Introduction

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"*Beyond* old and new perspectives on Paul!" bemused students exclaim. "We are still trying to get our heads around the old and new ones! Now there is a *newer* one?" And then there are those students who know a bit more about phrases such as "old perspective" and "new perspective,"[1] and this elite group often already have a personal investment in one or the other. With narrowed eyes, they continue: "So, you're saying that both the Reformation and the New Perspective on Paul have it wrong? And you think you have it right?!"

Depending on how early in the day it is, and whether I have drunk enough coffee, my response often runs something like this: "The 'old perspective' is not simply wrong, it has much to offer and don't let anybody tell you otherwise! But it is not a portrayal of Pauline theology that is without its problems. And the 'new perspective,' which doesn't even exist in the singular, is really a group of very different scholarly positions united by a new perspective on Second Temple Judaism. And they are likewise helpful. They saw some very real problems associated with the so-called 'old perspective,' particularly its portrayal of 'the Jew.' Yet its diagnosis of the problem confronting readers of Paul is one-dimensional and its prescribed reinterpretation of Paul remains partly implicit in the real interpretative difficulties involved."

1. This is not the place to summarize the import of those phrases, a task that has been undertaken in summary form in a number of places. See, for example, useful student resources such as Beilby and Eddy, *Justification*; Westerholm, *Perspectives Old and New on Paul*; Yinger, *The New Perspective on Paul*.

After linking some of this with what we have covered in our classes on Galatians and Romans, I finally add: "At least this is what Douglas Campbell argues. He presents a complete rereading of Paul's letters that genuinely offers a way beyond problems associated with old and new perspectives. And his resultant picture of Paul's theology generally, and the Apostle's soteriology particularly, is beautiful, liberating, consistent, exegetically rigorous, theologically aware, and pastorally compelling. It captures, I think, the best of the old perspective, with its concern to speak energetically about the God who saves, and it takes seriously the concerns of the new perspective on Second Temple Judaism. But in remarkable and jarringly elegant ways, it moves beyond them both." At this point, more discussion (and hopefully coffee) ensues.

But also in the academy, Douglas Campbell's work, particularly his monograph, *The Deliverance of God* (hereafter *Deliverance*),[2] has many people engaging in heated debate. On the one hand, some have simply dismissed his numerous proposals without too much engagement, while others throw serious charges such as "incipient Marcionism" and "intellectual blackmail" in Campbell's direction![3] Barry Matlock, for example, accurately described his own review of *Deliverance* as "unrelentingly negative."[4] Yet on the other hand, others speak of Campbell's paradigm-shifting brilliance,[5] his being "terribly right when it matters,"[6] and write of his creative originality,[7] and so on. So it is fair to say that Campbell's work has generated a very mixed response! And though I would argue that much of the criticism has been less than helpful and has not always represented his position accurately, *Deliverance* is of such significance (not to mention sheer size!) that it *requires* the attention and sustained consideration of the scholarly community. Reason enough for publishing this book!

But indulge me a little personal aside in order to explain further my own motivations for helping to organize the King's College London conference on *Deliverance*, and my work as editor of this book. Of course, some will no doubt rightly note that the quality of contributors to this

2. Campbell, *Deliverance*.
3. Moo, "The Deliverance of God," 150; Matlock, "Zeal for Paul," 137.
4. Matlock, "Zeal for Paul," 146.
5. Tilling "The Deliverance of God, and of Paul?" 83, 98.
6. Gorman, "Douglas Campbell's *The Deliverance of God*," 99.
7. Jipp, "Douglas Campbell's Apocalyptic, Rhetorical Paul," 197.

volume is all the justification I would need for going to press! But for me there are also deeper reasons. Apart from a desire to seek clarity on the complex debates surrounding Paul, justification, and the "new perspective(s)," my concerns, when reading *Deliverance*, have revolved around my experiences as a New Testament lecturer at St. Mellitus College, where I help to train present and future church leaders how to read and handle Scripture. In this capacity, I have become keenly aware of, to use Tony Thiselton's language, the "deep chasm between the universe of discourse in which some New Testament specialists operate and that of many systematic theologians," and, I would add, that of pastors and ministers.[8] I found it sobering to remember that, despite training in the best theological and biblical scholarship of his age, the young Karl Barth likewise was at a loss during his pastoral experiences in Safenwil.[9] And as I sought in class to clarify certain key Pauline exegetical issues with recourse to, say, the most precise model for understanding soteriological themes in second Temple Judaism and its relationship to works of law, or the best salvation-historical models relating to the curse of exile, I began to realize that I was potentially making biblical historians the often confused priests through whom my students needed to go to gain, through the fog of historical reconstruction, a word of God from the Bible. And this hardly lent itself to the kind of confidence 1 Peter 4:11 speaks about, that preachers could orate as those "speaking the very words of God." Could my curriculum have been generating more Safenwils?, I anxiously wondered. Fueled by such concerns, and a desire to hold on tightly to the best historical-critical and grammatical-linguistic tools of biblical scholarship, I picked up *Deliverance*.

As a result of a close reading, tectonic theological and biblical plates started to slide into place. Of course, I was—and am—left with a host of questions, but, as I read and then reread *Deliverance*, theological and exegetical concerns, scattered across the divided mind of my Western European theological education, began to reconnect. If Douglas is right, I mused, then understanding Paul is about being more profoundly Christ-centered than I had ever anticipated. On top of this, I found that numerous murky discussions found profound conceptual clarity in *Deliverance*—here was a work that could take the debates relating to Paul forward.

8. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 376.
9. See, e.g., Busch, *Karl Barth: His Life*, 61.

So you can perhaps imagine my disappointment when some key reviews started to come out, which not infrequently either ignored or sometimes quite seriously misunderstood Campbell's arguments, and then dismissed them. It goes without saying that though we may well end up disagreeing with Campbell for a host of reasons, it is better that they are *good* reasons that truly engage with his arguments, and not a caricature of them.

And so this book! It is based on the need to sit Douglas down, and think through his views carefully, making sure we understand him, and then we need together, with biblical scholars, church historians, systematicians, and classicists, to try to sift the wheat from the chaff. I am sure I speak for all of the contributors when I say we hope this book is an example of edifying sifting *and* listening.

To keep matters cohesive, and to make sure the central issues are covered, this book will roughly follow the structure of *Deliverance*. It is thus divided into two sections. Part One, chapters 1 through 8, analyzes key aspects of Campbell's account of the *problem* confronting readers of Paul. Part Two, chapters 9 through 15, analyzes key aspects of Campbell's proposed *solution* to understanding Paul aright. After each chapter—apart from his own, of course—Campbell writes a paragraph or two in response, what he has learned from each, or where disagreements remain. In this way, readers of this book will be drawn into a lively and important ongoing conversation. As the book goes to print, I will also release a video interview with Campbell, where we spend more time discussing some of the important critical issues.

In the first chapter, Alan Torrance focuses on the theological aspects of Campbell's proposal, particularly the contrast between Paul's apocalyptic and participatory theology, on the one hand, and contractual and foundationalist theology on the other. Torrance does not attempt to adjudicate on Pauline exegetical matters, but he does affirm the importance and appropriateness of the theological dynamics driving Campbell's project.

In chapter 2, Graham Tomlin focuses on Campbell's portrayal of Luther and a number of wider matters relating to Campbell's interpretation. If Campbell is right about Romans 1:18–32 being a position the Apostle apparently does not endorse, Tomlin asks, where does this leave the doctrine of the clarity of Scripture? Despite Tomlin's appreciation for Campbell's handling of Luther, he argues that Luther is not an example of

a mix of contractual and unconditional theology, as Campbell suggests. The contractual contours of Justification Theory are simply never present in Luther. The reformer indeed fights them.

Campbell begins, in chapter 3, by outlining "contractual foundationalism," a methodological Arianism that wreaks theological havoc and interpretive mischief in readings of Paul. Over against this stands the Athanasian response to this foundationalism, an unconditional and covenantal theological vision that offers a very different account of God, atonement, humanity, and its freedom and ethical responsibility.

Campbell's strong distinction between the "Justification Theory" dynamics inherent in traditional readings of Romans 1–4, and the "alternative gospel" of Romans 5–8, has been rejected by most reviewers. To clarify his argument, Campbell claims that the apocalyptic or alternative gospel is Athanasian in its theological heart, while Romans 1–4, traditionally understood, involves Arian methodological commitments. These are not, in other words, readings "in tension" with one another, but ones with fundamentally irreconcilable accounts of theology. In chapter 4 I assess Campbell's claims by examining the nature of Paul's divine Christology. Although Campbell's position is endorsed in a number of ways, I raise questions about the appropriateness of Campbell's vectorial language ("forward"/"backward" thinking).

Smith's learned contribution, in chapter 5, examines the extent to which it is appropriate for Campbell to make use of the term "Arianism." Contra Campbell, he argues that one should not identify Arius's Logos theology with ahistorical foundationalism. That said, Smith is in overall sympathy with Campbell's concerns and suggests that, instead of speaking of Arian Foundationalism versus Athanasian Apocalypticism, "Campbell would be better served to speak of a Eunomian Rationalism vs. a Nicene Apocalypticism or a Nicene Economic Theology."

Campbell's second offering, in chapter 6, presents a way out of the problems outlined in chapter 3, by focusing on how one reads one particular text, namely Galatians 2:15–16. He maintains that if the antithesis between "works of the law" and "faith" is read forward, that is, from an account of the problem to the corresponding solution, then all manner of sinister ills are unleashed into our construal of Paul's argument. Campbell's solution is simply to present a reading of these verses in such a way that the antithesis Paul constructs is a straightforward "A is not the case but B," a contrast based on a revelational account of Paul's argument. Not

only are all interpretative problems thereby solved, Campbell's argument here also offers a snapshot of his wider strategy and concerns.

In chapter 7, David Hilborn, while appreciative of Campbell's endeavors, raises a number of concerns in response to Campbell's chapter 6 essay. He questions Campbell's Barthian appropriation of Athanasius, and the strict distinction between forward and backward thinking. He also wonders to what extent Campbell has constructed another universalizing and mythologizing paradigm. Further, Hilborn asks whether Campbell's soteriology compels him towards universal salvation. This question involves a wider issue, namely concern about Campbell's use of the word "unconditional" as part of the "Athanasian" paradigm.

In chapter 8, Kate Bowler's short, yet lively, reflection draws Part One to a close. She draws lines of connection between Campbell's account of foundationalism, on the one hand, and various modern trends in American Christianity, on the other, particularly those aspects that tend to moralistic, therapeutic deism and America's "legal mind."

As noted above, Part Two of this book focuses on Campbell's proposed solution to the confused state of Pauline interpretation. A number of key exegetical issues are presented and examined. In chapter 9, Campbell shows why the problems he has already outlined in his previous chapters relate directly to how one reads Romans 1–3. He presents the case that a subtle misconstrual of Paul's argument has led to a massive distortion of Paul's theology. An analysis of Romans 1–3 paves the way for the claim that "any reader who holds that Paul is himself committed to the premises underlying 1:18–32 and 2:6 is endorsing forward thinking," a claim that is demonstrated via recourse to key scholarly contruals of this text. Picking up his argument from chapter 6, Campbell details one particular danger associated with this "forward thinking" reading, namely the (highly problematic) presentation of "the Jew." This leads to a summary of Campbell's "Socratic reading" of Romans 1–3, its justification and strengths, together with a number of responses to those who have challenged this crucial manoeuvre (including the arguments of Griffith-Jones in the next chapter).

In chapter 10, classicist Robin Griffith-Jones analyzes a number of texts that Campbell refers to as support for his claim that speech-in-character, *prosopopoeia*, would have been recognized in Romans 1:18–32 by Paul's original auditors. He examines Cicero, Quintilian, Seneca, and other relevant texts, and maintains that it is unlikely Paul would have

deployed a long block-speech with no clear introduction, that is, without introducing and identifying the speaker. Despite sympathy with Campbell's project, Griffith-Jones thinks his reading is "a recipe for confusion," and in this light he also critically examines Campbell's exegesis and translation of key texts such as 1:18 and 3:1–3, 8.

In chapter 11, Brittany Wilson explains that she shares Campbell's rejection of prospective, foundationalist, and contractual readings of Paul. However, she seeks to show a different way of reading material in Romans 1–3. Instead of opting for—what she maintains is—Campbell's problematic Socratic rereading, she gestures towards an alternative apocalyptic construal of these chapters (drawing particularly on the scholarship of Beverly Gaventa). Romans 1–3 is, she argues, consistently apocalyptic even if we read it entirely in Paul's own voice.

Campbell's final offering, chapter 12, is based upon the conviction that contractual foundationalism can be reactivated—even after his rereading of Romans 1–3—by particular (mis)understandings of Paul's *dikaio-* terms. When they are informed by notions of "justice" understood in terms of a narrative of retribution, contractualism rears its ugly head once again. His analysis then turns to examine the noun phrase, the "the righteousness of God," and the cognate verb, δικαιόω. Drawing on his more extensive work in *Deliverance*, Campbell's methodologically nuanced approach leads him to understand the noun phrase as a singular, saving, liberating, life-giving, eschatological, and resurrecting event. His examination of the cognate verb leads to the conclusion that construals of Paul's language, in terms of a Western legal and conditional narrative, is wrongheaded. Paul, he argues, "is utterly opposed to any account of salvation or gospel couched in these terms."

In chapter 13, while agreeing with Campbell's concern to combat all "Western contractualism," Scott Hafemann pays attention to the intertextual dynamics in Campbell's argument to contend that he has underestimated the covenantal context of key terms. In particular, Hafemann focuses on Paul's understanding of divine kingship and, therefore, the righteousness of God. Putting the covenant relationship at the center instead leads to a reframing of notions that Campbell must problematically hold apart, such as unconditionality and conditionality, retributive and saving judgment, the supposed two meanings of δικαιόω in Romans 2:13 and 6:7, and so on. In so doing, Hafemann presents a rather different proposal for reading Paul.

In chapter 14, I summarize Campbell's handling of *pistis*-related matters by focusing on some of his wider theological concerns and his exegetical manoeuvres specifically in Galatians. I finish by reflecting on the claims of Francis Watson, concluding that although the so-called *pistis Christou* debate is far from over, Campbell's treatment of the data is compelling.

In chapter 15, Curtis Freeman energetically argues that rejections of Campbell's grammatical arguments for a subjective genitive reading of *pistis Christou* are based on theological missteps. In particular, he argues that evangelicals do not understand Campbell at this point because their theology is functionally unitarian rather than Trinitarian, and crucicentric rather than incarnational.

The appendices contain two articles that inspired the genesis of Campbell's work.[10] Appendix 1 is a reprint of James Torrance's 1970 article, "Covenant and Contract, a Study of the Theological Background of Worship in Seventeenth-Century Scotland." Appendix 2 is a reprint of James Torrance's 1973 article, "The Contribution of McLeod Campbell to Scottish Theology." The impact of these essays on Campbell's thinking is obvious, and indeed they both pay close reading not only as they lay the groundwork for a good grasp of the concerns that drive *Deliverance*, but also because of their own elegance and theological clarity.

In all of these essays our hope is better to discern whether Campbell's diagnosis of the problem is helpful, and whether his prescribed apocalyptic rereading of Paul really does deliver the goods, and manages to lead Paul away from a potentially very dark and complex problem towards maybe more than just a coherent reading, but also a very exciting and liberating one. The process of discernment will be facilitated as we all contribute in this debate, eschewing caricature, misunderstanding, and unhelpful polemics.

I finish with one final word of interpretative counsel. If we are to grasp Campbell's arguments aright, we must recognise that our discussions about Pauline theology are not ends in themselves. Our work on Paul needs to be *responsible*. Grasping this dynamic in Campbell's endeavors is essential. But behind this, and indeed grounding it, are the kind of issues with which I began—those I mentioned in terms of teaching Paul's theology to church leaders. Campbell leads us to recognize, once again, that Paul's language is to be interpreted ultimately in relation

10. Cf. Campbell, *Deliverance*, xxiv.

to its "object," namely God, a factor that involves certain theological conditions (as Alan Torrance brilliantly argues in his essay "Can the Truth Be Learned?").[11] Right at the heart of Campbell's project is, I believe, a sentiment more significant than the winds of exegetical or hermeneutical fashion, as important and indeed necessary as some of them may be. It is a concern that reading Paul be animated, given confidence, and nourished by the simplicity of disciplined and delighted focus on the revelation of God in Christ. As Karl Barth put it in an essay in the book, *God Here and Now*:

> Even more than the Reformers did, we must let God and His Word be one, with more emphasis, more joy, more consistency, and we must let Jesus Christ be even more self-evidently the one Mediator between God and humanity.[12]

If we understand this concern, I don't think we will be far away from comprehending the soul of the *Deliverance of God*, even when we choose to disagree. Such burdens, I suspect, will also lead us beyond both old and new perspectives on Paul.

11. Torrance, "Can the Truth Be Learned?," 143–63.
12. Barth, *God Here and Now*, 18.