

PREFACE

Looking back over 35 years of scholarly writing is a bit like looking back at a road over which you have driven and realizing that the car window had been open and papers had been blowing out. There, behind you, is a string of publications scattered across the landscape of various journals, *Festschriften* and other collections. There may be something to be said for retracing your route, gathering up the bits and pieces, and seeing if you can put them back where they belong.

These essays take their place, of course, within the larger construal of Pauline theology about which I have been writing on and off most of my adult life, and which now finds a new expression in *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (PFG). But at several points along the journey I have tried to put down certain markers, and have tried as well to respond to criticisms and defend points I had made earlier. It may now be useful to have all of these pieces gathered together in one place.

I have made no attempt to bring these essays up to date. They stand as markers to ‘the way I saw things at the time’. However, I have been surprised, re-reading them after (in some cases) the interval of half a lifetime, to discover how much of what I still think I think was present, at least by implication, in some of the earliest pieces. Whether this shows mere stubbornness, or rather patience in drawing out meaning over time, others must judge. Nor are they uniform in style or even genre: some retain the oral format of their original presentation, some are geared specifically to current issues and moments within the life of the church, some are explicitly apologetic, defending a position taken earlier against specific criticism, and some are in a more traditional scholarly format. Like Paul himself (a point made by John A. T. Robinson in his *Redating the New Testament* [London: SCM Press, 1976]), there is no reason why a scholar who has also worked within the ongoing life of the church should not write in several different styles in quick succession.

This is not, of course, my first collection of Pauline articles. *The Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* was published in 1991 (UK) and 1992 (USA), and many of the pieces there remain seminal for all my subsequent work. Likewise, the book published under the quirky title *What St Paul Really Said* (1997) contained reworked versions of various lectures and essays that I had developed in the mid-1990s, and no attempt

is made to reproduce any of them here (though one or two pieces here will inevitably overlap with some of that material). There is, likewise, a certain amount of overlap between some of the present essays and some of the material in *Paul: Fresh Perspectives* (US title *Paul in Fresh Perspective*) (2005), and of course *Justification: God's Plan and Paul's Vision* (2009). I hope that will be helpful to many and irritating to few if any.

By no means all these articles have, as it were, the same status within my developing project of Pauline theology. Some, as will readily be seen, are ephemeral, responding to particular moments and challenges. Others, however, are loadbearing, offering a fresh account of a particular theme or set of passages and arguing the point more fully than I can do in *PFM*. The loadbearing essays include the very first one ('The Paul of History and the Apostle of Faith') and the very last ('Paul and the Patriarch'), and also, particularly, 'Paul, Arabia and Elijah', 'New Exodus, New Inheritance', '4QMMT and Paul', 'Romans 2.17–3.9', and 'Messiahship in Galatians'. My repeated attempts to say something sensible about Paul and Caesar (three essays here, and frequent sections in some of the others) act more as signposts to the fuller, and I hope more nuanced, account I have given in *PFM*.

It was decided, in assembling these essays from a period of 35 years, to leave them in chronological order of composition rather than trying to group them in themes. There may be something to be said, if any are so minded, for tracing the development of a strand of thought and seeing how different ideas gradually emerged. They divide quite nicely into those I wrote during my time, first, in Merton College, Oxford (1975–8), Downing College, Cambridge (1978–81) and Worcester College, Oxford (1986–93) (the essay on Käsemann's Romans commentary was written in Cambridge though not published until we had moved to Montreal, where I was from 1981 to 1986); second, in Lichfield (1994–9) and Westminster (2000–3); third, in Durham (2003–10), and fourth and finally, in St Andrews (2010 to the present). The four sections form a kind of arch, from the academy to the church and back again—though I was active in pastoral and preaching ministry throughout my early academic life, and tried to keep up my academic work during the three periods in which I was primarily involved in church work. For ease of reference, the pagination of the original publication has been inserted in each case. I have added short autobiographical remarks to each in order to contextualize the writing within 'real life'. I hope younger scholars in particular will be encouraged to see that essays and reflections do not necessarily emerge from some grand, well-organized original design, but often proceed in fits and starts in what seems at the time a fairly random fashion, only gaining such little overall coherence as they may have with the benefit of long and perhaps generous hindsight.

The present volume could not have arrived at its present form without the energetic and enthusiastic help of my current research assistant, Jamie Davies. This is only one aspect of the many tasks on which he has been engaged on my behalf, and it has been a joy to leave the collection of the essays, in some cases their transcription, and in many cases the seeking of permission to reprint (for which I am grateful), in his capable hands. Jamie

is the most recent in a notable line of assistants to whom I have been indebted over the last twelve years, starting with Nick Perrin in Westminster, continuing first with Archie Wright and then with Ben Blackwell in Durham, and including Chad Marshall during my four months in Princeton in 2009. I list alongside them Kevin Bush, who has nobly set up, organised and run 'my' website (<www.ntwrightpage.com>) and has advised me on all kinds of matters to do with that way of presenting my work and drawing out discussion and debate. I dedicate this book to all six of them with gratitude for their fellowship, their hard work, and their constant and cheerful wisdom.

N. T. Wright

St Mary's College
St Andrews
Lent 2013