

Pastoral Epistles. By William D. Mounce. WBC 46. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000, cxxvi + 641 pp., n. p.*

Together with Howard Marshall's ICC volume and the massive ECC entry by Quinn and Wacker (see my reviews in *JETS* 44/3 [2001] 549–53), William Mounce's addition to the WBC series has raised scholarship on the Pastoral epistles to a new level. While overall perhaps not as seasoned exegetically as Marshall, Mounce is generally more conservative—most notably, affirming Pauline authorship in the place of Marshall's dubious concept of "allonymity"—which should make his commentary the first choice for most evangelicals in a North-American setting (replacing Knight). Yet while Mounce may not bring to his task the years of experience of a Howard Marshall, he is consistently thorough, linguistically astute, and well informed of (almost) all the relevant literature. The scope of the present review permits only the most cursory detailed interaction.

To begin with, while acknowledging that the opponents are not precisely the same in each case (p. lxi), Mounce, rightly in my opinion, identifies the opposition behind the Pastorals as Jewish proto-Gnosticism (pp. lxix–lxxvi). His discussion of differences in style and vocabulary between the other Pauline epistles and the Pastorals is particularly thorough (pp. xcix–cxviii). Like Scott, Knight, and many others, Mounce thinks that the designation of Timothy as Paul's "true son in the faith" in 1 Tim 1:2 implies that Paul has led Timothy to the faith. Yet I would argue that this is not necessarily the case in light of passages such as 2 Tim 1:5 or 3:15 and the reference to Timothy as a "disciple" at their first documented meeting in Acts 16:1 (though it is possible that they met at the occasion of Paul's previous visit to Lystra, see Acts 14:8–20).

In his discussion of the syntax of 1 Tim 2:12, Mounce essentially concurs with my analysis of the "neither/nor" construction there, with the result that *authenthein* ought to be rendered as "to have authority" rather than as conveying a negative connotation (pp. 128–30). Mounce is also correct in contending that efforts to downgrade the force of *gar* ("for") in 1 Tim 2:13, despite the best efforts of egalitarian scholars, fail to convince (pp. 131–32). On 1 Timothy 3, on the other hand, while there may have been a "leadership crisis" in the Ephesian church, one must not go as far as Mounce who claims that "[a]lmost every quality Paul specifies here has its negative counterpart in the Ephesian opponents" (p. 153). This is possible, but unverifiable, and it seems wise to guard against an unrestrained "mirror-reading" hermeneutic at this point (and others; see below).

Another instance of disagreement pertains to Mounce's contention that "Paul does not teach that the deacon is under the overseer . . . both overseer and deacon serve the church in different capacities" (p. 207). Yet it appears that this (rather idiosyncratic) contention is contradicted by the fact that overseers are in charge of the entire congregation (e.g. 5:17), *including deacons*, so that the latter must submit to the former as do all church members. On the positive side, I concur (as do Quinn and Wacker) that "the rest" in 1 Tim 5:19–20 probably refers to the rest of the *elders* in the Ephesian congregation (though ultimately the entire church is in view as well). Finally, Mounce's discussion of Titus 2:13–14 is particularly thorough and astute.

On the whole, Mounce's commentary is a significant scholarly achievement and will no doubt be used with profit for many years to come. Personally, I am a bit surprised and disappointed at Mounce's consistent insistence that every detail in the Pastorals (see the comment in 1 Timothy 3 above) is rather narrowly constrained by Paul's original context. Nevertheless, this work comes highly recommended and — not the least owing to its reasonable price — ought to find a place on the shelves of every serious student of the Pastorals.

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