

Bullard, Collin Blake. 2014. Jesus and the thoughts of many hearts: implicit Christology and Jesus' knowledge in the Gospel of Luke. Library New Testament Studies 530. London: Bloomsbury T & T Clark. Hardcover. ISBN 978-0-567-66035-0. Pp. xviii + 210. \$ 120

Jesus and the thoughts of many hearts: implicit Christology and Jesus' knowledge in the Gospel of Luke came as a result of dissertation work presented to Cambridge University in 2013 by Collin Blake Bullard under the supervision of Simon Gathercole. The author utilises both redaction and narration criticism as hermeneutical interpretations in dissertating his thesis. It aims at addressing an important gap in the New Testament scholarship that borders on the understanding of the thoughts of the hearts of many people. Lack of material by the New Testament scholarship provokes the author to dive into this unknown domain. Exposing the motif of reading the thoughts of people by the Lukan Jesus is the basis through which the author builds his premise. In trying to deal with this motif, Collin Bullard divides his thought into three major sections or chapters with a preliminary introduction which serves as a summary of the whole thesis.

In the first chapter "Knowledge of Thoughts in Ancient Context" (pp. 27–64), Bullard deals with the examination of knowledge of thoughts from ancient literature. According to him, he does this to know whether any historical records could shed light on a human's ability to read the thought of another human being as depicted in Luke (p. 28). In doing this, he draws first from the context of the Greco-Roman sources and literature with the motif of *theios aner* and *theios Anthropos* to examining how the Greco-Roman world handled the motif of the knowledge of thoughts. The author examines great works that share insights into the motif of the knowledge of the heart, whom the author believes to have direct bearing such as Apuleius, Greek Magical Papyri, Propertius, Apollonius, and Pythagoras were examined. According to Bullard, Apollonius as a divine man is often considered by scholars as one that could read thoughts as a result, Bullard further examines the literature to authenticate the premise whether there

is any parallel between Apollonius and that of Jesus in Luke's Gospel. The Greco-Roman society believes strongly in the place of religion, but despite their religiosity there is no such evidence that human thoughts were understood. Yet Collin Bullard asserts that the Lukan Jesus' understanding of the knowledge of thoughts cannot be compared with that of Apollonius since he (Apollonius) never demonstrated this ability in any of his works (p. 37). After careful examination of the ancient Greco-Roman sources and literature, Bullard concludes that the ancient Greco-Roman lacks evidence in understanding the knowledge of human hearts. This enables him to dismiss the claim that Luke's idea does have a Hellenistic touch in his portrayal of the Lukan Jesus' ability to understand the thoughts of human hearts. Apart from tracing his evidence from the Greco-Roman world, Bullard also directs his searchlight towards Jewish sources. His search of a human figure in the Old Testament and other Jewish sources shows that prophetic knowledge of knowing the hearts of humanity was solely reserved for the domain of the divine.

Chapter two deals with Simeon's Oracle in 2:34–35. The prophetic interpretation of the oracle provides the author with the ability to critically examine such an oracle as one of the aspects of Jesus' ministry on earth. Again, Bullard believes in the centrality of this prophecy as a pivotal instrument in understanding the ministry of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke and the New Testament interpretation. The understanding of the Oracle is the understanding of the Jesus ministry and his duty to his people, and other nations. Bullard believes that the oracle is programmatic and functioned as a miniature of Jesus' actions and ministry, which include the falling and rising of many in Israel, as a sign spoken against, the sword, with the last item of the programme concerning the revelation of thoughts. It is based on these frameworks that the Bullard builds his hermeneutical interpretation of the oracle.

The revelation of the thoughts in Jesus' ministry is the hallmark of chapter three, which spins from pages 82–174. The author uses different texts to articulate his points which anchor on the belief that only Jesus is reckoned to know thoughts of humankind. His arguments on Jesus' knowledge of the thoughts of humanity are well demonstrated using various texts such as 5:17–26; 6:6–11; 9:46–48; 11:14–32; 11:37–54; 4:16–30; 24:36–43. Each text is interpreted based on the outlined parameters of investigations

which include the presentation of Jesus' knowledge, Lukan redaction, and resonance of the text with Simeon's oracle, as well as Christological implicit of the text. The ability to know the thoughts by Jesus indicates a progressive interpretation of the Jesus' Christological metaphor which Luke seems to unveil to his audience. In his presentation of Jesus' knowledge, Bullard's use of redaction interpretation acts as a means of assessing the Lukan interpretative scheme. The reason is to know whether Luke adds or subtracts from the other source, such as Mark, as well as the reason for such subtraction and addition. The author meticulously does this by opening each text carefully using a specific hermeneutical window to ascertain the Lukan redaction and interpretation and relationship of such a text to Simeon's Oracle. Each text is carefully redacted and its relationship in terms of its relevance to the Lukan Christology and the presentation of Jesus' knowledge is explained. A careful redaction and narration of each text using different themes in this chapter aim at exposing and confronting "the interior motives, attitudes, and the thoughts of other characters" (p. 174). For instance, in the appearance of Jesus to His disciples in Luke 24:36–43, there is an accentuation of his disciples' belief in the Lordship of Jesus and his ability to reveal the thoughts of the heart as an expression of Jesus' ability, as God-man, to have knowledge; Ballard asserts:

... for Luke, Jesus' knowledge of thoughts is not an ability he possessed by virtue of his resurrection. Luke 24:36–38 suggests that Luke saw an essential continuity between Jesus before and after the resurrection with respect to the revelation which Jesus effects. We have hypothesized that Luke understands Jesus to possess knowledge of the thoughts of the heart by virtue of his identity as Lord. This hypothesis is supported by the context of this episode, where the appearance of Jesus in 24:36 is an appearance of *ὁ κύριος* ... (p. 157).

In his conclusion, Bullard reiterates that Luke's use of the motif of supernatural knowledge is different from that of the ancient Greco-Roman world and that of John's Gospel. Jesus' knowledge of the thoughts of the heart in Luke implicates the Christological function of the Lukan Jesus as the one who reveal the hearts of humans, and as well as the one who judges and will reveal the secrets of all humanity and bring everything to light. Jesus is the only person that shares with God the ability to know

and understand the thoughts of the heart of humankind. Based on Jesus' relationship to God, his actions are similar and characterised the action of the *Lord God* and his relationship to humanity as Lord, as one who is empowered to expose and judge the thoughts of the heart of all humanity.

Bullard's work is credited for his formation and expression of his thought in the area of New Testament interpretation. His ability to wrestle with Simeon's Oracle using redaction and narrative criticisms is quite illuminating with great benefit to the area of interpretation and exegesis. However, it would have been of great benefit to the New Testament scholarship if Collins Bullard had expanded the scope of his reading the Simeon's Oracle beyond the redaction and narrative criticisms. Without doubt, redaction, and narrative readings of the text by Bullard are very insightful and contribute to the Lukan attestation of Christology of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

Reviewed by Godwin Akpan Etukumana