

J. DE WAAL DRYDEN

Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter

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Theology and Ethics in 1 Peter

Paraenetic Strategies
for Christian Character Formation

Mohr Siebeck

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Preface

No man is an island, not even the postgraduate research student. No matter how much of a project like this one is the result of personal force of will, the fact remains that it is also the result of a nexus of human connections, each making uniquely different contributions to the whole. But since my name alone accompanies this work, I owe a debt to acknowledge the myriad of support that fostered this thesis on so many fronts.

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Our families were a faithful source of encouragement and practical support, and we owe them many thanks for their belief in us and commitment to us. In innumerable practical details they made our life across the Ocean possible. For their understanding, flexibility, and solidarity we are deeply grateful. Special thanks to my dad, Tom Dryden, who proofread this thesis prior to both submission and publication, and to my father-in-law, Woody Harrison, for providing space for me in the library at his law offices to do the final thesis editing prior to submission.

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To my college, St. Edmunds, I owe a debt of gratitude for being the face of the university to me. I am thankful for the pleasures of fine formal meals and for financial assistance to aid me in my academic pursuits. Special thanks to my tutor Peter Jackson and his wife for their hospitality.

I also wish to thank the Cambridge Overseas Trust for financial assistance to defray some of the cost of my studies.

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I also feel indebtedness to all the men and women who have been my conversation partners in the study of 1 Peter, who have dedicated so much work to furthering our understanding of this document so rich with theological depth and human integrity. I am particularly thankful for the commentaries of Bud Achtemeier, Jack Elliott, and Dean Selwyn. (I owe a special thanks to Jack Elliott for giving me access to a draft of his commentary prior to its publication.) Also of special note, the various articles by Willem van Unnik on 1 Peter were of great benefit to me. In addition to these print conversation partners, I wish to thank Dr. Hans Bayer for pushing me in particular in my understanding of the benediction of 1 Peter 1:3-12, and Dr. Robert Yarbrough who introduced me to this epistle in Greek and set alight my passion for it.

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J. Dryden
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Christmas 2005

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Abbreviations

AB	Anchor Bible
AnBib	<i>Analecta biblica</i>
ANRW	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung</i> . Edited by H. Temporini and W. Hasse (Berlin, 1972–)
ANTC	Abingdon New Testament Commentaries
ASR	<i>American Sociological Review</i>
AUSS	<i>Andrews University Seminary Studies</i>
BDAG	Bauer, W., F.W. Danker, W.F. Arndt, and F.W. Gingrich. <i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> , 3 rd ed. (Chicago, 1999)
BDF	Blass F., A. Debrunner, and R. Funk. <i>A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> (Chicago, 1961)
Bib	<i>Biblica</i>
BNTC	Black's New Testament Commentaries
BTB	<i>Biblical Theology Bulletin</i>
CBQ	<i>Catholic Bible Quarterly</i>
EKKNT	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
EM	<i>Moral Epistles</i> , Seneca
EMSP	European Monographs in Social Psychology
EN	<i>Nicomachean Ethics</i> , Aristotle
ExAud	<i>Ex Auditu</i>
ExpTim	<i>Expository Times</i>
FBL	Foreign Biblical Library
FRLANT	Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des alten und neuen Testaments
HCRHP	<i>Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period (330 B.C. – A.D. 400)</i> . Edited by S.E. Porter. (Leiden, 1997)
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
ICC	International Critical Commentary
IDB	<i>The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by G.A. Buttrick (New York, 1962)
Int	<i>Interpretation</i>
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
JETS	<i>Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society</i>
JRE	<i>Journal of Religious Ethics</i>
JRH	<i>Journal of Religious History</i>
JSNTSS	Journal for the Study of the New Testament: Supplement Series
JSOTSS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KEK	Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament
KTAH	Key Themes in Ancient History
Lange	Lange's Commentary on the Holy Scripture
LEC	Library of Early Christianity

LSJ	Liddel H.G., R. Scott, and H.S. Jones. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> (Oxford, 1996)
NABPRSSS	National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion Special Study Series
<i>NewDocs</i>	<i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity</i> . Edited by G.H. Horsley and S. Llewelyn (North Ryde, NSW, 1981–)
NCB	New Century Bible
NIBCNT	New International Bible Commentary on the New Testament
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
NTD	Das Neue Testament Deutsch
NTF	Neutestamentliche Forschungen
NTL	New Testament Library
NTR	New Testament Readings
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
NTTS	New Testament Tools and Studies
RVV	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBLDS	Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SBLMS	Society of Biblical Literature Monograph Series
SBLBSBS	Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SCHNT	Studia ad corpus hellenisticum Novi Testamenti
SCP	Studies in Classical Philology
<i>SJT</i>	<i>Scottish Journal of Theology</i>
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SNTW	Studies in the New Testament and its World
SPIB	Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici
<i>TDNT</i>	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel (Grand Rapids, 1964–1976)
<i>TRu</i>	<i>Theologische Rundschau</i>
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der ältern Kirche</i>

Introduction

It has been many years now since Bernhard Weiß observed that, in 1 Peter 'the way in which the didactic and hortatory elements...are closely interwoven throughout, is characteristically distinct from the Paulines.'¹ Weiß noted two important things: (1) 1 Peter does not follow the Pauline organizing principle of separating 'indicative and imperative',² but instead (2) interweaves theology and ethics throughout the epistle. While not an entirely novel insight on the part of Weiß,³ it is one that has stood the test of time. Throughout subsequent research, this 'unPauline' interweaving of theology and ethics has been a well-rehearsed theme in Petrine studies.⁴

Selwyn, for example, comments that the, 'close interweaving of the two strands [of theology and ethics] makes it difficult to expound the teaching of the Epistle in regard to either without some overlapping.' He warns that, 'we may be most true to its message if we do not try to disentangle them

¹ B. WEISS, *A Manual of Introduction to the New Testament*, trans. A.J.K. DAVIDSON, FBL (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1887), 2:143.

² In Pauline studies there are two senses in which the paradigm of 'indicative and imperative' is used. The first can be called the 'organizational' indicative and imperative, where a first major section of theological material is followed by a second major section of ethical implication based upon the first theological section. Thus, imperative follows indicative at both the literary and logical level. The second sense might be called the 'eschatological' indicative and imperative, where Paul places both indicative and imperative immediately together in (eschatological) tension, as in Gal. 5:25: εἰ ζῶμεν πνεύματι, πνεύματι καὶ στοιχοῦμεν. It was this second sense of 'indicative and imperative' which was the concern of BULTMANN in his influential essay 'Das Problem der Ethik Bei Paulus,' *ZNW* 23 (1924): 123–40. In referring to the Pauline 'indicative and imperative', I am referring to the first 'organizational' variety. While 1 Peter often places the theological grounds for actions in the immediate context of commands, it does not utilize the second eschatological paradigm either.

³ FRONMÜLLER, for example, previously noted, 'Dogmatics and Ethics do not occur separately in this Epistle, but are often directly conjoined, and frequently present a quick, even bold transition from the one to the other.' G.F.C. FRONMÜLLER, *The Epistles General of Peter*, trans. J.I. MOMBERT, *Lange NT* 9.2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1870), 5.

⁴ As a word of clarification, the phrase 'Petrine studies' is used in two distinct senses: the broader sense being the historical study of the person of Simon Peter, the disciple of Jesus, and the writings associated with that name, biblical (Mark, 1 and 2 Peter) and apocryphal (Acts and Apocalypse of Peter), the second more narrow sense being the study of 1 Peter. It is this latter sense that I am using here. The distinction is, of course, general and not airtight, because our knowledge of the person of Peter and his biography informs our understandings of the writings associated with him and vice versa.

too much.⁵ Van Unnik characterizes the epistle as a 'constant dialectical process between dogmatics and ethics,'⁶ adding that, 'it is impossible to distinguish as clearly as one can in many of Paul's letters between doctrinal and ethical sections.'⁷ More recently Elliott has noted that the 'intricate interrelationship of kerygma and parenesis is one of 1 Peter's most distinguishing features among the epistolary literature of the NT.'⁸

In an attempt to explain this difference between these 'Pauline' and 'Petrine' patterns, Martin has offered a distinction between two different types of Greco-Roman paraenetic texts: 'In the first type, the ontological status and the admonitions are expressed in two distinct sections of the document.'⁹ Whereas, 'In the second type of paraenetic structure, the ontology and the admonitions are interwoven. Statements of ontological status are joined directly with their appropriate exhortations.'¹⁰ Thus, the typical Pauline paradigm of 'indicative and imperative' fits with the first type of text, while 1 Peter, where 'statements of ontological status are intercalated with their correlative admonitions,'¹¹ comports with the second variety. In this way, the difference between Petrine and Pauline styles is understandable in its historical context as choices among available stylistic options.

Martin gives us a place to begin to understand Petrine style, but his distinctions needs nuancing. While it is true that exhortations in 1 Peter are frequently accompanied by immediate justification, it has also been recognized that the theology of the epistle, taken as a *whole*, provides a network of theological grounding for injunctions *throughout* the epistle. Also, while it would be misleading to speak of an 'indicative section' at the beginning of the epistle, it is true that the author has concentrated his theology in 1:3–2:12, and that these verses are recognized to be in some sense foundational to the ethical exhortations of the entire epistle.¹² One

⁵ E.G. SELWYN, *The First Epistle of St. Peter: The Greek Text with Introduction, Notes and Essays*, 2d ed. (London: MacMillan, 1947), 65.

⁶ W.C. VAN UNNIK, 'Christianity According to 1 Peter,' *ExpTim* 68 (1956): 81.

⁷ W.C. VAN UNNIK, 'First Letter of Peter,' *IDB*, 3:759. Cf. C.E.B. CRANFIELD, *The First Epistle of Peter* (London: SCM, 1950), 122, 'Whereas others might – more logically and more neatly maybe – put first testimony and then as a separate division the exhortation that follows from it, Peter's way is to weave the two strands together.'

⁸ J.H. ELLIOTT, 'The Rehabilitation of an Exegetical Step-Child: 1 Peter in Recent Research,' *JBL* 95.2 (1976): 25.

⁹ T.W. MARTIN, *Metaphor and Composition in 1 Peter* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1992), 140. He cites the later dialogues of PLATO as indicative of this type.

¹⁰ MARTIN, *Metaphor*, 141.

¹¹ MARTIN, *Metaphor*, 141. He adds that, 'This compositional structure has always troubled scholars who have approach 1 Peter from a Pauline perspective.'

¹² Cf. D.W. KENDALL, 'The Introductory Character of 1 Peter 1:3–12,' (Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary, 1984), 103–20. Contra E. RICHARD, 'The Functional Christology

example of this is the collocation of corporate identity titles in 2:4–12, which provides normative interpretive images for the whole of the epistle's social ethics. Just as it is now recognized that the old Pauline paradigm of 'indicative and imperative' is not without its difficulties,¹³ neither is the alternative paradigm of piecemeal interweaving wholly representative of 1 Peter.

In this brief overview of roughly a hundred years of Petrine scholarship (1886–1992) one is struck by just how little progress has been made in our understanding of the relationship between theology and ethics. The statement of Weiß in the 1880s is comparable to those made today in monographs, commentaries, and NT introductions. Given that, as Elliott said, this is one of 1 Peter's 'most distinguishing features,' it is surprising that our knowledge has progressed little beyond the dictum that the letter does not follow the Pauline pattern but instead interweaves theological and ethical discourse. There is a need for more work that can engender a deeper and more nuanced appreciation of this intertwining of ethics and theology.

At least part of the reason for the meager progress in this area has been the primary concern among Petrine specialists with diachronic form-critical questions. Since Selwyn, form-criticism has been the dominant methodological approach in the study of 1 Peter. This is understandable, since so many questions still survive as to the relation of 1 Peter to the rest of the NT literature (especially the Pauline epistles)¹⁴ and to other early Christian traditions (whether written or oral) incorporated by the author into the epistle. An unfortunate side effect, though, of this approach is the categorical separation of theology and ethics inherent in form-critical methodologies.¹⁵ In distinguishing kerygma

of First Peter,' in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C.H. TALBERT, NABPRSSS 9 (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 1986), 123–4, who recognizes the function of 1:3–12, but argues that, 'From that point on, the letter without fail consists of alternations of imperative and indicative, that is, advice followed by examples or statements of theological justification.'

¹³ See V.P. FURNISH, *Theology and Ethics in Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1968), 98–111, where he establishes 'the impossibility of neatly distinguishing between dogmatic and moral themes' (99).

¹⁴ For a recent study, see J. HERZER, *Petrus oder Paulus?: Studien über das Verhältnis des Ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition*, WUNT 103 (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 1998).

¹⁵ A seminal expression can be found in M. DIBELIUS, *From Tradition to Gospel*, trans. B.L. WOOLF (London: Ivor, Nicholson and Watson, 1934), 239, 'Thus we see that the hortatory sections of the Pauline epistles have nothing to do with the theoretic foundations of the ethics of the Apostle, and very little with other ideas peculiar to him. Rather they belong to tradition. In this respect Paul is like the other Christian missionaries.'

and paraenesis, form-criticism brings to 1 Peter an agenda of separating the black beads of kerygma from the red beads of paraenesis. While it is certain that the author of 1 Peter has made use of a variety of traditional materials, the author has integrated those traditions to suit his own purposes. This integration of theological and ethical reflections forms an intricate tapestry in 1 Peter that cannot be separated without irreparable damage to the fabric of the epistle. For instance, in a crucial verse like 2:24, *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness*, how are we to separate theology and ethics without devastating injury to the sense of the verse?¹⁶ If we are to gain an understanding of how theology and ethics function *together* in 1 Peter, then we will need a methodology that does not separate the two *a priori*.

The recent rhetorical analysis of Thurén represents a positive development in this direction. He criticizes form-critical studies of 1 Peter for examining exhortations with an eye only to 'their origin, and not their function in the text.'¹⁷ He argues that a 'diachronic study of different traditions and their origin does not suffice,' and that 'a holistic picture of the letter is required.'¹⁸ He advocates the use of a synchronic functional approach. For Thurén the way in which theology and ethics function *together* is critical. The aim of his work is to uncover how theology works to motivate ethical action. He seeks to produce a distillation of the motivating ideological structure of the letter, while taking into account its paraenetic/rhetorical nature.¹⁹ This differs from my own aims in that, while he is sensitive to how theology and ethics function together, ultimately he still seeks to separate them. I intend to demonstrate how theology and ethics come together to function as paraenesis.

¹⁶ Not that this stopped R. DEICHGRÄBER, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der frühen Christenheit: Untersuchungen zur Form, Sprache und Stil der frühchristlichen Hymnen* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967), 141, who (albeit cautiously) divides the verse based on his reconstruction of what is confessional and what is an editorial insertion specific to the situation.

¹⁷ L. THURÉN, *Argument and Theology in 1 Peter: The Origins of Christian Paraenesis*, JSNTSS 114 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 20.

¹⁸ THURÉN, *Argument and Theology*, 28.

¹⁹ This is done by using a modified form of the argumentation analysis developed by TOULMIN in *Argument*. THURÉN has applied a similar methodology to Galatians in his recent work *Derhetorizing Paul: A Dynamic Perspective on Pauline Theology and the Law*, WUNT 124 (Tübingen: Mohr (Siebeck), 2000).

I. 1 Peter as Paraenesis

Talking about paraenesis in the context of 1 Peter is nothing new.²⁰ Dibelius, for example, in opposition to the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* interpretation of 1 Peter as an early Christian baptismal homily, pointed to the paraenetic nature of 1 Peter revealed in the presence of a *Haustafel*.²¹ In a similar vein, many scholars today would loosely characterize 1 Peter as a 'paraenetic epistle'.²²

Unfortunately, a great deal of confusion surrounds the question of what 'paraenesis' is.²³ For the present study, it is necessary to distinguish between two different senses of the word. The first refers to paraenesis in the sense of a 'form' (*Gattung*), like *Haustafeln*, virtue and vice lists, or collections of ethical maxims. The second sense is a literary genre designation, as in 'paraenetic epistle'.²⁴ For the sake of clarity, throughout this thesis I will adopt the terminology of 'paraenesis-as-form' to refer to the former and 'paraenesis-as-genre' to refer to the latter.²⁵ In Petrine studies, the main concern in the past has been with paraenesis-as-form, as a tool for answering diachronic questions. When Lohse, for example, speaks of 'paraenesis' in 1 Peter he is speaking of the paraenetic elements vis-à-vis the kerygmatic, not of 1 Peter as a paraenetic epistle.²⁶ As we have noted above, this approach is inherently limited in relating theology and ethics because it separates them from the start.

²⁰ To return to our historical starting point, Weiß saw paraenetic characteristics in 1 Peter. See B. WEIß, *Der petrinische Lehrbegriff* (Berlin: Wilhelm Schulze, 1855), 335-53, where he distinguished between paraenesis and paraklesis in 1 Peter.

²¹ M. DIBELIUS, 'Zur Formgeschichte des Neuen Testaments (außerhalb der Evangelien),' *TRu* 3 (1931): 232, 'Wir haben hier ein typisches Beispiel ausgeführter Paränese vor uns.'

²² E.g., J.H. ELLIOTT, *1 Peter: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AB 37b (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 11, 'The hortatory aim (5:12) and mood of 1 Peter, along with its inclusion of much hortatory and paraenetic material clearly qualify it as a "paraenetic/hortatory letter".'

²³ THURÉN, *Argument and Theology*, 17, complains that, 'The word "paraenesis" often carries a somewhat vague significance.'

²⁴ Unfortunately, both senses of the word have been used without distinction in form-criticism, and sometimes very closely together; for example, M. DIBELIUS, *James: A Commentary on the Epistle of James*, ed. H. KOESTER, trans. M.A. WILLIAMS, Hermeneia (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1976), 3, 'We may designate the "Letter" of James as paraenesis. By paraenesis we mean a text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content. Paraenetic sayings ordinarily address themselves to a specific (though perhaps fictional) audience, or at least appear in the form of a command or summons.'

²⁵ These somewhat awkward phrases are necessary, because we will need to retain the use of both senses while clearly distinguishing between them.

²⁶ E. LOHSE, 'Parænesis and Kerygma in 1 Peter,' in *Perspectives on First Peter*, ed. C.H. TALBERT, NABPRSSS 9 (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986).

Recently though scholars have begun to pursue the second sense of paraenesis (paraenesis-as-genre), and today there is an 'emerging consensus' that 1 Peter should be read as a paraenetic epistle.²⁷ While this represents a positive development, it is not without its problems. Unfortunately, the breadth of this consensus is built on a somewhat nebulous use of the phrase 'paraenetic epistle', where this designation means 1 Peter seeks, in some sense, to exhort or encourage. 'Paraenesis' in this sense does not refer to a historical epistolary genre, but instead is a vague description of the authorial aims of the epistle. It is a description of epistolary purpose not epistolary genre. In the end, this description possesses little utility in providing any hermeneutical tools to apply to our text.²⁸ In contrast to this consensus approach, the present study aims to show how 1 Peter functions as an example of a real epistolary genre from the ancient Greco-Roman world: a paraenetic epistle.²⁹

Recent research has advanced our understanding of Greco-Roman paraenetic epistolary traditions considerably and the present study seeks to apply some of these new insights to the study of 1 Peter as an epistle of this type. Wilson's recent study on Colossians, *The Hope of Glory*,³⁰ represents a promising model for this type of inquiry. Building on Malherbe's work on the Thessalonian correspondence,³¹ he interprets the

²⁷ J. PRASAD, *Foundations of the Christian Way of Life According to 1 Peter 1, 13–25: An Exegetico-theological Study*, AnBib 146 (Rome: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2000), 1: 'After a long period of divergent opinions on the nature of 1 Peter a consensus is emerging among scholars today that it is a paraenetic letter.'

²⁸ All studies that classify 1 Peter as paraenetic in this general sense draw little if any implications for exegesis from this classification.

²⁹ MARTIN has done some preliminary work in this area outlining some of the most basic characteristics of paraenesis as a Greco-Roman epistolary genre, and classifying 1 Peter as an example of that genre. But he made little use of this classification in the remainder of his work. He never developed how 1 Peter *functions* as a paraenetic epistle, nor did he seek to draw out implication for the purpose and structure of the epistle from its paraenetic nature. His single chapter on paraenesis is isolated from the rest of his work.

³⁰ W.T. Wilson, *The Hope of Glory: Education and Exhortation in the Epistle to the Colossians*, NovTSup 88 (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

³¹ A.J. MALHERBE, *Paul and the Thessalonians: The Philosophic Tradition of Pastoral Care* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), A.J. MALHERBE, 'Hellenistic Moralists and the New Testament,' *ANRW* II.26.1:267–333, and his recent commentary *The Letters to the Thessalonians*, AB 32b (New York: Doubleday, 2000). Although MALHERBE is the real pioneer here, WILSON's work is more suited to my line of inquiry because MALHERBE's focus is on the 'philophroneitic' elements in the Thessalonian letters, where Paul emphasizes his personal relationship with his correspondents as a paraenetic rhetorical device. As this emphasis is almost totally absent from 1 Peter, 5:1 being the closest we get to it, his model is of limited value. In contrast, WILSON identifies

author's aims within the categories of paraenetic epistles originating in the Greco-Roman philosophic schools. The purpose of this type of epistle is to exhort the recipients, as relatively new converts to philosophy, to continue on the path they have chosen and to conform their life practice to the teachings they have embraced. The aim of paraenesis is to facilitate growth in moral maturity through various forms of education and exhortation.

In like manner, 1 Peter seeks to confirm young Christian congregations in the new life they have embraced in Christ by facilitating growth in Christian character, chiefly measured in terms of growing moral integrity, and growing practical dependence upon God. This comports with the self-declared confirmatory aim of the epistle to exhort the communities to stand in ἡ ἀληθῆς χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ (5:12). As in Greco-Roman paraenesis, praxis that conforms to beliefs is an essential element in developing Christian maturity. Like Greco-Roman paraenesis, 1 Peter evidences an emphasis on ethical instructions that direct and encourage moral action. As we will see, in addition to this, 1 Peter adopts other modes of instruction common to paraenesis.

The Greco-Roman epistolary genre of paraenesis then represents a workable model to adopt in assessing the nature and aims of 1 Peter. This is not to imply an *exact* correspondence between Christian and philosophic paraenesis,³² but instead a sufficient overlap in aims and methods to warrant their association. As Wilson has shown with reference to Colossians, paraenetic epistles can provide a useful description in terms of generic style, content, and function.

Wilson's work also forges new ground in the relationship between theology and ethics. He recognizes that Greco-Roman paraenetic epistles were not confined to the use of typically 'paraenetic elements' (paraenesis-as-form), but also incorporated the use of narratives, moral exemplars, and theological/philosophical reflections, all of which were used in conjunction with 'paraenetic elements' to accomplish exhortative goals. His approach opens up new avenues for conceiving of the relationship between theology and ethics because it is unencumbered by a sharp dichotomy between the two. Since all these various literary forms can operate in a paraenetic mode, the hard distinction between paraenesis and kerygma dissolves when theology serves paraenetic ends. As Engberg-Pedersen has recently said with respect to Paul, 'Paraenesis consists in reminding and appealing. And

several other key literary strategies that are characteristic of paraenesis and applicable to both Colossians and 1 Peter.

³² A mature Christian character, for example, includes a well-seated active dependence on God, which is absent in the philosophic ideal of maturity.

that is what happens *all through* Paul's letters.³³ In other words, paraenesis describes not simply some portions of Paul's epistles (paraenesis-as-form), but what his epistles are aiming to accomplish as complete acts of literary communication (paraenesis-as-genre). For Engberg-Pederson, Paul's theology *is* paraenesis,³⁴ or at the very least, it serves to facilitate paraenetic aims. We will develop this more fully below, but at this point, we can see that the category of Greco-Roman paraenetic epistle not only places 1 Peter within the epistolary writing traditions of its day but also has the potential to unlock new pathways for understanding the relationship between theology and ethics.

II. Plan and Method

The basic agenda for this thesis is to garner evidence of the paraenetic nature of 1 Peter while at the same time highlighting new insights that can be gained by recognizing its paraenetic nature and agenda. The bulk of this thesis, then, will consist in (1) explorations of the nature and function of Greco-Roman paraenetic epistles, and (2) exegetical studies of Petrine texts read against this background.

The first two chapters set out to describe the epistolary genre of paraenesis, and then make a preliminary case for taking 1 Peter as an example of that genre. Chapter one outlines a functional epistolary genre classification for Greco-Roman paraenesis, by rehearsing characteristic literary/rhetorical strategies and how they function within an overall philosophic agenda of eudemonistic life-transformation. Chapter two makes an initial case for recognizing 1 Peter as a paraenetic epistle, by marking the literary features and strategies it shares with Greco-Roman paraenesis. In addition, it demonstrates how these paraenetic strategies are well suited to the epistle's agenda of promoting character growth in the midst of cultural ostracism.

With an initial classification of 1 Peter as a paraenetic epistle as a starting point, the five chapters that follow look in detail at five paraenetic literary strategies utilized in 1 Peter. This is done by first demonstrating how each strategy functions in Greco-Roman paraenesis and then how it

³³ T. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Paul and the Stoics* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2000), 302. *Italics original.*

³⁴ Cf. ENGBERG-PEDERSEN, *Stoics*, 295, 'Just to state the obvious: on such a reading there will be no valid distinction between "theology" and "ethics" in Paul. All through Paul will be "theologizing" in the sense of spelling out the meaning to human beings of what God has done (to them) through Christ. But all through he will also be concerned with what is the ultimate goal of his "theologizing": practice. Nothing must be torn apart here. It all hangs intrinsically and inextricably together.'

functions in 1 Peter.³⁵ The first three chapters examine the epistle's main theological discourse in 1 Peter 1:3–2:12, and include chapters dealing with: narrative worldview (chapter three), conversion and the moral antitheses that derive from it (chapter four), and social identity (chapter five). The aim of these chapters is to show how theology functions as paraenesis, i.e., how these literary strategies function to contextualize and motivate considered moral action, and facilitate growth in moral maturity.

The two chapters that follow examine the remainder of the body of the epistle (2:13–5:12) looking at the use of moral instructions/paraenesis-as-form (chapter six) and the use of Jesus as a moral exemplar (chapter seven). Again, the emphasis is on demonstrating the use of these techniques in Greco-Roman paraenesis, their correlate usage in 1 Peter, and how in both settings they function to promote growth in character through practicing moral integrity.

Finally, chapter eight summarizes the findings of the thesis and its implications for Petrine studies as well as the study of other examples of early Christian epistolary literature.

III. Labels and Caveats

While the method of the above plan is quite straightforward, in the sense that it involves the reading of 1 Peter in the light of an ancient epistolary genre, providing a label to accompany this methodology proves quite difficult. The emphasis on the character forming agenda of the epistle means that it has great affinities with what is now being called 'character ethics interpretation'.³⁶ But as this is a very young interdisciplinary subdiscipline in biblical research, it has yet to develop anything like a coherent methodology or set of methodologies.

My goals and methods probably have the greatest resonance with what is often called 'socio-rhetorical analysis', which combines elements of both social-scientific and rhetorical analysis. With rhetorical analysis, I share a fundamental concern for how the author uses rhetorical devices to shape the lives of Christian communities and the individuals that constitute those communities. However, while my study is *functional*, it is not strictly

³⁵ One of these paraenetic strategies, social identity, is in fact a Christian paraenetic strategy (derived from analogous Jewish traditions) and so is not characteristic of Greco-Roman paraenesis, for reasons we will see later. Even so, social identity does operate in 1 Peter as a paraenetic strategy. This is one example of the flexibility of the methodology adopted here, which does not confine itself to strict 'parallels'.

³⁶ See, e.g., W.P. BROWN, ed., *Character and Scripture: Moral Formation, Community, and Biblical Interpretation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

speaking rhetorical analysis, since I do not use the categories of either ancient or 'universal' rhetoric. Also, while I am concerned to map the function of certain literary/rhetorical strategies from the Greco-Roman world onto 1 Peter, I follow the growing consensus as to the limited usefulness of 'classical rhetorical handbooks' in studying NT epistolary literature.³⁷ In addition, my concern for the functionality of 1 Peter goes *beyond* the question of how the text seeks to affect its readers via *persuasion*, which is, strictly speaking, the focus of rhetorical study.

With social-scientific criticism, I share a concern for realities that extend beyond the individual and which penetrate into the social world and makeup of both the addressees and the author. Because of this I do adopt, to a limited degree, some basic terminology common to social-scientific criticism (e.g., identity, difference, and the other). That said, one will not find in what follows anything like a full-fledged social-scientific study of 1 Peter.

My practice has been to adopt a methodological eclecticism, which is governed by a set of exegetical convictions informed by discourse analysis (sometimes also called 'textlinguistics').³⁸ Now, just as this is not an experiment in social-scientific criticism, neither is it a linguistic study; one will only rarely find in what follows the highly specialized terminology familiar only to discourse analysts. But the principles that have guided my eclecticism are deeply influenced by the basic tenets of discourse analysis.

Discourse analysis is centrally concerned with what linguists call 'pragmatics',³⁹ what people *do* through acts of communication. As Brown and Yule say, 'In discourse analysis...we are concerned with [1] what people using language are doing, and [2] accounting for the linguistic features in the discourse as the means employed in what they are doing.'⁴⁰ Likewise, my concern here is with what the author is trying to accomplish in writing his epistle to these beleaguered churches in Asia Minor and how he does it. This goes beyond an analysis of what the text 'means', to the intentional pragmatics of the author revealed in the linguistic data and

³⁷ See, e.g., P.H. KERN, *Rhetoric and Galatians: Assessing an Approach to Paul's Epistle*, SNTSMS 101 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

³⁸ For an excellent introduction see J.T. REED, *A Discourse Analysis of Philippians: Method and Rhetoric in the Debate Over Literary Integrity*, JSNTSS 136 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 16–33.

³⁹ Cf. G. BROWN and G. YULE, *Discourse Analysis*, *Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 26, "Doing discourse analysis" certainly involves "doing syntax and semantics", but it primarily consists in "doing pragmatics". They also note that, 'Any analytical approach in linguistics which involves contextual considerations [i.e., paralinguistic considerations], necessarily belongs to that area of language study called pragmatics.'

⁴⁰ BROWN and YULE, *Discourse Analysis*, 26.

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