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“vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo”—Col. 3:3

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Prophetic Narrative Biography and Biblical Theology: The Prophet Hosea

James T. Dennison, Jr.

The prophet Hosea comes to us across the span of twenty-eight centuries; he comes to us with his face toward the Iraqi resurgents of the 8th century B.C.—armed Assyrian hordes and an implacable war-machine beneath the imperial gaze of their brutal hegemon, the Great King, the lord of the “four quarters of the earth”—Tiglath-Pileser III (745-727 B.C.).

Hosea, *navi la-Yahweh* (“prophet of the Lord”), comes to us with the “word of the Lord” (*devar Yahweh*). He comes to us with his own story—his own biographical story—his own poignant narrative-biographical story which is at the same time his Lord’s story—his God’s narrative-biographical story. The prophet Hosea comes to us with the Word of God and his autobiographical story from the 8th century B.C., mimetic of the Lord’s autobiographical story preternaturally transcending the 8th century B.C.

Superscription

The superscription to the prophet’s narrative-biographical story-prophecy is sandwiched by the revelatory paradigm. The eschatological intrusion of

the revealed Word of God (v. 1a and v. 2a)—the Word of God from out of his eschatological arena—the Word of the Lord which issues from his own sacred lips, from his own glory-throne, from his heavenly podium, from his own council of eschatological declaration—the eschatological Word interfaces with the narrative biography. And as that eschatological Word-revelation intersects the history—the biographical history—of Hosea the prophet, it draws him into the drama of the eschatological world; it folds down his history into the eternity of the eschaton; it conforms his story to the eternal story; it joins, yea it unites, his life to the life of the age to come. Hosea's life an embodiment of the life-plan hidden behind the ages; Hosea's story an anticipation of the now/not yet plan of redemption unfolding from before the foundation of the world; Hosea's biography a cameo of the Lord God's story with his Bride—his wayward, harlotrous Bride. Hosea's story and God's story interface—vertical vector and horizontal vector intersect by the Word of the Lord. Hosea's temporal life intersects with God's eternal life. Hosea's existential drama intersects with God's revelational drama. Hosea's historical experience converges with God's redemptive-historical continuum. Hosea's static drama conjugates God's organic drama. Hosea's protology is joined to God's eschatology.

And what is the horizon of Hosea's temporal life; Hosea's existential drama; Hosea's historical experience; Hosea's static life; Hosea's protology? It is the 8th century B.C.—an era neatly and precisely framed by the revelatory formula of chapter 1:1a and chapter 1:2a. The superscription to Hosea's revelatory prophecy is bracketed by the Word of Yahweh which comes in the 8th century B.C. The beginning of the Word of Yahweh and the end of the Word of Yahweh envelops the 8th century B.C.—from Uzziah, King of Judah (and beyond) to Jeroboam II, King of Israel (and beyond). The inclusio of the Word of Yahweh folds around the fateful century—the fateful 8th century B.C. and the death of one nation, together with the slow ebb of the life of the other. The inclusio encompassing Hosea's initial superscription wraps around the inevitable destruction of Israel and Samaria by the Assyrian imperium, even as it folds Judah and Jerusalem into the oppression of the Iraqi Antichrist so as to mirror the destiny of the southern kingdom in the reflection of the northern.

Hosea's superscription is more than historical. It is revelational, biblical-theological, trans-historical, structurally historico-eschatological. Death—the

inevitable end of history, intrudes itself semi-eschatologically into the present history of the prophet and the people of God of the 8th century B.C.

Biographical

The broadly generic historical (v. 1a to 2a) gives place to the narrowly specific biographical (v. 2b-9). Beginning with v. 2b, we are admitted to the private circle—to the intimate circle—to the family circle of the prophet. Beginning with v. 2b, we meet Hosea and his wife and his children. We meet Hosea, son of Beerī; Gomer, daughter of Divlaim; and Yitzre-el, Lo-ruhammah and Lo-ammi—sons and daughter of Hosea and Gomer. The curtain is lifted not only on the national destinies of Israel and Judah in the 8th century B.C., the curtain is also drawn back to reveal the inner life—the inner family life of the prophet and his bride and their offspring. We have a prophetic-revelatory portrait of the nation; we have simultaneously a narrative-biographical portrait of the prophet and his household. If the prophetic matter is revelatory and intersects with the eschatological, then the narrative biography is likewise revelatory and intersects with the eschatological. The eschatological vector in the prophecy does not surprise us; the eschatological vector in the narrative biography may. But this seamless garment of organically unfolding redemptive-historical drama intertwines divine prophetic word with human prophetic biography. The life-story of the prophet interfaces with the redemptive-story of the Lord.

There is something wonderfully suggestive here, is there not!? The merging of Word and life; or the co-mingling of revelation and personal existence. The intimacy of husband and wife; the familial affection of parents and siblings; the union of man and wife; the communion of parent and child. The circle intertwines relationships—enfolds relational intimacies: Bridegroom/Bride; Father/Son; Mother/Daughter. As if God himself were imitating the paradigm of intimate union and communion. As if God himself were reflecting relational intimacy: Bridegroom/Bride; Parent/Sons and Daughters. As if the relational and the conjugal were bound up in the communal; and the communal were distinguished in the personal. As if there were something incarnational about these relational vectors; as if the Bridegroom-Bride relationship were somehow congruous, coherent, mystically united.

There is a dynamic aspect here that relates Bridegroom, Bride, Son, Daughter, God, Man to one another. There is a dramatic aspect here that joins divine and human vectors in an indelible union—an indelible union of resemblance, reflection, imitation, mimesis. God as Husband and Bridegroom; People of God as Bride and Family. God as Lover; People of God as Beloved. God as married to his Bride; People of God as Betrothed to the Lord.

If the book of Hosea unites divine story and human story; if, in fact, the book of Hosea joins the divine and the human dynamically—dramatically; if the book of Hosea relationally joins the prophet's narrative biographical story to the transcendent theological story; if the book of Hosea so mirrors the drama of the prophet, his wife and his children in the drama of God, his Bride and his sons and daughters that there is an unbreakable relation between the two—that there is, as it were, an incarnational relation between the two, then do we not have in the book of Hosea a revelatory projection—even a revelatory recapitulation of the incarnational story—the redemptive-historical incarnational story of an eschatological Bridegroom and his eschatological Bride and their eschatological sons and daughters.

The motifs—the prophetic motifs—the narrative biographical prophetic motifs of the book of Hosea are simultaneously redemptive-historical, semi-eschatological, ineffably relational, even incarnational. This broadly construed paradigm reads as follows: Hosea is to Gomer as God is to Israel, as the Bridegroom of the people of God is to the Bride of God, as God the Father is to the children of God, as Christ is to his Bride, as the Bridegroom of the end of the age is to the sons and daughters of the age in-between.

8th Century B.C. Prolepsis

I am proposing a prolepsis of eschatological and redemptive-historical drama in the 8th century B.C. But even more, I am proposing an incarnational drama in the 8th century B.C.—in a prophet and his bride and their posterity. I am proposing the eschatological redemptive-historical story in the temporal prophetic-historical story. Or to say it precisely: the analogy of the historical paradigm requires the biblical-theology of the redemptive-historical paradigm.

We encounter the revelatory imperative as it enters history in the first narrative-biographical words God speaks to the prophet: “Go, take a wife of harlotry” (1:2b). The apparently shocking commission is in fact proleptic as well as redemptive-historically paradigmatic. The book of Hosea is replete with imagery of God’s Bride—herself betrothed unto the Lord from “the days of her youth” (2:15), when the Lord took his virgin Bride to himself at the Exodus and “betrothed” her unto himself in faithfulness and loving-kindness (2:19, 20). The redemptive-historical paradigm of Israel—God’s young virgin Bride from the land of Egypt—is expegetical of the prophetic paradigm. Israel was the faithful virgin Bride of God at the beginning. But she prostituted herself before other lovers—before the golden calf, at Baal-Peor (9:10), before Baal (2:8, 13, 17), before the manifold idols of the nations (4:17). And having gone a-whoring after other gods (4:12), this once-upon-a-time Bride of God played the harlot (9:1), joining herself to idols, to gods who were no gods, giving her body to be used by those who knew her only to abuse her (2:7; 3:2). And having been used up and degraded, abused and discarded—the former Bride of the Lord found herself sold into bondage, auctioned as a piece of meat, humiliated by her whoredom and her whore-masters.

Would then, her once-upon-a-time Divine Lover and Bridegroom leave her to herself—in her shame, her filth, her nakedness, her disgrace, her harlotrous adultery and whoredom? Would the one who betrothed her unto himself once-upon-a-time in Egypt, in these last days of Israel—the days of Hosea, the prophet of the Lord—would the one who betrothed her unto himself time past, leave her in her bondage, her shame, her living-death time present? Would the omniscient Heavenly Bridegroom leave his once-upon-a-time wayward Spouse to perish in her harlotry, to wallow in her adultery, to die in her slavery?

Or would this Heavenly Bridegroom—out of his great love even for his wayward Bride, from his profound grace for such an adulterous Bride as she, out of his faithfulness—*his* faithfulness to his pledge, his covenant, his faithful covenant promise to his Bride; would not this Heavenly Bridegroom and Lover rescue and redeem and ransom and save and deliver his unfaithful Bride? Would he not intervene in the history of his faithless and adulterous Bride and purchase her for himself? Would he not transform her, change her, renew and restore her from once-upon-a-time adulterer to now-and-forever faithful and pure?

Would not the Lord God, Bridegroom of Heaven, beholding the reversal in the history of his Virgin Bride turned to unchastity, adultery, fornication and harlotry; would not the Bridegroom of Heaven, seeing the historical reversal of virgin Bride to harlot slut—would he not determine—yea, would he not foreordain to reverse that denewal; to regenerate that degeneration? Would he not reverse the present history of his whorish Bride with the future history of his faithful Spouse? Would the Bride of God, having reversed her story in adultery, find her story reversed by her divine Bridegroom unto fidelity? Would the reversal be reversed? Would the historical reversal be reversed in a new wedding celebration—a fresh wedding celebration—a once-and-for-all wedding celebration? Would the historical reversal be reversed by the eschatological reversal of the reversal?

Exodus Paradigm and the Prolepsis

It is clear, therefore, from the Exodus paradigm foundational to Hosea's retrospectively redemptive-historical, organic continuum that the Lord's command in 1:2b is proleptic—not what Gomer *was* on her wedding day, but what Gomer *became* later by “pursuing her lovers” (2:7). Virgin Bride at first; adulterous Bride later. Israel chaste at first; Israel idolatrous later.

Support for this biblical-theological paradigm is found in the parallel phrase in v. 2b—“children of harlotry.” That Gomer's children were not the fruit of her harlotries is plain in v. 3: “she conceived and bore him [i.e., Hosea] a son.” The firstborn child is conceived by union of Hosea and Gomer, not by the union of Gomer and some other. This is true of each of the three children conceived and born according to the narrative-biographical record in chapter 1. The children are not harlots at birth (surely, an impossibility!); nor are they born of Gomer's future adulterous harlotry (the firstborn son certainly was not!). Rather the children become involved in “the spirit of harlotry” (4:12; 5:4) in which their mother also becomes involved. Labeling them “children of harlotry” (1:2; 2:4) is in their case, as it is in the case of Gomer herself, a proleptic reference to what they will become in the future—when they too grow up, mature and like many in Israel, go a-whoring after Baal, the idols of the groves and the cult prostitutes of the high places of Israel (4:13-15a). The mirror similarity in the mother

and the children is borne out in the parallel symmetry of the Hebrew narrative text: v. 2—“Go, take to yourself a wife” (verb+verb+feminine noun); v. 3—“So he went and took Gomer” (verb+verb+feminine noun).

Jezreel: Inclusio and Chiasm

At this point, we shift from the marital union per se and descend to the reflection manifest in the familial relation. A structural inclusion frames the narrative biography of the persona of the first child. The inclusio is in his name: *yitzre-el* or Jezreel. The first name in v. 3 is *yitzre-el*—the firstborn son; the last name in his two-verse narrative biography in v. 4 is *yitzre-el*—Jezreel, the firstborn son. The inclusio folds in the sentence of divine judgment on account of the blood-lust of the dynasty of Jehu—a dynasty which includes Jeroboam, King of Israel, listed in v. 1. (Jeroboam II ruled Israel for 40 years—793-753 B.C.) Because of Jehu’s bloody campaigns of assassination and execution (2 Kings 9 and 10), God declares that he will repay: “Vengeance is mine saith the Lord.” But the iniquity included within the boundaries of the name *yitzre-el* is a reverse pun on the national name *yiara-el* (Israel). In fact, the chiasmic arrangement of the names *yitzre-el* and *yiara-el* in vv. 4 and 5 is a dramatic evidence of the one mirrored in the other—Jezreel in Israel, Israel in Jezreel: the nation mirrored in the location, the location in the nation. And that chiasmic mirror-reflection is a mimetic reversal. Notice: *yitzre-el* (Jezreel) means “God sows”, “God scatters” (as a farmer sows or scatters seed): Jezreel—“scattered by God”. Israel means “prince with God”. The divine wrath will make a Jezreel of Israel—it will reverse prince-with-God status to scattered-by-God status. The destruction of Israel by the Assyrian army in 722/21 B.C. will reverse the history of Israel—scattered and dispersed of God will be written over Ephraim and Samaria from “that day” (1:5).

Lo-Ruhamah and Divine Negation

The familial biography—or more specifically, the filial biography, is one that displays the story of the nation. The firstborn son, in his name, is epexegetical of the story of the nation. Israel’s story is the story of Jezreel. And what is true

of the firstborn son is true of the second child—the first daughter, Lo-ruhammah—“No mercy”. The negative particle—*lô* in Hebrew—is an emphatic reversal—not mercy or kindness or compassion poured out, but *no* mercy, *no* compassion, *no* kindness. The history of Lo-ruhammah is the history of Israel. God showed his mercy when he brought her out of Egypt (12:9; 13:4), out of bondage, out of tyranny. But because her subsequent life has become a life of harlotry, God will reverse her story—God will negate her story—God will nullify her biography: “No Mercy—Lo-ruhammah.” The pattern of redemptive-historical reversal continues to be embodied in the story of the second child of Hosea and Gomer—even as that reversal was embodied in the story of the first child of Hosea and Gomer.

Israel’s Tumultuous Final Thirty Years

Before I consider the name of the third child, let me suggest something that I think is indicated by the pattern of the Hebrew text with regard to the formula of the divine speech in this first chapter. The second half of the 8th century B.C. in the Northern Kingdom of Israel, capital at Samaria, was the era of denouement to destruction. From mid-century to the final deportation of Israel by Assyria in 722/21 B.C., the nation is in the throes of a steady, downward spiral of disintegration. No less than six kings rule the nation in the space of thirty years; four of the six come to the throne by assassinating their predecessors. Tiglath-Pileser III, the Great King of Assyria (note 5:13; 10:16, NASB margin) invades Israel during the notorious Syro-Ephraimite War (734-732 B.C.) and plunders eight of the Israeli tribal provinces. In addition, he levies crippling annual taxes upon King Menahem and King Hoshea who in turn (good bureaucrats that they were) passed the taxes on to the people (2 Kings 15:19-20; 17:4; Tiglath-Pileser’s Annals in ANET, p. 284). King Hoshea sends ambassadors to Egypt (2 Kings 17:4; Hos. 7:11) in a futile foreign policy attempt to leverage the Pharaoh of the Nile over against the lord of the “four quarters of the earth.” This vacillating and treacherous foreign policy but fuels the terminal wrath of the Assyrian fury. The final blow, whether struck by Assyrian emperor Shalmaneser III or Sargon II (a detail still hotly debated)—the final *coup de grace* was the capital blow.

The prophet Hosea lives through this era of political turmoil, international intrigue and the inevitable death of a nation—a nation whose idolatrous treachery in betraying the Lord God merits the justly deserved wrath of God. And the wife of Hosea and the children of Hosea? they are emblematic of this decline. Notice the declining pattern of the divine speech: v. 2—“The Lord said to Hosea” (four Hebrew words); v. 4—“And the Lord said to Him” (three Hebrew words); v. 6—“And the Lord said to him” (two Hebrew words); v. 9—“And he said” (one Hebrew word). 4-3-2-1: declining pattern of speech; declining state of the nation. From the wife and mother sinking into harlotry to Jezreel falling into spiritual adultery to Lo-ruhammah mimicking mother and brother in refusing God’s mercy to Lo-ammi—the last of Hosea’s children.

Lo-Ammi and Double Divine Negation

Lo-ammi means “not my people”. And it carries with it the reciprocal corollary: “not your God”. God is poised to divorce himself from his adulterous Bride. This nation which was joined to the Lord as the people of God from the covenant made with Abraham when the Lord said, “I will make you a great nation;” and “I shall be your God.” That gracious covenant was confirmed and renewed at the Exodus and at Mt. Sinai—a gracious covenant in which God the Lord declares, out of his free, undeserved favor, that Israel will be his peculiar possession, a nation holy unto the Lord. And the flip side of the covenant relation that declares “You are my people, says the Lord,” is the precious declaration, “I am your God.” From Hebron to Sinai and throughout the whole span of redemptive-historical covenant grace—“I am yours and you are mine.” That is the narrative of the covenant story from father Abraham to the prophet Hosea’s third born. But antithetically, in this name, Lo-ammi, God dissolves the covenant—reverses the external status of his grace and favor—turns his people back to “not my people”; turns back his external divine relation to “not your God.”

Prophetic Biography: National Biography

The story of Gomer and her children is the story of the nation of Israel. Bride of the Lord becomes the whore of Baal. Prince with God becomes scat-

tered and sown to the powers of darkness. Pitied of God becomes unpitied of the Lord; people of God your Lord becomes not-my-people, not-your-God.

722/21 B.C. marks the end of the story—the end of the story of God and the people of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. The harlot Bride and the harlot children have earned their wages—have loved their harlot wages (9:1; 2:12)—the wages of sin—the end of their story—the reverse of the living story in death! The horizontal clashes with the vertical in dreadful finality; the vertical intersects the horizontal in ultimate crisis. The story of Israel crisscrosses with the story of heaven—and nothing interfaces with that celestial story which is harlatrous, adulterous, wayward, traitorous. All such as that—all that is harlatrous is outside that *civitas Dei*—that “City of God”—all such is outside in the flaming abyss of the Inferno.

The biography of prophet, wife and children is as the biography of a nation. The story of Hosea, Gomer and family is the story of a people. Life to death; mercy to wrath; recognized to alienated and estranged. Thus saith the Lord, “I will destroy your mother” (4:5); “I will forget your children” (4:6); “Though you play the harlot continually, O Israel” (4:15, 18); “I will pour out my wrath like water” (5:10); “Destruction is [yours]” (7:23); “You sow the wind, you shall reap the whirlwind” (8:7).

Prophetic Narrative Reversal

But the paradigm of historical reversal—from Israel alive to Israel destroyed—the paradigm of redemptive-historical reversal is destined for eschatological reversal. The reversal will itself be reversed. The reversal of destruction will itself be reversed in salvation. This fundamental paradigm of prophetic eschatology—applicable to all canonical prophetic eschatology—is found poignantly, explicitly in the prophet Hosea. And, in Hosea, the prophetic eschatological reversal interfaces with the prophetic biographical narrative. If the story of Hosea, Gomer and their children is a tragedy (and it is!); if their story of a happy marriage with the blessing of sons and a daughter turns tragic (and it does!); if the biography of the prophet is, as it were, an incarnation of the biography of God’s relationship with his Bride, with his sons and daughters, then we must tell the rest of the story. For the prophetic narrative

biography is also folded down into prophetic narrative eschatology. The story of the prophet has an eschatological vector. The story of prophetic narrative reversal is eschatologically reversed. “I will heal their apostasy; I will love them freely; I will redeem them from death, saith the Lord” (14:4; 13:14).

And Hosea? Hosea reversed the story of his harlotrous bride, Gomer. He bought her back (3:5), ostensibly from the slave block to which she had been degraded by her debauchery. Hosea turned back the history of Gomer by redeeming her: “you shall not play the harlot,” he said to her (3:3). “I will be towards you as a husband [again] . . . for I love you as a woman is loved by her husband” (3:3, 1). And thus, the story of Hosea and Gomer ended in redemption. He ransomed his adulterous bride and brought her home once more for the great love with which he loved her. And in that story-book reunion, he took her to himself once more in faithfulness and love “forever”. “I will betroth you to me *leôlam*” (“forever” as the Hebrew reads, 2:19). The eschatological reversal of the prophetic narrative biography is *leôlam* (“forever”). No more harlotry in this bride; no more adultery in this bride; no more a-whoring after other lovers in this bride; but in this second home-coming, in this second honeymoon—eternal fidelity, eternal loyalty, eternal chastity, eternal purity. A ransomed and redeemed bride beloved of her husband-bridegroom *leôlam* (“forever”). Forever loved, forever ransomed, forever brought back, forever possessed and possessing.

Eschatological Incarnational Narrative

Here is the incarnation by way of anticipation of the eschatological marriage Supper—the marriage Supper of the Lamb. “Come, I will show you the bride, the wife of the Lamb—she whom he has purchased with his own blood; she whom he has cleansed by the washing of water, having now no spot or wrinkle or any such thing. She has made herself ready; does she not come as a bride adorned for her husband—wrapped in the robes of righteousness, clothed upon with the garments of salvation, dressed in robes of fine linen, bright and clean; no longer with any curse upon her, nor anything unclean, nor immoral, nor idolatrous. For the bride shall say, Come—Come to our marriage Supper. And she shall gaze into his face and he shall behold her—and together they shall say, ‘My beloved is mine and I am my beloved’s *leôlam*!!’”

And the story of Hosea's harlotrous children was eschatologically reversed. The scattered sons of Jezreel were "gathered together" in "the great day of Jezreel" (1:11). They were summoned from Egypt and Assyria and the four corners of the earth. The name *yitzre-el* will be reversed; it will be reversed in the future eschatological reversal when the scattered of the Lord will become the gathered of the Lord. And the kingdom sown and strewn to the wind will be gathered again under "one leader" even "David their king" (3:5); when the eschatological story will be *yitzre-el* transformed into *yiærael*—the eschatological Israel—the eschatological Israel of God who is "David their king" and that *leôlam*.

The daughter's story will be reversed from Lo-ruhammah to Ruhammah (2:1). From no mercy to mercy *leôlam*. The reverse biographical story of Hosea's daughter is to turn her story from wrath to grace—from compassion nevermore to compassion forevermore (Rom. 9:25-26; 1 Pet. 2:10). "I will have compassion on her who had obtained no compassion" (Hos. 2:23). Reverse biography reversed eschatologically. The paradigm of prophetic narrative biography is folded into, joined unto, participates in the divine narrative eschatology.

And the second son? Lo-ammi. His story too is transformed by the reverse name "Ammi" (2:1). Not—not my people, but rather my people and that *leôlam*. "It will come about that where it [was] said to them, 'You are not my people,' it will be said to them, 'You are the sons of the living God'" (1:10). For I will say to those who are not my people, 'You are my people' and they will say, 'Thou art my God.'

The prophetic narrative biography intersects with the transcendently eschatological narrative—the horizontal with the vertical—the historical with the redemptive-historical—the temporal with the eternal. And in the one is the other. In the narrative biography of Hosea and his bride is the eschatological narrative of Christ and his Bride. In the story of Hosea and his sons and daughter is the eschatological story of the sons and daughters of *yiærael Yahweh* (Gal. 6:16).

In Hosea's story—Christ's story; in Hosea's story—your story; in the redemptive-historical story—our story!

John Calvin on Galatians 3

v. 12. *But the man that doeth them shall live by them.* For the present question is not whether believers ought to keep the law as far as they can (which is beyond all doubt), but whether they obtain righteousness by works; and this is impossible. Moreover, if anyone objects, ‘Since God promises life to doers of the law, why does Paul deny that they are righteous?’ the answer is easy. None is righteous by the works of the law, because there is none who does them. We admit that the doers of the law, if there were any, would be righteous. But since that is a conditional agreement, all are excluded from life because none offers the righteousness that he ought. We must bear in mind what I have already said, that to do the law is not to obey it in part, but to fulfil everything that belongs to righteousness. And from such a perfection all are at the furthest remove (*Calvin’s Commentaries: The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, trans. T. H. L. Parker. Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1965, 54-55).

Francis Roberts on *Ordo Salutis* and *Historia Salutis* ¹

God's covenant of faith and promises thereof are first made to Christ, and then to his seed in him. This must needs be so . . . 2. God's decree of election, and his execution of that decree in all the branches of it, first have respect to Christ, and then secondarily in him to all his seed: and therefore proportionately God's covenant and promises, being one branch of this execution of God's decree, must first respect Christ, then Christ's seed. Consider well: if we look at God's decree, is not Christ as Head and Mediator first of all elected, and then his seed in him? If we look at the execution of God's decree, is not Christ first accepted as God's only beloved Son, and then his seed adopted in him? Is not Christ first justified, that is, acquitted from the guilt of all the sins of his

¹ Francis Roberts (1609-1675) was one of the remarkable Puritans of the 17th century. He demonstrates an uncanny 'Vosian' interface between the decrees of redemption (*ordo salutis*) and the history of redemption (*historia salutis*). The reader will notice that the one is found in the other, and vice versa as they Christocentrically converge in the Eschatological Man. Here is the gist of the remarkably perceptive observation of Roberts: what God has decreed has been lived out in history by his Only-Begotten Son and therefore belongs to those in Christ. The actualized eternal decree is first and foremost lived out in the eschatological Adam/Son of God/Son of Man; and in his history, the history of those federally "in him" by grace alone is filled to the full. They are, in fact, identified with his history as he is with theirs—and that decretally as well as historically.

This quotation comes from the section of Roberts's book in which he is dealing with the Westminster Larger Catechism's comments on the Covenant of Grace, Q&A 31. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized in our version above. My thanks to Benji Swinburnson for sharing this statement with us.

people imputed to him, and then they justified by faith in him? Is not Christ first sanctified, filled with the Spirit, made full of grace and truth, having all fullness dwelling in him; and then all his seed sanctified in him, receiving of his Spirit, and of his fullness, even grace for grace? Is not Christ first made heir of all things, and then his seed co-heirs with him? Did not Christ as a public person first die, and then all his seed die and suffer in him? Did not Christ first rise from the dead, ascend into heaven, and sit on God's right hand; and then afterwards all that are Christ's rise again, ascend into heaven, and sit on God's right hand in and with Christ? Shall not Christ first come to judge the world, and then they that are Christ's shall judge the world with him? Why then should it be thought strange that the covenant and promises should first be made to Christ, and then in Christ to all his seed? (Francis Roberts, *Mysterium & medulla Bibliorum: The Myserie and Marrow of the Bible* [1657] 76).

Paul, the Covenant Theologian

Lawrence Semel

Introduction

Dr. Richard Gaffin, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, has written a new book entitled *By Faith, Not By Sight: Paul and the Order of Salvation* (Paternoster, 2006). Dr. Gaffin has committed much of his career to the exposition of Pauline theology and this new book is a further expansion and building upon his earlier work entitled *Resurrection and Redemption, A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (originally entitled *The Centrality of the Resurrection*—his thesis for the Doctor of Theology degree at Westminster in Philadelphia). Gaffin declares that this new book comes at a time when “the study of Paul is currently dominated by the so-called ‘New Perspective on Paul,’ the substantial reassessment of his theology that has emerged over the past several decades” (1). In the first chapter, Gaffin gives a brief summary of the differences between the Reformation’s understanding of Paul and that of the New Perspective. He then indicates the purpose of his book.

In view of reservations and denials accompanying the emergence of the New Perspective and resulting in a diminished interest in or dismissal of the importance of the question of the *ordo salutis* in Paul, it seems well to test this dismissal by structuring reflections on his theology, especially his soteriology, in terms of this question and the issues it raises.

The controlling question I want to address throughout concerns Paul's understanding of how the individual receives salvation What does the application of salvation to sinners involve for him? Does he distinguish between salvation accomplished (*historia salutis*) and salvation applied (*ordo salutis*) and if so, how, and how important is the latter for him? What is the place of justification in his theology? Is it basic in his soteriology? These and related questions will occupy us (4).

In this book, Gaffin interacts with the New Perspective, but he does not do so in detail. It remains a background consideration. His primary purpose is to write a positive presentation of Paul's theology, especially his soteriology. But he makes his own position in the debate on Paul crystal clear.

. . . I see myself as working within the Reformation understanding of Paul and his soteriology, more particularly the understanding of Calvin and classical Reformed confessional orthodoxy, as I build on the biblical-theological work that has emerged within that tradition, particularly that of Herman Ridderbos and, before him, Geerhardus Vos, with the attention they have drawn to the controlling place of the redemptive-historical or covenant-historical dimension of his theology (5).

The Bible the Center of Christian Faith

One of the things that I most appreciate about Dr. Gaffin is his desire to get to the center of our Christian faith. In his new book, he speaks regularly about central concerns. I trust that it goes without saying that the foundational consideration for Gaffin is an unwavering commitment to the centrality of the Bible. The Scriptures are the rule for our faith and life. And it is from the Scriptures that we derive both our theology and our theological method. The Bible is not only the content of God's revelation to us; the Bible also reveals to us how we are to read it.

Of course, Gaffin accepts the Pauline authorship of all the books ascribed to him in the NT—this over against many of the New Perspective proponents (46). And his commitment to the inspiration and infallibility of Scripture stands out in his discussion of Paul as a theologian. As a theologian, Paul must be distinguished from all other theologians who have come after him. Paul is not a theologian on a par with theologians who follow after him in the sense that his theology has no more authority than that of any other. Paul was an apostle and as such, to receive him is the same as to receive the one who sent him. Christ sends Paul as his apostle. Therefore to receive Paul is to receive Christ; to reject Paul is to reject Christ. The writings of Paul are Scripture and they come to us, along with all other Scripture, as the authoritative word of God. In those Scriptures, Paul’s theology is contained. Paul’s theology therefore “is Spirit-borne, canonical, foundational . . . all subsequent theology, including ours, ought to be Spirit-led (Rom. 8:13), but unlike Paul’s it is not also Spirit-borne (2 Pet. 1:21). Ours is non-canonical, no more than derivative of his” (13).

Gaffin views himself as standing firmly in the tradition taught in the Westminster Standards. He refers to them often. On his handling of Scripture, he states, “I do not understand myself to be saying anything other basically than what is affirmed in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1:6, namely, ‘that the teaching of Scripture is not only what is expressly set down in Scripture, but also what by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture’” (15). “In terms of the history of redemption, we share with Paul, and the other New Testament writers, a common redemptive-historical focus or concern.” Along with all the NT writers, we live in the same redemptive historical context. We all live between the comings of Christ. Therefore, their religion and ethic is our religion and ethic. And Paul’s theology and soteriology must be ours as well. This “redemptive-historical continuity between ourselves and the New Testament writers” will help insure in us “that the ‘good and necessary consequence . . . deduced’” from Scripture “is truly that, truly ‘good and necessary’” (15).

The Covenant the Center of the Bible

As I read Dr. Gaffin’s book, I was reminded of the article by Geerhardus Vos entitled “The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology” which

appears in the book *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (edited by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., 234-67), a book containing the shorter writings of Vos.

Because the Bible is central, then also the doctrine of the covenant is central. Gaffin agrees with Vos and Ridderbos that Paul's theology is "controlled by the redemptive historical or covenant historical dimension." The reader of Gaffin's new book will find, I believe, a faithful Reformed exposition of the doctrine of the covenant. I remember him saying once that no one in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had to subscribe to the teachings of Machen or Warfield or Vos. But all in the church had to subscribe to the Westminster Standards. And from the evidence in this book, I believe that he agrees with Vos's assessment of the Westminster Confession of Faith in the above mentioned article, when he wrote: "The Westminster Confession is the first Reformed confession in which the doctrine of the covenant is not merely brought in from the side, but is placed in the forefront and has been able to permeate at almost every point" (239). Gaffin sees Paul as a covenant theologian. In his discussion of union with Christ, he makes the statement that "Paul's understanding of union with Christ . . . stems from the Old Testament and, as much as anything, shows him to be a covenant theologian."

The OT and the NT are tied together by the theme of covenant. In the original covenant of works, Adam, by his perfect obedience would gain everlasting, eschatological life. Vos puts it this way:

After the fall man would never again be able to work in a manner pleasing to God except a completed work of God be performed on his behalf. Earning eternal life has forever been taken out of his hands . . . The obtaining of eternal life thus comes to lie in God, as a work that is his alone, in which his glory shines and of which nothing, without detracting from that glory, can be attributed to the creature (246).

This is the overarching content of Paul's theology. This new book from Gaffin helps us see Paul as the expositor of this covenantal perspective. As he develops his presentation, this commitment to the Reformed perspective of the covenant is made apparent.

The Center of the Covenant at its Deepest Level

The Bible is central. And the covenant is central in the Bible. And central in the covenant is God and his glory. In Vos's article, he discusses the Reformed commitment to the doctrine of the covenant (241-42). This is not due, Vos says, just to the fact that the Reformation was a movement to return to the Scriptures alone. The Lutheran as well as the Reformed shared that commitment. But Reformed theology "succeeded in mastering the rich content of Scripture . . . because Reformed theology took hold of the Scriptures in their deepest root idea" (241).

This root idea which served as the key to unlock the rich treasures of the Scriptures was the preeminence of God's glory in the consideration of all that has been created. All other explanations of the difference between the Lutheran and the Reformed traditions in the end again come down to this, that the former begins with man and the latter with God. God does not exist because of man, but man because of God. This is what is written at the entrance of the temple of Reformed theology (241-42).

If I understand Vos correctly, he was saying that for Luther, man's salvation, the doctrine of justification by faith alone, was the center of Biblical teaching. This is understandable because of the theological battle in which he was engaged. By the grace of God, Luther rediscovered the Biblical gospel that the people of God did not have to face an uncertain future and fear the coming judgment day. Gaffin puts it this way:

Late medieval Roman Catholicism left the future verdict at the final judgment the ever anxious and uncertain outcome of the Christian life. In contrast the Reformers came to understand that, in effect, the verdict, belonging at the end of history, had been brought forward and already pronounced on believers in history, and so constituted the certain and stable basis for the Christian life and unshakeable confidence in the face of the final judgment (80).

This rediscovery of the gospel was like the blowing of refreshing breezes off of the shores of heaven itself. No wonder that Luther made the doctrine of justification by faith alone the center of the Biblical message and the center of his doctrine of salvation.

But Gaffin, in concert with Vos, will go deeper in Scripture to find the center of the Biblical message. He will go deeper than the doctrine of justification by faith. As he discusses these things, Gaffin will at the same time, be careful to distinguish what he says from some of the current controversies over the doctrine of justification in the church at large. He insists that though it will be his contention that the root of Paul's theology is not the doctrine of justification or any of the other benefits of Christ's work applied to the believer—that this understanding does not

“de-center” justification (or sanctification), as if justification is somehow less important for Paul than the Reformation claims. Justification is supremely important, it is absolutely crucial in Paul's “gospel of salvation” (cf. Eph. 1:13). Deny or distort his teaching on justification and that gospel ceases to be gospel . . . But no matter how close justification is to the heart of Paul's gospel, in our salvation, as he sees it, there is an antecedent consideration, a reality, that is deeper, more fundamental, more decisive, more crucial: Christ and our union with him, the crucified and resurrected, the exalted Christ. Union with Christ by faith—that is the essence of Paul's *ordo salutis* (43).

Gaffin doesn't want to “de-center” justification or in any way diminish its importance in Paul's theology and soteriology. But union with Christ is deeper and more fundamental and more decisive and more crucial. Perhaps in understanding Gaffin's emphasis, we would profit from his illustration of the iceberg mentioned in his book *Resurrection and Redemption*.

. . . the true problem in understanding Paul is that he is a theologian, a careful and systematic thinker, accessible only through pastoral letters and records of his sermons. His writings are obviously not doctrinal treatises; but neither do

they consist in a variety of unrelated, *ad hoc* formulations or in an unsystematic multiplication of conceptions. They reflect a structure of thought. The Pauline epistles may be aptly compared to the visible portion of an iceberg. What juts above the surface is but a small fraction of what remains submerged. The true proportions of the whole lie hidden beneath the surface (28).

Gaffin's exposition of Paul's doctrine of salvation will not "de-center" justification, but he sees that doctrine as one of the peaks of the iceberg jutting above the surface of the water, along with all the other benefits of the salvation of Christ applied to us by his Holy Spirit. But all these peaks above the surface are invariably tied to the unifying, deeper substructure of the iceberg, namely the doctrine of the covenant and its emphasis on union with Christ. The whole iceberg is at the center of Paul's theology and soteriology. But the iceberg has a structure that also needs to be appreciated and understood.

The Center of the Covenant: God and His Glory

Gaffin's interest is to find the center of Paul's theology at its deepest level. As precious as the doctrine of justification by faith is to all of us, and "near to the heart of Paul's gospel," that doctrine does not penetrate deeply enough; it does not penetrate, to use Vos's term, to the "root idea" of Scripture. The root issue is not how can sinners be made right before God? If that is the "root idea," then, as Vos comments, it still begins with man and with man's salvation. God is still viewed in some sense as existing for man, and man and his need of salvation is the center of God's concern. If this view dominates the faith and life of the church, it creates grave problems in the church. If we begin here, then the tendency is for us to end up worshipping our own salvation instead of the God who saves us (Cf. S. G. De Graff, *Promise and Deliverance*, 1:21). And in its worst forms, it leads to the idea so prevalent in our day, that if my need for salvation is God's chief concern, then I must be the most important consideration for God and he must exist to meet my every need. And hence we have the narcissistic Christian world we live in. God exists to entertain me in worship! God exists to serve me and make me happy! God exists to meet my needs!

As Vos says, Reformed theology—covenant theology—penetrates to the “root idea” of the Scriptures. That “root idea” is the preeminence of God’s glory. “This is what is written at the entrance of the temple of reformed theology” (242). Salvation is to the end of worship. God and his glory are at the center, at the root of all Biblical teaching. God is the Creator of man and as such man is accountable to God to render him glory. Sin in its basic essence is withholding that glory from God and giving it to another and usurping it to himself. Redemption in Christ is all about restoring man to be man as created in God’s image and that to this end—to bring him glory. “For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen” (Rom. 11:36).

The Bible is about the covenant. And the covenant is a covenant of grace. It’s all about what God does in his Son Jesus Christ to save us from our sins. Obtaining eternal life is forever placed beyond the reach of our own good works. God must do this work for us and in doing it for us, the glory belongs entirely to him. As Vos puts it in his previously mentioned article: “When the Reformed takes the obtaining of salvation completely out of man’s hands, he does this so that the glory which God gets from it might be uncurtailed” (247).

In his article, Vos goes on to expound the centrality of the doctrine of the covenant and that the root idea in the covenant is God and his glory. He says that the principle of the preeminence of God’s glory divides into three parts.

When this principle is applied to man and his relationship to God, it immediately divides into three parts: 1. All of man’s work has to rest on an antecedent work of God; 2. In all of his works man has to show forth God’s image and be a means for the revelation of God’s virtues; 3. The latter should not occur unconsciously or passively, but the revelation of God’s virtues must proceed by way of understanding and will and by way of the conscious life, and actively come to external expression (242).

When I read or hear Dr. Gaffin on Pauline theology and soteriology, this statement of Vos comes to mind. I believe that Gaffin’s work in teaching and writing is embedded in the doctrine of the covenant and is always seeking to lead us to the root of the Biblical message—the preeminence of the glory of

God. And this is his service to the church. He regularly is helping us to see: (1) every work of man is preceded first by the work of God accomplished in Jesus Christ and the glory belongs to God! (2) Anything that can be said about our work only serves to show forth God's glory as his character is imprinted and reproduced in us by his work of grace in us. (3) Gaffin works hard to get the church to understand this clearly and consciously so that deliberately coming to realization in our minds and coming to expression upon our lips, is praise and glory to God for that precious work that God has accomplished on our behalf in Christ. To see that the whole content of Biblical revelation is not about us, not about man, but rather it is about God and what he has done in his grace in Christ, to save his people from their sins.

James Dennison, in his Gospel of John lectures, reminded us of the debate between Pelagius and Augustine where they contended for different ways to express the covenant between God and his people. Pelagius said it was to be stated this way: "God, ask what you will. God, I will give you what you ask." Augustine disagreed! This is the way the covenant is to be expressed: "God, ask what you will. God, give what you ask." God's work always precedes man's work that the glory might belong to him. This is what Paul is doing in his theology. In his book, Gaffin is helping us to see and understand it. Salvation in Christ is to the end of worship, that God might be glorified.

The Center of Paul's Theology: Redemptive History

The Bible is central, the covenant is central to the Bible and central to the covenant is the preeminence of God and his glory. Now how does Paul's theology expound the covenant and show forth the preeminence of God and his glory? What is at the center of Paul's theology? What makes up the iceberg of his thought?

In getting at the center of Pauline theology, Gaffin draws from the work of Vos and Ridderbos who both posited the primacy of redemptive history. He writes, "In the Reformed tradition of interpretation there are only two attempts to deal comprehensively with the teaching of Paul as a distinct unit. These are

Geerhardus Vos's study on Pauline eschatology (*The Pauline Eschatology*) and the recent volume of Herman Ridderbos" (*Paul an Outline of his Theology*)." And he states that both of these men came to the same basic conclusion independent of one another that "the center of Paul's teaching is not found in the doctrine of justification by faith or any other aspect of the *ordo salutis*. Rather, his primary interest is seen to be in the *historia salutis* as that history has reached its eschatological realization in the death and especially the resurrection of Christ." At the deepest level of Paul's theology then is the emphasis on the *historia salutis*, the history of salvation. Here Paul's focus is first and foremost on the work that God has done in Christ.

In the covenant of grace, every work of man is preceded by the work of God, that the glory of God might be uncurtailed. Therefore, at the center of Paul's theology is the history of the saving work of Christ. In that event, Jesus acted not just for himself but as covenant head and representative of his people. The once-for-all accomplishment of salvation in history is where Paul's attention first lies. The writings of Paul unfold for the church the amazing grace of God in the work of Christ. They cause his readers to see that salvation is not our work so that we can never boast. Paul calls upon us to join him in boasting in nothing but the cross of Christ.

Gaffin maintains Paul's focus is on the *historia salutis*. But then, arising from the history of the accomplishment of Christ's work is Paul's accompanying interest in the *ordo salutis*, the matter of how the once for all accomplished work of Christ is applied or appropriated by the individual believer. Gaffin asks, Does Paul have an *ordo salutis* in his theology? Does he answer the question, How does a person get saved? Yes he does! In Acts 16:31, the episode of the Philippian jailor, Paul answers that very question from the jailor, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answer, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved." Paul says in Romans 10:9 "that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you shall be saved." Paul is clear that a person is saved by faith in the accomplished work of Christ. We appropriate the accomplished work of Christ by faith that is focused upon him. We receive Christ and rest in him alone for our salvation. By faith we lay hold of Christ and all the benefits of his work for our salvation.

The Center of Redemptive History: the Death and Resurrection of Christ

The Bible is at the center of our Christian faith. The doctrine of the covenant is at the center of the Bible. And at the center of the covenant is God and his glory. And at the center of Paul's theology is the history of redemption. Next Gaffin argues, for Paul, at the center of the history of redemption, is the death and resurrection of Christ.

The central historical event of Christ's coming is his death and resurrection. This center of his redemptive historical theology can be detected from his writings. When Paul summarizes his preaching and teaching, it is focused on Christ and specifically on his death and resurrection. There are several passages in Paul where this is evident. A major passage to consider here is

1 Corinthians 15:3-4, where Paul summarizes the gospel which he preached to the Corinthians by saying: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." Paul's message to the Corinthians could be summarized as the gospel proclamation of Christ's death and resurrection. This was the matter of "first importance" by which Paul not only means that it was the first item in his teaching, but also that it was the item of central and paramount concern (23).

This surely squares with the information we have on Paul from the Book of Acts. On the road to Damascus, the resurrected and exalted Christ appears to Paul. In the subsequent accounts of his conversion experience in Acts this is the focal point of his presentation. He saw the risen Christ. For Paul, the good Jew and Pharisee, the resurrection belonged to the final age—it belonged to the eschaton. The OT prophesied many things concerning the arrival of the great future, but one of those things was that it would be the age of resurrection. "Your dead will live; their corpses will rise" (Isa. 26:19). When Paul sees the risen Christ, it begins to dawn on him that the final age, the eschaton had arrived and commenced. Therefore, it is the death and resurrection of Christ that impacts Paul so greatly and it is from that event in history that his whole theology and soteriology emerge.

Aspects of the Center of Pauline Soteriology

Paul's gospel reveals that his theology is focused on Christ and upon the definitive work of Christ in his death and resurrection. This means that the death and resurrection of Christ are at the center of Paul's soteriology. Therefore, Gaffin states: "the center of Paul's gospel-theology is not one or the other applied benefit of Christ's work [justification, etc.] . . . but that work itself . . . In other words, as we raise the question of the *ordo salutis* in Paul, we need to keep in mind again that his controlling focus is the *historia salutis*, not the *ordo salutis* . . . he is concerned with matters of individual appropriation only as they are integrally tethered to and flow from his redemptive-historical focus" (24). As he said before, this does not "de-center" justification in Paul's teaching but it does put the benefits of Christ's salvation applied to us in a more proper Biblical perspective. It puts those benefits in the perspective of the covenant. Those redemptive benefits only flow to believers because of the work of Christ as the covenant head of his people. And to understand how this central redemptive event of Christ's death and resurrection is applied to believers, we have to understand the eschatological nature of the event and its application to us.

1. Pauline Eschatology

As Paul reflects upon the coming of Christ, the whole eschatological character of redemptive history comes to the fore. The OT prophesied that when the Messiah came and the final era arrived, it would be a time of both salvation for God's people and judgment for the impenitent. When Jesus comes, he reveals that the element of salvation and judgment are separated. Jesus comes the first time to bring salvation, to bear the judgment himself upon the cross. Judgment is postponed to allow for the ingathering of the elect through the preaching of the gospel. Only when the time of harvest is over will final judgment come at the second coming of Christ. So Paul sees that though the final era has commenced with the first coming of Christ, it will only be consummated at the return of Christ and the end of this world.

So, for Paul, Gaffin writes: "eschatology is defined not only in terms of Christ's second coming but also by his first, by what has already taken place in

Christ, especially his death and resurrection, as well as what is still future at his return. Paul teaches an eschatology that for the church is, in part, present, already realized” (26). Paul sees the whole of redemptive history from creation to consummation by way of the two-age construction—this age and the age to come. There is first this present evil age, fallen, sinful and in rebellion against God. This world united to the first Adam is a life under the dominion of sin, condemnation and death. Redemption in Christ according to Galatians 1:4 is to deliver us from this present evil age and “by implication, to bring believers into the coming world order, the new and final creation, marked by eschatological life in all its fullness” (27). Salvation in Christ is to be seen as being transferred from one age into another, from this present evil age and its mode of existence of sin, condemnation and death, into the age to come and its new mode of existence of righteousness, justification and life. Paul puts it this way in Colossians 1:13: “For he delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his Son.” The believer in Christ is viewed by Paul as a new creation where old things are passed away and behold all things have become new (2 Cor. 5:17). “The believer, in union with Christ, is already [a] participant in God’s new and final order” (28). He already in one sense belongs to the age to come. He is blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ (Eph. 1:4). He has the down payment of it by the Holy Spirit.

2. Paul on Sin—Transfer From What?

For Paul, our salvation is our being transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of God, from one domain or sphere into another. So, to understand Paul in his soteriology, you have to understand Paul on sin. In the domain of darkness, this present evil age, man in sin and rebellion is guilty before God and he stands on the brink of eternal damnation. Not only is man the sinner guilty before God but he is also utterly helpless. Gaffin states: “This, as Paul sees it, is the grim ‘plight’ of sinners, a plight all the more grim, because, left to themselves, sinners are unable to comprehend adequately, much less acknowledge, either their guilt or the bondage of their corruption in sin. Even less can they grasp what the ‘solution’ is” (33).

The sinner does not see or understand his own plight nor can he see that the only remedy for sin is the gospel. Paul declares that the Gentile holds the gospel to be foolishness and the Jew holds it to be a scandal (34). In Ephesians

2:1ff., Paul describes the plight of man as a tomb like existence: “And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the age of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desire of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.”

Dead men cannot do anything to extricate themselves from their tomb-like existence. If this plight of man is going to be resolved, the message of Scripture is that God must do it. Paul goes on in Ephesians 2:4 to say, “But God, being rich in mercy, because of his great love with which he loved us.” God must work salvation for man. God must snatch him from the brink of the chasm of eternal damnation and transfer him from his state of sin and misery into the estate of salvation. God’s work always precedes man’s work. As the Westminster Shorter Catechism puts it, “God having, out of his mere good pleasure, from all eternity, elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer” (Q&A 20). In the covenant of grace, God in Christ transfers us out of this fallen world and its mode of existence of sin and death, and into the new mode of existence of righteousness and life of the world to come.

3. Union with Christ

How is this deliverance in Christ accomplished? How is this transfer from this present evil age into the age to come—into the kingdom of God—how is this transfer accomplished? The answer is Paul’s teaching concerning our union with Christ. And this answer is the heart and center of Paul’s soteriology.

In Paul’s teaching of union with Christ, he shows himself to be a covenant theologian. He learns union with Christ from the OT and from the description of the covenant regularly repeated throughout Scripture as a relationship of mutual possession: God is our God and we are his people who will dwell together in his own heavenly dwelling place. Union with God in the covenant brings to the forefront how that covenant union is accomplished. It is accomplished by union with Christ. In union with Christ, God’s people come to be his

possession and God becomes their possession. “The climatic realization of this covenantal bond, this reciprocal possession between the triune God and his people, centers for Paul, in union with Christ. This . . . is the central truth of salvation for Paul, the key soteriological reality comprising all others” (36).

Paul is talking about union with Christ when he uses the language of being “in Christ” or “with Christ.” Paul’s meaning here is most clearly seen when he compares and contrasts Adam and Christ, as the last Adam (Rom. 5:12-19). “What each does is determinative . . . respectively for those ‘in him,’ as their representative” (36). At the head of the whole race stands the first Adam. What the first Adam did had consequences for all whom he represents. For all who are united to him the consequences of his fall into sin flow to them. But there is also the last Adam, Christ, the head and representative of his people who by faith are united to him. From Christ and his work, all the benefits of salvation flow to his people.

This union with Christ or solidarity with Christ is all encompassing (37), extending from eternity to eternity. We were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world and we remain united to him through to the future glorification (Rom. 8:17; 1 Cor. 15:22). Though Paul knows that he was chosen “in Christ” before the foundation of the world, he recognizes that this worked itself out in time and in his own life. He states that there was a time in his life when he was outside of Christ (37), when he was also a child of wrath, even as the rest, as he states in Eph. 2:3. But Paul comes to be “in Christ” Gaffin states, “Here an absolutely crucial question, an *ordo salutis* question, emerges. What effects this transition from wrath to grace, from the wrath of being ‘outside’ Christ to the salvation from that wrath of being ‘in Christ’?”(37-38).

Christ accomplishes this transition from wrath to grace. And our faith unites us to Christ in his work. We by faith receive him and rest in him. We are united to Christ in all the work he performs. Paul is quite consistent in describing this. We are buried with Christ! We were crucified with Christ and died with Christ! We are raised with Christ! We have ascended with Christ and are seated with him in the heavenly places! We reign with Christ! We shall return with Christ when he returns! We are inseparably united to Christ in the history of the redemption he accomplished. And therefore, when Christ undergoes his transition from death (that he bore in our place) to life, we were passed from

death to life in him. We are in him and all the benefits of his work become ours. “Faith unites to Christ so that his death and resurrection are mine, in the sense of now being effective savingly in my life . . . faith is the work of God by his Spirit, effective in ‘calling’ sinners, otherwise ‘dead in trespasses and sins’ (Eph. 2:1, 5) and thus utterly incapable of faith in and of themselves, ‘into the fellowship of His Son’ (1 Cor. 1:9), into union with Christ” (42). By faith in Christ, we are united to him and transferred in him from wrath to grace, from condemnation to justification, from death to life. Justification is essentially this transfer (45).

But the movement is also in the other direction. Those who are in Christ then also have Christ in them. “[P]resent union has a *reciprocal* character. Not only are believers in Christ, he is in them, and ‘the hope of glory’ for the church is ‘Christ in you’ (Col. 1:27)” (39). When I swam for the first time in the Pacific Ocean, it wasn’t long before the Pacific Ocean was in me. Jesus does his work for me (justification and adoption), but then he also does his work in me (sanctification and glorification). In that order! It’s all of grace. It’s all the work of God to save us in Christ, and nothing of the gospel and nothing that characterizes our salvation is outside of Christ. The gospel is not just the grace of God done for me in Christ. It is also the grace of God in Christ worked in me. Both the forensic (justification) and the transformative (sanctification) are functions or manifestations or aspects of union with Christ. “In union with us Christ has a significance that is decisively forensic as well as powerfully transforming” (41). Gaffin summarizes: “Present union with Christ—sharing with him in all he has accomplished and now is by virtue of his death and resurrection—that, as much as anything, is at the center of Paul’s soteriology” (40). Calvin agrees when he speaks in the *Institutes* (Book 3) of the way of salvation: “First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us.”

4. By Union with Christ there is the Twofold Remedy for Sin

It is by virtue of union with Christ, that we have the two-fold remedy for the two-fold plight of sin. The salvation provided for us in Christ is the remedy for the guilt of sin and also for the enslaving power of sin. Christ remedies the guilt of sin in the forensic work that he does for us. Christ remedies the enslav-

ing power of sin in the renovative/transforming work that he does in us. The remedy for the guilt of sin is found in the forensic work of Christ of justification. The remedy for the enslaving power of sin is found in the renovative work of Christ of sanctification. The latter half of Gaffin's book is given to these two aspects of Paul's soteriology, sanctification and justification.

But before he does that, he says some preliminary things about justification. Interacting with the New Perspective, Gaffin makes what he calls some baseline observations about Paul on justification. He is persuaded, over against the New Perspective, that the Reformation was right in its assessment of Paul on justification. Justification is about soteriology not ecclesiology. It is not about ecclesiology. It is not about whom you may eat with and who you are to have fellowship with. It's not about being and living as a Christian. Rather, it's about how one becomes a Christian (45). It is a transfer term, describing an individual's transfer from wrath to grace, a part of which is involved in Col. 1:15: "that God delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his son."

Without going into Gaffin's detailed explanation here, he argues that the best entry for understanding Paul on justification is his parallel between Adam and Christ (46). In Romans 5, Paul presents a parallel construction between Adam and Christ and the corresponding two orders of existence. Adam stands at the head of the first order described as sin, condemnation and death. Christ stands at the head of the new order described as righteousness, justification and life. The new order that Christ brings answers to the order of the first Adam. Christ's righteousness answers and remedies sin. Christ's justification answers and remedies condemnation. Christ's resurrection life answers and remedies death. Condemnation is a forensic idea—a judicial act based upon man's sin. It results in the sentence of death. Justification is a forensic idea—a judicial act based upon Christ's righteousness. It results in the sentence of life. Therefore, justification takes place in union with Christ (50). The ground of justification is our union with Christ and his righteousness imputed to us. Gaffin quotes Calvin once more: "This is a wonderful plan of justification that . . . they [believers] should be accounted righteous outside themselves" (52) In our justification, an alien righteousness is imputed to us and faith is the alone

instrument of our appropriation of it. Gaffin remains persuaded that the Reformation understood Paul's doctrine of justification by faith alone correctly.

Eschatology and the Order of Salvation— Sanctification

In the final chapters, Gaffin discusses Paul's *ordo salutis* in the framework of his eschatology. The order of salvation in Paul is tethered to the center of his gospel theology and that center is focused on Christ's death and resurrection which is eschatological in nature. Eschatology encompasses not only the return of Christ, but also his first coming and everything of the believer's faith and life between Christ's comings. Therefore Paul's order of salvation is itself a thoroughly eschatological reality. The question Gaffin asks is this: how does Paul elaborate the eschatological salvation in Christ received by faith? (53). What are the implications of union with Christ by faith for the subject of the application of salvation to the believer? Gaffin first takes up the matter of sanctification.

1. Eschatology, Resurrection, and Union with Christ

In his book *Resurrection and Redemption*, Gaffin argues that Christ's resurrection is his justification, his adoption, his sanctification and his glorification. His presentation there is too much to go into here. But this is only to be understood in the context of the covenant. Christ, as the covenant head and representative of his people, became sin for us who knew no sin. He was condemned for the sin which he became. He was made to be a curse for us by his suffering and hanging upon a cross. Under the curse which he became for our sakes, he was abandoned by the Father when he said, "My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me"? And he died the penalty for the sin of his people. Christ's resurrection reverses all of these things which he became and did as head of the covenant on behalf of his people. In Christ's resurrection, the believer has his own resurrection. The resurrection is Christ's justification and in Jesus' justification, the believer has his. The resurrection is Christ's adoption and in Jesus' adoption, the believer is adopted. The resurrection is Christ's

definitive sanctification and in Jesus' sanctification (in that sense) the believer has his sanctification. The resurrection is Jesus' glorification and in Jesus' glorification, the believer is glorified. Every work of man is preceded by the work of God.

Paul's order of salvation is determined then by the way he views the resurrection of Christ and the believer's participation in it. In *By Faith, Not By Sight*, Gaffin writes: "Consistently, without exception, [Paul] stresses the unity there is between Christ's resurrection and theirs, the solidarity that exists between him and them in being raised" (59).

This inseparable unity between Christ's resurrection and the resurrection of believers is clearly presented in a passage like 1 Corinthians 15:20 where Christ's resurrection is called the "firstfruits." "Firstfruits" is a reference to the OT offering of firstfruits that Israel gave to God. It consisted of the earliest fruits to ripen, the initial portion of the harvest, the first installment of the whole (59). But the important thing to remember is that the firstfruits, the initial quantity is inseparable from the whole harvest and represented the entire harvest. Therefore, Paul is saying that the resurrection of Christ and the resurrection of the believer cannot be separated. In God's redeeming plan, there is one whole, single harvest of resurrections. Christ's resurrection is the "firstfruits".

Christ's resurrection is the first, but the resurrection of believers is in view. There is an order involved. Verse 23 confirms this: "each in his own order: Christ the firstfruits, then at his coming those who belong to Christ." Paul means here not just that Christ's resurrection is the guarantee of the believer's resurrection. "Rather, Christ's resurrection is a guarantee in the sense that it is nothing less than the *actual* and, as such, representative beginning of the 'general epochal event' . . . the general resurrection, as it includes believers, *begins* with Christ's resurrection" (60). This means that the resurrection of Christ is not an isolated event like other resurrections in scripture. Christ's resurrection signals the arrival of the new era and is the initial portion of the whole harvest of resurrections belonging to that new era. (i.e., Christ the first-born also, p. 61).

The resurrection of Christ and the future bodily resurrection of the believer are not separate events. Rather they are two episodes, temporally distinct, of the one and same event. Together they form the beginning and end of the same harvest (61). They are so inseparable that Paul will argue in 1 Corinthians 15, that if there is no resurrection of Christ, then there is no resurrection of the believer. And if there is no resurrection of the believer, then there is no resurrection of Christ. They are two episodes of the one event.

2. The Already and the Not Yet

Now within the unity between Christ's resurrection and the believer's resurrection, the believer participates in the resurrection of Christ in two stages—the already and the not yet (62). On one hand, Paul will speak of the believer's resurrection in the past tense and say that believers in Christ have already been raised. Colossians 3:1: "If you then have been risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." Believers in union with Christ were raised with Christ. When he was resurrected the believer was also. But it has two stages to it, an already and a not yet stage. The believer is already raised with Christ and this phase of his resurrection commences at his conversion. In Eph. 2:1-10, Paul describes the believers walk before he was a Christian and after he became a Christian. Before he walked in the deadness of trespasses and sins and after becoming a Christian his walk is characterized by good works. What accounts for this radical reversal in conduct? The answer lies in verses 5-6. The thing that has produced this decisive change in conduct is *his having been made alive and having been raised with Christ*. (62).

Therefore, three things are to be understood in Paul's teaching on the theme of the resurrection: "(1) Christ's own resurrection, three days after his crucifixion; (2) the resurrection that occurs at the inception of life in Christ, the believer's initial appropriation of that salvation; and (3) future, bodily resurrection of the believer at Christ's return" (63). All of these constitute a single resurrection harvest. The union of the believer in Christ's resurrection "consists of two episodes in the experience of the individual believer, one that is past, already realized and one that is still future, yet to be realized"(63).

3. *Eschatology and Paul's Anthropology*

How is this already/not yet participation of the believer in the resurrection of Christ further explained by Paul? What are the implications of our union with Christ by faith for the subject of the application of salvation to the believer? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand Paul's anthropology.

Paul's anthropology can be summed up as "inner man" and "outer man." 2 Corinthians 4:16 says it best and succinctly: "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day." This is how he views the constitution of the Christian. "Here we have Paul's basic outlook on the Christian existing between the resurrection and return of Christ, on how, in fundamental categories, believers are to view themselves during this interim. In other words, this is a key text for issues related to salvation in its actual appropriation, for Paul's *ordo salutis* (54).

Paul sees these two aspects of "inner man" "outer man" as entering into Paul's soteriology in a major way. In 2 Corinthians 4:16, the outer man, the body, is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day. What is now true in the inner man is not yet true for the outer man (55). What is true for believers in the inner man is not yet true for their bodies. "The outer man is the subject, the 'I' that I am, undergoing decay resulting in death. The inner man is the subject, the 'I' that I am, marked by life, in fact . . . eschatological life and ongoing ('day to day') renewal" (56). In 2 Corinthians 4:7, he puts it this way: "We have this treasure in clay jars." The treasure is the life-imparting gospel which we have in the inner man, while the clay jar is the body which is not yet renewed by that gospel.

This inner man/outer man distinction is how our participation with Christ in his resurrection is to be viewed in the pattern of the already and not yet. "In view here is our participation in the eschatological salvation revealed in Christ, as both realized and unrealized, as already present and still future." The believer is united to Christ in all of his accomplished work, but he participates in it in an already/not yet manner. He participates in it in two stages. The benefits of Christ's work are already possessed by the believer in his inner man, but those benefits are not yet possessed in the body, in the outer man. "So far as the believer is 'inner man' [he is] already raised; so far as the believer is 'outer

man' [he is] yet to be raised" (65). In 2 Corinthians 4:7, Paul puts it this way: "For we walk by faith, not by sight." Here, "faith" corresponds to what the believer already presently has in the inner man and "sight" corresponds to what the believer will receive in the future and what will be openly manifest in the resurrection of the body at Christ's return (58). Presently, the benefits we receive from union with Christ are received by faith and not sight. In the future when Christ returns, those benefits will be openly manifest for all to see. Then we will possess those benefits by sight.

Already believers united to Christ by faith are resurrected in the inner man. Gaffin puts it this way: "in the deepest recesses of who they are . . . believers will never be more resurrected than they already are" (67). This is not figurative language. In terms of Paul's anthropology, the past resurrection of the inner man is to be understood as realistically and literally as future, bodily resurrection. By faith in Christ, the believer is already in the inner man a new creation, born again into the new eschatological era, into the kingdom of God. This is the basis for the believer's ongoing renewal (sanctification) day by day spoken of in 2 Cor. 4:16. The good work that God has begun in them, God will also complete. That good work is the work of resurrection. (Phil. 1:6). The whole of a believer's existence is subsumed under the category of resurrection. The whole of the believer's life is about being transformed by the resurrection. The Christian life is resurrection life. The believer is born into that life, he walks daily in that life of sanctification and one day his transformation will be completed by the resurrection of his "outer man," in the resurrection of his body.

4. The Ethics of Paul: The Indicative and the Imperative

We are to understand our salvation in terms of our union with Christ in his death and resurrection. The benefits of his death and resurrection are applied to us in an already/not yet pattern. We appropriate this salvation already in the inner man and then later, in the future, in the outer man.

The eschatological resurrection of Christ, the already/not yet and inner man/outer man distinctions in the teaching of Paul all determine what he says about sanctification. This can be seen in his consistent use of the indicative and the imperative. Such use is clear in a passage like Colossians 3:1-4. In verse

one, Paul writes: “If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.” “If you have been raised with Christ”—is in the indicative mood; in the phrase “seek the things above”, the verb is an imperative. So Paul is saying, if the indicative, then the imperative; or concretely, if you have resurrection life, then seek resurrection life; because you have resurrection life, seek resurrection life. Therefore, seek after what you already have. This is the pattern of indicative and imperative in Paul (other passages are listed on p. 70).

In regard to sanctification then, this grace of God is viewed on the one hand as the gift and work of God already possessed by the believer (1 Cor.1:2; Phil.1:6), and on the other hand as the work of the believer that he pursues (2 Cor 7:1). What in Gal. 5:22 is called the “fruit of the Spirit”, in Rom. 6:22, is called “your fruit.” “Love” is the first fruit of the Spirit in Gal. 5, but it is also the first command (Rom. 13:8-9). Therefore Paul’s ethic can be summarized like this: “become what you are!” “Become what you [already] are *in Christ!*” (71). The indicative describes the believer’s salvation that he has, as a gift of God’s grace, in Christ. The imperative then speaks to how the believer is to live. In his writings, Paul put it in a variety of ways. You are saints, holy ones; become what you are. Pursue holiness. You are citizens of heaven, conduct yourselves as citizens. You are light, walk like the light. Sanctification for Paul does not say to believers, become what you are not. Rather, for Paul, sanctification says to believers, become what you already are in Christ. As Charles Dennison put it, you cannot get to heaven unless you start in heaven. You can’t pursue holiness unless you begin as holy in Christ.

This relationship between the indicative and the imperative is not reversible. The indicative precedes the imperative. Paul always writes in this way. No command is given to the church until he first reminds them about who they are in Christ. He never asks them to obey without first reminding them that Jesus has obeyed first. And he doesn’t just cite Jesus as the example for obedience. He makes it clear that Jesus in them is also the power that will enable them to obey. You cannot live the Christian life until you are first a Christian united to Christ by faith. You must first be in Christ and that salvation accomplished by him. Only then can Christ be in us and work in us the new obedience of a life striving to obey God’s commands. “[T]he indicative provides the impulse or

incentive toward fulfilling the imperative” (72). Christ’s work precedes our work. If you reverse these then, you are saying that obedience leads to the state of being in Christ; and that makes our salvation to be on the basis of our own works.

The relationship between indicative and imperative is also inseparable. When Paul writes in the indicative, he always at least implicitly has the imperative in view. Imperative without the indicative makes for moralism. Indicative without imperative leads to antinomianism. The “indicative and imperative are given together and compliance with the imperative is the consequence and attestation apart from which the indicative does not exist” (72).

In Phil. 2:12-13, the imperative comes first. Let the believer continue working out their salvation with fear and trembling. But then he reminds them of the indicative: “for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.” He does not say that the indicative of God’s working parallels our working. “Nor does he say that God’s activity supplements ours, or ours his. Nor is there even a suggestion of a tension, as if God is at work in spite of us or to compensate for the defects in our working. Rather, we are working just *because . . . God is working*” (73). “[It] is not divine-human partnership, in the sense of a cooperative enterprise with each making its own contribution . . . Sanctification is 100% the work of God and, just for that reason, is to engage the full, 100% activity of the believer” (74, i.e., God’s mysterious math).

God’s work of salvation for his people is all of grace. Sanctification is the work of God’s grace that he does in us. “[U]ltimately, [it] is not a matter of what we do, but of what God does. As the best in the Reformation tradition recognizes, [sanctification], no less than our justification, is a work of his grace” (77; Westminster Larger Catechism Q&A 75; Westminster Shorter Catechism Q&A 35). And this benefit of Christ’s redeeming work is applied to us in the already/not yet pattern. The believer in Christ is declared already holy, already sanctified in him. This is the definitive sanctification of the believer. But then also there is the progressive aspect of our sanctification. The believer in himself is not yet holy and he must pursue holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. Paul in his letters to churches addresses them as saints, “holy ones.” They are already holy in Christ by virtue of his cleansing work and the imputation of his holiness and righteousness to them. But they are also not yet holy

and therefore they are to pursue holiness. They are to seek to overtake what they already have. They seek to become what they already are in Christ. But their position in Christ provides them with the enabling grace to pursue the life of sanctification. Because, by faith, we are united to Christ and have put on Christ, the power of sin over us, the dominion of sin over us, has been broken and we are able in Christ and by his Spirit dwelling in us to present our members as instruments of righteousness (Rom. 6) (78).

We are saved by grace “through faith and that not of ourselves. It’s the gift of God, not of works lest any man should boast. But also we have been created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” The fruit of good works originates from God not from men. Remember Vos’s principle: every work of man is preceded by the work of God that his glory might be preeminent. Ultimately, in the deepest sense, for Paul our good works are not ours but God’s. They are the result of God’s imprinting upon us his own character and virtues so that we reflect his glory back to him and reflect his glory out before others. Our works in sanctification are his work begun and continuing in us, his being at work in us, both to will and to do what pleases him. Paul asks in 1 Cor. 4:7, “What do you have that you did not receive?” “These questions . . . have the same answer for sanctification as for justification, for our good works as well as for our faith. Both faith and good works, are God’s gift, his work in us” (78). “The deepest motive for our sanctification, for holy living and good works . . . is the resurrection power of Christ, the new creation we are and have already been made a part of in Christ by his Spirit” (78).

Eschatology and Justification

How should Paul’s teaching on justification be understood in terms of the eschatological nature of his soteriology? How is justification to be understood in terms of the believer’s union with Christ in his resurrection and in terms of the already/not yet and inner/outer man distinctions?

The Reformation firmly grasped the eschatological ‘already’ of justification. “For instance, in a verse like Romans 8:1, ‘There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,’ Luther and others, instinc-

tively and implicitly if not explicitly, heard an eschatological pronouncement. They understood that the ‘now’ . . . there has eschatological force; it is the ‘now’ of eschatological realization” (80).

But what about justification and the not yet? Does Paul’s soteriology support the idea of our justification as in some sense still future? Gaffin states that: “at least as an initial reaction, that our answer should be in the negative, and an emphatic ‘no’ at that. . . .To speak of justification as in any sense ‘not yet’ appears to take away from it’s ‘already,’ definitive character . . . to threaten its present, absolute finality, to undermine its settled certainty in the life of the Christian” (80). Gaffin insists that Paul never undermines this settled certainty. Anything that might be said about a future aspect to our justification cannot take away the certainty that the believer is already justified by faith in Christ.

References in Paul to a future justification are few if any at all (cf. Rom. 2:13; 5:19; Gal. 5:5; 2 Tim. 4:8). All of these passages are contested, but Gaffin believes at least some of these teach a future justification. “[T]he case for a future aspect to the Christian’s justification or, put another way, for a decisive future aspect to the forensic side of salvation that is tantamount to justification, does not rest on such passages alone or even primarily” (81). Gaffin will build his case for a future justification on four components: (1) a presumptive consideration stemming from the structure of Paul’s soteriology and eschatology; (2) the forensic significance that both death, including bodily death, and resurrection have for him; (3) his teaching on adoption; (4) his teaching on the final judgment. (81)

1. Comment on the Westminster Standards

Before he takes up the four components, Gaffin refers us to the teaching of the Westminster Standards. Larger Catechism Q&A 90: “What shall be done to the righteous at the day of judgment?” Shorter Catechism Q&A 38: “What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection?” In both answers, it is stated that on the judgment day believers, said to be already righteous, shall be “openly acknowledged and acquitted.”

To be acquitted or justified are interchangeable. Acquittal is at the heart of justification. Therefore these catechisms teach “in effect, that for believers the

final judgment, as it involves their being acquitted, will have justifying significance; in some sense it will be their justification, their being declared to be righteous. We may conclude, then, by clear implication, that the notion of the believer's justification as in some sense future or having a future aspect has confessional grounding in Reformation orthodoxy" (82).

2. Justification as Future: Four Components

First, the structure of Paul's overall theology and soteriology infers that justification must be one aspect of that whole structure. There is no room in Paul for a justification that lies outside the center of his soteriology—which lies outside of union with Christ and the benefits of that union that are applied to believers. There is no room in Paul for a justification that is not qualified by his inner/outer anthropology or that is outside his already/not yet pattern. Therefore, "a future justification of the Christian at Christ's return, in the resurrection of the body and at the final judgment . . . is a 'good and necessary consequence,' fully consonant with Paul's teaching" (83). Justification cannot be isolated from Paul's root idea of union with Christ and its related aspects. This presumption, Gaffin states, may not convince everyone but there is more than this.

Second, a future aspect to justification is seen in the forensic significance that both death (including bodily death) and resurrection have for him. Union with Christ is not only renovative. It also has judicial or forensic significance.

There is judicial importance to Christ's resurrection. As the God-man and second Adam and head of the covenant, to redeem us Jesus who knew no sin became sin on our behalf (worst of sinners). He was then condemned for the sin he became and he died on the cross the sentence of that condemnation. Therefore, Jesus' resurrection is his own justification; it is God's declaration of Jesus' own righteousness; it is God's justification of his Son and it is the reversal of the sentence of death by putting life in its place. Jesus' resurrection speaks in a judicial manner. It is Christ's own justification as the head of his covenant people. Therefore, for Christians, Christ's justification given with his resurrection becomes theirs. When they are united by faith to the resurrected, the justified Christ, his righteousness is reckoned as theirs or imputed to them.

1 Timothy 3:16: confirms the resurrection of Christ as his own justification. “He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit.” The word ‘vindicated’ is the word ‘justified’. In the resurrection of Christ, Jesus was raised from the dead by the Holy Spirit and his resurrection was his justification. It is important to note that his justification was not on the basis of any righteousness of another imputed to him, but only on the basis of his own righteousness. And Romans 4:25 directly connects Jesus’ resurrection with our justification: “who was delivered up for our trespasses and was raised for our justification.” The resurrection is Christ’s justification on the basis of his righteousness. The believer’s justification is a function or manifestation of union with Christ in his resurrection. In Christ’s justification we are also justified. Sin brings the consequence of the judicial sentence of condemnation and death. Christ’s righteousness brings the reversal of the sentence by the judicial declaration of justification and life. The judicial sentence of death is reversed in the judicial verdict of resurrection life. The believer is united to Christ in his justification and in Christ’s justification the believer has his own. Our justification is of the whole man. The believer is righteous on the basis of Christ’s righteousness imputed to him. He is justified in the whole person before God on the basis of that righteousness and he is already raised from the dead. This complete justification is realized first in the inner man and only in the future will it be openly manifested in the outer man by way of the resurrection of the body. The believer “is alive from the dead yet in a mortal body” (cf. Rom. 6). His justification is complete, but it is still hidden and invisible to the world because his body is still subject to decay and death like everyone else in the world. What is future about his justification then is the resurrection of his body at the judgment day when, before the whole world, the believer will be openly and publicly justified before men. God will declare unmistakably that those who believe in Christ are redeemed and have life while those who do not believe are condemned and receive death. The one act of justification unfolds in two steps: one already realized and one still future. “[T]he open or public declaration of that judicial reversal, that manifest declaration attendant on their bodily resurrection and the final judgment, is likewise still future. In that sense, believers are already justified—by faith. But they are yet to be justified—by sight” (88).

Third, like justification, adoption in Paul is a forensic reality. Christians only become the children of God by being adopted into his family in Christ. Christ is God's Son uniquely. Only on the basis of his redeeming work that cleanses us and makes us holy, does Jesus' Father become our Father. Apart from Christ, we are children of wrath. This wrath of God is the divine sentence judicially pronounced against us. When we are adopted, this is on the basis of a judicial declaration of God. We are called the children of God. "Christians are not God's sons either inherently or by virtue of creation. Neither is that identity the outcome of a renovative process. Rather, the believer has the status of being God's son by his decisive, declarative act. Adoption like justification is judicially declarative" (92).

But in Scripture, adoption, this judicial, declarative act, also participates in the already and not yet of Paul's theology. In Romans 8:14-17, believers have already been adopted. They are the sons of God. But a few verses later (v. 23), Paul writes that "we wait eagerly for adoption, the redemption of our bodies." Now adoption is future and it coincides with the yet-to-come end of all things when we receive our resurrection bodies. The resurrection of believers will be declarative of the believer's adoption. Therefore adoption, a forensic, declarative, judicial act is seen as both present and future. At first glance this appears confusing. How can the believer be both adopted and not yet adopted (perfect/not yet perfect)? Adoption is one event that the believer partakes of in two stages. He is adopted in the inner man and that hidden and received by faith. He will in the resurrection of the body be adopted also in the outer man openly and he will have his adoption then by sight (93). Therefore, Paul's teaching on forensic adoption provides a window on how he would have us view the closely related forensic blessing of justification. As adoption is both present and future, so too is justification.

Fourth, at the final judgment Scripture states clearly that works will serve as an essential criterion. It will be a judgment according to works. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for the things he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor. 5:10). "Believers, too face final judgment, and for them, too, that judgment will involve the just adjudication of the things they have done bodily in the outer man." (94). In Romans 2:5-6, Paul, in the midst of arguing that all have

sinned and fall short of the glory of God, refers to the day of wrath that is coming; in v. 6 he adds, that on that judgment day, “God will render to each one according to his works.”

What are we to make of these passages that speak of the need for obedience and good works as a condition for entrance into the kingdom of God? “How are we to relate this future judgment according to works . . . to his clear and emphatic teaching elsewhere that justification . . . is a present reality, received by faith alone and on the basis of the imputed righteousness of God revealed in Christ?” (97-98).

The answer is everywhere given in Scripture. The righteousness that is required for entrance into the eternal kingdom of glory is also given as a gift of God’s grace to his people. Gaffin quotes Ridderbos to show that “[f]or Paul the imperative, no less than the indicative, is the concern of *faith* . . . and they are that together and inseparably. On the one hand, faith in its receptivity answers to the indicative, on the other, faith in its activity answers to the imperative” (73). For Paul, faith works through love. We are justified by faith alone, but not by a faith that is alone but by a faith that is ever accompanied by good works (Westminster Confession of Faith). “For Christians, future judgment according to works does not operate according to a different principle than their already having been justified by faith. The difference is that the final judgment will be the open manifestation of that present justification, their being ‘openly acquitted’ as we have seen. And in that future judgment their obedience, their works, are not the ground or basis” (98). They are the proof of our justification by faith and the necessary fruit that accompanies genuine faith in Christ.

“Nor are [good works] (co-)instrumental” for appropriating our justification before God. Works are in no way a supplement to the instrument of faith. “Rather, they are the essential and manifest criterion of that faith, the integral ‘fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith’” (Westminster Confession of Faith 16:2) (98). Note Gaffin’s comment on p. 100: there is an “integral, unbreakable bond . . . between justification and sanctification.” The “alone instrument of justification is not alone in the person justified” (Westminster Confession of Faith, 11:2).

Faith is alone the instrument of our justification, but it is not alone; rather it is accompanied by good works. We are already justified by faith in Christ.

And that justification by faith that we already have will, in the judgment, be openly manifested in sight of all. Believers will be acquitted openly not on the basis of their works, but only for only on the basis of the work of Christ imputed to them. That justifies them! But the genuine character of their faith in Christ that justifies—the proof of it—will be openly manifest in the good works that they performed.

But the root of those good works is again the work of Christ. Our good works are also given and worked in us as a gift of God's grace, but the reward for them is given to us. We receive a crown of life; yet believers, knowing that the root of their good works is Christ in us, cast their crowns at the feet of Jesus. Every work of man is preceded by the work of God.

How do the resurrection and the final judgment relate (99; Larger Catechism Q&A 90; Shorter Catechism Q&A 38)? The full possession of our salvation (even the not yet portion of it) are given to us prior to the final judgment. The completion of our redemption, our bodily resurrection, precedes final judgment. When Christ returns the dead are raised bodily; those alive at his return are changed in the twinkling of an eye. Paul says that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” (2 Cor. 5:10). But believers partake of their future resurrection—the consummation of their salvation—before the judgment takes place. By faith in union with Christ, they have a secure and complete salvation. The final judgment where works are considered does not reverse that or take away that complete salvation. We appear at the judgment “in ‘Spiritual’ bodies that are as imperishable as they are glorified and powerful . . . as they are already fully conformed to the image of their brother, the exalted Christ” (99). “If believers appear at the final judgment already resurrected bodily, then they will appear there also as *already openly justified*. Their future justification . . . will have already taken place in their resurrection, with the *de facto* declarative, forensic, justifying significance it has in Paul . . . This means, further, that, for believers, the final judgment, as it is to be according to works, will have for them a reality that is . . . reflective of and further attesting their justification that has been openly manifested in their bodily resurrection”(99-100).

Therefore, this not yet aspect of our justification—the public manifestation of it in the future resurrection of our body—does not diminish the assur-

ance and certainty of our present justification. Toplady's hymn, "A Debtor to Mercy Alone," states:

My name from the palms of his hands, eternity will not erase;
Impressed on his heart it remains, in marks of indelible grace.
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure, the glorified spirits in heaven.

3. Justification and the Present

We are justified in Christ and we are preserved by Christ in that justified state. Calvin says, "Therefore, we must have this blessedness not just once but must hold to it throughout life." God is the one who justifies (Rom. 8). Christ in heaven is making continual intercession for us. Christ as servant of his people accomplishes our salvation. But even now in heaven he continues to be the servant in the application of his salvation to us by his Spirit. He intercedes on our behalf. This is why nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ. Our confession of Christ, our perseverance in faith, our final arrival in glory and our final possession of the resurrection body, is all the work of God's grace. Jesus continues in heaven to intercede for us before the throne of God and to preserve us in our justified state. His work precedes any of our work. Our work is only reflective of his person and work in our lives. And Paul's interest is that we see that and know it consciously. Dick Gaffin helps us to see that in Paul.

XI. Appeals to the Reformed Community

In his book, Gaffin is making certain appeals to the Reformed church community. Preeminently he pleads with us for a proper appreciation for the foundational position of the doctrine of union with Christ. The church often has the tendency to talk about justification and all the applied benefits of Christ's redeeming work without tethering them to the underlying truth of union with Christ. Gaffin does not at all want to see any diminishing of the concern for the *ordo salutis* in the Reformed community. But he wishes for a greater and more conscious rooting of the *ordo salutis* in the *historia salutis*—

in the once for all accomplishment of salvation by Christ in history. God's work precedes man's work, that the glory to him might be uncurtailed.

Along this line, he appeals to the church to see sanctification, not just justification, as a work of God's grace arising from our union with Christ. The tendency is often to speak of justification as God's work of grace for us in Christ and sanctification as our work done in gratitude to God for that salvation. Taking nothing away from the note of our appropriate thanksgiving to God by the pursuit of a holy life, sanctification is not our work—it is God's work of grace in us flowing from union with Christ. God's work always precedes man's work that his glory might be uncurtailed.

Further, Gaffin pleads for the eschatological understanding of the gospel. That is, in the exposition of Paul's theology and soteriology, we will always take consciously into account his pattern of the already/not yet and the inner/outer man; what is now ours by faith and what will be ours in the future by sight. What we have in the already of our salvation belongs to the inner man; we lay hold of it and possess it by faith. What we do not yet have of our salvation belongs to the outer man and will in the future be ours by sight.

XII. Conclusion

In this book, Gaffin is helping us to see the doctrine of the covenant of grace in such a way that the grace of God, and therefore the glory of God, are given their preeminent place.

Vos discusses the conception of Christ as our great high priest saying that Christ's priesthood in the covenant involves both the idea of "leadership and participation in attainment."

The priest is not one who stands personally outside of the movement he directs or has no share of his own to realize in the end he serves. His close unity with the people and his representative relation to them already indicate that the opposite must be true . . . the priest himself is the first to travel the road and reach the goal to which it is his task to bring

others (“Hebrews, The Epistle of the Diatheke,” *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 212).

Vos goes on in the article to discuss the idea in Hebrews that Jesus is the “author” or “captain.” In Hebrews 2:10, Christ is called the “author” of our salvation. In Hebrews 12:2, he is called the “author and perfecter” of faith. Vos states:

Jesus does not as an outside person procure salvation for the race; by breaking His own way to the goal He has carried the others in His wake. And again, Jesus has not produced faith in us, while Himself living above the plane and beyond the need of faith; it is through His own perfect exercise of faith that He helps believers to follow in His footsteps (213).

In this wonderful exposition of Christ as the covenant head of his people, at every point along the path our Savior is revealed to us as the author—the leader of the whole movement of redemption. Jesus is the “trailblazer” of our salvation. As the trailblazer in the old west went first and opened the path and then brought others over that same path which he pioneered, so is Christ to his covenant people. He goes first and he goes alone. He cuts the path; he opens the path to God and heaven and glory. And then he also brings his people over that same path which he pioneered. He brings the many sons to glory.

In this latest book, Dr. Gaffin is expounding this covenant perspective for us. Christ, for our salvation, and as covenant head of his people, goes first in everything. And his people must see their salvation and understand it in terms of their union with him. He is saved in order that we might be saved in him. He has perfect faith in order that we might be saved by faith in the faith of Jesus. Jesus is first in life in order that we might have life in his name. He was justified by his own merits in order that we might be justified in him as a gift of God’s grace. He was adopted in order that we might be adopted in him. He was sanctified, declared the holy one, in order that we might be declared holy in him. He was glorified first in order that we might be glorified in him. Everything we have of our salvation has come to us as a gift of God’s grace in Christ. Paul asks the Corinthians and through them he asks us, “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Cor. 4:7).

Gaffin stands with Vos and Ridderbos in working out the full implications of our Reformed and Covenantal theology and soteriology. As Vos says, the preeminence of the glory of God is written over the “entrance of the temple of Reformed theology” (*Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 242). Dr. Gaffin helps us to see the revelation of God’s virtues so that by way of our understanding and by way of our wills and by way of our conscious life all of this might come in the church to external expression.

Anthony Burgess on the Law and the Gospel¹

We have confuted the false differences, and now come to lay down the true, between the law and the gospel, taken in a larger sense.

And first, you must know that the difference is not essential or substantial, but accidental: so that the division of the Testament or Covenant into the Old and the New is not a division of the genus into one's opposite species; but of the subject according to its several accidental administrations, both on God's part and man's. It is true, the Lutheran divines do expressly oppose the Calvinists herein, maintaining the Covenant given by Moses to be a Covenant of works, and so directly contrary to the Covenant of grace. Indeed, they acknowledge that the fathers were justified by Christ, and had the same way of salvation with us; only they make the Covenant of Moses to be a superadded thing to the Promise, holding forth a condition of perfect righteousness unto the Jews that they might be convinced of their own folly in their self-righteousness. But I think it is already cleared that Moses' Covenant was a Covenant of grace . . . for certainly the godly Jews did not rest on sacrifices or sacraments, but by faith did really enjoy Christ in them, as well as we in ours.

¹ Anthony Burgess (†1664) was a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines. His work against the Antinomians was heralded internationally. This quotation is taken from Lecture XXVI of his *Vindicae Legis: or A Vindication of the Morall Law and the Covenants from the Errours of Papists, Arminians, Socinians, and more especially Antinomians* (1647) 251 (sic! 253). Spelling and punctuation have been modified slightly above.

Reviews

[*K:NWTS 22/2* (Sep 2007) 54-58]

Paul Lawrence, *The IVP Atlas of Bible History*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. 188 pp. Cloth. ISBN: 0-8308-2452-9 \$40.00.

Fifty years ago, a Bible “atlas” consisted of a smattering of twenty-five or more maps indicating boundaries of ancient Near Eastern nations, locations of cities, towns and bodies of water, and routes of itinerary for famous Biblical sojourns (Exodus, Babylonian Exile, Missionary Journeys of Paul, etc.). The book under review is a superb example of the maturity of taking Biblical history in conjunction with Biblical geography, all represented sumptuously cartographically. Over the past half-century, Bible atlases have become essential tools in understanding the ‘lay of the land’ (Biblically speaking). No pastor or serious student of Scripture should be without one—and the book under review would be an excellent addition to the shelf (whether in the study or the academic library) for those with either an empty or available ‘Bible Atlas’ slot.

This is a very attractive Atlas. It is a Lion Hudson production (Oxford, England) distributed in the U.S. by IVP. As with other Lion products, the volume is beautifully illustrated with striking color photos, colored semi-topographical maps and side-bar contextual illustrations. So pleasing to the eye, it has more of the ‘coffee table’ look than an academic or study tool. But to relegate this volume to the coffee table would be a mistake.

Using a canonical narrative approach, the Atlas follows the unfolding story of the Bible from Genesis to the dawn of post-Apostolic Christianity.

Maps for each discreet narrative (i.e., patriarchal settlement, Exodus sojourn, Davidic monarchy, demise of Israel [722/21 B.C.] and Judah [586 B.C.], return from Exile, Intertestamental era, Ministry of Christ and Paul, etc.) provide the means for visualization of place and time. Thus, our volume is an historical atlas as well as a geographical atlas. Where the history of the ANE (Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome) impinges on the history of Israel-Judah, the map (and the narrative) expands to briefly cover the story of those kingdoms.

The fact that Paul Lawrence is research assistant to K. A. Kitchen, world-class Egyptologist (and evangelical Christian), adds weight to the historical accuracy of the volume. In addition, A. R. Millard, world-class Assyriologist (also an evangelical Christian), is Senior Consulting Editor for our Atlas. The point-of-view from which Lawrence and the editors approach the Biblical narrative is refreshingly conservative. “It is our contention that history should primarily be based on written sources, and, although the writer is aware of a large body of critical scholarship connected with the Bible, theoretical reconstructions of the past based on minimal or no evidence have no place here. Ancient writers lived much closer to the events they described than we do, so it is our basic policy to show them healthy respect. This applies to the writers of the Bible just as much as to other ancient historians . . .” (7). And this is a fair-minded conservatism, best illustrated on pages 36-37, where both early and late dates for the Exodus from Egypt are listed with brief summaries of evangelical arguments for each. If Lawrence leans towards the early 1447 B.C. date, he does so well aware that his esteemed mentor (emeritus) at Liverpool disagrees with him.

This Atlas is quite up-to-date. The Ketef Hinnom amulets are mentioned (134) with devastating impact on Deuteronomistic and Priestly theories of the composition of Numbers 6:22-24 and Deuteronomy 7:9. The now famous (and controversial) James ossuary is portrayed and discussed (149). Both of these discoveries are integral to the historicity of the Scriptures—the defense of which is integral to this Atlas.

The Atlas concludes with a subject index (178-82), a brief gazetteer (183-85) and a Scripture index (186-87).

I am still convinced that the *Carta Bible Atlas* (edited by Yohanan Aharoni, Michael Avi-Yonah, A. F. Rainey and Ze'ev Safrai—4th edition, 2002) is the most useful Bible Atlas for students of the Scriptures. It contains more than twice as many maps than our review volume (271 vs. 108); there are more pages of text in *Carta* (195 vs. 175); there are more side-bar illustrations from ANE archaeology. However, the drab, greenish maps of the latter are extremely boring and dull—though very informative and (in general) accurate. *Carta* offers much more detail about Biblical history and thus remains the scholarly choice. But this poses the challenge to a future publisher of a new Bible Atlas: let us have the Leibnizian acme, i.e., the best of both worlds *re* Bible Atlases. Surely, in this day of advanced digital photography and computer-generated graphics, an Atlas that combines the striking beauty of the Lion/IVP product *and* the plethora of coverage of the *Carta* product would be the *summa bona chartarum*.

As we reflect on the geography of the Promised Land, we need to pause to consider the redemptive-historical or biblical-theological implications of God's revelation in space. We are accustomed (rightly) to delving into God's revelation in time—that is, in history; but let us ponder the fact that God gave his revelation to a geographical region that was the thoroughfare of the ancient nations and world empires from 2000 B.C. to 70 A.D. If, in fact, Palestine was the geographical location where, in the main, God's saving grace in revelation was received and recorded—then this geographical data is not a potpourri of mere facts. These geographical names and places are intimately connected with the redemptive revelation which flowed from the mind of God to his servants—Moses and the prophets; Jesus and the apostles.

In these spaces—these geographical places—God disclosed himself in word and deed, in speech and act. In this land, in these places, God acted to reveal himself and his amazing grace—his tender invitation to come to a better land, a heavenly geography, an eschatological Canaan. And please note, as the nations crisscross the land where God reveals himself, they are being folded into his universal plan of redemption in which, in the fullness of time, the spaces of the whole earth will hear the glorious tidings of salvation in his Son, Jesus Christ. Men and women and children out of every nation, tribe, tongue and geography will stream from their lands to sit at the feet of Jesus in a land with no more curse, nor crying, nor sorrow any more. The elect of the nations shall come to the glory-land of which the earthly Promised Land was

never anything else but a shadow—a pale, dim, corruptible, destined-to-fade-away shadow.

“These died in faith . . . having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. And indeed, if they had been thinking of that country from which they went out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one” (Heb. 11:13-16).

“The Jerusalem above—she is our mother” (Gal. 4:26).

“For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come” (Heb. 13:14).

“But you have come to Mt. Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven . . .” (Heb. 12:22-23).

And thus a modern Atlas of the Bible will interweave the history of the great nations of the ANE as they sandwich tiny Israel-Judah at the keystone between Asia and Africa—the Land Bridge between Mesopotamia and the Nile Delta. At the crossroads of the ANE lies the narrative story of a people who received the “oracles of God.” This story was at the keystone of the nations and upon that central location God the Father bestowed an incarnation. An incarnation of a person—his very own beloved Son—who was the central focus of his revelation in and to that keystone nation—who has become in these last days the central focus for the salvation of the nations—nations which once flanked the geographical center of revelation—but nations to whom that saving revelation has radiated through the geographically unbounded gospel of salvation. From that former world and era to this later world and era; from the old world to the new world; from this (temporal) world to that (eschatological) world eternal. The historical geography of the Bible keeps us centered upon the focal story—the focal person—of the Bible. The revelation of the Triune God is central to the Bible as Israel-Judah was the keystone of the ancient world. But the divine person has displaced the geography, as the center of the story is no longer terrestrial—it is celestial at the right hand of the Father in a land of never-ending glory—in a land to which the nations are invited, welcomed, suffused with semi-eschatological gospel-sal-

vation intruding from above—from the transcendent land eternal in the heavens! To that land, all history and geography is oriented; and that land will displace and supersede all history and geography.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

[K:NWTS 22/2 (Sep 2007) 58-62]

Andrea Ferrari, *John Diodati's Doctrine of Holy Scripture*. Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006. 129 pp. Paper. ISBN: 1-892777-98-3. \$16.00.

Giovanni Diodati (1576-1649) is a name to which every Italian Protestant, every reader of the Italian Bible, is beholden. For this man, *di nation lucchese*—this pilgrim of Geneva, Switzerland in the time of Theodore Beza (1519-1605) and the epigones—this man translated the Hebrew and Greek Word of God into Italian for the first time. Diodati's *La Bibbia cioè i libri del Vecchio e del Nuovo Testamento nuovamente traslati in lingua Italianna da Giovanni Diodati di nation Lucchese* (1607) remains “in print” after more than 400 years—a remarkable testimony to the importance and faithfulness of the task he undertook when he turned sixteen years of age. Few today remember Diodati, his theological importance eclipsed by his greatest student, Francis Turretin (1623-1687). But his translation of the “oracles of God” into the vernacular *lingua Italiano* advertises his epithet as one who “being dead, yet speaketh”.

This small book on Diodati's doctrine of Scripture is a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the University of Wales, Lampeter (2003) by Mr. Ferrari, Reformed Baptist pastor in Milan, Italy. Ferrari is at home in the languages necessary to make Diodati accessible to an English-speaking audience—his bibliography contains titles in Latin, Italian and French, the laboratories of research on Diodati's career. In four chapters, Ferrari gives us: a biographical sketch (5-21); an historical survey of the doctrine of Scripture (from the early church to the 16th century, 22-45); an English translation of Diodati's *Theses theologicae de Sacra Scriptura* (46-51); and a commentary on the Theses, supplemented by Diodati's famous 1643 *Pious Annotations Upon the Holy Bible* (52-102).

For those acquainted with the historic Reformed doctrine of Scripture, there are no surprises here. Drawing upon Richard Muller's magisterial Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics (especially, volume 2, "Holy Scripture"), Ferrari interweaves quotations from Calvin, Turretin and others in support of the verbal equivalence—the Words of the Scriptures=the Words of God. There is no neo-orthodox, dialectical sleight of hand here (the Words of Scripture *bear witness* to the Word of God, *geschichte* distinguished from *historie*). There is no classic liberal deviance here—the Words of Scripture *contain* the Words of God, i.e., somewhere amidst the plethora of human words are divine words if our rational processes can divine them. The fads of rationalist (18th century), idealist (19th century), existentialist (20th century), post-existentialist (phenomenologist), post-modern (21st century) 'readings' of the Bible are not the reading of the Reformers and their post-Reformation (Protestant Scholastic) students. For them, what the text of the Bible says, God himself says.

Diodati's dialogue is not fundamentally with the rationalistic humanists of his era (i.e., the Socinians, post-Renaissance *literati*, Libertines and pre-Spinozan radicals). The chief threat to the Protestant clarion, *sola Scriptura*, is the Roman Catholic *non Scriptura sola sed Scriptura et traditio* (the famous "two sources" of religious authority in Counter-Reformation Roman Catholic orthodoxy). Diodati's *Theses* are formulated chiefly with the famous Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation Council of Trent (1545-1563) in mind. It was there that the pontifical communion declared the (Holy Spirit) inspiration of both the written Word of God and the "unwritten traditions" of Christ and the apostles which had been handed down (*traditio*) through holy mother church and are enshrined in the *ex cathedra* declarations of the Vatican. The Council of Trent is clear¹: these written traditions (akin to the Jewish distinction between written Torah and oral Torah²) are given by inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

¹ The authoritative Latin version and English translation of the *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* is by H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis, MO: Herder, 1941). The "Decree concerning the Canonical Scriptures" (April 8, 1546) reads, in part: "[the Council] clearly perceives that these truths and rules are contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions [*traditionibus*], which, received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ Himself, or from the Apostles themselves, the Holy Ghost dictating, have come down to us, transmitted [*traditae*] as it were from hand to hand" (p. 17/296). Cpr. Denzinger, *The Sources of Catholic Dogma [Enchiridion Symbolorum]* (1954) 244.

² Cf. this reviewer's comments on this facet of Judaism in *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 18/1 (May 2003): 51.

Hence such Roman Catholic doctrines as the infallibility of the Pope (Vatican I, 1870); the immaculate conception of the virgin Mary (she was conceived without original sin, even as Jesus was; decreed in 1854); and the “bodily assumption” of the virgin Mary into heaven (as Jesus was; decreed in 1950): all these are revealed to the faithful “by inspiration of the Holy Spirit”.

Diodati’s elevation and defense of the inspired Old and New Testament over against the claim to “on-going divine revelation” in the “living voice” of the tradition of Roman Catholicism is a classic exercise in Protestant orthodoxy—as relevant today as it was in the 16th and 17th centuries. For the Roman Catholic Church, *semper eadem* (“always the same,” i.e., irreformable) continues to hold the “two sources” theory of divinely-inspired, infallible and inerant truth today. Thus one of the latest official publications (with the Imprimatur) of the church, i.e., the Roman Catholic Catechism (1992/1994)—an authoritative declaration of the sum of Christianity which all the faithful must believe in “the service, that is, of supporting and confirming the faith of all the Lord Jesus’ disciples”—states: “Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together, and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing;” and “As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, ‘does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honored with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.’” Diodati, as all historically orthodox Protestants asks: do we rely on Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture **only** (formal principle of the Reformation); or on Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture **and** tradition (formal principle of the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation)?

In addition to the *Diodatina* (the moniker of his justly famous Italian translation of the Bible), Giovanni held a distinguished career as pastor of the Italian Church in Geneva (1612-1649) and professor at the Academy of Geneva (chair of Hebrew, 1597-1605; chair of Theology, 1609-1649).³ With his colleague,

³Cf. this reviewer’s summary of the history of the Italian community of Geneva in “The Life and Career of Francis Turretin,” in Francis Turretin, *The Institutes of Elenctic Theology* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing Co., 1997) 3:639-58. Cpr. also his “The Twilight of Scholasticism: Francis Turretin at the Dawn of the Enlightenment,” in Carl R. Trueman, ed., *Protestant Scholasticism: Essays in Reassessment* (Cambria: Paternoster Press, 1999) 244-55.

Theodore Tronchin (1582-1657), he was a delegate to the famous Synod in Holland where he and his Geneva peers endorsed the Calvinistic orthodoxy of the Canons of the Synod of Dort (1618-1619).

The one slight blemish on Diodati's career was the unfortunate—even tragic—dispute over his attempt to revise the French (Protestant) Bible of 1588. Heavily favored by French Huguenots and French-speaking Genevans for use in French-speaking Roman Catholic regions, this translation became virtually sacrosanct following its publication. Though many (Beza included) admitted it needed revision, in the polemical contests with Roman Catholic apologists (especially the Jesuit, Pierre Cotton [1564-1626], and Francis Veron [1575-1625]), the Protestants were being crushed by a blitzkrieg of Roman Catholic books and pamphlets alleging their French Bible was *plagiaire* (“falsified”). The debate is detailed by Brian Armstrong in “Geneva and the Theology and Politics of French Calvinism: The Embarrassment of the 1558 Edition of the Bible of the Pastors and Professors of Geneva,” *Calvinus Ecclesiae Genevensis Custos* (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1984) 113-33 (an article conspicuously missing from Ferrari's bibliography, 123-29). But the adverse publicity from this Roman Catholic dis-information campaign against the French Bible succeeded in destroying any chance Diodati may have had for publishing his own revision. It also produced internal dissension in Reformed circles in France and Geneva. The upshot was a strict refusal to permit Diodati's revision to appear; and an entrenched defense of the 1588 version. Sadly, the feud left Diodati embittered, disillusioned, uncharitable and even undiscerning (his defense of the Amyraldian tendencies in Alexander Morus was both alarming and short-sighted).⁴ Still, Ferrari's little book permits us to look beyond these unfortunate incidents to the *Diodatina*—the on-going legacy of this great *Lucchese di Ginevra*.

There are a few minor faults in the text which should be noted. “Miraculously” (p. 10) may be too strong a translation. If the original is *miraculeusement*, it may mean simply “wonderfully” and in this context, more appropriate lest

⁴ Cf. Armstrong's article (p. 113, n. 1) and my article on Turretin's life cited in note 3 above for the entire discussion.

Diodati appear to be suggesting the continuation of miracles (implicitly repudiating his sentiments in Thesis XX, as well as the Protestant case for the cessation of the charismata in the polemics with the original ‘charismatic’ church, i.e., Rome). I suspect “DuMulin” (p. 19) is a typo for DuMoulin. Our author notes Athanasius’s declaration of the 27 canonical books of the New Testament. But he omits the important Muratorian Canon which dates (as conservative scholars suggest) from the late 2nd century A.D. *Ad fonts* (p. 34) should read *ad fontes*. The biographical essay and bibliography lacks any use of *A Milton Encyclopedia* (ed. W. B. Hunter) and David Masson’s monumental *Life of Milton*—both of which contain trenchant reflections on the Diodati family, especially Charles, Giovanni’s nephew, who lived in London and was the close boyhood friend of the famous Puritan poet, John Milton. In addition to Armstrong’s article mentioned above, also missing from the bibliography is the important article by Simonetta Adorni-Braccesi, “Religious Refugees from Lucca in the Sixteenth Century: Political Strategies and Religious Proselytism,” *Archive for Reformation History* 88 (1997): 338-79. (Adorni-Braccesi has made numerous important contributions to the discussion of the Lucchese in Geneva and elsewhere during the 16th century.)

These quibbles aside, the author and publisher are to be thanked for this little “niche volume”—i.e., an (un)weighty tome which opens up the life and doctrine (of Scripture) of a significant voice of Reformed orthodoxy in the “citadel”—post-Calvin Geneva.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

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Paul D. Wegner, *A Student’s Guide to Textual Criticism of the Bible: Its History, Methods & Results*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006. 334 pp. Paper. ISBN: 0-8308-2731-5. \$19.00.

In a follow-up volume to his informative *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* (1999), Professor Wegner provides a handbook on OT and NT textual criticism. As was the case with his earlier contribution, this volume is clearly written, includes photographs (B&W),

charts, tables, schematics, fairly and squarely covers the issues under discussion, is reasonably priced and is soundly evangelical in orientation. Although he does not cite him, nonetheless Wegner echoes B. B. Warfield when he says: “careful examination of these manuscripts [“texts up to two thousand years old”] has served to strengthen our assurance that our modern Greek and Hebrew critical texts are very close to the original autographs, even though we do not have those autographs” (301).¹

Writing from the position of “reasoned eclecticism” (240), Wegner takes us on a tour of the manuscript treasures from the Ketef Hinnom amulets (tiny silver scrolls containing Num. 6:24-26 and Dt. 7:9, dated 725-650 B.C.) to the lavish Aleppo (ca. 930 A.D.) and Leningrad (1008 A.D.) Codices, with a stop-over at Qumran and the plethora of manuscripts discovered there beginning in 1947; from P52 (papyrus fragment of John 18 dating from ca. 125 A.D.) to (4th century A.D.) Codex Sinaiticus (Tischendorf’s fabulous discovery) and Vaticanus (also 4th century A.D.) by way of the stupendous 20th century discoveries—Chester Beatty, Bodmer and Nag Hammadi papyri. All the manuscript finds and families are reviewed making this handy volume a quick reference guide for students and pastors alike. One could not do better than to have Wegner’s book—in fact, both of his books—on the shelf.

Our volume is organized canonically—OT to NT. An introductory chapter defines textual criticism (23-43); then we have two chapters on transmission of biblical texts (44-86). Next are detailed chapters on the OT (87-203) and NT (205-97). The whole is neatly summed up in the “Conclusions” (298-301). A very intelligent “Glossary” (302-10) follows, supplemented by name, subject and Scripture indices (314-34). However, the subject index is not thorough or complete. For example, the Oxyrhynchus papyri are discussed on page 182, but there is no entry for Oxyrhynchus either under “O” in the subject index or under “papyrus”. In our age of computer generated indices, this is a major blunder on the part of the publisher. Double entry indices (or cross reference varieties) are a cinch in our digital age.

⁵ For Warfield’s comments on the “substantially autographic text,” see his *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (1886) 12, 14; “The Inerrancy of the Original Autographs,” in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield* (1973) 2:580-87, esp. 584; and citations in *The Infallible Word: A Symposium by the Members of the Faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary* (1946) 162-63, 194-95.

It is easy to get lost in the trees of textual criticism and forget that the history of the transmission of the Hebrew and Greek texts provides us with a lovely forest. Ninety percent of the Hebrew OT shows no “significant variation” (25). The UBS Greek NT displays variants in ca. 500 out of 6,900 words—a mere 7% of the NT text. In other words, more than 90% of the OT and NT text is without controversy. (As Edwin Yamauchi has observed: classicists, eat your heart out!) In neither the OT nor the NT does any doctrine central to the Judeo-Christian faith stand or fall. The reliability of the OT and NT Scriptures has been and continues to be established and confirmed by the science of textual criticism.

Since 1947 (discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls/DSS at Qumran), our confidence in the reliability of the transmission of the Hebrew OT has been exponentially augmented. Since 1979 (discovery of the 8th-7th century B.C. Ketef Hinnom amulets), higher critical fundamentalists of the Pentateuch have been embarrassed by the existence of so-called P (‘Priestly Writer’) and D (‘Deuteronomist’) texts pre-dating the Exilic and Josianic eras. Since 1920/1934 (acquisition and publication of P52), Harnackian liberals have been chagrined by a fragment of John’s gospel which is extant well in advance of their pet theory—that the fourth gospel is a late 2nd century A.D. product from the post-Polycarp church of Asia Minor. How many other pet theories of liberal scholars—ever reconstructing the Hebrew and Greek texts based upon their evolutionary or developmental (they call it “trajectories”) hypotheses of the origin of religious texts—have crumbled with the most recent manuscript discoveries. Who would have imagined, in the heyday of German and American liberalism, that Qumran would revolutionize the study of the text of the Hebrew Bible (and that by essentially reinforcing traditional and conservative premises) making the textual apparatus of Kittel’s famous Hebrew Bible even more of a farce than it was on publication? And who would have dreamed (Tischendorf, eat your heart out!) that the NT papyrus discoveries of the 20th century would confirm in the main the established text of the NT (Westcott and Hort)? Oh yes, there are diehards who refuse to concede—radical revisionist post-liberals and egghead King James only types. But the weight of the primary evidence has passed by these blind leaders of the blind and we possess superb text critical editions of both the OT (Stuttgartensia; or the forth-coming *Biblia Hebraica Quinta*, two fascicles of which have been released) and the NT

(either Nestle-Aland or UBS). Is it possible to project future spectacular discoveries? Indeed, this *is* pure speculation. But put yourself back in the text critical world of 1946 and imagine (“What hath God wrought”!) the first news dribbling out from Jerusalem about a Bedouin boy’s rock throwing on the west shore of the Dead Sea.

Inevitably, Wegner must confront the theories which have been manufactured to account for the profusion of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Are there many versions of the Hebrew Bible? Were these diverse versions edited, shaped, theological skewed by schools of scribes and copyists? Is there a simple Hebrew Vorlage to the Massoretic Text (MT); or are there many Hebrew text precedents to our modern Hebrew Bible? Does the Septuagint (LXX) represent a separate stream of Jewish tradition diverse from that of the MT tradition? And what of the NT? Are the Alands right about the primary documents; or does the nod go to Bruce Metzger and the editors of the widely accepted UBS text?

In assessing these questions, we encounter the bell weathers of OT and NT text criticism. Especially Emmanuel Tov for the Hebrew text and the Alands and Metzger for the Greek text. Tov’s monumental work (*Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* [1992/2001]) imposes higher critical—not just text critical—theories upon the origin of the Hebrew Bible. His sophisticated theory of the origin of the Hebrew text is steeped in the theological manipulation of the post-Exilic Jewish community. In other words, Tov has joined historical tradition criticism (*Traditionsgeschichte*) with textual criticism. His book is a masterpiece of amalgamation, but it is also an insidious assault on the notion of an authoritative autographa. Wegner is alert to this danger, discounting “both Emmanuel Tov and Bruce Waltke [who] have argued that there may be several original forms of a biblical text” (32). Our author continues to maintain that there is one form of the text which became canonical (37)—an essentially evangelical position which asserts and defends a definitive autographa (“God-breathed” text).

However, let us keep in mind the number of erstwhile theories about the origin and evolution of the texts of the Hebrew OT and Greek NT that have gone up in smoke in the last century with the DSS and NT papyri finds. Let us therefore resolve to say only what may be objectively stated given the present

state of the actual manuscript evidence. Let us eschew theories of manuscript origins for the hard, cold data of the manuscripts themselves. Let us remember how many “assured results of scientific criticism” are in the ash can of history, bringing wry smiles to later true scholar’s lips and the wrinkled brow expostulation, “What were they smoking?” More text critical theories for the “true origin” of the Vorlages have been advanced and abandoned than Carter’s has little pills. So enough already!! Stick to the facts and say no more than the actual data indicates! Leave the theorizing to the whimsies of the liberal higher critics and restrict textual criticism to what is evident before the eyes. Who knows? in 50 or 100 years (if the Lord tarries), we may have even more exciting manuscript discoveries dating from the 5th century B.C. (for the Hebrew OT) and the 1st century A.D. (for the Greek NT).

In the meantime, Wegner provides a safe and sane path through the myriadic abundance of OT and NT manuscripts. May his tribe increase and flourish!!

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Calvin R. Stapert, *A New Song for an Old World, Musical Thought in the Early Church*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2007. 232 pp. Paper. ISBN 978-0-8028-3219-1. \$18.00.

When I was converted in college, we sang traditional hymns. After I finished seminary, I took a call to an old United Presbyterian Church (N.A.). This church used the United Presbyterian Psalter of 1912. We, therefore, sang only the Psalms. At first I wasn’t sure what I had gotten myself into, but now I thank God for that experience. It was a great growing time when I was able to learn the Psalms and today I still believe very strongly in singing the Psalms. However, I never became an exclusive psalmist. I believe that Colossians 3:16-17, understood in its context, requires us to sing songs that reflect the fullness of revelation in Jesus Christ. This is seen in the phrase, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,” as you sing. This can only take place with New Testament revelation.

However, through my experience I have always been interested in the place of music in worship. Early in my ministry, I came across a doctoral dissertation from the Free University of Amsterdam entitled, *Musical Aspects of the New Testament*, by W. S. Smith. It had an excellent description of music in the New Testament, and I still refer to it today. Therefore, when I saw the title of this volume, I was very intrigued to learn more about music during the time of the early church.

The author of this book is Calvin Stapert, a professor of music at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For many years, he has been interested in the early church. In chapter one, he draws a parallel between life in the Roman Empire and life in our world today. This is the basis for drawing a parallel between music then and now. He follows with a foundational chapter describing the main events of the second and third centuries. Then he takes two chapters to describe the life and teaching of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. Clement was Greek-speaking and more favorable to Greek ways; Tertullian was Latin-speaking and dead set against any part of the culture invading the church.

In the next three chapters, Stapert follows the same procedure as with the previous three, only this time he is covering the late third century through the earlier fifth. The two church fathers that he highlights are Ambrose and John Chrysostom. Again Ambrose is Latin-speaking and Chrysostom is Greek-speaking. Nevertheless, in this case they are both leery of their culture. He chose these two because of the many references to music in their writings.

Thus we have the first eight chapters of the book. I must say that they are more a history of the time and a description of the thought of the men than they are an understanding of the music of their time. However, just when I was tired of digging, I hit the mother lode. Chapters 9 and 10 make this book a treasure. In chapter 9, we have a detailed description of the use of music in the Roman Empire, describing what transpired in the theater, in the streets and in the homes. Don't worry, it doesn't get too graphic thus making it X-rated; rather it is just descriptive enough to give your imagination a pretty good idea of how bad things were. The music was raucous, sensual, and loud. Sometimes it was so bad that you could be in your home and not able to think straight. (It is interesting to make the comparison with our generation and its music.)

Chapter 10 is the real gem. It describes what church music was like from the time of the synagogue in the New Testament era up to the fully developed monastic orders. Some of the results of studying the evidences that I found interesting were:

(1) There is *no* evidence that the Jews sang the Psalms in synagogue worship. There *is* evidence that they sang Psalms at home, at weddings, at funerals, and at the Passover.

(2) From the New Testament era until the third century, the early church sang mainly songs that they composed about Christ and the Gospel.

(3) In the fourth century, the practice of singing the Psalms and Canticles (other parts of Scripture) came to full bloom. The reason for this is that the Gnostics and the Arians were converting many through their music and the orthodox church wanted to counter this with singing the Scriptures themselves.

(4) After the fourth century, the monasteries kept the practice of Psalm singing alive by singing up to thirty Psalms a day. In the course of their regula, they would cover all one hundred and fifty Psalms.

There is one more chapter that I would like to emphasize. It is chapter 12, "Postlude: What Can the Early Church Teach Us about Music?" In this chapter, Stapert returns to the parallel between the Roman Empire and our times. In doing so, he believes that we should take the same stance as the early church. "In our sensation-hungry, pleasure-mad society, we should be no less courageous than were the church fathers in holding and promoting counter-cultural views and practices. They did not hesitate to denounce the music of their society that they saw as pernicious, no matter how popular it was. We should be as ready to denounce what is pernicious in our own society" (196). He then talks about three arguments that are used against this stance. One, "it is just a song"; two, all things are the work of a good Creator and are, therefore, good; and three (adopted from the church growth movement), "if we wish to see the church grow, we must adopt the music of the ambient culture" (198). He then goes on to successfully demolish each of these arguments.

Although I found a great deal of the material in the first eight chapters to be more church history and philosophy than they were a discussion of music,

nevertheless, the material in chapters 9, 10, and 12, is so important for the contemporary discussions of psalms vs. hymns and cultural accommodation vs. counter-culture, that I would, nevertheless, highly recommend reading this book.

—J. Peter Vosteen