

READING ROMANS THEOLOGICALLY: A REVIEW ARTICLE

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Major commentaries on various books of the Bible have been appearing at a dizzying pace in recent years. I have also been struck by the increasing length of such commentaries. W. D. Davies and Dale Allison are writing a three-volume commentary on Matthew for the ICC series. John Nolland composed a three-volume commentary on Luke (WBC). Raymond Brown's work on the epistles of John (AB) is 812 pages long and includes a great deal of small print. The length and depth of so many of the commentaries make them less useful and more expensive for the busy pastor or interested layperson. Perhaps scholars are mainly writing commentaries for other scholars. I for one would like to see a return to the standard that Calvin set in commentary writing: brevity and clarity.¹ A commentary should be abreast of modern scholarship, but it should not delve into the details of the text to such an extent that the clarity of the commentary is compromised and the work becomes burdensome for the reader.

A significant new commentary has appeared on the scene with the publication of Douglas Moo's work on Romans.² Moo has written a replacement volume for John Murray's earlier NICNT two-volume work. An aside about Moo's commentary is necessary here. He wrote an earlier volume on Romans 1–8 (Chicago: Moody, 1991). Moody Press, however, dropped its Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary series, and thus Moo could not complete his work on Romans for Moody and proceeded to send it to Eerdmans. The Wycliffe commentary was a Greek-text commentary, whereas the NICNT explains the English text. Of course Moo's exegesis in both cases represents a careful interpretation of the original text. In the present series, however, the Greek is explained in the footnotes. Stylistic and format changes mark the new edition, along with the updating of the bibliography. But as Moo himself says, "I made few substantive changes" (p. viii).

The reader may think that Moo has transgressed the ideal of brevity since his commentary exceeds a thousand pages. In this instance, however, such a judgment would be mistaken. Romans is the meatiest of Paul's letters and deserves more extended reflection. Moreover the volume is extensively footnoted, and thus the pressed pastor or reader could confine himself or herself

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¹ J. Calvin commends clarity and brevity in his commentary on Romans (*The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and to the Thessalonians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1960] 1).

² D. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids/Cambridge: Eerdmans, 1996).

to the text (though there is a gold mine of research and wisdom in the footnotes), which I would roughly estimate to be about six hundred pages. The exposition of the text is also remarkably clear. The volume contains a brief introduction, and each section is introduced by a summary of its contents followed by verse-by-verse exegesis. Moo interacts extensively with other views, and yet he presents the material in such an organized fashion that the reader is not lost in a welter of opinions. The interpretation preferred by Moo is invariably defended with evidence and argumentation so that the reader not only knows what view Moo prefers but also why he opts for one interpretation rather than another.

Comparing Moo to some recent English commentaries on Romans may help us understand his distinctive contribution.³ Perhaps it is appropriate to begin with Murray.⁴ Readers would make a great mistake to ignore Murray's work, for in my own forthcoming commentary on Romans I often found Murray to be remarkably helpful.⁵ He does not slavishly repeat the views of commentators who precede him. He interacts in a fresh and dynamic way with the text. Indeed, Murray's theological depth makes his commentary one of the most practical for pastors.

But more than thirty years have passed since his work appeared, and thus a fresh appraisal of Romans is needed in light of modern scholarship. For instance, more and more scholars are persuaded that Romans was addressed to specific circumstances in Rome, a view that has become increasingly popular since Murray's day.⁶ Moo agrees—correctly, in my judgment—that Romans was addressed to specific circumstances in Rome, where Jews and Gentiles were suffering tensions. Thus he does not support the traditional view that Romans is a systematic compendium of Paul's theology. The traditional view is difficult to support since many Pauline themes are not developed in detail in Romans. For example, there is no developed Christological statement such as is found in Col 1:15–20 or Phil 2:6–11. Moreover nothing at all is said about the Lord's supper, and little is said about the Church or the second coming. Moo cautions, however, that resolving the difficulties between Jews and Gentiles is not the only reason Paul wrote Romans. Paul

³ I could include here the commentaries of E. Käsemann (*Commentary on Romans* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980]), P. Stuhlmacher (*Paul's Letter to the Romans: A Commentary* [Louisville: Westminster/John Knox, 1994]) and A. Schlatter (*Romans: The Righteousness of God* [Peabody: Hendrickson, 1995]), which have in recent years been translated into English. Stuhlmacher's commentary is filled with insights and is quite useful, but it is too brief to be compared to Moo's work. Schlatter's work is unique in the commentary genre. It is more of a theological commentary than a verse-by-verse exposition of the text. Schlatter is often brilliant, but the commentary style (and occasionally the content) is idiosyncratic, and thus his commentary will not likely gain a popular following in the United States. Käsemann's work is remarkable for its pithiness and the sustained attempt to defend justification as the theme of the letter. Most English students will become lost rather quickly by the erudition that marks Käsemann's commentary, for his clarity suffers when it is transferred to the English-speaking world.

⁴ J. Murray, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT: Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959, 1965).

⁵ The commentary is forthcoming from Baker Book House.

⁶ For a volume examining a number of issues relative to Romans, especially the purpose of the letter, see *The Romans Debate* (ed. K. P. Donfried; rev. ed.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1991).

developed his theology in a more extensive fashion in Romans than his other letters to secure Roman support for his mission by explaining his view of the law and salvation history. The traditional view rightly perceives that Romans is theologically the most comprehensive letter written by Paul, and Moo explains why this is so. Paul needed to explain to the Romans his theology, particularly as it related to the law and salvation history, so that they could wholeheartedly support his mission to Spain. If doubts lingered about the legitimacy of Paul's gospel, especially in areas that were controversial between Jews and Gentiles, then the Roman church would not stand behind the Pauline mission. Moo's conclusion regarding the situation that provoked Romans is characteristic of his commentary: balanced, careful and thorough. He explains various positions fairly and clearly and is always judicious in setting forth his reasons for preferring a particular view.

One of the great strengths of Moo's commentary is that he reads Romans theologically. Many commentators disavow any theological synthesis in writing a commentary, thinking that such an enterprise either swerves away from the text or is inherently distorting. I would maintain, on the contrary, that the richest and greatest commentaries on Romans take Paul seriously as a theologian. It is precisely here that we evangelicals, as long as we derive Paul's theology from a careful reading of all his letters, can do work that is deeper and more creative than those who eschew any theological synthesis. If the theological dimension of Paul is squelched, scholars end up merely describing what Paul says in the letter. A great commentary, however, explains a letter exegetically and theologically. In my opinion Moo succeeds in this endeavor. He is not afraid to broach theological issues. They are explored often and in some depth, and thus his commentary is a great contribution to the study of Romans. For the remaining portion of this review I will touch on some of the major issues he explores. I will also continue to compare Moo with other commentators on Romans.

I. THE LAW IN OTHER COMMENTARIES AND IN MOO

A major issue that marks Romans commentaries is the position adopted vis-à-vis Paul and the law. Murray represents a rather standard Reformed view, and Charles Cranfield defends a similar view in some detail.⁷ Cranfield's commentary is marked by a depth of insight and scholarship that make it indispensable for any serious student of Romans. He has drunk deeply at the well of the ancient commentators in the history of the Church, and he also takes Paul seriously as a theologian. Both Murray and Cranfield wrote their commentaries on Romans, however, before the impact of the massive work of E. P. Sanders,⁸ whose view is now well known and need not be rehearsed in detail here. Suffice it to say that he challenges the notion

⁷ C. E. B. Cranfield, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1975, 1979).

⁸ E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977).

that the Judaism of Paul's day was marked by legalism. Instead, the pattern of religion was covenantal nomism in which obedience to the law was a response to God's covenantal grace. Both Murray and Cranfield, like most previous commentators, maintain that Paul responded to the legalism of Judaism. Sanders challenges such a thesis by forcefully arguing that the notion that Judaism was legalistic is a myth.

Taking advantage of Sanders' paradigm relative to Judaism is James Dunn, who works out his "new perspective" on Paul in his commentary.⁹ He contends that Paul does not fault the Jews for legalism. What troubles Paul is that the Jews of his day were ethnocentric and nationalistic.¹⁰ They excluded Gentiles from participation in the Abrahamic promise, claiming that Gentiles had to become Jews to enter the people of God. Paul's primary complaint with the Jews, says Dunn, is that they were exclusivists instead of inclusivists. They shut Gentiles out of the people of God by insisting on circumcision, food laws, and observance of days. Paul, on the other hand, teaches that Gentiles can become part of the people of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Dunn has become one of the most prominent and persuasive advocates of the new perspective on Paul.

It is interesting to see how other recent commentaries have responded to the work of Sanders and Dunn. One might expect Roman Catholic commentaries, given the polarization between Catholics and Protestants historically, to embrace the new position. Joseph Fitzmyer, however, brushes aside the views of Sanders and Dunn rather quickly, arguing that Paul opposes merit theology.¹¹ Fitzmyer's work reflects deep learning and acquaintance with the views of the early Christian fathers. The extensive bibliography alone, unparalleled in any other commentary on Romans, is worth the price of the book. But the commentary section itself is rather spare, and Fitzmyer is not as interested in theological synthesis as one might wish.¹² The name of Leon Morris is well known within evangelicalism, and his work is marked by thoroughness and a clear explanation of the text. His commentary on Romans is no exception, and yet it is rather surprising that a 1988 commentary fails to interact at all with the work of Sanders and some of the early articles of Dunn relative to Paul and the law.¹³ Morris shows little evidence of taking seriously the revolution that has rocked NT studies relative to Paul and the law. This makes his commentary less useful, since a modern commentator must respond to those who have posed questions about the traditional interpretation of the text. John Stott, on the other hand, is well aware of recent debates and presents a well-argued case for a more traditional position.

⁹ J. D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8 and Romans 9–16* (WBC; Dallas: Word, 1988).

¹⁰ A similar view of Romans is propounded in the commentary by J. A. Ziesler, *Paul's Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Trinity, 1989).

¹¹ J. A. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1993).

¹² Another helpful Catholic commentary is by B. Byrne, *Romans* (Collegeville: Glazier, 1996). Byrne also dismisses the views of Dunn and Sanders and is quite similar to Fitzmyer in his view of the law.

¹³ L. Morris, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988).

Stott's commentary is the model of a popular commentary, for it is exegetically sound and pastorally applicable.¹⁴

One of the strengths of Moo's commentary is that he interacts extensively with the new perspective on Paul and presents his own position clearly and forcefully. "Works of law" in Paul does not focus, *contra* Dunn, on the parts of the law that segregate Jews from Gentiles—namely, circumcision, Sabbath, and food laws. "Works of law" refers rather to the deeds of the law as a whole, according to Moo, and cannot be limited to only part of the law. Moo's argument regarding the meaning of "works of law" and "law" is detailed and persuasive. It harks back to his 1983 article on the meaning of "law" in Paul, which is probably the single most important article for determining how Paul uses the term *nomos*.¹⁵ When Paul says that neither Jews nor Gentiles can be righteous by works of law (Rom 3:20) he means, says Moo, that no one can keep the law to a sufficient degree to be right before God. In other words, Paul teaches that one must keep the law perfectly in order to be justified. Such perfect law keeping is impossible, and thus one can be right with God only through faith in Jesus Christ. I believe Moo is substantially correct here, though perhaps he should emphasize a bit more that Paul directs his criticisms against Jews who tried to cloak themselves in their covenantal privilege in Romans 2. In any case, Moo is right in saying that Paul indicts the Jews because of their failure to keep the law. The emphasis is not on the exclusion of the Gentiles. It is on the failure of the Jews to keep the law they treasure and teach.

The other burning question is whether Paul's discussion of the law responds in part to Jewish legalism. It is becoming increasingly popular to answer with a resounding "No." Moo rightly emphasizes that Paul speaks against Torah as the path to righteousness because of his salvation-historical perspective. Insofar as they emphasize this truth Sanders and Dunn are on target. (Indeed, it would be fair to say that Moo does a particularly fine job throughout the commentary of demonstrating the redemptive-historical cast of Paul's thought.) But Moo also demonstrates in his careful exegesis of texts such as Rom 3:27–4:8; 9:30–10:8 that Paul counters the idea that one can achieve righteousness by works. Both texts contain a fundamental opposition between works and faith. The opposition between faith and works cannot be submerged in its entirety into the salvation-historical sea. Moo's sober exegesis demonstrates that the fundamental contrast in these texts is between believing and doing. He cautions us against thinking that all Jews bought into merit theology. Nonetheless some Jews fell into such a trap. And, as Moo observes, this is scarcely surprising since all human beings are prone to pride. Dunn and others have strongly challenged the Reformation view that

¹⁴ J. Stott, *Romans: God's Good News for the World* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1994).

¹⁵ D. J. Moo, "Law, 'Works of the Law,' and Legalism in Paul," *WTJ* 45 (1983) 73–100. J. A. Fitzmyer also demonstrates that recent evidence from Qumran supports this view ("Paul's Jewish Background and the Deeds of the Law," *According to Paul: Studies in the Theology of the Apostle* [New York: Paulist, 1993] 18–35).

Paul opposed Jewish legalism. Moo has now demonstrated that the Reformers were on target in saying Paul opposed legalism.

Another controversy, which may be unfamiliar to some readers, is how to render the phrase *pistis Iēsou Christou* in Rom 3:22–26. Traditionally the phrase has been translated “faith in Jesus Christ,” but lately more and more scholars prefer “faithfulness of Jesus Christ.” The Greek is ambiguous and could be rendered either way. In recent years a veritable flood of scholars are endorsing the latter view. There is not space to enter into the debate here, but Moo defends cogently and convincingly the traditional view that “faith in Jesus Christ” is the superior interpretation. One argument in particular is decisive for me in this regard, and that is the continuity or flow of the argument from chap. 3 to chap. 4. Those who support “faithfulness of Christ” plausibly defend the idea that *pistis* in every instance in chap. 3 could refer to the faithfulness of Christ, but when we read chap. 4 it is abundantly clear that it is the personal faith of Abraham that is in Paul’s mind. Paul introduces Abraham because he is a paradigm for the Roman Christians, and he is pragmatic because he obtained righteousness by faith. It seems quite unlikely that Paul would emphasize in such detail that Abraham was righteous “by faith” in chap. 4, whereas in chap. 3 he would say that we are righteous by “Jesus’ faithfulness.” Just as he emphasizes that Abraham was right with God by faith in chap. 4, so too in chap. 3 he stresses that Christians are justified by faith. Another problem with the “faithfulness of Jesus Christ” interpretation emerges—namely, that there is not a single text that unambiguously speaks of the “faithfulness of Jesus,” whereas the necessity to exercise faith is often taught in Paul.

A text that is quite controversial is Romans 2, where Paul speaks of justification by works (2:13) and says that those who do good works will receive eternal life (2:6; cf. 2:7–10, 26–29). How could Paul say that eternal life is according to works when he also maintains in 3:20 that no one is righteous by doing works of law? Moo says that Paul means just what he says. Those who do good works will receive eternal life. But, says Moo, the problem is that no one does the necessary good works. All fall short of perfection, and no one is justified by works of law (3:20). Interpreting what Paul means in Romans 2 is quite difficult, and Moo may be correct in suggesting that the chapter demands perfection for eternal life—a perfection no sinner ever attains. It seems to me, though, and I argue this case in more detail in my own forthcoming commentary, that Rom 2:28–29 reveals that Paul has in mind the good works that are done by the power of the Spirit. The new-covenant work of the Spirit produces good works in believers’ lives, and those who do such good works will receive eternal life. No contradiction exists with 3:20 because Paul there excludes good works as a basis for righteousness, but in Romans 2 he says that one will receive eternal life according to one’s good works. The distinction is an important one, for earning or meriting eternal life is excluded—but Paul also teaches that one must be changed in order to receive eternal life on the last day. The structure of 2:6–11 also supports my interpretation, for Paul threatens those who do evil with judgment and promises eternal life for those who practice what is good. He gives no hint that no

one actually does the necessary good works. The parallelism between doing good and evil in vv. 7–10 suggests that some do what is good and receive eternal life, while others do what is evil and face God's wrath. This interpretation also seems preferable because elsewhere Paul teaches that believers who practice evil will not inherit the kingdom (Gal 5:21; 1 Cor 6:9–11)—that is, they will not experience eternal life. Only those who sow to the Spirit will receive eternal life. Those who sow to the flesh will be destroyed (Gal 6:8; cf. Rom 8:13).

If one wanted to describe Moo's position on the law as a whole, it would be accurate to say that he adopts a nuanced Lutheran perspective on the law. That alone makes his commentary distinctive. In terms of the ongoing validity of the law, Moo maintains that the Torah came to an end with the coming of Christ. One period of salvation history ended, and another era began. Believers, therefore, are no longer under the law of Moses in any sense. Moo rejects any attempt to distinguish between the moral segments of the law and other aspects of it. The law is a unity and has passed away with the coming of Christ. It does not follow from this that the Christian is free from all moral norms, according to Moo, for the law of Christ is now the standard of life for believers. Moo rightly discerns the salvation-historical shift between the Testaments—something Cranfield, in my opinion, does not emphasize sufficiently. Moo is also correct in saying that the Mosaic law ended with the coming of Christ. It seems to me, though, that Paul understood the fulfillment of the new covenant (Jer 31:31–34) to involve the keeping of the moral norms of the OT law. To be sure, Paul nowhere explicitly distinguishes between moral norms of the law and the other aspects of the law. But his teaching on the law (see Rom 2:26–29; 8:4; 13:8–10) implies such a distinction. Practically speaking, the distinction between Moo and me on such an issue could be overemphasized, for the content of what we would both put into the law of Christ would be remarkably similar. The interpretation of some verses, however, seems to be affected. He labors to show that the fulfillment of the law in 8:4 is forensic only, whereas it seems much more likely that Paul is speaking of the actual fulfilling of the law in the everyday lives of Christian believers. It is fulfilled in “those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.” Moo is correct in emphasizing the newness of Paul's gospel, in which a new era in redemptive history is inaugurated. But it seems to me that Paul understood this newness to involve the keeping of the moral norms of the OT covenant by the power of the Holy Spirit (Ezek 11:18–19; 36:26–27).

II. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD AND THE “CENTER” OF ROMANS

One of the most important and controverted phrases in Romans is “righteousness of God” (1:17). We all know that Luther's new understanding of the term was formative for the Reformation, and debate about the meaning of the term continues to this day. Moo opts for a comprehensive meaning of the term, maintaining that God's righteousness refers to his saving activity by which he declares those who have faith to be right in his sight. Thus the

righteousness of God does not involve moral transformation or the infusion of righteousness. It is God's saving action on behalf of his people by which he counts them as right before him. I believe Moo is on target in describing God's righteousness as his saving activity and that this saving activity is to be understood in a forensic sense. The idea that God's righteousness should be understood as his transforming power has been advanced by Ernst Käsemann and Peter Stuhlmacher.¹⁶ Stuhlmacher argues that the early Luther espoused such a position but did not continue to emphasize it in his ongoing controversies with Catholicism.¹⁷ Käsemann and Stuhlmacher probably go too far in saying that God's righteousness is his faithfulness to all creation, and Stuhlmacher now admits that the term is not a technical one in apocalyptic.¹⁸ Moo carefully considers the evidence set forth by Käsemann *et al.* but comes to a more balanced conclusion than they, one that emphasizes the alien righteousness that belongs to believers in Christ.

Is the righteousness of God the "center" of Romans and of Paul's thought? Moo says it is a very important theme, but it is not the center. He sees salvation history or Christology as more central in Pauline thought and argues that the gospel is the theme of Romans. Moo is correct in not ascribing central status to justification and in perceiving the importance of salvation history and Christology. Justification falls under the umbrella of redemptive history instead of vice versa. Perhaps some have been tempted to identify justification as the center because of the historic debate between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Scholars such as Wrede and Schweitzer, on the other hand, were surely wrong to minimize the significance of justification, and Moo is much more balanced in concluding that righteousness is a very significant theme in Romans without being the center. Whether the gospel is the theme of Romans is more controversial, though Moo makes a good case for his thesis. The focus on the gospel in Rom 1:1, 16 certainly makes his suggestion attractive (cf. also 16:25). There is also little doubt that Romans contains an exposition of Paul's gospel. The gospel may be the leading theme in Romans, but it is not in my opinion the fundamental theme. The reason Paul expounds his gospel and engages in his ministry is so that God will be honored (1:5; 16:27). The root sin of human beings is their failure to honor and glorify God (1:21). Righteousness is by faith, and faith is so significant because it honors and glorifies God as the one who can meet every need (4:20). After Paul recounts God's plan in salvation history relative to Jews and Gentiles (9:1–11:35) he breaks into praise, giving God the glory for working out history with such wisdom (11:36). Paul focuses upon the gospel precisely because it brings praise and honor to God. Indeed, the book ends with the theme of

¹⁶ E. Käsemann, "The Righteousness of God' in Paul," *New Testament Questions of Today* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1969) 168–182; P. Stuhlmacher, *Gerechtigkeit Gottes bei Paulus* (FRLANT 87; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1966).

¹⁷ For an exposition of Stuhlmacher's view on righteousness that chronicles some changes in his thinking see S. Hafemann, "The 'Righteousness of God,'" in P. Stuhlmacher, *How to Do Biblical Theology* (Allison Park: Pickwick, 1995) xv–xli.

¹⁸ For documentation on this point see *ibid.* xl–xli n. 39.

God's glory (16:27). As Schlatter says, "Could there be a more fitting conclusion for Romans than *solī deo gloria*?"¹⁹

III. ROMANS 7

Romans is full of controverted texts, and one of the most disputed in the letter relates to Romans 7. Many scholars claim that 7:7–12 describes Adam's experience in the Garden, but Moo suggests that the experience of Israel when she received the law is relayed here. Moo's interpretation is a fascinating one and certainly a possibility, though I believe a reference to Paul himself is more likely. Moo must relativize the meaning of the term "alive" to sustain a reference to Israel. But once this move is made, then a reference to Paul himself is quite plausible—as long as we recognize that Paul refers to himself precisely because his experience is paradigmatic. The central objection to seeing a reference to Adam is that Adam lived before the era of the law, and the disjunction between Adam and the era of the law is crucial for Paul's understanding of salvation history.

Even more sharply contested is the spiritual status of the person described in 7:14–25. Is the "I" who cannot do what he desires and practices what he hates a Christian? Moo argues effectively that the person in view cannot be a believer, for no believer is a slave to sin (7:14) and held captive under its power (7:23). Such a conclusion by Moo may surprise some readers since his commentary is Reformed in its orientation. But it is a mark of his objectivity as a scholar that he is willing to consider whether the Augustinian interpretation is correct. As always he is exceedingly fair to those who espouse a different position. Moo rightly emphasizes that it is difficult to see how Paul could describe believers as slaves to sin and captives to sin. In fact in my own commentary on Romans I argue a view quite similar to Moo's. If 7:14–25 does not refer to believers, it does not follow that believers live sinlessly perfect lives or have no struggle with sin. Indeed, many Christians are convinced that the latter part of Romans 7 describes them precisely because the struggle with sin is so fierce. Once we see, however, that 7:14–25 portrays the experience of those who are totally defeated by sin—that is, in bondage to sin and captives to sin—then it becomes clear that believers are not in view in this text. Believers struggle with sin and are not free from sin since they live in the interval between the "already" and the "not yet," but they are not captives to sin.

IV. ROMANS 9–11

Romans 9–11 has increasingly been recognized by scholars to be a central part of the letter to the Romans. Moo concurs with this judgment and argues that it is an integral part of the Pauline gospel. Paul argues in this section that God's promises to Israel have not been rescinded and that they will in-

¹⁹ Schlatter, *Romans* 280.

deed be fulfilled. Some scholars have claimed that Paul's argument in this section is internally contradictory, but Moo defends well the coherence of Paul's thought. Other scholars have suggested that Israel will be saved without faith in Christ. This theory, though attractive, is shown to be wishful thinking through Moo's careful exegesis of the text. What does Paul mean when he says that "all Israel will be saved" (11:26)? The idea that the reference is to both Jews and Gentiles is rightly rejected, for the Jews are distinguished from the Gentiles in chaps. 9–11. Moo argues that the reference is to ethnic Israel and that Paul predicts the salvation of a great number of Israelites near the second coming of Christ. In my opinion this is the most satisfying interpretation of a controversial text.

Paul's words about predestination in these chapters have also precipitated a great deal of controversy in the history of the Church. Many scholars now maintain that Paul refers only to the historical destiny of nations or to corporate salvation in chap. 9. They thus deflect the predestinarian offense of the chapter. Moo rightly argues that both of these expedients are unconvincing. The issue in chap. 9 is not historical destiny but salvation. Paul is willing to be cursed (9:3) because Israel lacks salvation, and it is the fulfillment of God's saving promises that is in question in 9:6. Indeed, the terms "children of God" (9:8), "promise" (9:8–9), "election" (9:11), "works" and "calling" (9:12) show that soteriology is at stake here. Moo also rightly argues that one cannot separate individual and corporate election in this text. The two belong indissolubly together. Indeed, Moo even argues—again, rightly and courageously—that Paul teaches double predestination. But Moo is a Biblical theologian, and thus he also argues that Paul teaches human responsibility. Both divine sovereignty and human responsibility are maintained by Paul, and he provides no philosophical resolution of the problem. We must not, says Moo, deny one pole or the other, for the two are ultimately related in a mysterious way that exceeds our understanding.

V. CONCLUSION

In this review I have dug some shafts in which a few of Moo's conclusions that would be of interest to the reader are described and discussed. I hope the reader's appetite is whetted to explore the whole commentary, for the work is an exegetical and theological gold mine. It is sure to be a standard commentary that will be consulted by all for years to come.