

Trinity provides the grounding for beauty itself: given that the Triune God is characterized by “the dynamism of outgoing love, then primordial beauty is the beauty of this ecstatic love for the other.” (4) This unabashed centering on a unique feature of the Christian God may not be the most popular move in the art world, but it is certainly part of the path to having good “theology and the arts.”

In addition to the centrality of the Triune nature of God, Begbie also maintains a distinct emphasis on the role that Scripture plays in defining not only our theology but also our understanding for the roles that the arts can and should play. In chapter four, Begbie interacts with some of the published comments of David Brown, a significant “arts theologian.” Where Brown proposes an art that is free to reinterpret both Scripture and church tradition as it finds need (82), Begbie responds by acknowledging Brown’s concerns but then demonstrates that not only should Scripture be normative for our understanding and production of art (88), an art so constrained (and here he draws on Bach as a paradigm) would actually be better and more productive than art lacking such constraint (89).

In all, Begbie demonstrates not only great skill in guiding others through the world of interactions between theology and the arts, he also demonstrates a willingness to be, first of all, an orthodox Christian in the world of art. He doesn’t try to blend away the distinctiveness of being a Christian, but rather, he promotes theological orthodoxy based in Scripture as the ultimate means of developing meaningful and rich art. Many may benefit from this book, and if artists embody Begbie’s approach to the arts, the world will benefit.

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Persecution and Participation in Galatians. By John Anthony Dunne. WUNT 2.454. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017. 248 pp., \$96.10, paperback.

Persecution is a repeated theme in the book of Galatians (e.g., 1:13, 23; 4:29; 5:11; 6:12), and yet the theme has been neglected or downplayed by most scholars. In his published dissertation, John Anthony Dunne attempts a comprehensive account of the theme of persecution in Galatians. Dunne

seeks to demonstrate that “in Galatians, Paul is informed by the Christ-event and the full implications of participation with Christ in such a way that he sees suffering for the sake of the cross not as incidental, but as one of the alternative marks to circumcision, which demarcates the true people of God, and sets them apart for future blessing” (4). After reviewing the history of research in chapter 1, in chapter 2 Dunne examines Galatians 3:4, 4:6–7, and 4:28–5:1 and concludes that suffering marks Christian identity (sonship) and destiny (inheritance). In chapter 3, on the basis of Galatians 6:11–17, Dunne argues that suffering serves as a means of “participation in the cross” and thus indicates “who will therefore be vindicated at the final judgment” (88). Since Paul bears the marks of a slave of Christ (Gal 1:10; 6:17), he expects the Galatians to become slaves as well (Gal 6:2). In chapter 4, Dunne claims that Paul’s emphasis on suffering and slavery in Galatians echoes Isaiah. In this claim, he builds on the earlier work of Matthew S. Harmon (*She Must and Shall Go Free: Paul’s Isaianic Gospel in Galatians*, De Gruyter, 2010). Dunne’s argument can be summarized in three steps: (1) Paul echoes Isaiah 53 when he describes Jesus’ death (Gal 1:4; 2:20; cf. Isa 53:5–6, 10, 12). (2) Paul presents himself as the Isaianic servant from Isaiah 49 (Gal 1:10, 15–16, 24; 2:2; cf. Isa 49:1–6). He is thus the servant of the Servant, displaying the Servant’s suffering and indwelt by his Spirit. (3) Finally, Paul calls on the Galatians to imitate him as suffering servants (Gal 4:12–5:1; Isa 49–54). The true people of God, therefore, are those who imitate Paul as he participates in the sufferings of Christ.

Dunne’s research represents the most comprehensive attempt to understand the topic of persecution in Galatians to date, and the quality of his research only serves to buttress the value of his work. Dunne, rightly, argues that the persecution theme serves a theological purpose in Galatians and is thus not merely an incidental circumstance of the letter. One of those theological purposes is to mark the identity of God’s true people, the true heirs of God, in contrast with the Old Covenant mark of circumcision. Students of Galatians would do well to wrestle with Dunne’s work as a way to fully appreciate the contribution that the persecution theme makes to Paul’s argument.

Nonetheless, I would point to two chief criticisms of Dunne’s work. First, Dunne shows little concern for understanding the historical background to the persecution referenced in Galatians. He acknowledges

this in his conclusion by identifying historical reconstruction as an area for further research. This issue, however, cannot be isolated from exegesis. Two recent trends in Pauline studies in particular—Paul within Judaism and Paul and Empire—demonstrate how significant historical reconstruction is to understand the theology of the text. These trends offer unique readings of Galatians based on particular understandings of the historical evidence. For example, without historical reconstruction the interpreter cannot easily identify instances when Paul might be using the theme to accomplish polemical purposes rather than addressing the historical setting of his readers. If Paul is using *διώκω* in Galatians 4:29 polemically to refer to false teaching rather than physical or social hostility, then this would tell us something significant about Paul's understanding of the concept of persecution as well as his conception of false teaching. Dunne attempts to evade the issue, and thus he must interpret references to persecution at face value.

Second, Dunne's emphasis on Isaianic echoes in chapter 4 is the weakest aspect of his argument. Dunne appeals to broad echoes of Isaiah 49–54 throughout the book of Galatians as the basis of Paul's theology of persecution. If one can only understand the echoes to Isaiah, then one can fully understand Paul's theology of persecution in Galatians. The emphasis, therefore, is placed on what is underneath the text of Galatians as the key to understanding the letter. While some (but not all) of Dunne's identified echoes exist, it may be better to seek a simpler and clearer explanation of Paul's theology of persecution from a surface reading of Galatians itself. Nevertheless, despite these two weaknesses, Dunne's work remains a significant contribution to scholarship on Galatians, and those who would preach or teach Galatians would do well to grapple with Dunne's arguments. No preacher should exposit Galatians without exhorting his congregation to bear the mark of suffering.

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