ROMANS 7 AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY

In this book, Will Timmins provides a close rereading of Romans 7 within its literary-argumentative context and offers a fresh and compelling solution to the identity of the ‘I’ in this text. Challenging existing paradigms, which fail to provide both literary coherence and theological plausibility, he develops his own positive theory concerning the ‘I’. Along the way he also re-examines a number of key texts within the letter which have hitherto not been given due weight within the scholarly discussion.

This study offers a fresh and satisfying solution to one of the Bible’s most notorious cruxes and contributes to our understanding of the Apostle Paul’s thought. It will be of interest to all scholars and students within the fields of biblical studies and Christian theology.

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ROMANS 7 AND CHRISTIAN IDENTITY
Romans 7 and Christian Identity

A Study of the ‘I’ in Its Literary Context

WILL N. TIMMINS
Moore Theological College, Sydney
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PREFACE

This book has been a long time in the making. It started life as a personal wrestling, on and off over a period of years, with the various, rival interpretations of Romans 7. Although I felt the attraction of some of them, I remained dissatisfied with all of them, unpersuaded that they had the explanatory power to deal with various elements of the text. My quest for a solution to the problem of the ‘I’ eventually took the form of a PhD thesis, which was submitted to the University of Cambridge in 2014. This book is a revised version of that thesis. The additional time between completion of the PhD and the submission of the book manuscript in early 2016 afforded opportunity for some sharpening of the thesis. A few chapters remain largely unchanged, some sections have undergone minor revision, and Chapter 6, on Romans 7:14–25, has been expanded. Chapter 2 passed through an additional phase as ‘Romans 7 and Speech-in-Character: A Critical Evaluation of Stowers’ Hypothesis’, ZNW 2016: 94–115. It is reproduced here with permission. I am thankful to Prof. Paul Trebilco, who kindly accepted this book for publication in the SNTS monograph series.

My supervisor at Cambridge, Dr. Peter Head, cast his critical and judicious eye over various drafts of the original thesis. He chivvied me along when I found myself stuck in the Pauline thicket, and gave generously of his time, friendship, hospitality, and encouragement. Dr. Simon Gathercole expertly took over responsibility for supervising when Peter was on sabbatical for a year, gave the project additional impetus, and kindly made himself available for invaluable advice and input at other points along the way. My examiners, Prof. John Barclay and Dr. James Carleton-Paget, were generous and insightful in their engagement with the thesis, and the revisions I undertook for publication were, in large measure, a response to questions that they raised. I am also thankful for the interactions, written and verbal, with scholars who generously imparted of their wisdom or pre-publication material, including Prof. John Barclay, Dr. Mark Seifrid, and Dr. Stephen Chester. The bulk of the
research was undertaken in the congenial environment of Tyndale House, Cambridge. Not only did I benefit from the use of the excellent library, but I was enriched by numerous productive conversations with the staff and fellow researchers.

It is with special thanks that I acknowledge the contributions made by family and friends. A number of individuals from Beeston Free Church joined together to provide a generous monetary gift, the Tyndale House Council provided me with an Erasmus Scholarship, and various family members and friends provided additional financial help. To all of them I am very grateful indeed. Roger Hitchings, Jonathan and Sue Green, Chris Watkin, and Nathan Buttery offered the sort of personal support and encouragement, which, though not directly related to the project, was instrumental in helping keep the project on track. And the love of my parents has been a quiet source of strength, from which I have been able to draw at various points along the way.

Finally, I dedicate this book to my wife, Lizzy. To her, and for her, I am deeply grateful.

Χάρις δὲ τῷ θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν.
ABBREVIATIONS

'Abot R. Nat. Avot of Rabbi Nathan
Aen. Aeneid
Alleg. Interp. Allegorical Interpretation
Ant. Jewish Antiquities
Apoc. Ab. Apocalypse of Abraham
Apoc. Mos. Apocalypse of Moses
Apoc. Sedr. Apocalypse of Sedrach
Bar Baruch
BFCT Beiträge zur Förderung christlicher Theologie
BGU Aegyptische Urkunden aus den Königlichen (later Staatlichen) Museen zu Berlin, Griechische Urkunden. Berlin
CBQ Catholic Biblical Quarterly
Decal. De decalogo
ExpTim Expository Times
Hist. Rech. History of the Rechabites
ICC International Critical Commentary
JBL Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ Jewish Biblical Quarterly
JETS Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society
JSNT Journal for the Study of the New Testament
List of Abbreviations

JSOT  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSPL  Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters
JTS  Journal of Theological Studies
LCL  Loeb Classical Library
Leg.  Legum allegoriae
Legat.  Legatio ad Gaium
LXX  Septuagint
Macc  Maccabees
Mor.  Moralia
Mos.  De vita Mosis
m. Pirqe ʿAbot  Mishnah Pirque ʿAbot
NICNT  New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIV  New International Version
NT  New Testament
NTS  New Testament Studies
Pss. Sol.  Psalms of Solomon
SBL  Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS  Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
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<td><em>Sibylline Oracles</em></td>
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<td>Sir.</td>
<td>Sirach/Ecclesiasticus</td>
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<td>Somn.</td>
<td><em>De somniis</em></td>
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<td>Spec.</td>
<td><em>De specialibus legibus</em></td>
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<td>TDNT</td>
<td><em>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</em></td>
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<td>WTJ</td>
<td>Westminster Theological Journal</td>
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<td>ZNW</td>
<td><em>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</em></td>
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<td>1QS</td>
<td><em>The Rule of the Community</em></td>
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