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978-0-521-35898-9 - The Theology of the Second Letter to the Corinthians

Jerome Murphy-O'Connor

Frontmatter

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The resonances in the dialogue of Paul's Second Letter to the Corinthians are difficult to detect unless the reader has some knowledge of the social, religious and economic situation of the community to which the apostle was writing. In this lucid and clear survey, Father Murphy-O'Connor attempts to provide such background information, which he integrates skilfully into a flowing exposition of Paul's thought. St Paul's theology thus comes to life as the complex interplay of factors which prompted him to write as he did to the Corinthians is examined and explored.

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NEW TESTAMENT THEOLOGY

**General Editor: Professor J. D. G. Dunn,
Department of Theology, University of Durham**

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Letter to the Corinthians**

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This series provides a programmatic survey of the individual writings of the New Testament. It aims to remedy the deficiency of available published material, which has tended to concentrate on historical, textual, grammatical and literary issues at the expense of the theology, or to lose distinctive emphases of individual writings in systematized studies of 'The Theology of Paul' and the like. New Testament specialists here write at greater length than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of other New Testament theologies, and explore the theological themes and issues of their chosen books without being tied to a commentary format, or to a thematic structure drawn from elsewhere. When complete, the series will cover all the New Testament writings, and will thus provide an attractive, and timely, range of texts around which courses can be developed.

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THE THEOLOGY OF THE SECOND LETTER TO THE CORINTHIANS

JEROME MURPHY-O'CONNOR, OP

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Editor's preface

Although the New Testament is usually taught within Departments or Schools or Faculties of Theology/Divinity/Religion, theological study of the individual New Testament writings is often minimal or at best patchy. The reasons for this are not hard to discern.

For one thing, the traditional style of studying a New Testament document is by means of straight exegesis, often verse by verse. Theological concerns jostle with interesting historical, textual, grammatical and literary issues, often at the cost of the theological. Such exegesis is usually very time-consuming, so that only one or two key writings can be treated in any depth within a crowded three-year syllabus.

For another, there is a marked lack of suitable textbooks round which courses could be developed. Commentaries are likely to lose theological comment within a mass of other detail in the same way as exegetical lectures. The section on the theology of a document in the Introduction to a commentary is often very brief and may do little more than pick out elements within the writing under a sequence of headings drawn from systematic theology. Excursuses usually deal with only one or two selected topics. Likewise larger works on New Testament Theology usually treat Paul's letters as a whole and, having devoted the great bulk of their space to Jesus, Paul and John, can spare only a few pages for others.

In consequence, there is little incentive on the part of teacher or student to engage with a particular New Testament docu-

ment and students have to be content with a general overview, at best complemented by in-depth study of (parts of) two or three New Testament writings. A serious corollary to this is the degree to which students are thereby incapacitated in the task of integrating their New Testament study with the rest of their Theology or Religion courses, since often they are capable only of drawing on the general overview or on a sequence of particular verses treated atomistically. The growing importance of a literary-critical approach to individual documents simply highlights the present deficiencies even more. Having been given little experience in handling individual New Testament writings as such at a theological level, most students are very ill-prepared to develop a properly integrated literary and theological response to particular texts. Ordinands too need more help than they currently receive from textbooks, so that their preaching from particular passages may be better informed theologically.

There is need therefore for a series to bridge the gap between too brief an introduction and too full a commentary where theological discussion is lost among too many other concerns. It is our aim to provide such a series. That is, a series where New Testament specialists are able to write at greater length on the theology of individual writings than is usually possible in the introductions to commentaries or as part of New Testament Theologies, and to explore the theological themes and issues of these writings without being tied to a commentary format or to a thematic structure provided from elsewhere. The volumes seek both to describe each document's theology, and to engage theologically with it, noting also its canonical context and any specific influence it may have had on the history of Christian faith and life. They are directed at those who already have one or two years of full-time New Testament and theological study behind them.

James D. G. Dunn
University of Durham

Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	Analecta Biblica
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
AusBR	<i>Australian Biblical Review</i>
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeology Review</i>
BGBE	Beiträge zur Geschichte der biblischen Exegese
BHT	Beiträge zur historischen Theologie
BNTC	Blacks New Testament Commentary
CBQ	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
EB	Etudes Bibliques
ETL	<i>Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses</i>
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des alten und neuen Testaments
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
NJBC	<i>New Jerome Biblical Commentary</i>
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum, Supplements
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
RB	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
RechBib	Recherches Bibliques
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
ScrB	<i>Scripture Bulletin</i>
SNTS	Society for New Testament Studies
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i>

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Abbreviations

TF	Theologische Forschung
TS	Theological Studies
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum neuen Testament
ZNW	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>