

INTRODUCTION

This issue of *Letter & Spirit* continues now for a third time the exploration of the reception history and influence of St. Paul in the life of the Church and in her theology. The articles in this issue demonstrate and illuminate Paul's hermeneutical principles of biblical unity, of coherence, and of the recapitulation of the story of salvation history. These Pauline principles of interpretation have always been fundamental to an understanding that the New Testament does not replace the Old, but fulfills, completes, and transcends it.

In their study "The Diffusion of Death: Romans 5:12 and Original Sin," **Scott W. Hahn** and **Curtis J. Mitch** propose a reading of Romans 5:12 that differs from traditional as well as modern interpretations of the text. The authors contend that Paul is concerned in this passage with the origin of spiritual rather than physical death, and that this condition of spiritual lifelessness spreads to all of Adam's descendants, with the result that all become sinners. That Paul understands "death" as spiritual death is supported by contextual and intertextual arguments, and the precise relationship between sin and death is reconsidered on the basis of philological evidence for taking the final clause of Romans 5:12 consecutively rather than causally, as in most modern translations. The Council of Trent's teaching that original sin is at bottom "the death of the soul" in Adam and his progeny is shown to have a revealed foundation in Scripture.

Since the Reformation, Paul's account of justification has been ground zero for both exegetical and ecclesiastical debates. While E. P. Sanders has moved the center of Pauline soteriology to participation in Christ, justification remains a major point of contention across the various "perspectives" on Paul. In his article "New Covenant Justification by Cardiac Righteousness: An Augustinian Perspective on Pauline Justification," **John A. Kincaid** offers a path forward for the justification debates by building on the recent contributions of Michael Gorman and John Barclay by means of Augustine. It is argued that Augustine's account of Pauline justification centers on the saving righteousness of God as a "cardiac righteousness" that is comprehensively empowered by grace and operative by the virtue of faith through the Spirit. It is further argued that Augustine's account of justification finds corroboration in the Pauline corpus, in particular, in 2 Corinthians 3:1–11. This paper contends that Paul's ministry of righteousness entails the promised heart-renovation spoken of in Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. Against that backdrop, it is argued that δικαιοσύνη in 2 Corinthians 3:9 is both juridical and moral, what can rightly be called cardiac righteousness, and this reading fits nicely within both Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts. In answering potential objections to this account, this article highlights that the final judgment is an assessment

of the condition of the heart, thereby not only requiring that Paul's use of *δικαιόω* be realistic not counterfactual, but also necessitating that justification include cardiac righteousness.

In his article "Paul's Rhetorical Purpose in Ephesians 4:9-10: *Upsilon Vector Mimēsis*," **William Bales** seeks to determine Paul's rhetorical purpose in a notoriously difficult text, Ephesians 4:9-10, "In saying, 'He ascended,' what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things." Bales' study exposes the need not only for technical scholarship but for a kind of "homiletical awareness"—that Paul uses ancient rhetorical techniques in his efforts to persuade his Ephesian audience to Christ-like imitation. The fruit of Bales' study is not only a clearer vision of what Paul is saying in Ephesians chapter four, but a deeper appreciation of Paul's message in the letter as a whole.

In his study "Mystical Marriage as Temple Service in Ephesians," **André Villeneuve** explores how the letter to the Ephesians paints a rich picture of the Church as Body of Christ, as holy Temple, and as the Messiah's mystical bride. Since Christ chose the elect "before the foundation of the world," the Church is pre-existent, even mystically preceding Adam and Eve. The eternal union of Christ and the Church was the "cosmic blueprint" for Adam's "one-flesh" union with Eve, and the perfect model to be imitated in every human marriage. Christ's union with the Church is rooted in his self-sacrifice at the Cross, which demonstrated his all-surpassing love for his bride. The marriage is also portrayed as a Temple service that sanctifies her through the "nuptial bath" of Baptism and "nourishes and cherishes" her as his own flesh. Christ's followers are called to imitate His sacrificial love for the Church and His work of sanctification that will reach its completion at the end of time.

St. Basil the Great has been celebrated by the Church for centuries as a pioneering father of the monastic life and as a champion of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. In his essay "St. Basil's Debt to St. Paul," **Stephen M. Hildebrand** explores in these two areas the decisive influence that St. Paul exercised on St. Basil. The article concludes that Basil's whole ascetic corpus is, essentially, a Pauline charism of the word (1 Cor. 12:8), and that from Paul Basil drew his understanding of the rank of the Holy Spirit and his ordered relationship to the Father and the Son.

In his essay "A Few Obscure Men: Augustine's Reception of Saint Paul's *Ignobilitas*," **David Vincent Meconi, S.J.**, shows how Augustine appropriated the thought and theology of the Pauline epistles. From a particular disgust for his lack of erudition and style to a profound and formative appreciation for Paul's writings, Augustine came to rely on Paul to unravel the thorniest of theological aporiae. Paul's direct link between the goodness of visible creation

and the singular essence of the Creator (Rom 1) lifted Augustine from the pitfalls of Manichaeism. Paul's deep, visceral regard for the need for divine grace (Rom 5) gave Augustine firm direction in his prolonged battle against Pelagius and his followers. Paul's understanding of sin as a divided heart (Rom 7) and Christ as the only true remedy for wholeness provided Augustine with what he needed to understand the entire drama of Christian salvation.

In his article "The Spiritual Experience of Saint Paul in the Monastic Theology of St. Bernard," **Fr. Thomas Esposito, O.Cist.**, analyzes the extensive use that the great Cistercian Bernard of Clairvaux makes of the Apostle's life and letters. For the 12th century Abbot of Clairvaux, Paul is a model of conversion and obedience for his monks to imitate and an illustrious example of someone who has renounced his own selfish will to follow humbly the will of Christ. Bernard regards Paul as the great teacher of mystical experience, learned through the monastic *conversatio*, or way of life, which generates desire for union with Christ in the Holy Spirit. Esposito also presents a general overview of Bernard's theological anthropology, highlighting several specific Pauline phrases that structure Bernard's understanding of man and the monastic life.

In his article "Exegesis and Ecclesiology in Augustine's *City of God*" **John C. Cavadini** explores Augustine's exegetical methodology in Book 14 of *City of God*. Cavadini shows that for Augustine—and for us—reading the stories of the Old Testament within a salvation-historical framework of Pauline recapitulation is essential to preserving the very theology of the church. If we lose a sense of reading the Scriptures "mystically," then history flattens out into a secular enterprise, an enterprise concerned merely with the city of this world and its flawed learning. The Bible is reduced to moralism. Our ecclesiology becomes both evangelical and Protestant, not a "sacrament" of anyone's sacrificial love but reducible to the will and virtue of those assembled.

Douglas G. Bushman's translation of "The Justice of God, Principle of the History of Salvation," reproduces part of an ecumenical course that **Stanislas Lyonnet, S.J.**, taught in 1967. Focusing on Romans, Lyonnet demonstrates St. Paul's fidelity to the Old Testament and his consistency with contemporary Judaism by stressing that God's justice is *saving* justice. Definitively revealed in the mystery of Christ, God's justice has the same effect as his mercy: the justification of sinners. Lyonnet shows that the Church Fathers and Thomas Aquinas understood St. Paul in this way. He elucidates the opposition of a biblical understanding of God's justice as synonymous with his mercy to a theological understanding that identifies God's justice with his wrath. Lyonnet's mastery of historical sources assures this piece's enduring relevance.

