

The Pastoral Epistles. ICC. By I. Howard Marshall. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1999, xlii + 869 pp., \$69.95.*

After several years of relative drought (the last major commentary on the Pastorals by George Knight in the NIGTC series appeared in 1992), the 1999–2000 academic year has seen a veritable flood of major publications on the Pastoral epistles pour from the presses. Apart from the present work and the inaugural volume of the Eerdmans Critical Commentary (reviewed separately above), significant new releases also include William Mounce's substantive contribution to the Word Biblical Commentary series and Peter Gorday's Ancient Christian Commentary on the Pastorals, not to mention the more practical works by Walter Liefeld (NIV Application Commentary) and Kent Hughes and Bryan Chapell (Preaching the Word). Clearly, it will take some time before the net gain for the study of the Pastoral epistles can be fully gauged, though the cumulative contribution of the above-mentioned volumes will certainly be judged to be significant. Perhaps to complete this deluge of new material on the Pastorals for the near future, Stephen Baugh has contributed the commentary on the Pastorals for the Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (forthcoming), and I have completed work on a commentary on this corpus myself (for the new Expositor's Bible Commentary).

Marshall's ICC entry, written in collaboration with Philip Towner, culminates the author's long-standing study of the Pastoral epistles and provides a worthy addition to the series. Marshall, Professor of New Testament Exegesis at the University of Aberdeen, has long been one of the leading British evangelical NT scholars, and the present work adds to his reputation. It is not possible within the confines of this review to interact in detail with Marshall's various exegetical judgments. It must suffice to position Marshall's commentary in relation to other comparable works and to select and briefly critique a few salient examples of positions taken by him in the present volume.

Marshall takes up the three Pastoral epistles in the order Titus–1 Timothy–2 Timothy, because Titus addresses a less-developed and complex ecclesiastical situation and therefore may have been written before 1 and 2 Timothy. However, this difference may simply be due to the less-developed situation *in Crete* over against *Ephesus* rather than indicate which epistle was written first. After taking up introductory issues such as canonicity, text, and genre, Marshall devotes a full 22 pages to the structure of each of the three letters (pp. 18–40). Timothy's opponents are identified, not as gnostics, but as "a group of Jewish Christians, perhaps travelling teachers with an ascetic streak, who were active within the Pauline mission area" (p. 51).

In his very full treatment of authorship (pp. 57–92), Marshall concludes, disappointingly, that "the way in which the thought [in the Pastorals] is expressed, both linguistically and theologically, poses great problems. . . which seems to make it unlikely that he [Paul] himself wrote in these terms to trusted colleagues" (p. 79). This does not mean that Marshall opts for pseudonymity, which, he acknowledges, involves deceptive intent (pp. 80–83). Rather, he postulates a scenario in which "somebody close to a dead person continued to write as (they thought that) he would have done" (p. 84), a view Marshall labels "allonymity" or "allepigraphy" (*ibid.*). The intended audience of the letters were, according to Marshall, leaders of congregations in Crete and Ephesus! Asia Minor (p. 85). Thus, in his reading, Titus and Timothy turn out to be only the purported, but not the real, recipients of these epistles. Marshall is, however, rather fond of the idea that 2 Timothy may be substantially the work of Paul and that it formed the basis for the "allonymous" writing of 1 Timothy and Titus (p. 86). If so, of course, this would mean that 2 Timothy, not Titus (see above), was essentially written first.

To apply Marshall's line of reasoning to his own commentary (which was by his own acknowledgment written "in collaboration with" Philip Towner), perhaps several hundred years from now some might claim that the commentary was actually not written by Marshall himself but compiled subsequent to his death by Towner based on Marshall's notes and perhaps also on some of

his previous publications. With the passage of time, doubtless a plausible case could be construed along those lines. The only problem would be that, while plausible, such a theory would not square with the facts, for Marshall did in fact publish the commentary during his lifetime and as the person responsible for his work (the degree of collaboration by Towner is another matter). But if Marshall would protest attributing his own work to a posthumous student collaborator, might not Paul likewise be given short shrift by Marshall's theory of an "allonymous" authorship of the Pastorals?

The remainder of this review will take up several matters arising from Marshall's remarks on 1 Tim 2:9–15 and comment on a few other important interpretive judgments. First, Marshall claims that the injunction, "Let a woman learn," in v. 11 pertains to any learner, including "presumably men who were not teaching" as well (pp. 452–54). However, this is irrelevant here, because the command is addressed specifically, and generically, to *women*. Second, Marshall's argument that elsewhere women are encouraged to teach *women* and *children*, so that the prohibition of women teachers in v. 12 is not absolute (p. 441), does not alter the fact that in the present passage women are told not to teach (or have authority over) *men*.

Third, after calling my syntactical study of v. 12 "convincing" (p. 458), Marshall nonetheless finds a way to sidestep this study's implications for the present passage, concluding that the phrase means "to teach in an overbearing manner" (pp. 458–60). However, Marshall furnishes no proof that the Greek conjunction *oude* can function in the way he suggests (i.e. link a term adverbially to another by way of *hendiadys*). The stubborn fact remains that *oude* is a coordinating, not a subordinating, conjunction. Fourth, Marshall's contention that the present prohibition is merely part of Paul's general silencing of false teachers in the Pastorals — and thus "not absolute or for all time" — also misses the mark, because the norm invoked by Paul in v. 13 is creation order, not merely local circumstances. In each case, Marshall diverts attention from the explicit (and usually quite plain) wording of the text by introducing alleged local circumstances that are then taken to relativize or otherwise set aside the overt, express message of the passage. This strategy unnecessarily complicates and obfuscates matters but must be resisted as an attempt to erode a more natural reading of the text that appears to be unpalatable for Marshall on ideological grounds.

In his interpretation of 1 Tim 3:1 ("If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task"), Marshall contends that "[t]he statement must surely imply that some people thought it undesirable" (p. 475). Apart from the fact that this argument is rather novel, it is also doubtful and an instance of the dubious "mirror-reading hermeneutic" *a la* Fee that looks for local circumstances behind every single phrase in the Pastorals. In his treatment of deacons in 1 Tim 3:8–12, Marshall claims that the requirement in v. 9 that deacons "must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience" implies "that the deacons also had some share in teaching and instruction of the congregation" (p. 485). However, this fails to take adequate account of the absence of terms related to teaching or ruling (most notably "able to teach," v. 2; see also v. 5b) in the case of deacons as well as to give full weight to the designation "deacon" (from the Greek *diakonos*, "servant") as over against "overseer." Marshall's suggestion that deacons served "perhaps as leaders of house churches" (p. 495) is likewise pure conjecture.

Another interpretive judgment pertains to 1 Tim 5:17 (translated by the NIV as "The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially [Gk *malista*] those whose work is preaching and teaching"; the NASB rendering is similar). Understood thus, this passage seems to imply that there are some elders who direct the affairs of the church but who do not also labor hard at preaching and teaching. Similarly to Mounce in his recent WBC contribution, Marshall contends that *malista* here means "namely," in which case the distinction between teaching and nonteaching elders would disappear (p. 612). However, the NT pattern of usage speaks decisively in favor of the meaning "especially" here and elsewhere in the Pastorals (cf. 4:10; 5:8; 2 Tim 4:13; Titus 1:10) in the sense that a larger group is first named from which subsequently a subsegment is separated out and brought into focus (cf. especially Acts 25:26: all of you, especially king Agrippa;

Gal 6:10: all people, especially believers; Phil 4:22: all believers, especially those of Caesar's household; Titus 1:10: many rebellious people, especially those of circumcision group; 2 Pet 2:10: the unrighteous, especially the immoral and those who despise authority).

On the positive side, Marshall rightly renders *rhiza* in 1 Tim 6:10 as "the" rather than "a" root of all evil (contra Mounce and the majority of interpreters). He appropriately points out that the absence of an article before "root" does not necessarily mean that the term is indefinite. Moreover, Marshall is correct in contending that calling the love of money "the root of all evil" is probably hyperbolic and need not be taken to mean that money literally is the sole root cause of evil. This is further suggested by similar sayings in Greek literature that are likewise worded in absolute terms (e.g. "Money is *the* mother-city of all evil").

Not infrequently Marshall's commentary displays original thought, such as when he suggests that 2 Tim 3:7 may refer to "people receiving an endless series of lessons, perhaps for a fee?" (p. 777) or when he conjectures that Demas may have left Paul because "he balked at martyrdom" (citing Pol. 9:2) but that he may have "continued actively as Christian, even as a missionary," in Thessalonica (pp. 815–16; cf. 2 Tim 4:10). This quality is comparatively rare in a day when much material is merely recycled or repackaged. Another valuable feature of this commentary is the presence of eleven thorough excursuses on major themes in the Pastorals, such as *eusebeia* and *syneidesis*, the *se̅phrē̅n* and *pistis* word groups, the trustworthy sayings, and other topics.

Apart from the above-mentioned differences on the interpretation of 1 Tim 2:9–15 and other passages, I found myself frequently (sometimes to my surprise) in agreement with Marshall's exegesis (especially on Titus). When compared with Mounce's recent WBC commentary, Marshall clearly emerges as the more seasoned interpreter whose judgments are generally judicious and well-informed. While in overall flavor more critical than its North-American counterpart — especially in its rejection of Pauline authorship — and problematic in its culturally conditioned reading of passages such as 1 Tim 2:9–15 owing to Marshall's egalitarian commitment, the present work constitutes a valuable contribution to scholarship on the Pastorals and a worthy addition to the ICC series.

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