

BOOK REVIEW

Aune, David E., ed. *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006). 270 pp. Pbk. US\$26.00

The multiple implications and applications resulting from the study of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism are often in flux. *Rereading Paul Together: Protestant and Catholic Perspectives on Justification* edited by David Aune attempts to show the relationship between twentieth-century Pauline scholarship and the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*. In this way, it attempts to line up key elements of Pauline study with a contemporary application. It does this by including a series of essays on the issue at hand: the *Joint Declaration*, the nature of Pauline studies in this regard and the study of Paul's reception in the Church. David Aune then concludes these sections by intricately tying the positions of contemporary Pauline scholars with the study of justification, illustrating the value of academic biblical study for this application: ecumenical discussion.

The book is divided into three major sections, the first of which addresses aspects of the *Declaration* itself. David G. Truemper explicates the 'voyage of discovery in the quest to recover unity'. He illustrates that the post World War 2 era saw a shift in both Catholic and Lutheran hierarchies to allow such a conversation. The first draft of the *Joint Declaration*, produced in 1994 by the Roman Catholic/Lutheran Joint Commission, was debated until the acceptance by both the Lutheran World Federation and the Roman Catholic Church in 1999. Truemper notes the primary statement word for word, 'Together we confess: By grace alone, in faith in Christ's saving work and not because of any merit on our part, we are accepted by God and receive the Holy Spirit, who renews our hearts while equipping and calling us to good works.'

Having traced the process of arriving at this point, the next essay takes up the issue of Catholic reception of the *Joint Declaration*. Susan

K. Wood expresses the Catholic reservations involving the question of ‘merit’, the simultaneity of sin and justification, and the baptismal theology of the two groups. The first two issues make up the bulk of the remaining disagreement and show that the *Declaration* only articulates what is agreed and does not resolve all differences on what properly belongs to a doctrine of justification. However, Wood clearly shows that agreements are made anew, especially with regard to baptism.

The final article pertaining directly to the *Declaration* illustrates the methodological shifts in Lutheran systematics that must take place to truly implement an ecumenical position. Michael Root argues that elements of the Catholic reservations are found historically in the Lutheran movement itself. He cites Scandinavian Lutherans who have accepted a role for the will, however slight, in the justification of the individual. He also mentions Luther’s own *Against Latomus* of 1521, where Luther qualifies and expounds the simultaneity of justification and a sinful state. This exposition allows concord with the current *Declaration*. These studies into the current religious situations provide the backdrop for the further discussion of biblical scholars on Paul’s doctrine of justification.

The second major section contains articles by contemporary Pauline scholars of both Catholic and Protestant backgrounds. Joseph Fitzmyer argues in a philological manner that justification is merely a single image of a more complete portrait depicting the effect of the Christ event. He cites the close connection of דָּקָא and δικαι- as cognates within the LXX. He understands δικαιόω to ‘otherwise mean[t], “to make or set right”, or “to deem right”’. In this way, he betrays a certain understanding of lexicography as well as a tendency to favor the classical use, as many of his examples emphasize. This argument, simplified for the sake of readability and interdisciplinary sensitivity, furthers the book’s previous assertion that justification is not the doctrine by which Paul’s theology rises or falls.

Richard E. DeMaris raises two related concerns with Fitzmyer’s thesis. First, in the contemporary context of the ecumenical debate, DeMaris argues that more attention must be given to the goal of both parties to word the doctrine of justification in a manner that contemporary individuals may understand. The second related concern is the synchronic use of the δικ- word group. These two concerns are used to argue that Paul’s use of justification terminology directly relates to

and challenges imperial formulations of justice and applies it to contemporary discussions of justice.

The final essay by John Reumann tracks the major influences in the study of Paul's theology and doctrinal reassessments in the Lutheran Church. He uses this academic history to articulate common biblical criticisms of the *Declaration*, diffusing the criticisms, but also leaving room for biblical scholarship to continue to speak. Reumann articulates two elements that broaden the traditional Lutheran doctrine canonically. First, Reumann argues that many of the statements on justification in Romans and Galatians were actually formulations composed by the pre-Pauline church as a whole and in this way reflect early apostolic preaching (Gal. 2.16; Rom. 3.28). Secondly, the Philippian letter (particularly Phil. 3) illustrates a doctrine of justification outside the Galatian controversy and in a broader context. All the scholars in this section affirm the need to broaden the discussion of Paul's soteriology and ecclesiology beyond justification. The Lutheran scholars, however, make reservations to maintain the biblical nature of certain Lutheran particulars.

The third major section addresses the reception of Paul in the history of the Church and various perspectives within this field. Margaret M. Mitchell smoothly transitions from critiquing Reumann to explicating her particular scholarly enterprise of reconstructing Chrysostom's reading of Paul. She counters Reumann's assertions that Gal. 2.16 and Rom. 3.28 clearly mark separate propositional statements affirmed outside of Paul's writings by arguing for their clear placement within the arguments being made. Continuing to Reumann's view of the Philippian text, Mitchell employs the reception of Philippians by Chrysostom. She argues that Chrysostom's struggle with the Marcionites makes him an indispensable resource for understanding Paul's characterization of his achievements as σκῦβαλον. Chrysostom necessarily qualifies this, in order to contrast with the Marcionites, that the law itself is not σκῦβαλον and faith must include works as well.

David M. Rylaarsdam, while somewhat detached from the rest of the book, outlines several receptions of Paul in the early Church. He begins by denying two common assertions: that Paul was a marginal figure in the early Church and that a smooth reception of Paul occurred in the early Church. To illustrate this point, Rylaarsdam compares and contrasts the readings performed by Origen, Chrysostom and Augustine. He argues that elements from all three play a role in both Lutheran and

Catholic doctrine. Chrysostom's emphasis on works is paired with his understanding of the eschatological judgment. Origen's progressive eschatology is coupled with a focus on divinity as opposed to Chrysostom's anthropological focus. Augustine certainly emphasizes more than both of these an interventionist grace and the rescue of the will from depravity. Rylaarsdam thus highlights the diversity of Paul's reception in the early Church, citing particularly the life situations and texts emphasized in these three interpreters.

Finally, Randall C. Zachman discusses the interpretation of Paul in the late Middle Ages and early Reformation periods. Thus, he sets Luther's reading of Paul in contrast to Augustine's interpretation. The latter emphasizes proper love for God ordering one's will and emphasizes Rom. 5.1-5, 7, Galatians 5 and 1 Corinthians 13. The former emphasizes confidence in God's mercy and Romans 3-4, 8, Galatians 3 and 1 Corinthians 15. He concludes, 'For the past four hundred and eighty-two years, these two ways of reading Paul have striven mightily with each other but have basically played to a draw.' This section clearly notes that a diversity of readings is found in the history of Christianity, questioning the exclusivity of a Reformation reading.

David Aune adds a substantial concluding article illustrating the relationship of previous and contemporary Pauline scholarship to divisive issues between Protestants and Catholics. While he notes that many of the recent studies in Paul's theology have attempted to refine the Christian theology of Judaism rather than to enable ecumenical discussion, he is able to show that these studies do not hinder the ecumenical discussion and in several cases aid it. His treatment of the data leans heavily toward describing the New Perspective. He only briefly mentions the work of Martin Hengel and its implication for Pauline study. While Aune spends a good deal of space on the Evangelical response, he ultimately finds this position (as represented in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*) unconvincing. Aune's conclusion is somewhat odd in that he spends a great deal of time defending a position that only nominally aids the ecumenical discussion in view. He concludes his article by extolling the value of academic Bible study for ecumenical discussion.

While this book is intriguing, it makes no hard contribution to the study of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism. This is ultimately a rehashing of previous studies in light of this ecumenical event. However, the book may have influence as the wind in the sails of the New

Perspective is running out and justification for further studies must be presented. There is certainly room, as Aune admits, to continue the discussion using more intricate data and fresher methods. Also, being able to come at the artifacts of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism with a full picture of its possible implications promotes more discerning readings. While no new artifacts or positions are discussed in this collection, it has implications for the process of scholastic study of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism.

This book is a useful reminder of the nature of the discipline of Biblical Studies, especially in relation to dogmatic commitments. As the New Perspective sought to refine the Christian understanding of Judaism in the first century, the desire to enable ecumenical conversation could result in a fresh look at the apostle to the Gentiles. These research questions ultimately make detailed study of the artifacts of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism approachable from other key disciplines. The book is informative to scholars of ancient history and contemporary theology and attempts to bring these two fields into conversation.

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