. The lecture, well received by an appreciative audience, is now made available to the entire readership of *The Expository Times*.

What Makes a Good Exposition?

Professor Dunn could hardly have chosen a more appropriate theme for his lecture. The Journal has been traditionally concerned to link critical scholarship and the preaching of the Gospel. The lecture takes us through the complex issues that connect text and sermon. Hermeneutics is not the easiest of subjects to express or grasp in a short compass, but this lecture is marked by the lucidity of an expert expositor. Written with a deep respect for the text in context and also for its reception in different historical communities, it presents good preaching as marked by 'a burning desire to speak meaningfully and relevantly to the people addressed, and a prayerful openness to the Spirit of God . . .' Read and enjoy!

In this number, the theme of exposition that is faithful to the text is continued in Professor Kilgallen's sensitive handling of the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican.

Studying Paul

The current debate in Pauline scholarship is being enhanced by the contribution of younger scholars. Too often in the past the interpretation of the apostle's writings has been dominated by the theological presuppositions of the scholar and conclusions thereby pre-empted. Today the emphasis is on reading Paul's letters in the historical and social context they addressed. But this is no easy task! Our Book of the Month considers Mark Nanos' book on Galatians. It is based on his PhD thesis at St Andrews and contributes an innovative reading of Paul's letter that cuts across much recent scholarship. It is likely to be a focus of debate for some time to come. Other theses from Oxford, published as SNTS monographs, put forward alternative views that are also worthy of careful study and will no doubt have their place in the ongoing discussion. Some of these figure in the Review Article below. The debate is no longer simply about the pros and cons of traditional theological exegesis and the 'new perspective' on Paul. The parameters of the discussion are now much wider. Remember – you read it here first!

BOOK OF THE MONTH

Mark D. Nanos, *The Irony of Galatians: Paul's Letter in a First-Century Context* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002. $26.00. pp. 376. ISBN 0–8006–3214–1).

IRONY is a double-edged sword. To say the opposite of what you mean invites misunderstanding – unless the code is recognizable through familiarity or some other contextual indicator. 'A fine fellow you are . . .' is not likely to be taken as a compliment but as a gentle or humorous rebuke. 'I'm surprised that you did not understand . . .' does not mean that the speaker is overcome with wonder but that he/she gently chides the receptor for not being quicker in the uptake. Paul uses just such an expression in his letter to the Galatians. 'I am surprised that you are so quickly turning away from him who called you by grace . . .' Not 'astonished'; not 'outraged' – but certainly disappointed and gently chiding. He is speaking *ironically*, and he does not want to alienate further those who have taken, or are in danger of taking, a wrong step. Irony was a familiar strategy in ancient rhetoric and letters, and would be identified by the receptors as ironic rebuke.

This is, at any rate, the contention worked out in detail by Mark D. Nanos in *The Irony of Galatians*. The immediate effect is to counter those interpretations that assume that the omission of a thanksgiving section indicates that Paul is furiously angry and can't wait to express his outrage! Not so! He is annoyed, but not so much at the recipients as at those who are influencing them: causing them to adopt an alternative 'message of good' ('gospel'). The argument of the book is devoted to elucidating this situation.

A key issue is the identity of the groups in question: the addressees and the 'influencers' (to use Nanos' terminology). The addressees are Paul's protégés, Gentile believers in the gospel of grace through Christ and therefore members of the people of God, the *ecclesiai* in Galatia (1:2). The 'influencers' – with whom Paul is undoubtedly angry: they were anathema to him – were pressurizing them to accept circumcision as the 'completion' of their journey from being Gentile sinners to being full members of God's people Israel. This is the alternative 'message of good', the 'other gospel' – although Paul denies that there can be such a thing. Accordingly, the 'influencers' are located within the local synagogues. The argument is not about belief in Christ as such. Messianic beliefs were probably present in the synagogue communities. The issue at stake is whether Gentile believers needed to go the whole hog and become Jewish proselytes. The synagogue communities – or at least some of their leaders – may have become alarmed at the formation of separate *ecclesiai*, consisting of Gentiles baptized in the name of Christ and, at Paul's instigation, refusing to become proselytes and accept the traditional marks and practices of the people of God.

If this was the general *stasis* or principal issue, its implications were far reaching. In the rhetoric of the letter, three 'exigences' or 'issues' are apparent. Paul is writing to persuade his converts not to be lured away from the only true gospel, namely the message of Jesus the Christ crucified and risen through whose mission alone their membership in the people of God was won. There are no strings attached. Any additional requirement is a defection from the Gospel. The exigence for the recipients was the question of their identity. They were caught between two sets of communal norms, neither of which honoured the status they claimed as a household of faith. They were no longer pagan Gentiles. They were not Jews. Who were they? They had been marginalized. They felt exposed, vulnerable – suffering 'status uncertainty': 'a crisis of identity that is at the same time religious, political, and familial' (p. 106) – and they were in danger of resolving the issue by completing the process of proselyte conversion. The 'influencers' urge that this is precisely the course they should take. In this way boundaries will be respected, social control maintained, and traditional practice observed.

What is controversial about this proposal is not any inherent improbability in its argument but the extent to which it undermines or overturns previous

interpretations. In a comprehensive chapter, the author exposes the shortcomings of attempts at labelling the 'influencers'. He exposes the confusions of terms such as 'Judaizers' (from F. C. Baur onwards), 'opponents' or 'rivals' (e.g., H. D. Betz), 'agitators' or 'troublemakers' (too common to document), or 'teachers' (J. L. Martyn). He critically reviews the prevailing descriptions of the 'influencers': they were 'Jewish people or groups' (Schmithals adds 'gnostic'; Jewett holds that they were Christ-believing Jews who advocated circumcision for political reasons). They were 'Christ-believers with a different gospel of Christ' that combined Law with faith in Christ (Dunn is cited here as spokesman for a broad scholarly consensus). They were members of 'a Jerusalem Christ-believing coalition' (Jerusalem/Palestinian/Jewish/Christians, or 'Christian Jews' and so on – their orientation being towards the leaders in Jerusalem). They were missionaries (Martyn) or 'outsiders' – that is, not Galatians (the author firmly rejects this interpretation, in spite of the 'us' and 'them' distinction that Paul makes): yet 'The only stranger to the location of the addressees and those influencing them appears to have been Paul!' (p. 183).

The author emphasizes that the term 'influencers' is used in a relatively neutral sense. While Paul disapproved of their views, they themselves acted in good faith when they urged the addressees towards becoming proselytes. In this way they would resolve the ambivalence of their position. He proceeds to argue that they may have been involved in the administration of the proselyte programme and some of them may even have been proselytes themselves. They were not Christ-believers but were not necessarily opposed to faith in Christ; what they insisted on was conformity with the traditional norms that obtained for membership of the people of God.

This is a fascinating book that undoubtedly makes a major contribution to the debate about Galatians. The author argues his case vigorously and, even when that case is at its most controversial, it is by no means easy to fault its logic, and the critic (like proud Edward II) is sent away to think again! Accordingly, I simply note below some of the issues that gave me occasion to ponder.

Irony and rhetoric. The author plausibly defines Galatians as a letter of ironic rebuke. This puts it firmly within the category of rhetoric. The whole letter is persuasive speech. It therefore reflects the rhetorical situation, and embodies a rhetorical purpose. We must think in terms of emotive effect and logical argument ('ethos', 'pathos' and 'logos'), as well as the *dispositio* of its parts. The author rightly avoids emphasis on the traditional classifications found in the handbooks of rhetoric (judicial, deliberative and epideictic). Classical writers were aware that neither the letter-form nor the administering of a rebuke were compatible with the kind of orations reflected in the traditional classifications. (Although the latter have figured largely in recent discussion of Galatians, the results have not been greatly illuminating.) As the author puts it, 'Paul's letters are more speech and sermon, such as one might expect in a synagogue meeting' (p. 329). But they have their own inherent rhetoric, as has been argued above. The question arises whether the author puts too much emphasis on irony. Clearly, it plays an important role, but so also do many other rhetorical features – not least the element of *narratio* discussed below. Would a better title have been 'The Rhetoric of Galatians'?

The narrative element in Galatians. The prominence of biographical narrative in the letter is unmistakable. It may be partly accounted for by Paul's apologetic for his own apostleship. He had been characterized as a mere populist or 'man-pleaser', offering a soft option to his converts. For this reason, Paul – that erstwhile proponent of extreme Judaism – was driven to present an extensive *reprise* of his calling as an apostle whose 'gospel' was not man-made but of divine origin. So far so good! However, carried along by the intensity of his narrative, he proceeded to give an account of his relations with the apostles in Jerusalem, the dispute as to whether Titus should be circumcised and finally his argument with Peter at Antioch. One wonders if there is not a stronger reason for this part of the *narratio*. Does the author play down its significance too much in his concern to delineate the dynamics of a localized controversy in Galatia? Surely the logic of the letter's rhetoric suggests that the extensive narrative – Paul's story – is germane to the issues Paul is pursuing with his addressees. Is there not therefore a more integral connection between the Antioch incident and the Galatian controversy – a

more direct connection than Paul's pique at having his authority flouted by those whom he had trusted? Thus, while the author's account of the dynamics of the conflict in Galatia is impressive, he may be in danger of underestimating its connection with developments both in wider Jewish culture and in the Gentile mission. Paul was not simply addressing a little local difficulty in Galatia. He had met these kinds of difficulty before, and at Antioch as in Galatia he had to argue for the all-comprehending effectiveness of salvation in Jesus Christ. It is not right to say that belief in Christ was not at issue in Galatia.

The limitations of the evidence. We have only Paul's letter. To deduce from it the stances of the addressees and the 'influencers' is to develop and test hypotheses on the basis of limited evidence and inevitably to negotiate the minefield of 'mirror imaging', argument from silence, and authorial presupposition that beset the path of the imaginative interpreter. The author's awareness of such booby-traps enables him to avoid the worst disasters, but his results are necessarily tentative and invite further discussion.[1]

[1] Readers may wish to compare the approach adopted in this book with those of the monographs reviewed below. The difference in approach to Galatians is striking.

REVIEW ARTICLE

Some Monographs on Paul

IF the number of monographs is anything to go by, there seems to be a reawakening of research interest in Paul. Admittedly, there have been exciting new initiatives. The work of Sanders and Dunn and 'the new perspective on Paul' opened up the field, as did the contribution of socio-historical criticism, led by Meeks and Theissen and many others, and cultural anthropology (Arnold van Gannep, Mary Douglas). Another creative approach pioneered by H. D. Betz and W. Wuellner is that of rhetorical criticism, to which Nanos on Galatians is the most recent contributor. How far is this reflected in the monographs? Some examples are briefly reviewed below.

S. A. Cummins, *Paul and the Crucified Christ at Antioch: Maccabean Martyrdom and Galatians 1 and 2* (SNTS Monograph Series, 114; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. £45.00. pp. 287. ISBN 0–521–66201–X). The incident at Antioch continues to challenge the historical imagination, and not simply in more recent times. The author surveys the discussion from patristic times to the 'new perspectives' of today. He then attempts to move beyond the work of Sanders and Dunn in particular by pressing for a radical interpretation of Paul's statement, 'I through the law died to the law' – in consequence of the crucifixion of the Messiah. He insists that emphasis on circumcision and the food laws as covenant markers goes back to Maccabean times, and that the problem at Antioch *may have been* (my emphasis) exacerbated by subsequent nationalist sentiment. Suffering, martyrdom and vindication of the people of God were part of this scenario, and apocalyptic motifs such as Daniel 7 also played their part. There may even have been a Maccabean martyr cult at Antioch itself. The author then argues that Paul's view of ministry was a dramatic and ironic reworking of this material. At its centre is the crucified and exalted Messiah: Paul offers himself as a paradigm of this kind of conformity to Christ. A key question was therefore who constituted the true people of God: those who stood for loyalty to the Torah after the Maccabean model, or those who like Paul identified

with the crucified Messiah. The question of how far hypothetical reconstruction corresponds with socio-historical evidence is acute here. The author therefore explores the topic of Jews and Christians at Antioch as a preface to the discussion of Galatians 15–21 in the light of this Maccabean hypothesis. It is interesting to note that both Nanos and Cummins invoke irony but apply it in quite different ways. The dynamics of the debate at Antioch are also quite different in Nanos and Cummins. Is any *rapprochement* possible? Clearly, further discussion will be required.

T. L. Carter, *Paul and the Power of Sin: Redefining 'Beyond the Pale'* (SNTS Monograph Series, 115; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. £45.00. pp. 241. ISBN 0–521–81041–8). The concept of sin in Paul's writings has been a major issue for commentators and interpreters through the ages. Theological debate conditioned interpretation from Augustine and the Reformers and led to a counter-blast from Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, who 'pierced behind 1300 years of dogmatic interpretation' (p. 6) to the historical setting of Romans – a course that New Testament criticism followed up, albeit in a variety of ways. T. L. Carter situates his own work in just such a modern approach, seeking to understand the issue of 'sin' in the light of Paul's socio-cultural context. To this end he invokes the work of Mary Douglas (in spite of the latter's reservations about the use of her work by New Testament scholars), and adopts her 'Grid and Group' model, the appropriateness of which is fully canvassed. This cross-cultural analysis of the symbolism of sin is applied to physical and social boundaries at Corinth, to exclusive boundaries in Galatia, and to bounded groups and inclusive boundaries in Rome. Thus an understanding is gained of Paul's way of redefining the people of God in relation to the power and dominion of sin, understood in eschatological rather than ethnic terms. The conclusion is that it is inappropriate to hold that human nature is 'beyond the pale' by reason of its depravity. Rather, sin is 'beyond the pale': outside the dynamic of the people of God, who embrace both Jew and Gentile. This is a well-argued contribution to the debate, to which the above summary does scant justice. Whether it is a complete answer to the problem of sin in Paul's writings is another matter, but it deserves the serious attention of all interested in the theology of Paul.

Moyer V. Hubbard, *New Creation in Paul's Letters and Thought* (SNTS Monograph Series, 119; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002. £45.00. pp. 293. ISBN 0–521–81485–5). The concept of the 'new creation' is central to the biblical story and, not least, to Paul's theology. But what are its roots; or, to change the metaphor, in what reality is it anchored? Jewish tradition is a prime contender. Accordingly, the author surveys the Jewish scriptures – in particular, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all of which contain relevant material. He then takes *Jubilees* as a case study and shows the cosmological and anthropological nuances of the concept in apocalyptic Judaism, offering a picture of a transformed universe. A powerful example of the 'new creation' in Diaspora Judaism is provided by *Joseph and Aseneth*. It is emphasized that such discourses respond to particular contexts engaging the writers. The author then proceeds to place Paul's 'new creation' language in the theological context of his life-death symbolism, using insights from cultural anthropology (especially Arnold van Gennep on the rights of passage). This is followed by a study of 'newness of life' in Romans 6:1–11, and 'newness of the spirit' in Romans 7:1–6: studies that show Paul's dependence on Ezekiel's 'new Spirit', and his characteristic linkage of Spirit, newness and life. Central to the transformation, however, is the crucified Christ (Gal. 2:19–20). This general pattern is worked out in detail in relation to key texts such as 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Galatians 6:15. The conclusion is that the similarities between Paul and *Joseph and Aseneth*, for example, do not reflect direct borrowings by Paul but 'issue from the fact that both make use of a common repertoire of religious symbols to describe *conversion*' (p. 240). The relevant New Testament passages evidence Paul's reflection on his own conversion, which is virtually an experience of new creation: hence his christocentric view of 'new creation' – an interpretation anticipated by H. J. Holtzmann almost one hundred years ago. The author thus rejects reliance on 'an exclusivistic history-of-religions approach to Paul's new-creation motif' (p. 240). A cogent and refreshing thesis that makes a valuable contribution to the interpretation of Paul's theology.

THE EDITOR