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

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Introduction

This issue contains two new Vos items discovered by Benjamin Swinburnson in the Library and Archives of Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, during a visit on December 4, 2008. The first is a student notebook in which Vos's 1905 participation in a Missions presentation at the Seminary is recorded.[1] The second is Vos's own summary abstract of his inaugural address penned for *The Princeton College Bulletin* in 1894.

The notes on Vos's Missions lectures were found in the notebook of Howard Howell Davies (1882-1962). Davies was a B.D. student at Princeton from 1904 to 1907.[2] His notebook, entitled "Theism-Canon-Missions. Princeton Theol. Seminary", is deposited in the Special Collection of the Princeton Theological Seminary Library (Francis Landy Patton Collection, Box #1). It is used here with the kind permission of that office. Vos's two lectures, entitled "The Biblical Basis of Missions" (pp. 85-106 of the notebook), are dated November 8 and November 15, 1905 respectively.

As Davies took typical student notes, the lectures are of course not a verbatim transcription. There are gaps in expression, abbreviated summaries and abrupt transitions. Swinburnson has transcribed the notes from the handwritten manuscript and "filled in the gaps" in order to present a more smoothly read-

1 According to the *Catalogue of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church Located at Princeton, N. J. for 1912*, Vos joined Drs. William B. Greene, Jr., C. R. Eerdman and Mr. Keir D. Macmillan in teaching the Missions course (43). The 1905 Notebook shows that Vos was followed by Dr. John DeWitt who lectured on "The History of Missions." It would appear, therefore, that Vos was a regular participant in these course lectures.

2 Cf. *Biographical Catalogue of Princeton Theological Seminary*, compiled by Arthur M. Byers, Jr. (1976) 1907.

able version. He has also supplied the cross-references to other published Vos writings. No attempt has been made to alter Vos's viewpoint or edit his views, only give more ready expression to (often) truncated notes. The remarkable feature of these notes is that they reveal Vos's biblical-theological method applied to the unfolding theme of Missions in the Bible. The redemptive-historical approach is evident throughout—in fact, arresting in its profundity, clarity and simplicity. The reader will find "Vos at work" in his usual biblical-theological manner touching on a subject with which we do not usually associate him. Nonetheless, his approach to Christian/Biblical Missions is a characteristic organic unfolding of God's revelation on the topic from Genesis through the prophets. We are, once more, enriched by Vos's penetration into the whole counsel of God—in this case, his determination to save Jew and Gentile alike in the fullness of time.

The condensation of Vos's foundational Inaugural Address[3] is a quaint précis of the young professor's often prolix style. There is nothing new here; still, we find a focus on the highlights which the author/speaker himself wished to feature.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

3 "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," reprinted in Richard B. Gaffin, ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* [*RBHI*] (1980) 3-24.

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 5-11]

The Biblical Basis for Missions

Geerhardus Vos

In order to establish a biblical basis for missions, we must show that redemption was originally intended for the entire human race. In other words, we must show that it teaches national universalism. By this, we do not mean the salvation of all individuals. This kind of universalism is consistent with the principle of election, e.g., Paul who was the great universalist. Yet he insisted on sovereign election.

There are three things we must note about this kind of universalism.

1. First, this universalism is a conscious, intentional universalism. Sometimes people use this word in a weaker sense, i.e., Christianity has a natural tendency to spread and overleap national boundaries. This is simply a statement of observed fact. These people don't find universalism as a conscious purpose of the divine mind. There were objective disclosures of God before the religion of the Bible began.

2. Second, this universalism is an absolute universalism because it is in the purpose of God. Other religions have also spread across national boundaries, but these are only matter of fact results that give no guarantee for the future. Inherent tendencies cannot support absolute claims. But if we know that God has promised, we can then speak of absolute universalism.

3. Third, we must distinguish between the universalistic purpose on the part of God and the missionary call on the part of man. Biblical revelation is universalistic from the outset and became missionary in the fullness of time.

In the Old Covenant, a universalistic religion is clearly announced. There are no missions under the Old Covenant. The aim of the Old Covenant was to make Israel a segregated people. As long as this went on, there was nothing perfect that Israel could have given to the world. Under the New Covenant, there is added to universalism the most strenuous missionary activity.

First Lecture (November 8, 1905)

The Element of Universalism in the Mosaic Revelation

In the biblical account, creation comes first. The books of Moses were national [in focus]. Yet the Pentateuch doesn't begin with Abraham, but has a wider basis. It begins with the creation of the human race. You cannot explain what God did to Israel until you know God's relation to the race. This is true in both an historic and in a legislative sense. The ordinances of God before the fall and after the deluge were not imposed on Jews alone, but on all humanity. This can mean that what is done to Israel must be intended for the race. The covenant history of Israel is of a piece with universal history, not national history. The central current of the history of the race is here narrowed down to the channel of Israel. Backwards and forwards, it opens up into the wide sea of God's dealings with humanity. The narrowing is to keep the waters pure.

Man is descended from a single pair. All men are equal in virtue of their original likeness to God. These are wide-reaching facts. The race originally had one destiny. What is done to reinsure this destiny in redemption has no narrower compass than that to which the original destiny pointed. The probation in paradise was linked to the promise of the redemption of the race. The gospel of paradise speaks in terms of the race. It does not even contain a reference to Israel.

After paradise, history assumes a narrowing process. The line of the covenant runs from Seth through Noah, Shem, Abraham, etc. At each step of the process, we find a declaration of God upholding the universal nature of redemption.[1] This universalism is more and more insisted upon in revelation as the facts point in the opposite direction, e.g., the case of Noah. Before the

1 *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (1975), hereafter *BT*, 76-80.

separation of Shem, Ham, and Japheth, God concludes his covenant with Noah, his sons, and every living creature. It was a universal covenant. Its meaning is that the present order of the universe will continue indefinitely, and that the plan of salvation may work itself out. Here we have two things to note: (1) redemption is confined to the Shemites; and (2) the natural order of the universe is guaranteed [to continue].[2] The conclusion is that the redemption that had been confined to the Shemites will spread over the whole world. When Shem is distinguished from his brothers, it is not that he may get the benefits of salvation for himself. Japheth is to dwell in the tents of Shem.[3]

After Noah, the rapid increase of Israel made a division of the peoples necessary. Here there is another election—the Abrahamites are separated from the other Shemites. Here also divine revelation counteracts this and guards against a mistaken inference. In Genesis 10, we find the table of nations; although all other peoples are dismissed, yet that dismissal is not final.[4] The names of all peoples are registered.[5]

The universalistic elements in Abraham's history are numerous. "In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:3). There is a meeting with Melchizedek, who represents the remnant of an old universal knowledge of God. Melchizedek gave tithes and in so doing recognized that his own privileges were subservient to a wider plan. Melchizedek is a type of Christ.[6]

Next we have the prophetic blessing of Jacob, "Let the peoples serve thee, etc." (Gen. 27:29). Here we have a reference to the conversion of the Gentiles, which assumes the form of submission to Israel. The attitude of the nations towards Israel will determine their own fate—blessing Israel they shall be blessed. Jacob bestowed blessing on his son, Judah, who is to become the Lion-tribe leader of his brethren. The royal leadership is to have a glorious issue. He will reign until all are subservient—until Israel shall come to

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2 *BT*, 51-55.

3 *BT*, 56-59.

4 Original: "Begin Gen. 11 and in chap[ter] 10 [we] find [the] table of nations, although all other peoples are dismissed, yet dismissal not in final."

5 *BT*, 59-60.

6 *BT*, 76-80.

Shiloh to put up a tabernacle as a sign of victory over the Canaanites (Gen. 49:8-9).[7] This contains the primary meaning. The words refer to Canaan. But events prophesied later events. The leadership of Judah in war and enjoyment of peace are types of the kingdom of Christ.[8] David and Solomon received greater obedience than Judah.

The history of David and Solomon was typical of another prince of warlike conquest and peaceful enjoyment.[9] There are two important features here. (1) The idea of the kingdom of God first appears. Judah is a royal tribe. This carries a universalistic idea. It implies the subjection of the nations to Jehovah. (2) The turning point which divines the warlike and peaceful period of Israel is the coming to Shiloh to seek the tabernacle.

In the case of David and Solomon, it is the building of the Temple. Between Christ's struggle and the everlasting reign of peace is his entering into the heavenly tabernacle, i.e., his ascension (Matt. 28:19).

The last blessing of Balaam doesn't go much beyond the blessing of Jacob (Num. 24:15-19). "A star will arise out of Jacob" (Num. 15:7).[10]

Two passages from Deuteronomy, the Song of Moses and the Blessing of Moses, must also be considered here.[11] In the former chapter, we have a description of the punishment (but not the destruction) of Israel. In verse 43, the nations are invited to share in the joy of restored Israel. In the other chapter, we find the separation of the tribes of Issachar and Zebulun. He shall call the peoples unto the mountain of Jehovah's inheritance. There they shall offer sacrifices (cf. Deut. 34:19).

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7 *The Eschatology of the Old Testament*, ed. by James T. Dennison (2001), hereafter *EOT*, 89-106.

8 The original notes read as follows: "[The] Leadership of Judah in war and enjoyment of peace (types of) --------." Though the sentence is incomplete, it appears to be an obvious reference to Christ's messianic reign.

9 *EOT*, 125-26.

10 *EOT*, 107-16.

11 *RHBI*, 431. Here Vos discusses the universalistic elements in the Song of Moses.

Second Lecture (November 15, 1905)

The Prophetic Revelation of Universalism

Israel's history comes into contact with the world. The future of Israel determines the destiny of the Gentiles. The universalistic disclosures attach themselves to great crises into which Israel is brought by contact with the world.

There are four periods that we must consider:

1. The circumstances under which the kingdom arose.
2. Israel's conflict with the Assyrians.
3. The progress of Babylonian power.
4. From the exile to the close of revelation.

First, there is a connection between the ideas of the kingdom and universalism, due to the circumstances under which the kingdom arose. The kingdom was not founded to regulate the internal affairs of Israel, but to prepare for the attacks of outside nations. As the idea of the kingdom develops, its worldwide scope appears.

Early universalistic prophecies belong to the time of David. In Psalms 2 and 110, we have the echo of the promise given to David of the eternal duration of his house (2 Sam. 7). In both Psalms, the kingdom involves all the earth (cf. Ps. 18:34-50).[12] In Psalm 72, we read of the Solomonic response to the prophetic promises (cf. 1 Kings 8:43).[13] On this basis, the prophets subsequently built.

Later, in the reign of Jehoram (9th century, B. C.), when the Philistines conquered Judah and were selling people to the Phoenicians, a group of prophecies refer to this: Obadiah, Joel, and Amos. Here the universalistic idea appears in negative form. The "Day of Jehovah" is a universalistic idea (Obadiah 15,

12 *EOT*, 123-30, 138-39.

13 *EOT*, 135-36; *The Pauline Eschatology* (1930/1979), hereafter *PE*, 352-54.

Joel 2:31 [4:1, Heb.]).[14] The Messianic kingdom in Amos embraces only the Levitical territory. The judgment is connected with the theocracy. The nations are judged for their attitude towards Israel. In Joel, we read that the Spirit will be poured out on all flesh. This is a doubtful passage.[15]

Second, the conflict with the Assyrians comes next. Assyria is a world power. At this time, then, the destiny of the whole world in the Kingdom of God becomes a theme of revelation. This appears in Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Nahum, and Hosea. "I have removed the bounds of the peoples" (Is. 10:13-14; cf. Is. 36:18; 37:10). Against this is placed the universal kingdom of Jehovah.

This is first done by an unknown prophet. Isaiah 2:3 and Micah 4:2 speak of the "mountain of Jehovah's house, all nations come unto it, etc."[16] Three things can be said about it. First, this is a positive universalism. The nations are not only judged, but also converted. Second, the extension of religion is due to Jehovah rather than to Israel. Third, the imagery of war and subjugation is abandoned. It is replaced by voluntary obedience to the law.

These ideas are repeated by Isaiah and Jeremiah: "The earth is full of the knowledge o the Jehovah" (Is. 11:9-10). The root of Jesse stands as an ensign of the peoples. In Isaiah 19:24, the prophet goes further. There is equality in Jehovah's service. Isaiah 19:19 speaks of "an altar in the midst of Egypt" (cf. Micah 5:4-5). Isaiah 24-27 is an eschatological prophecy.[17] In Nahum, there is no positive universalism.

Third, there is the progress of power of Babylonian power. Zephaniah stands between the two periods. Jeremiah is in the center. Habbakuk. First, there is a new worship of the Gentiles now cut loose from the temple and from Jerusalem. Zephaniah speaks of the fact that "the gods of the earth shall starve" (2:11; 3:9). Second, in Jeremiah for the first time salvation is traced

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14 *EOT*, 37-41; *BT*, 291-92.

15 Vos seems to be saying that it is doubtful that the Joel passage has any real universalistic significance in the sense he has been describing in the lecture. Cf. *RHBI*, 95-96.

16 *RHBI*, 284-85; *PE*, 3-4.

17 See his treatment of this passage in "The Modern Hypothesis and Recent Criticism of the Early Prophets," *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (1898) 9:214-238, 411-437, 610-636. Available online at www.biblicaltheology.org.

to the mercy of Jehovah (Jer. 12:15; 16:19). The positive statements are not frequent. Jeremiah does indirect service to universalism. There are two ideas: (1) the spirituality of the true worship of Jehovah; and (2) the individual character of this worship (Hab. 2:14; Is. 11:9).

Fourth, there is the period of the exile to the close of revelation. Large parts of Isaiah belong to this period, as well as Ezekiel, Zechariah, Haggai, and Malachi. The heathen will recognize Jehovah's works in the salvation of Israel. He opens their eyes and they take him as their God. This is to happen in the Messianic era. The second part of Isaiah goes further and grasps the missionary idea itself. Israel has a duty with reference to this. The Servant of Jehovah must preach to the Gentiles. Both the spiritual Israel and the Messiah are mentioned as the servant of Jehovah. Israel must then be a prophet to the nations.

Ezekiel does not go beyond Isaiah. Zechariah advances further after the exile. The King comes to Zion and will speak peace to the nations (Zech. 9:10; 14:9). Haggai connects the conversion of the Gentiles with the glory of the new temple (Mal. 1:11; Hag. 2:7).[18]

Daniel views the development of the kingdom from the point of view of universal history. He gives a philosophy of history. Here we see a most pronounced universalism. The history of the world is explained in terms of the history of Israel. The stone becomes a mountain which fills the earth (Dan. 7). This speaks of the eschatological character of the spread of the kingdom.[19]

Jonah lies all by itself. It records the Hebrew prophet's message to a heathen city. It is a protest against Jewish particularism. His preaching belongs to the sphere of common grace, not special grace. The Ninevites speak of Elohim, not Jehovah. But common grace has elements of special grace. His experience before arriving at Nineveh perhaps prefigures the entrance of the gospel, etc.

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18 *EOT*, 161.

19 *PE,* 104-09; *RHBI*, 38-39.

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 12-16]

The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline.[1]

By G. VOS.

Theology both according to its etymological meaning and to logical principles should be defined as a science which has God for its object. This definition alone entitles it to a place among the other sciences, since the division of sciences must follow the distribution of reality. Besides having a specific object to distinguish it from other sciences Theology also has this peculiarity, that in it the relation of the object to the subject is rather active than passive. God not so much passively permits Himself to be known, as actively makes Himself known, nay creates a subject to make Himself known to. This unique fact is expressed in the conception of revelation, and particularly in that of supernatural revelation. If in revelation God has assumed an active relation towards man, it follows that man must respond to this by putting himself first of all into a passive, receptive frame of mind for the purpose of appropriating this revelation. Hence, the first great division of Theology, commonly designated Exegetical Theology, has for its controlling idea this receptive attitude towards the source of the knowledge of God in revelation. The whole of Exegetical Theology aims at nothing else than the faithful reflection in the human consciousness of the image of God's self-revelation in the Scriptures. Among the various studies belonging to this department there is one, which most adequately and naturally gives expression to this common idea, and this

1 Printed in *The Princeton College Bulletin* 6/4 (November 1894): 93-95.

one central study in which Exegetical Theology culminates is usually designated Biblical Theology. Biblical Theology is that part of Exegetical Theology which deals with the revelation of God. But it deals with this revelation more especially as a divine act and not, like Systematic Theology, as a product. Biblical Theology discusses both the form and contents of revelation from the point of view of the revealing activity of God Himself.

The nature and method of Biblical Theology, therefore, are prescribed for it, in the general principles of the plan of revelation. In general, Biblical Theology must be a *history* of supernatural revelation, because revelation has been carried on in a historically progressive form. The principal cause of this fact again lies in this, that revelation did not come independently but in connection with the work of redemption, which latter work was, of course, historically accomplished, because it proceeded on the basis of the natural development of the present world. Revelation, however, is not co-extensive with the whole work of redemption, for redemption is still going on while revelation has ceased to speak. Revelation accompanies in its progress the gradual unfolding of the central and objective salvation of God only, and not the individual application and further extension of this after it has once been accomplished in Christ.

At many points we may even say that revelation and redemption interpenetrate, inasmuch as the redeeming acts of God speak for themselves and so obtain a revealing quality. The historical character of revelation also serves the purpose of making its truth practical and concrete throughout. For this reason God has seen fit to bind up revelation with the history of one particular nation, so that it could be adjusted to its wants and emergencies. If we look more closely at the history of redemption, the course of which revelation had to follow, we shall observe that it has been controlled by the principle of organic development. Consequently revelation has been shaped by this principle likewise. The increase of revealed truth was organic increase and not mechanical addition. The organic heart and center of the truth was there from the beginning, and the subsequent growth consisted in the unfolding of what was potentially given from the very first. So it becomes clear how men could be saved by means of the truth from the outset, although the truth was subsequently disclosed with much greater fulness and clearness.

Side by side with historic progress, we observe in the course of revelation a striking multiformity of teaching. Along the historic stem of revelation, branches are seen to shoot forth, frequently more than one at a time, each of which helps to realize the complete idea of the truth for its own part and after its own peculiar manner. There are many different types of teaching in the Scriptures. Isaiah is different from Micah, John is different from Paul. But the individuality of the writers has been created and developed by God and subsequently employed by Him to give expression to certain inherent sides and aspects of the truth. Besides with the historical progress in the delivery of truth, Biblical Theology has to deal with this multiformity of teaching. Its complete definition would therefore be: *the exhibition of the organic progress of supernatural revelation in its historic continuity and multiformity.*

It must be admitted that Biblical Theology as a separate science is of a Rationalistic origin. But what the spirit of Rationalism perverted, we should restore to its proper place and its legitimate functions. Even now Biblical Theology is suffering from the baneful influence of philosophical ideas discordant with the principles of Christianity and revelation. Its treatment is largely shaped by the philosophy of evolution, and that especially in two respects. This philosophy everywhere tries to trace a process of development from the lower to the higher forms, from the impure and imperfect to the pure and perfect. So in regard to the knowledge of God, whose growth we observe in the Biblical writings, evolution traces a gradual advance from sensual, physical conceptions to ethical and spiritual ideas. This of necessity rules out the revelation factor from Biblical Theology. Revelation as an act of God can not be associated with anything imperfect or impure. Secondly, evolution has introduced into Theology its agnostic spirit. It teaches that only phenomena can be known. In consequence no longer God but religion is posited as the object of Theology, Theology becomes a phenomenology of religion. And Biblical Theology is defined as the history of the religion of Israel and of early Christianity.

Over against this the right treatment of Biblical Theology should emphasize the following principles. First of all, that revelation is an objective communication of truth from God to man. Every system of Theology that subjectivizes revelation fits not into a theistic but into a pantheistic view of the universe. In the second place, in the method of Biblical Theology, the historic principle should be kept under control by the revelation principle. To say that

the truth has a historic side, should be never so interpreted as to mean that it is only relatively or imperfectly true. God has shaped history itself so as to make it subservient to the full disclosure of the truth. Thirdly, Biblical Theology should not merely recognize the truth of the revelations recorded in the Bible, but also the truth of the history of redemption and revelation which the Bible outlines for us. If it fails to accept the Bible as a whole, it is only partly Biblical. Finally, the name Biblical *Theology* should never be understood so as to involve a co-ordination of the contents of the Bible and the productions of later theologians. There is no Theology in this sense in the Bible, but the Bible contains the material for Theology, as the stars do for astronomy and the phenomena of life for biology. Inasmuch as the name Biblical Theology retains somewhat of the rationalistic flavor and has actually favored this misconception it would be better to abandon it and substitute the more expressive name History of Revelation.

The practical advantages to be expected from the study of Biblical Theology are chiefly the following. It exhibits to the student of the Word the organic structure of the truth therein contained and its organic growth as the result of revelation. If anything then this will convince the student that the Bible is the work of God Himself. The organic structure of the truth bears exactly the same relation to Supernaturalism that the argument from design in nature bears to Theism. In the second place, Biblical Theology furnishes an antidote to the destructive critical views now prevailing. These theories disorganize the Bible because they declare its historical structure to be false in its main lines. Biblical Theology by exhibiting this structure in its importance for revelation, will show how irreconcilable the modern views are with the supernatural claims of revealed religion. Thirdly, Biblical Theology gives new life and freshness to the old truth, because it teaches us to know the truth in its historical and practical bearings. In the fourth place, Biblical Theology is of great value for the study of Systematic Theology. It proclaims the fact too often forgotten in our days that the true religion cannot dispense with a solid basis of objective knowledge of the truth. There is no better means of silencing the supercilious cant that right believing is of slight importance in the matter of religion than by showing what infinite care God has taken to reveal unto us the knowledge of Himself and His counsel. Biblical Theology also shows that the fundamental doctrines of our faith do not rest on isolated proof-texts, but have grown or-

ganically out from the stem of revelation. Finally, Biblical Theology will keep Dogmatics in contact with the divine truth which the latter has to systematize, and thus prevent it from wandering off in unfruitful speculations.

The higher practical end of the study of Biblical Theology, as of all Theology, lies in the glory of God, and not in anything that serves the creature. It shows how God's works of redemption and of revelation partake of the peculiar glory that attaches to all organic growth. It teaches us to know God as the one that is, that was and that is to come, in order that no note may be lacking in that Psalm of praise to be sung by the Church, into which all our Theology must issue.

[Abstract of Inaugural Address delivered before the Theological Seminary, May 8th, 1894.]

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 17-25]

Geerhardus Vos, Biblical Theology and Preaching

James T. Dennison, Jr.

On May 8, 1894, Geerhardus Vos took the podium at First Presbyterian Church, Princeton, New Jersey, to deliver his Inaugural Address as the first Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary. The heresy trial of the infamous Charles Augustus Briggs was fresh in the mind of his auditors. Briggs, Professor of Biblical Theology at Union Theological Seminary, New York, had been suspended by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America the previous year. Vos's address, entitled "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," was a programmatic essay. It defined Biblical Theology as he would teach it for 39 years at Old Princeton. Vos's last book—his magnum opus, *The Pauline Eschatology*—published 36 years later, would only deepen and enrich the Biblical Theological program laid down in 1894.

Early in that Inaugural Address, Vos articulated the *principium* of his approach: "By the objective self-manifestation of God as the Redeemer, a new order of things is called into being" (the address is reprinted in Richard Gaffin, ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 5). This new order of being is coterminous with God's revelation in word and deed. And because it is God's revelation, this new order intrudes the person and work of the Triune God into the created order. Vos would later define this new order as the eschatological arena. As the priority belongs to God himself, so the priority belongs to his arena breaking into creation. Eschatology is prior to soteriology. Said Vos, "The

eschatological is an older strand in revelation than the soteric"(*Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments*, 140). "The eschatological outlook is the mother soil out of which the tree of the whole redemptive organism has sprung" (*The Self-Disclosure of Jesus*, 2l-22). "Insofar as the covenant of works posited for mankind an absolute goal and unchangeable future, the eschatological may be even said to have preceded soteric religion" ("The Eschatology of the Psalter," in *The Pauline Eschatology*, 325). "The believer has been translated into a state which while falling short of the consummated life of eternity, yet may be truly characterized as semi-eschatological. In view of this, it can cause no surprise . . . when the mind of the New Testament writers in its attempt to grasp the content of the Christian salvation makes the future the interpreter of the present, eschatology the norm . . . of soteriological experience" ("The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 92). "The eschatological strand is the most systematic in the entire fabric of the Pauline thought-world. For it now appears that the closely interwoven soteric tissue derives its pattern from the eschatological scheme, which bears all the marks of having had precedence in his mind" (*The Pauline Eschatology*, 60). "Romans 2:6, 7 . . . proves that the eschatological principle is so deeply embedded in the structure of the biblical religion as to precede and underlie everything else" (*The Pauline Eschatology*, 60).

These quotations contain the Vosian genius *in nuce*. The priority of the eschatological is as the priority of the Triune God. Hence every soteric revelation is eschatologically oriented. The soteric grace is heaven-originated, heaven-intruded and heaven-bound. The Lord of heaven reveals himself to his creatures in order to bring them to himself—in order to bring them to heaven. The Mediator of that soteric grace is none other than the Eschatological Son. God himself undertakes, in the person of his own Son, the pilgrimage which will bring many sons and daughters to glory—to the eschaton. His presence is no less real and actual under the types and shadows of the Old Testament as it is in the fullness of time accomplished under the New Testament. He is the lamb behind Abel's lamb; he is the self-maledicted one who passes between the divided pieces of Abram's covenantal sacrifice; he is the Paschal victim by whose blood Israel goes free; he is the Joshua who brings his people into Beulah land; he is the Davidide whose kingdom shall have no end; he is the banished Exile whose return is nothing less than a resurrection from the dead. He is the

eschatological son of Adam; he is the eschatological son of Abraham; he is the eschatological son of David; he is the eschatological son of Zerubbabel—whose advent marks the fulfilling of all righteousness (Lk. 3:38; Mt. l:l-17; 3:15). He is the eschatologically elect and predestined one in whom we have become the eschatologically elect of God—chosen in Christ Jesus from before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4). He is the eschatologically called and summoned one in whom we have received the eschatological vocation—called according to his purpose (Rom. 8:28). He is the one eschatologically justified—made to be sin who knew no sin (2 Cor.5:21), justified in the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:16) by the resurrection from the dead (Rom. l:4)—in whom we have received eschatological justification, for he was raised up for our justification (Rom. 4:25). He is the one eschatologically glorified who has entered into the *doxa* of heaven—in whom we are all changed from glory to glory (2 Cor.3:18). *Historia salutis* and *ordo salutis* kiss one another in the Son. For his *historia* is the recapitulation of the *ordo* and in his *historia* our *ordo* is fulfilled.

Vos's Inaugural Address laid down the blueprint for the semi-eschatological program. Biblical Theology regards supernatural revelation in its historical progress. Vos's famous illustration of the flower from bud to blossom indicates the beautiful unfolding of God's gracious words and deeds down through redemptive history. The history of redemption is an organism, every part of which is intimately united genetically. The historico-genetic character of Biblical Theology is both analeptic and proleptic—organically related retrospectively and prospectively. If we consider the Biblical Theological organism linearly, we discover typological analepsis and prolepsis. But Vos is deeper than mere typology—for revelation itself is richer than the bare horizontal. Like the Algebra II X-Y axis, the horizontal line is intersected by the vertical line. For Vos, the vertical line intruding on to the plane of linear redemptive history is the eschatological vector. Not only is the historico-genetic character of Biblical Theology oriented linearly; it is also oriented vertically—the eschatological penetrates into the temporal revealing the wonders of God's person, God's arena, God's grace. Bare typology is a denial of the drama of the eschatological interface with the historical. The intrusion of the eschaton is as essential to a proper Biblical Theology as the typology of Scripture. By grace through faith, the believer is brought into this drama—the participation in the history of what God has done (time past) and the identification with what God continues to do

in Christ Jesus (time present) with the assurance that he will continue to do in Christ what he has begun (time future). It is to this drama that Paul testifies when he says, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "God has raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places" (Eph. 2:6). The drama of the historico-genetic and eschatologically intrusionary biblical theological history of redemption is that my life is hidden with Christ in God in the text of his revealed word (Col. 3:3). It is not for me to extract from the text; rather it is for me to live in the text—to find myself a part of the beautiful organism unfolding by the grace of God to that perfect day.

Second, Biblical Theology, though historical in character, is not antithetical to the revealed character of truth. Vos is well aware of critical reductionism—attempts by critics of the word of God to reduce revelation to "rational truths" (l8th century), to idealistic dialectics (19th century), and, we may continue, to existential self-authentication (20th century). The truth of revelation is not subject to the latest critical theories. The historic unfolding of revelation is not an evolution of philosophical enlightenment. All higher criticism is unbiblical in that it reduces truth to prevailing philosophy. For Vos, the Bible is *revealed truth* historically unfolding.

Third, Biblical Theology is not a bare chronicle of events in sequence. When the Bible as a whole is considered biblically-theologically, we discover a philosophy of the history of redemption. This wholistic stance of Vos—integrally related to the historico-genetic character of revelation—underscores the fact that every point is part of the whole book. Atomistic treatment of texts is a removal of the part from the whole. As the severing of the head from the body, atomistic reductionism renders the Scripture a dead letter. Vos's most profound and stimulating discussion of the philosophy of revelation and redemption is found in the remarkable third chapter of *The Teaching of the Epistle to the Hebrews*.

Vos concludes his Inaugural Address by directing remarks to the student of the Word of God. The Professor is giving an *apologia pro munere meo professoris*. In other words, here is how I will teach Biblical Theology. First, the organic scope of revelation in relation to the supernatural whole; the alternative is atomism and reductionism. Second, an antidote to destructive critical views. How well Vos knew these views! He had studied under August Dillman,

Bernhard Weiss and Hermann Strack at Berlin—H. J. Holtzmann, Wilhelm Nowack and Wilhelm Windelband at Strasbourg. His masterful reviews of Schweitzer's *Quest for the Historical Jesus* and Bousset's *Kyrios Christos* demonstrate that indeed an orthodox Biblical Theology is the one sufficient antidote to an apocalyptic Jesus and a Jesus reduced to *religionsgeschichte*. An eschatological perspective is the apologetic warp and woof of supernatural revelation. Third, Biblical Theology brings freshness and vitality to the study of the Word of God. Old truths are vividly reborn with the reality of the semi-eschatological perspective. There is drama between the pages of the Bible—a drama which beckons the believer to step inside and live the life of the age to come—even now! Finally, Biblical Theology "is of greatest importance and value for the study of Systematic Theology" (23). Both Biblical Theology and Systematic Theology resort to the same well—the same *principium*—namely, the Bible. Both mutually enrich one another. Though methodologically distinct, like the Trinity, they are not separate with respect to displaying the whole counsel of God.

When Vos stepped down from the Chair of Biblical Theology in 1932—at the age of 70—he could look back at 39 years of labor in which his inaugural sketch had been fulfilled in the classroom and in the study—with rhetorical flourish and the pen. He practiced what he preached. Machen was awed; Van Til, Murray, Stonehouse were affected; and B. B. Warfield, with whom Vos walked, often arm in arm, about the quadrangle at Princeton—B. B. Warfield was a dear friend

The crowning achievement of this remarkable career was *The Pauline Eschatology*, self-published first in 1930. It contains Vos's mature reflection on the greatest apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. And that greatness arose from the marvellous transformation which occurred in a Jewish Pharisee trained at the feet of Gamaliel. Saul of Tarsus, Pharisee, became Paul of Arabia, Christian. On a dusty road outside of Damascus, this linear Jew looked full in the face of the eschatological Christ. Resurrection blazed upon Paul on the Damascus Road and that Pharisee knew that the eschaton had arrived in principle in the risen Lord Jesus. The centrality of the resurrection is the key to Paul's conversion, the key to his missionary zeal, the key to his theology. Without it, one understands neither Paul nor Vos.

Pages 36-71 of *The Pauline Eschatology* contain a wonderful—indeed a lovely—prospectus of the semi-eschatological drama which has arrived in the resurrection of Christ. Here is where the death on the cross is confirmed as eschatologically final—a once-and-for-all sacrifice never to be repeated, fully sufficient for the sins of God's people from the blood of Abel to the blood of the last martyr. Here—in the risen Lord Jesus—is where the vindication of God's righteousness is evidenced once-and-for-all; no more death to those in the risen Christ—he is the resurrection and the life. Here—in the risen Lord Jesus—is the open conquest of the principalities and powers, the maledictory forces who dominate through the curse; no more bondage to the elemental powers for those risen with Christ, no more curse to those whose curse has been removed once-and-for-all in the risen Christ. The resurrection of Christ is the turning point of the ages, the moment in which the two ages—the present age and the age to come—overlap (see the famous diagram on page 38 of *The Pauline Eschatology*). We have been raised up now together with Christ Jesus, though we are not yet consummately raised in the body to behold him as he is. But as surely as we have been raised up together with him even now, we shall be raised up in the body at the day of his appearing and the now/not yet will be swallowed up in the never-ending forever and forever. For Vos, this semi-eschatological perspective was what characterized the burning hearts of the early Christians. As with Paul on the Damascus Road, the future had been brought forward into the present and their lives, as his life, had been transformed—changed from death to life—from darkness to light—from God-haters to lovers of God, the Father, God, the Son and God the Holy Spirit—from walking according to the flesh to walking by the Spirit. The life of the age to come had taken possession of them as Christ had taken possession of them; Christ, in whom is the life of the age to come. The light of the age to come had taken possession of them as Christ had taken possession of them; Christ, in whom is the light of the age to come. The love of God of the age to come had taken possession of them, as the Christ of God had taken possession of them; Christ, the well-beloved of the Father and the Spirit in whom the love of God was shed abroad in their hearts. The Spirit of God had taken possession of them as the Lord, the Spirit (2 Cor. 3:18) had taken possession of them; Christ the Lord in whom the Spirit dwells, world without end.

Vos sets forth Paul's theology by the remarkable statement: "to set forth the Apostle's eschatology means to set forth his theology as a whole" (*The Pauline Eschatology*, 11). Paul's soteriology (his theology of salvation) is therefore eschatologically (or better, semi-eschatologically) oriented. Four elements are reviewed: resurrection, salvation, justification, the Holy Spirit. The resurrection, which Jewish eschatology reserved to the end of history, has, through the resurrection of Christ, been revealed in the midst of history. Those united to Christ by grace through faith are incorporated into a new order—a new reality—a resurrection arena—*in Christo coram Deo*—interadventually positioned in resurrection-life through the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Salvation, in the Jewish eschatology, a linear drama awaiting the averting of the wrath to come on the last day, is now understood to be present—the believer even now delivered from the wrath to come (1 Thess. 1:10), as well as assured at the consummation—no more wrath! Interadventually positioned in the life of salvation, the believer by grace through faith is not now under wrath nor will he ever be in the future, any more than Christ, in whom the believer exists—any more than Christ, who has borne the wrath of God, can at some future time become an object of the Father's wrath. Justification, in the linear Jewish eschatology a declaration awaiting the final weighing of the scales of merit and demerit at the end of history, is now declared to be present in the justification of Jesus by resurrection on the ground of his all-sufficient merit covering all our demerits, whereby he earns the declaration, "Not Guilty," "Acquitted," "Right with God." The death and resurrection of Christ, in the midst of time, becomes for the believer by grace through faith nothing less than "the last judgment anticipated" (*The Pauline Eschatology*, 55). Justification is an eschatological reality—justified freely now, justified freely not yet—nevermore to be unjustified. Vos gives short shrift to the fourth element—the Holy Spirit in his eschatological aspect because he had written a full article on the topic for the centennial celebration of Princeton Seminary. That article, "The Eschatological Aspect of the Pauline Conception of the Spirit," first published in 1912, is the most profound, the most challenging, the most difficult of all Vos's writings. In essence, the Holy Spirit becomes, through the resurrection of Christ, the αρραβών of the arena in which he has dwelt from all eternity. Now flowing in all his pneumatic fullness because of the resurrection of Christ in and by the Spirit, he indwells all who are united to Christ, as he indwells the risen Lord Jesus. Where the atmosphere of the

age to come is wanted, the Spirit incorporates believers by grace through faith into the age of the Spirit—in whom, by whom and through whom they walk—no longer according to the flesh. It is now the inaugural fullness of the realm of the Spirit which has been poured out upon the believer through the Spirit of the risen Christ; that consummate fullness not yet enjoyed is none the less certainly pledged and assured to those destined for the realm where the Spirit dwells forever.

The eschatological perspective impacts the ethical life. Paul's orientation to the heavenly places undergirds his imperatives for godly living. Quite simply, if one exists *coram Deo*—semi-eschatologically seated in heavenly places in Christ Jesus—his ethical motivation is eschatologized. His chief delight is to live out of the arena of his Savior, his heavenly Father, the Spirit of holiness. The deeds of the flesh cannot exist in the heavenly arena. Since my life is hidden with Christ in God, my behavior and actions are to reflect that heavenly glory. While I never perfectly or consistently live as it were out of heaven, nonetheless my perspective on what pleases my heavenly Father proceeds from that eschatological dimension. As eschatology is prior to soteriology, so eschatology is prior to ethics. I can no more abandon myself to the works of the flesh, than Christ can abandon himself to the works of the flesh. And in my weakness, as I seek my strength from above, I plead, Abba, Father—let my actions be a mirror of the life of heaven itself. *Soli Deo Gloria*!

With respect to the preaching moment, Biblical-Theological preaching is semi-eschatologically oriented. Any less would be a betrayal of what we have learned from Geerhardus Vos. The hearer finds himself at the interface of the vertical and the horizontal—the eschatological and the temporal. And the task of the preacher is to draw the hearer's life into the text. All Biblical-Theological preaching is textual preaching—the Biblical text in its context—the Biblical text in its redemptive-historical context—the Biblical text in its semi-eschatological context. All Biblical-Theological preaching in Christocentric preaching because for Paul, and all the New Testament writers, Christ is the center of the semi-eschatological drama. In Christ, we are seated in heavenly places—in Christ, we shall be raised up at the last day. *Zwischen den Zeiten*, we live *ev Christo* ("in Christ"). Paul's favorite phrase for identification and union with Christ is *ev Christo*.

We preach so as to draw the hearer into Christ; to encourage the hearer to live in Christ; to pray that the Holy Spirit will even more sweetly enrich the hearer's walk in and with Christ. The semi-eschatological Pauline theology—semi-eschatological Vosian Biblical Theology—means sweet glory for the believer because like Paul, Biblical-Theological preaching is content with nothing less than the preeminence of Jesus Christ—to make Christ known and the power of his resurrection: all else is counted as dung for the sake of the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus. The proclamation of the life of heaven provisionally now in the believer through Jesus Christ; the proclamation of the life of heaven consummately assured not yet to the believer through Jesus Christ. *Sic sentio; sic praedico!*

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 26-27]

Calvin on Merit and the Land of Canaan[1]

"Moses speaks here of the land of Canaan. But if men cannot deserve anything in this world in respect of transitory things, how shall they deserve everlasting life?[2] If I cannot win a little piece of ground, how shall I win a whole realm? So then, let us mark that of the things that are said here, we must gather a general doctrine, which is, that … the children of Israel were put in possession of the land that had been promised them, not for their own righteousness sake, but through free goodness" (376).

"God would have the said covenant which he made concerning the land of Canaan and the temporal succession, to be known to be of his free goodness[3]: it is much more reason that when he calls us to be heirs of his kingdom, and shows himself to be our God and Savior, his goodness should have the highest degree, and all respects of deserving be laid away[4], so as men should not

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1 "The 62 Sermon of John Calvin upon Deuteronomy" (Dt. 9:1-6, esp. vss. 5 and 6: "It is not through thine own righteousness or for the rightness of thy heart that thou art come to the possession of their land . . . . Know thou therefore that it is not for thine own righteousness that the Lord thy God hath given thee this good land to possess: for thou are a stiff-necked people"), *The Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon the Fifth Booke of Moses called Deuteronomie . . .* (1583; facsimile reprint Banner of Truth Trust, 1987) 376, 378; cf. the original French text in CO 26:644, 648-49. Spelling and grammar have been modernized above.

2 Fr. *mais si les hommes ne peuvent rien* ***meriter*** *en ce monde pour les choses caduques comment* ***meriteront-ils*** *la vie eternelle.*

3 Fr. *gratuit.*

4 Fr. *et que tout regards de* ***merites*** *soyent ici abbatus.*

imagine themselves to have I wote not power of their own to prevent God's goodness[5]. . . . And so we have no cause to allege anything at all on our own behalf, but rather to be ashamed of ourselves, that God may only be exalted and have all praise given to him" (378).

5 Fr. *que les homes ne cuident point avoir ie ne say quoy de pouvoir prevenir la bonté de Dieu.* "Prevent" here is used in the Latin (*praevenio*) sense of "to come before".

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 28-33]

So, What is Faith?

Hebrews 11:1, 17-19; Gen. 18:14; 22:1-14

William D. Dennison

What is faith in Jesus Christ? The answer to Question 86 of the *Shorter Catechism* of the Westminster Standards says: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon him alone for salvation, as he is offered to us in the gospel." This statement corresponds clearly to a sentence that appears in chapter 14, section 2 of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*: "But the principle acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace." Indeed, the *Confession* does an excellent job in describing the *sole object* of our faith, Jesus Christ! Our eyes are to be fixed on Christ alone as the one who saves us. Furthermore, the *Confession* does an excellent job of describing the principle acts of saving faith: accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone to secure all the saving graces that accompany our salvation in Christ. Upon closer analysis, however, may we ask whether the *Confession* describes every aspect of the "act of faith?" For example, as accurate as the *Confession* is about the object and definition of faith, nowhere does it mention Hebrews 11:1, which describes the inner dynamic of faith as "the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen!" This omission does not give anyone license to attack the *Confession*; rather, it points to the fact that the *Confession* does not provide a comprehensive summary of everything that we believe about a biblical view of faith. We must still continue to affirm that the Holy Scriptures are the comprehensive source for the rich doctrine of faith!

Oh church of the Lord, Jesus Christ, Hebrews 11 pushes us into the inner dynamic of faith—it pushes us into the inner core and essence of the gift of faith (Eph. 2:8), as it is an expression of our faith-union in Christ! Through the author of Hebrews, the Holy Spirit challenges us—does the faith described in Hebrews 11:1 define your faith-union with Christ? Does such a view of faith dominate your identity, your walk, your life in Christ? Or is faith in Jesus merely used by you as a "crutch"? Meaning, I simply pull Jesus out of the closet when I need him to help me walk; when I need a friend, when I need a job, when I need him to pull me through a difficult time in life—just to cope. Permit the Holy Spirit, through the text in Hebrews 11:1, to strip you of such a false and evil act of faith—an act that deceives you from embracing the true notion of faith found in the Bible! How? Push yourself, under the submissive power of the Spirit, to apply yourself into the Spirit's own interpretation of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in Hebrews 11:17–19, so that you can comprehend and live the inner depth and riches of a holy faith in Christ.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested" (vs. 17). What was tested? What was the nature of the test? The Greek word here means, "To prove exceedingly." What is being proven exceedingly in Abraham? Quite simply, it is his faith—"the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen" (vs. 1). In order to comprehend the impact of Abraham's test in connection with the statement of verse 1, let us highlight certain points in Abraham's life in respect to his faith.

When God first appears to Abram, he makes a promise that from him the nations will be blessed (Gen. 12:3). When Abram leaves Haran as a seventy-five year old man and sets his sights upon the land that the Lord has promised to him, he is already embracing the promise of God by faith—he trusts the Lord for something that is *hoped* for, something that he has not yet *seen*! As Abram comes into the land *hoped* for and not *seen* (Gen. 13:14–18), years pass which include such important events as Abram's defeat of the confederation of kings and the rescue of Lot (Gen. 14:1–17) as well as the appearance of Melchizedek (Gen. 14:18–20). In Genesis 15, God appears to him and renews the promise that his descendents will be as many as the stars in the sky (Gen. 15:5). Keep in mind that Abram is getting older. He has no children; and yet, in response to the revelation of God to Abram, the Scripture says: "he believed in the Lord, and He [God] accounted it to him for righteousness" (Gen.15:6). His faith is

still set upon "things hoped for"—"things not seen!"

For eleven more years, Abram's faith embraced the promise that God made in Genesis 15:5 (Gen. 16:16). At that time, since Sarai bore him no children, she gave him her maid, Hagar, and the two of them had a child, Ishmael. Although the eighty-six year old Abram lived *as if* God fulfilled his promise with the birth of Ishmael (Gen. 16:16), in reality God's promise had not been fulfilled. The promise would not be fulfilled with a maid! Rather, it would only be fulfilled with Sarai, his true wife!

Now Abram is challenged once again by the nature of faith! This time it is thirteen years later when Abram is ninety-nine years old (Gen. 17:1) and Sarah his wife is ninety years old and beyond the time she could bear children (Gen. 17:17). Facing this circumstance, is Abraham's faith now a belief in things *hoped* for, things not *seen*? Unlike previous episodes, this time such a faith is *not* seen in Abraham; this time God's demand for faith is met by mockery in the form of laughter before the Lord—both by Abraham (Gen. 17:17) and Sarah (Gen. 18:12; she even denies to the Lord that she had laughed, vs.18). As the Lord is mocked by both of them, God adds another component of faith in respect to his person and his promise—for a faith which includes "things hoped for, things not seen" must also incorporate the Lord's strong admonition of Sarah, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14). In this incident of mockery and weakness on the part of Abraham and Sarah, we are seeing God's patience in bringing his children on a path *from* an infant faith *to* a mature faith! Indeed, Abraham could believe God when he knew that he could have children (Gen. 12); and he could believe in God's promise when he thought Ishmael was the child of the promise (Gen. 17:18); but now, can he have *hope* for a child whom he has *not seen* (Heb. 11:1), especially from a wife who is beyond the years of childbearing?

As God declares to Sarah a further element of faith (that "nothing is too hard for the Lord"), we find exposed in Abraham and Sarah the *immaturity of faith*. And yet, in this situation, we also find that the Lord will not forsake his covenant oath! He will not forsake his faithfulness to Abraham and Sarah. The Scripture is clear—the Lord himself must act sovereignly by his own power in this situation in an *act* of pure grace! Notice God's activity recorded in Genesis 21:1 (birth of Isaac): "And the Lord visited Sarah as He had said, and the Lord

did for Sarah as He had spoken." There is nothing here about Abraham going unto Sarah and she conceived; rather, in the context of the lack of faith, God is bringing his sovereign will to fulfillment (although the birth of Isaac is not a virgin birth, the language of the text gives the appearance of a virgin birth, foreshadowing the virgin birth of the true seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ). Indeed, the Lord assures Abraham and Sarah that "nothing is too hard for the Lord" in the birth of Isaac. They will have to come to embrace *this* component of faith as their faith matures.

The question now is: "Is the faith of Abraham maturing?" In order to see if Abraham's faith is maturing, God puts him to the test (Gen. 22:1; Heb. 11:17). This test is going to be the most incredible proof of faith—it is "an exceeding proof." Keep in mind the new component here: nothing "too hard" for the Lord is *wed* to "things hoped for", "things not seen"! Here the most mature faith is exposed—we are looking into the very depths of the inner core or essence of faith. God has already led the way; he has already given a glimpse of that in which *the inner core of faith* must consist. God has brought forth the child of promise from a woman who had been barren all her life and who had also passed the time to bear children. God had brought forth *life* from a woman whose ability to have children was *dead*! *God brought life from death!*

Thus, here is the question that lies behind Abraham's test in Genesis 22: Do you, Abraham, really believe that God can bring life from death (remember we are moving into the inner essence of faith)? Behold Abraham, you have witnessed the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen—Isaac, the promised child has arrived by the sovereign power of God! But now that Isaac has arrived, will you sacrifice your one and only son, the long awaited child of the promise? Will you, Abraham, kill your only begotten son? Now in this situation, what is the substance of things *hoped* for? Now in this situation, what is the evidence of things not *seen*? How deep is your faith now, Abraham? Abraham has walked with the Lord for some thirty years, and now the Lord is asking him to kill the promise—in effect, the Lord is asking Abraham to forfeit his thirty-year walk with him. In light of this command, bizarre to the human mind, has Abraham learned that nothing is too hard for the Lord (Gen. 18:14)?

Oh reader, the Hebrews passage takes us deep into the essence of faith. Do you not see it? Will you not participate in God's challenge of Abraham so that you will also *act* with a living faith? Why does Abraham willingly offer up his only begotten son, Isaac? Because Abraham already concluded that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead (Heb. 11:19; Gen. 22:8). *Simply put, Abraham had concluded that God would raise Isaac from the dead even if he executed him*! Indeed, Abraham had come to believe that nothing is too hard for the Lord—this is *faith* in that which seems to be empirically impossible. It is one thing to have Isaac born from a woman who is beyond the years of childbearing, but at least, Sarah is alive. She was a living person upon whom the Lord could perform his sovereign activity. But to slaughter one in death, and then, to revive someone who is actually dead and bring that one to life, what is that? When has that ever happened? How is that possible? Indeed, nothing—no, nothing is too hard for the Lord! The substance of things *hoped* for, the evidence of things not *seen* was embraced by the faith of resurrection in Abraham's heart!

Are you participating in Abraham's faith? Indeed, the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen is truly culminated in a faith that believes in resurrection! But as in Abraham's situation, the *object* of a "resurrection faith" directed and placed upon Isaac *fails*—this child was born in sin like all of us! The promised child of the covenant is not Abraham's "seed," Isaac; rather, the promised child, Isaac, is pointing beyond himself to the eschatological promised child of the covenant in Abraham's "seed," Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:16, "seed" singular)! For God's challenge to Abraham with respect to fulfilling a commitment to covenantal redemption is the same challenge that the Lord God of heaven and earth issues upon himself. God has placed before his people their *hope* for that which has not been *seen*: your Redeemer, your Savior, the true child of the promise has arrived in the person and work of Jesus Christ! Behold, your hope has come; the evidence has been seen as Christ comes in the fullness of time in flesh of our flesh! But this time**,** unlike Isaac, God the Father's providential hand permits his only begotten Son to be slaughtered as an *atoning sacrifice* for the wretchedness of our sin. And as this perfect sacrifice, without blemish, lay dead in the grave as bearer of our sin and our unrighteousness, God's sovereign *activity* enters the tomb and makes a boisterous declaration: *nothing is too hard for the Lord!* He resurrects his

Son who is branded with our sin in order to give us life! Life, *free* from the slavery of our wretched internal natures—*free* to breathe the breath of eternal life, as we embrace the resurrected Christ by faith!

Do you not accept, receive, and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for your salvation? Do you not see that as you embrace the object of your holy faith, Jesus Christ, that the essence of that faith—a truly mature faith is that which embraces a resurrected Redeemer and Savior who has rescued you from the pit of Hell? The substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen for Abraham has now come for you! Your hope—the glory of the Son is clearly evident before you. Will you not live in faith-union with the exalted and resurrected Christ, your only comfort in life and in death!

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 34-35]

Calvin on Universal Salvation[1]

Howbeit, Saint Paul, having spoken of servants, says that God's "grace has appeared fully to all men." As if he should say that God thought it not good to chose[2] only the great and noble men, and such as are in reputation[3], but he has spread out[4] his mercy even to the basest[5], such as the world rejects, such as the world disdains and such as are had in contempt[6]. Those God has vouchsafed to honor by putting them into the array and degree of his children[7].

And so we see why Saint Paul speaks here of all men: whereby we may judge what soundness[8] is in these busybodies that meddle with expounding of

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1 From "Sermon 12 on the Epistle to Titus" (Titus 2:6-14, esp. v. 11: "For the grace of God has appeared bringing salvation to all men") as found in *Sermons of M. John Calvin on the Epistles of S. Paule to Timothie and Titus* (1579; reprint 1983) 1179; cf. CO (*Calvini Opera*) 54:531-32 for the French text. The sermon was preached at St. Pierre on the morning of September 29, 1555. For the dating, see the discussion in T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching* (1992) 150-52, 166-67. Calvin begins this sermon, "The last Sunday I showed…" (1169), indicative of his customary *lectio continua* in preaching morning and afternoon through a book of the Bible on the Lord's day. Spelling and punctuation have been modernized.

2 Fr. literally: "that God is by no means content to chose".

3 Fr. literally: "held in esteem".

4 Fr. "or expanded".

5 Fr. literally: "smallest", "littlest".

6 Fr. literally: "held in opprobrium".

7 Fr. literally: "putting them among the rank and degree"

8 Fr. literally: "folly", "blockishness".

the holy Scripture, which is not to be understood according to their vein[9], when they say God will have the whole world to be saved, and the grace of God has appeared for the salvation of the whole world. Therefore, it follows that men have free wills and that there is no election nor predestination to salvation[10].

But if beasts should speak, they must needs have a little more reason than this[11]. For Saint Paul's meaning, in this text as well as in the other to Timothy, which I have expounded there, is nothing else but that God calls the great ones, though they are not worthy, and that he ceases not to adopt the little ones and to reach out his hand to receive them, though the world despise them.

9 Fr. literally: "style".

10 Fr. literally: "and that there is no election nor predestination to salvation at all".

11 Fr. literally: "they ought to have a little more judgment than this".

Reviews

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Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca. 1520 to ca. 1725. Volume Two: Holy Scripture, The Cognitive Foundation of Theology*. Second edition. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003. 537pp. Cloth. ISBN:0-8010-2616-4. $44.99.

As a student at Chandler School of Theology, I remember seeing Dr. John Hayes reading in the library. He pointed out a book to me—this second volume, in its first edition. Very fine work he implied. Later he told our class that Dr. Muller had rightly critiqued his book (which he coauthored with Dr. Frederick Prussner). Hayes and Prussner's book *Old Testament Theology: Its History and Development* had wrongly claimed that Johannes Cocceius was a precursor of modern critical Biblical theology. But Dr. Hayes added (with his characteristic wry humor), "Prussner wrote that part."

This acknowledgment by Dr. Hayes (a scholar who was known among his colleagues to be one of the most voracious scholars on the faculty) is just one indication of the esteem this book has received—and deserves. In this second edition, Dr. Muller has given us another quality revision. While he has not changed the order or titles of the chapters, he has rearranged some of the materials and "entirely recast some of the sections" to highlight two sub-themes that he is trying to develop throughout the four-volume set. These include "the placement of the Salmurian theology within the boundaries of confessional orthodoxy and the congruence of English Reformed and Puritan theology in

its dialogue with the continental Reformed" (15). He has also updated the bibliography both in the footnotes to this volume and in the cumulative bibliography at the end of volume four.

Scripture's Infallibility

This second volume first introduces us to medieval views of Scripture. Dr. Muller highlights both the nature of Scripture and hermeneutics. In this section, he suggests that Thomas Aquinas made a distinction between Scripture and Word that influenced Reformed views of Scripture. The reviewer found the initial treatment of this distinction imprecise. One may think that Dr. Muller is giving Aquinas a Neo-Orthodox interpretation. However, he continuously denies that the Reformers (who followed them) held to a Neo-Orthodox view of revelation.

One example of this is Muller's refutation of Emil Brunner. Brunner claimed that (for the Reformers) the *Word is exclusively Christ*. Then he contrasted this to Post-Reformation Reformed Scholastics, who held that the *Word is exclusively Scripture*. Muller counters these assertions by claiming that the *Word is both Scripture and Christ* both in the Reformers and the later Reformed Scholastics. Of course, Muller does not mean by this that Christ speaks to his people apart from the Scriptures. No, Christ now speaks to his people by the Scriptures alone, not through dreams and personal revelations. But Christ is Word since he is the Ontic Word of God. With regard to Scripture, the point is (as Muller says of Bullinger) Scripture is not simply a witness to the Word (the Barthian view), but the Word itself (or an aspect of the Word).

By showing that the Word and Christ are not separate, Muller can counter the Neo-Orthodox view that the Word witnesses to Jesus Christ. At the same time, he claims that the Word is not so equated with Christ as to deny revelation outside of Christ (here presumably countering the Neo-Orthodox denial of natural revelation,155).

Muller expands on this when he refutes the Barthian appeal to Luther. "It is not accurate, however, to equate Luther's sense of the whole of Scripture as bearing and witnessing to Christ with the Barthian concept of Scripture as a witness to the Word or revelation. Luther understood all of Scripture to bear

witness to Christ precisely because he viewed Scripture as God's revelatory Word and Christ as the fulfillment of God's revelation—Barth understood Scripture as witness to Christ because he viewed Christ as the Word and as God's revelation in an ultimate and ultimately restrictive sense and Scripture as Word only in a derivative sense, and not as revelation. For Barth, Scripture can be said to *become* God's Word in the event of God speaking through it to believers concerning the revelation that is Jesus Christ" (67). Clearly Muller distances the Reformers from their Neo-Orthodox interpreters.

At the same time, as in *After Calvin*, Dr. Muller claims that Calvin held to a looser view of Scripture than that found among his later Reformed followers. Yet his assertion is weakly supported and inconclusive. Again, as in our review of *After Calvin* (this journal 22/3 [December 2007]: 64-71), we ask, why doesn't Muller argue continuity between Calvin and his successors on this point as he does elsewhere, especially since his support for this assertion is so weak?

Further, Dr. Muller is unwilling to use the term "inerrancy" to describe the Reformed Scholastics's view (300, n. 26). He prefers to use the term "infallibility" to describe their position because it was the term they used. In this comment, Muller may not be denying that the Reformed Scholastics held to inerrancy, but he is not affirming it either. This slight of hand is a common practice in academia, a way to keep all your constituency happy and stay cozy with the club. We think, after making such comments, he should not remain ambiguous, considering the present climate of theological debate. All he had to say was that he used the term "infallibility" to be historically accurate, but that the position was essentially the same as the modern view of inerrancy.

Why not make this assertion? Muller leaves open the possibility that the answer is the same as the one he gives to use the term infallibility instead of inerrancy: the Reformed Scholastics simply claimed that the Scriptures did not err. That is, they only used the *verb* to describe their view. They do not use the *noun* inerrant. In this reviewer's opinion (insofar as Dr. Muller leaves open the possibility that the Reformed Scholastics did not substantially hold to inerrancy), he is making a distinction without a difference. If the authors of Scripture did not *err*, then certainly the result of their work was *inerrant*. If it wasn't, then what was the result? The only other option would be *errant* (for

there is no *tertium quid* between the two; they are contradictories, not contraries). And the Orthodox certainly wouldn't assert that the Scripture is *errant*.

But perhaps Dr. Muller is claiming that, when saying the authors of Scripture did not err, they did not assert one way or another whether the text was inerrant as a result. If so, what practical significance can their failure to err have for the church? For the church has no other access to the fact that they did not err than the texts that resulted from this process. Thus, if the result wasn't inerrant, then it is wrong to assert that they did not err. We do not think the Orthodox were blind to these implications, since they were well trained in language and logic. And we do not suspect that Muller wishes to go in this direction either since he appeals to the Reformed defense of the *apographa*.

In his unwillingness to assert inerrancy, Muller thinks he is acting historically, i.e., just describe what the Reformed Scholastics believed. Don't try to relate this to modern views. However, if we of the 21st century are to steer clear of misunderstanding the 17th, then we have to compare and contrast it to our own situation at certain points. In refusing to do this, instead, Muller leaves the impression that they did not essentially believe in inerrancy. Further, Muller himself does not consistently stick to this historical objectivity. He criticizes the Hodges and Warfield for defending the inerrancy of the *autographa* instead of the *apographa* (414, n. 192). Clearly, he is contrasting the views of the 17th century Reformed Scholastics to a later view (rightly or wrongly—as the reviewer believes) and giving a theological judgment on the latter.

Further, it is not clear to us why Muller could not compare the 17th century view to inerrancy and remain consistent with his historical objectivity. For, in his historical method, he continually compares and contrasts Post-Reformation Scholastics to their 19th and 20th century interpreters. In some cases, Muller must interpret the views of these 19th and 20th century interpreters in the process—then compare and contrast them to the 17th century. Thus, after noting why he did not use the term inerrancy, why not make a simple statement affirming the essential similarity between the Reformed Scholastic view of infallibility and the modern view of inerrancy?

Inspiration

At many points, Muller's discussion of inspiration is well done yet unsurprising. Here we will note some of his comments on the historical process of inspiration, the nature of accommodation, and the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points. Helpful to this discussion is the distinction between revelation and inspiration. Muller suggests that revelation is the content conveyed, while inspiration is the manner in which that content has been conveyed in writing.

His comments on the historical nature of revelation and inscripturation presume this distinction. Muller points out the pattern in which revelation is sometimes separated historically from inscipturation. We find revelations given to Abraham, but they were not inscripturated until the time of Moses. Muller states that some of the Reformed recognized the same historical movement (from personal revelation to inscripturation) in the prophets. Elijah and Elisha received personal revelations, but did not themselves record those revelations. They were followed by the writing prophets.

It is well known that numerous people appeal to Calvin's doctrine of "accommodation" to defend their view of cultural accommodation. Muller believes this is not justified. "This traditional view of accommodation stands in contrast with the notion of a necessary accommodation of truth itself to the conventions of language or to particular cultural contexts, an alternative understanding of accommodation that, in rationalist hands, pointed toward the replacement of a Scriptural norm in theology with rationalist philosophy" (305). Muller associates this later view of accommodation with "latitudinarian theologies" and Rationalism.

Muller also discusses the debate over the inspiration of the Hebrew vowel points. While the Reformers did not hold to the inspiration of the points, later Reformed theologians (such as John Owen) believed it was necessary to do so. They did so in order to counter the Roman Catholic claim that (without inspired vowel points) one needs the church to interpret Scripture. Muller points to Louis Cappel's arguments against their inspiration and its association with the Salmurian (Amyraldian) theology of France, of which he was a part.

Muller's discussion of the vowel point debate leads up to the Helvetic Consensus (1675) in a unique way. He points to Reformed authors who fol-

lowed Cappel and did not believe that the vowel points were inspired. However, such Reformed writers argued that the Masoretes had faithfully pointed the text according to the traditional use of the Hebrew language. Also, the original text implied these vowel sounds insofar as the meaning conveyed by the points was implicit in the original text. The original text was not a set of meaningless consonants. Therefore the sense of the vowel points was inspired. According to Muller, John Owen argued against this view and defended the inspiration of the points themselves, not simply their sense. However, Muller suggests that the authors of the Helvetic Consensus (like Francis Turretin and John Henry Heidegger) moved beyond Owen when they stated that either the vowel points themselves or the sense of the points was inspired. Thus Muller suggests that the Helvetic Consensus does not argue for the inspiration of the physical ink points on the page, but only leaves this as one of two possibilities. However, as with previous Reformed authors (once opposed by Owen), they argue that at least the sense of the points was inspired.

The Authority of Scripture and its Self-Authentication

Muller has a very helpful chapter on the divine character of Scripture in which he discusses the authority of Scripture and its self-authentication, which will be our present focus.

Muller claims that for Reformed Scholastics the authority of Scripture is the first principle from which its inspiration and everything else is derived. For this to be the case, Scripture must be self-authenticating. Its authority is not derived from any authentication outside itself. Other forms of authentication (such as the miracles of Christ and the apostles) are confirmatory. They do not substantiate the validity of the word to an *imago Dei* which otherwise was completely indifferent to its truth or falsity. Instead, when people hear the message of Scripture they know that the voice of God speaks therein. And to trust in the message savingly they must receive the internal testimony of the Spirit, who thereby confirms the word *to their hearts*.

This requires further clarification on both the teaching of self-authentication and the internal testimony of the Spirit. Muller claims that the Reformed Scholastics (noting John Owen) are more precise than Calvin. For they empha-

size that the internal testimony of the Spirit is not a personal communication given to each individual believer (266). Instead, the internal testimony of the Spirit involves the intimate union of Word and Spirit. It is (we might say) the combination of the objective Word of God and the subjective regenerating work of the Spirit. It does not involve the Spirit (in his subjective work) communicating information directly to the individual Christian. Instead, the objective communication of information only takes place through the Word, whose author is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit in his subjective testimony simply works in the heart to make it receptive to the Word. The Scripture of itself, however, is self-authenticating and does not need the Spirit in his subjective work to communicate information to the sinner, testifying that the Word is true.

Muller presents the broader picture of Scripture's self-authentication by noting that (for the Reformed) three aspects of revelation are self-authenticating: natural revelation, the internal testimony of conscience, and the Scriptures (268). Muller seems to suggest that each of these forms of revelation independently witnesses to its truthfulness apart from the testimony of the other. This reviewer would like more proof of this. It seems to him that natural revelation and the testimony of conscience are (for Francis Turretin and Wilhelmus a Brakel) the precondition without which Scripture could not connect to the *imago Dei* and command its authority. If this is the case, the Scriptures are still self-authenticating (see below). For every human being already possesses these preconditions. As such, when the Word of the gospel comes to them, they immediately apprehend its authority (at some level). They do not wait in abeyance, completely uncertain whether the gospel is true, until it is confirmed from without. However, if we take Muller at his word, his view would suggest more than this view of self-authentication. It would require that Scripture is self-authenticating apart from its relation to natural revelation and the *sensus divinitatis*. And on the flip side, it would imply that natural revelation testifies to its own authority apart from the Scripture's substantiation. As I read him, Muller is suggesting three forms of independent self-contained authority.

Muller certainly argues that Scripture's self-authentication means that Scripture's authority never remains in abeyance in any human heart, waiting for *external* evidences to substantiate it. Instead, Scripture testifies to its own authority with its own *internal* evidences. Still, Muller can speak of the "divine self-attestation" found "extrinsically, in the miracles that occur throughout

Scripture and in the conversion of the world by means of Scripture" (274), even though he places them on a "lesser level of significance" (276) and sometimes speaks of them as confirmatory.

Muller is clearly suggesting that self-authentication is connected with the *marks* of Scripture. Brakel "notes the divine self-attestation in the text, the profundity and majesty of the teachings, and the fulfillment of prophecy," thereby connecting self-attestation to the internal marks (271). Thus, Muller can follow up this sentence on "self-attestation" with an elaboration of the "argument for divinity based on 'intrinsic evidences' or 'marks'" (271). Such internal marks include the subject matter, the grandness of style, and the consistency of all the parts. Insofar as any element of Scripture portrays these, it is self-authenticating.

Muller also connects the authority of Scripture to its self-attestation. This does not subjugate the authority of Scripture to the subjective apprehension of human beings. For both self-attestation and its concomitant authority have an objective nature grounded in God that is prior to their subjective apprehension in the human subject—a distinction Muller notes from Turretin.

Muller also claims that Scripture is self-authenticating as a whole. Individual verses are not necessarily as self-authenticating as others except when seen in connection in their context and in relation to the Bible as a whole. Even some books of Scripture are more self-authenticating than others. As Muller states (with quotes from Turretin), "The evidences or marks of divinity do not appear uniformly throughout Scripture: like the stars in heaven, some books 'shine' more brightly than others—so that the Gospels and Pauline Epistles offer fuller evidence of divinity than Ruth or Esther—but no book so lacks evidences of divinity as to call it into doubt. Nor is it necessary that each chapter of a canonical book evidence all the marks: it is 'sufficient' if all the marks are present in the 'divine writings considered collectively and as a whole'" (269-70).

Thus, we might say, while Muller believes the words "thus saith the Lord" are marks of divine authority (274), taken out of their context they are not necessarily as self-authenticating as when found in context. Nor perhaps would the words "Let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, lest he become weary of you and hate you" (Prov. 25:17). These may require their

broader context to be as fully self-authenticating Words of God as other texts that more fully bear the marks of divinity.

At the same time, all the individual books of Scripture are self-authenticating to some degree; otherwise they would not possess the criteria by which the church judged them to be canonical and consonant with the rest of the canon.

Further, since self-authentication and authority are intimately connected, the *authority* of individual passages (removed from their contexts) is dependent on the degree to which they are self-authenticating. And (presumably) their authority (as their self-authenticating nature) is strengthened to the degree that they are connected to their broader context—and finally to their connection with all the parts. Thus, if Muller is correct, does this suggest that the more the Scriptures unveil their organic nature the more they strengthen their authority?

While Muller does not make this point, it appears to us that there is one internal mark more fundamental than any other when considering the degree to which an individual passage (standing alone) is self-authenticating to those not familiar with the rest of Scripture: this mark is that of subject matter. For the issue of the consistency of all its parts (when a verse is considered alone) only comes into consideration insofar as the verse is itself internally coherent. It seems that the Reformed are suggesting that to the degree that a verse or book reveals the majesty of God, the sinfulness of man, and the redemption in Christ, to that degree it is self-authenticating. This would accord with Muller's own claim that the Reformed believed the gospels to be more self-authenticating than Esther and Ruth when seen in isolation of the whole.

While Muller is not given to relating these issues to modern issues of Systematic and Biblical Theology (that is too unhistorical for him), we may point out a possible implication of these points. Namely, we would propose that the more the Scriptures unveil their organic connections (the consistency of all the parts), the more they reveal their self-authenticating authority.

Yes, of course, the Scripture's self-authenticating authority is grounded in God and his authority as the one who speaks therein. Yet Muller helps us to see that the marks are part and parcel of this reality; that (by implication)

they are grounded in God; that they are the finger-print of God himself. Thus, we should not think of self-authentication without them.

Thus, we may say that the authority of Scripture is ultimately grounded in God's own independent eschatological nature—a nature he eternally possessed prior to revelation and its human apprehension. At the same time, he has embodied this self-attesting authority in the objective organic continuum of special revelation. This is the finger-print of God, the mark of his workmanship. Thus, Scripture's self-authentication and its authority in both its parts and the whole is more fully apprehended the more the church apprehends this objective organic continuum of revelation in all its unity and multiformity.

Returning to Muller's discussion, he also deals with the testimony of the Holy Spirit as an essential aspect of the divine authentication of the Word. At the same time, as noted, the Spirit does not inwardly communicate objective knowledge to the heart apart from Scripture. Instead, he inwardly persuades the heart of the objective marks of Scripture itself.

Finally, Muller notes that with the "decline of orthodoxy," Herman Venema apparently gave up "the claim of a distinctively 'theological' external certainty" (283). Venema, being influenced by Rationalism, distinguished mathematical certainty from moral certainty. As a result, he believed that theological certainty "cannot be argued of the tangible, external sources themselves, granting the inward and spiritual nature of the certainty of faith" (284). Instead, after a long quote from Venema, Muller concludes, "Such arguments cannot be 'admitted in establishing the divinity of Scripture'; rather, they produce 'conviction' in the heart of one disposed already to the truth of Christianity" (284). Venema's position shows the influence of German Pietism and together with it prepared the way for the Kantian revolution (284). The implication seems to be that the self-authenticating character of Scripture was undermined, setting the stage for the assaults of the 19th and 20th centuries with its Kantian division between the historical veracity of the text and theology.

The Canon of Scripture

Before embarking on an examination of Muller's overriding arguments regarding canon in the Reformation era, our readers may be interested in how

Muller deals with the issue of the canon as it developed. In other words, how could the canon Israel possessed at various stages of its development be considered perfect before the canon was completed? This question is especially pressing since "The 'perfection' of the individual books of Scripture is relative to the purpose of the book and does not imply that any book of itself 'is sufficient to the common end,' which is the salvation of the church" (315). Thus, how could a limited collection be considered sufficient for the former era?

Respecting the canon, Dr. Muller's main claim is that the Reformed did not articulate a defined canon until the Council of Trent. According to Muller, the Council of Trent was the first official definition of the canon in church history. Since Trent defined the canon to include the Apocrypha, the Reformed felt compelled to strictly define their own canon of Scripture. However, before this point, there were two issues of canon that remained ambiguous. First, did the Old Testament include those books found in the Septuagint that were not in the Hebrew Scriptures (the present Protestant Apocrypha)? Second, the fathers and the Medieval Church distinguished New Testament writings into two categories: Homolegomena and Antilegomena. Thus, some New Testament books possessed uncertain authority. According to Muller, the early Reformers worked with this distinction in mind, as we see in Luther's famous claim that the epistle of James is an epistle of straw (67-68).

To further support this claim, Muller points to early Reformed theologians such as Peter Martyr Vermigli and Wolfgang Musculus, but especially Musculus. He notes places in Musculus's writings where he supposedly makes the distinction between the Homolegomena and the Antilegomena (374). According to Muller, Musculus refuses to make a final decision (as an individual) on the authority of the disputed New Testament writings—the Antilegomena (374-76).

While the present reviewer does not have the expertise to examine all of Muller's arguments, we believe there is reason to reexamine his conclusions. Muller began this argument when discussing canon in the Medieval period (30-31). There he presents several arguments to support his claim of a "relative fluidity of the canon" in the Medieval Church. "The most prominent examples" are the "the occurrences in medieval bibles and in the works of medieval commentators and theologians of the text and of references to the

Shepherd of Hermes and the Epistle to the Laodicenes." As an example, he refers to the "seventh-century *Codex Claromontanus* which includes Barnabas, the *Shepherd of Hermes*, the *Acts of Paul* and the *Revelation of Peter* mixed together with our present New Testament writings." He also mentions that the Epistle to the Laodicenes was included in numerous medieval Bibles.

However, this of itself does not prove that these works were regarded as canonical. It only indicates that these works were regarded as edifying to the church. With the expense of books during the period, it would make sense to include such "edifying works" with a book already copied for purchase, namely the canonical text. Muller himself notes that the medieval commentator Haimo of Halberstadt regarded the Epistle to the Laodicenes as an "edifying work" and that John of Salisbury regarded the "Shepherd of Hermes among the Old Testament Apocrypha." How do we know that their inclusion in medieval Bibles was intended as anything more than edifying, but not canonical? (See also 381 for their edifying use among the Reformed).

The same thing can be said for the Old Testament Apocrypha. Muller himself states, "They were quite commonly singled out by medieval teachers as deuteron-canonical. Thus Hugh of Saint Victor noted that the Apocrypha do not belong to the canon but ought to be read for edification." Why then doesn't Muller conclude that this was the reason why they were included in medieval Bibles? Why instead does he say, "The fourfold exegesis…rendered a strictly defined canon unnecessary"?

Perhaps, one of Muller's other proofs for their quasi-canonical status comes from his allusion to the Roman Catholic theologian Gregory Martin. "The Calvinists, notes Martin, with reference to the problem of New Testament *antilegomena,* accept James while rejecting the rest, for no more reason than it pleased Calvin to do so—even though Tobit, Ecclesiasticus, and the books of Maccabees 'were allowed and received for canonical by the same authority that St. James' epistle was'" (382). But why should we be persuaded that Martin (even though a contemporary of the period) was correct in his assessment of these issues? How do we know that he was not biased by his Roman Catholic polemic rather than persuaded of this by a careful reading of the fathers and Medieval doctors?

Muller presents other arguments for his position. Perhaps he thinks the

arguments are cumulative. However, we think they may be merely circumstantial (for instance, Muller seems to imply that the Reformed only defined a clear canon after they were pressed to do so by the Council of Trent, thus Reformed Confessional statements on the canon followed, 379-380). In this case, we believe Dr. Muller would admit that these confessions simply articulate positions already argued by Calvin. Thus, we are not convinced the reasons Dr. Muller has given for a pre-Tridentene "fluidity of the canon" are conclusive.

In fact, there are reasons to question his conclusions and to pursue further research in this area. For we might ask, where do the church fathers make a distinction between Homolegomena and Antilegomena? And do they consider this distinction substantive after the fourth century? Do not lists such as the Muratorian Canon and the letter of Athanasius imply that the books contained in the lists are authoritative, not questionable? If so, would the Medieval doctors depart from the fathers on such a fundamental issue? Of course, any serious reexamination of these questions would require in-depth study of the original sources, even more than Muller has been able to pursue on this particular issue.

Biblical Interpretation

Chapter 7 on "The Interpretation of Scripture" is well worth reading in its entirety and is a fitting conclusion to the book. Here we will highlight section 7.3 entitled "The 'Divers Senses' and the Unity of Scripture," while making a few comments on 7.5.

In this discussion of hermeneutics, Muller points to the importance of the literal sense of Scripture expounded by Thomas Aquinas and developed by Nicholas of Lyra for the later Reformed development of the literal sense.

Dispensationalists take note; according to Muller the literal sense is not equivalent to the immediate signification of the words. (The Reformed made this claim contrary to Cardinal Robert Bellarmine.) For example, "if your right hand offend thee, cut it off" is absurd if understood according to the immediate signification of the terms (478). In this case, the literal sense is *figurative*. At the same time, Muller offers some rules of clarification that follow along the

lines of Benedict Pictet's warning that we not "hastily depart from the literal sense, but only when it is contrary to the analogy of faith, and offers an absurd meaning" (479). On the surface, this would seem to support the Dispensational hermeneutic that "if the plain sense makes sense seek no other sense." However, the Reformed used the analogy of Scripture to decide what was absurd in a way that Dispensationalism often fails to do, especially in the interpretation of prophecy. Also, as we will see, Muller suggests that the Reformed argued for both the historical and prophetic referents of sacred history in a way that we do not think is consistent with Dispensational hermeneutics.

Citing Edward Leigh, Muller states that the Reformed criticized the Roman Catholic hermeneutical method "first, in the definition of the literal sense as 'that which the words immediately present' which frequently in the Old Testament ignores the primarily figurative significance of the words; second, in the claim that there may be several literal senses of a text; and third, in the 'division of the mystical sense into Allegorical, Tropological, Anagogical' (477).

As noted in the above text from Matthew, the Reformed concluded that the literal sense is sometimes *figurative* (478). The literal sense is unitary and includes figures in the text. As Muller puts it "there are allegories in the text, according to the intention of the Spirit, but allegories of human invention, brought to the text from without, must be excluded" (479). In this respect, the Reformed used the medieval scholastic dictum "*theologia symbolica non est argumentativa*" with one clarification—that "the *sensus mysticus can* serve as a ground of doctrine, but only when it is the sense 'offered by the Holy Spirit by means of the sacred writers,' as distinct from the added sense, not inherent in the text" (479).

Typological meanings are to be indicated by the text itself by means of the *analogia scripturae*. But this typological or mystical sense cannot then "be divided into a series of distinct senses: this would be a reversion to the *quadriga*" (480). Instead, "tropology, allegory, and anagogue, if they are real meanings, are literal ones" (481). That is, if the literal sense indicates them then they are real meanings; otherwise they are not.

Yet this should not be interpreted to mean that a text cannot refer both to the immediate history of Israel and to Christ typologically. The literal sense of the text must be judged by the analogy of Scripture. Thus "Hosea 11:1, 'Out

of Egypt have I called my son,' and Exodus 12:46, 'Thou shalt not break a bone of him,' are not unclear in their historical context, but they also have a prophetic referent" (481). To support this position, Muller quotes William Whitaker's *Disputation* to the effect that "the Son in the former passage denotes not only the people of Israel, but Christ also; and the bone in the latter, is to be understood of Christ as well as of the paschal lamb" (481). Muller comments on Matthew Poole to the same effect—that "Poole expressly objects to an exclusively prophetic reading of the text on the basis of Matthew 2:15: the text refers both to Israel and to Christ—both are to be given their 'proper share' in the meaning so that 'the letter and the history are verified in both'" (481). Muller concludes from this that "The orthodox exegete, therefore, finds a reading similar to the double-literal sense of Lyra, but argues that it is a single, broad sense—a sense that allows both the immediate sense of the text in its ancient setting and the extended prophetic meaning relative to the fulfillment of God's promises" (481).

In this discussion of typology in the 17th century, there is still room for research on specific areas of interpretation. For example, did the Reformed use the example of the way Scripture interprets itself to interpret other texts not explicitly interpreted in other areas of Scripture? Muller claims that "Other allegories or figures, not indicated directly by the Spirit in another text, such as the use of the story of David and Goliath to indicate Christ's victory over the devil or to point to the war in our members and the need to overcome our passions, these comments Whitaker, are 'true and may be fitly said: but it would be absurd to say that either the one or the other was the sense of the history'" (482).

At least in respect to David being a type of Christ in this battle, did all the Reformed take this view or did Whitaker (in what appears on the surface to be a wholesale lumping of Davidic typology together with allegories about our passions) represent one of several positions among the Reformed? Muller has already mentioned the range of interpretation between Calvin and the Federal school. Does this comment rest somewhere on that trajectory without representing Reformed scholastics as a whole? Do other writers allow for typological interpretation of specific individuals in the Old Testament when the New Testament does not mention them specifically, but only suggests that the category of which they are a part (such as Prophets, Priests, and Kings)

are types of Christ? And do they regard these types (based on categories) as intended by the history rather than as imposed from without?

Now we turn briefly to the question of the modern historical critical method and its relation to the 17th century Reformed Scholastics. In light of the fact that the Cocceians engaged in typological exegesis, it is surprising that Prussner believed they were precursors to modern critical Biblical theology. Nonetheless, Muller clearly refutes this and other arguments found in Hayes and Prussner's book (121-122, 511-514). For instance, the argument that the Reformed scholastics degraded Scripture to a confessional orthodoxy based in atomized proof-texts (512). Interestingly, Muller says elsewhere that it is the "historical-critical approach" that "atomizes the text and segments individual statements of Scripture off from the larger theological concerns generated by the scope of the whole Bible (504)."

Concluding his refutation of Prussner and Hayes, Muller argues against those who try to tie the Reformers to the historical-critical method and contrast them with the Reformed Scholastics of the 17th century. This position wrongly suggests that "the great divide in the history of exegesis and hermeneutics" occurred at the Reformation and the Reformed Scholastics missed it. Instead, this "great divide" occurred in "the eighteenth century, specifically the period from Semler to Gabler." Thus the Reformed Scholastics should not be judged by the criteria of the modern historical critical method. "Before the dawn of this radically historical method, the overriding concerns of the exegete were grammar and theological meaning, not historical context (even when the historical context was noted as an element in the understanding of the text), and the underlying assumption of hermeneutics was the lively address of the inscripturated Word to the present-day life of the church, not the problem of a religious 'truth' lodged in the alien culture and strange thought-forms of long-dead peoples" (513).

Christ the Center of Scripture

What does Dr. Muller suggest the Reformed believed about the centrality of Christ in Scripture? At least one modern Reformed writer has suggested that those who seek Christ as central in all of Scripture are following a central-

dogma theory. However, this is a misapplication of Muller's critique of 19th century central-dogma theories. Muller's second volume is even clearer on this point than his first. "These arguments…point away from the central-dogma theory inasmuch as they manifest Christ and covenant, rather than the eternal decree, as the hermeneutical focus of Reformed orthodox system and the 'basis' of its 'scientific nature, and method in principle of Reformed dogmatics'" (213). Christ as the hermeneutical focus of Scripture does not equal the central-dogma theory. Nothing could be clearer.

Of course, Muller would not say the same thing about the Neo-Orthodox view of Christocentrism. As in volume one, we suspect he implicitly criticizes this system once again (even while commenting on the Lutheran critique of the Reformed). "Thus, the Reformation era Christocentrism that identified Christ as the *scopus Scripturae* never intended that Christ be understood as the interpretative principle in all points of doctrine, the heuristic key to the entire range or extent of doctrinal meaning" (212). Here Muller is not denying the Christocentric nature of redemptive revelation. Instead, he is pointing out the Reformed distinction between the pre-incarnate Son of God and the incarnate Son. The pre-incarnate (not the incarnate) Son was at work in creation. Thus for Calvin, "Creation, providence, the doctrine of human nature and sin, and even the doctrine of the Trinity fall outside the doctrines of redemption governed specifically by the revelation of God in Christ" (211).

Still all doctrine, presumably even the doctrines of creation, providence, fall, and Trinity point to Christ. As Muller states: "Christ does not point out the meaning of all doctrine—instead, all Scripture and all doctrine point toward the person and work of Christ as the core of the Christian message, the central soteriological truth but not the overarching meaning of all Scripture, confession, and system" (212).

In this light, Muller says of Calvin, "Christology does not impinge interpretively on every exegetical issue or point of doctrine" (212). At the same, Dr. Muller suggests differences among the Reformed on exegetical issues related to Christological interpretations of the Old Testament, suggesting that Calvin was restrained in his use of typological interpretation, while the Federal school was more prone to it (222).

In his discussion of the foundation or scope of Scripture (i.e., the center

or bull's eye of its target, 209), Muller gives numerous examples of Reformed theologians who argued that Christ is the center to Scripture. Boquinas wrote a "full system of doctrine organized around the principle of union with Christ" (215). His younger colleagues at Heidelberg, Caspar Olevianus and Zacharias Ursinus, followed a similar perspective. Cocceius developed this view of the *fundamentum Scripturae*, saying that (in the first of two respects) it is "Christ, the one in whom we are joined, in whom we live, and on whom we rest in faith" (218). Other federal theologians like Hermann Witsius argued, "the doctrine of Christ is the key of knowledge (Luke 11:42) without which nothing can be savingly understood in Moses and the prophets" (219).

However, Dr. Muller suggests that as Reformed theology progressed in the 17th to 18th century (with a greater emphasis on *praxis*, 223) the concept of the *fundamentum* or *scopus Scripturae* became less important. The Federal school retained it longer than others. However hermeneutics developed "toward an increasingly literal, textual, and comparative linguistic method that increasingly excluded the allegorical and typological approach not only of the middle ages but also of the early Reformers" (222). This involved a movement away from the claim that the goal of each text is Christ. "In this altered hermeneutical context, it became impossible to claim that the goal or direction of each text was Christ, but quite acceptable to affirm that the goal of Scripture in whole and in part was the redemption of believers" (222-23).

The Reformed and the Amyraldians

There is one more issue that deserves comment. As with his first volume, Dr. Muller claims that 17th century Reformed theologians generally regarded Amyraldians to be Reformed. He implies that some Reformed Confessions (obviously alluding to the Consensus Helveticus) distanced the Reformed from the Amyraldians. However, he suggests that the majority of the Reformed embraced them as members of their camp, while rejecting their errors. Dr. Muller has made this claim elsewhere. However, we find this conclusion questionable. Benjamin Swinburnson has written a fine article questioning this claim. We suggest that the Helvetic Consensus should be seen as the crystallizing of views held by previous Reformed theologians, not an alternative position. Francis Turretin, one of its signers, saw no discrepancy with signing this document and

at the same time (in his *Institutes*) referring to the Amyraldians as "our men." That is, the Amyraldians came out of the Reformed camp historically. And they were closer to the Reformed than the Arminians. Nonetheless, they represented a serious aberration of Reformed theology, one that required the Amyraldians to be bared from teaching in the church—thus the Helvetic Consensus.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dr. Muller's book is well researched and well worth reading. Readers will gain new insights into Medieval, Reformation and Post-Reformation Reformed views on Scripture, on Scripture as the Word of God and the *Principiium Cognoscendi Theologiae*, on Scripture's properties and divinity (with its authority and self-authentication), as well as its interpretation. We have expressed more reservations about Dr. Muller's presentation on the canon, yet scholars researching the subject need to interact with it due to the significance of the work. Unfortunately, Dr. Muller also continues to suggest that Calvin held a looser view of Scripture than his orthodox successors. That said, the book is a wealth of information and will open up new vistas of understanding to its readers, vistas that should spark them to explore in greater depth the riches of the Reformed tradition. We owe Dr. Muller a debt of gratitude for his labors.

—Scott F. Sanborn

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 54-57]

Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament: A Guide to Context and Exegesis*. Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2006. 504 pages. Paper. ISBN: 978-1-932792-40-9. $39.95.

The Department of Religion at Baylor University has been a nursery for structural, rhetorical even narratological studies of the Old and New Testament. Under the direction of Charles Talbert in particular, numerous fertile and suggestive books and articles have issued from Baylor University Press and other publishers. Klauck's volume is a superb example of the strengths

and weaknesses of this contribution. In these pages, we have an up-to-date survey of epistolary rhetoric, advancing the work of J. L. White, G. A. Kennedy (*Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*) and David Aune (*The Westminster Dictionary of New Testament & Early Christian Literature & Rhetoric*[1]) and others. Klauck uses the classic *Light from Ancient Letters* by White and enlarges the discussion with articles and books published to 2005. He gives us a tour not only of types of letters found in the Greco-Roman world (67-182), but of writing materials (i.e., papyrus [cf. his diagram of how this was made, 50]), inks, pens, even 'postal' systems (43-66). While his focus is on the NT epistles, he situates them in the wider context of ancient epistolary practice (see his schematic of letter components, 42). The result is an informative exploration of similarities and differences in the apostolic letters vis-à-vis their contemporaries. We are alerted to the common ground (a "letter") between the letter writing apostles and their contemporaries without forgetting the uniqueness of NT epistles. This latter observation features the distinctive theology (even biblical theology) of the NT letters, a point that is not much emphasized by our author. That is, Klauck does do provide theological insight into the NT epistles.

Klauck alerts (191) us to the so-called 'epistolary *parousia*' or epistolary "presence" which is common to the apostle Paul. The 'presence' of the apostle with his reading audience is a means of identification, i.e., Paul's readers with him and he with his readers. This 'communion of the saints' is anchored in the Christological *parousia* ("presence"), i.e., Christ with us, we with Christ. Which is to note that union and communion of the believer with Christ and Christ with the believer is prominent even in the epistolary style of the apostles, especially Paul. A biblical-theological focus on union with Christ (or union with the *parousia* of Christ) is preeminently Christian and Pauline (not to mention apostolic).

Klauck gives us a brief overview of the content and structure of letters by Epicurus, Cicero, Seneca, Philo, Josephus, Bar Kokhba (149-73, 229-97). This is followed by a précis of all the NT epistles (229-353). Then Klauck gives a detailed rhetorical exposition of 1 and 2 Thessalonians (355-408), 2 Peter (408-19) and two letters embedded in the book of Acts (15:23-29; 23:26-30)

1 Cf. the review by Scott F. Sanborn in *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 20/2 (September 2005): 69-72.

(419-34). (He also provides detailed analysis of 2 and 3 John, 28-41.) Each section of the book contains excellent supplementary bibliographies (there is a comprehensive general bibliography at the beginning of the work, xix-xxviii). And a feature which professors of NT will appreciate—Klauck includes exercises for students in each section *and* an Answer Key for these exercises (445-69). In fine, a remarkable accomplishment.

But Klauck is a member of the critical fundamentalist lobby and that factor skews his approach to the inspired NT text. He falls lock-step into line with the pseudonymous school, which holds that Paul wrote neither Ephesians ("Deutero-Pauline') nor the Pastorals; that Peter did not write 2 Peter; that James did not write his epistle, nor Jude his. All of this is just so much same old same old liberal fundamentalism. We are not surprised, but with such well-informed understanding of pagan epistolary conventions, one would expect an equally discriminating recognition of the uniqueness of the apostolic letters. The problem of overmuch application of non-Christian epistolary technique to Christian (NT) epistles is that it fails to account for the unique difference Christ himself makes to the Christian author and his reading audience (cf. epistolary *parousia* above, for example). Hence, Klauck with his liberal fundamentalist colleagues, is eager to suggest of the NT epistles and their authors what he would never suggest of the pagan (non-Christian) letter writers—fraud and deceit. That is, he routinely endorses pseudonymity and 'deutero'-authorship of Pauline and Catholic Epistles; something he would never suggest for Cicero, Seneca, Philo, Josephus, etc. Why? Why this prejudice against Christian epistolary style? Why is Paul not allowed Ephesians (Eph. 1:1) and the Pastorals (1 Tim. 1:1; 2 Tim. 1:1; Titus 1:1) when he says he writes them, while Seneca (e.g.) is allowed his letters when he says he writes them? Why are some of Seneca's epistles not pseudonymous? Or why do we not search for Deutero-Cicero? If source criticism may be freely applied to the NT epistles, why is it not applied to pagan and non-Christian epistles? Why the 'scholarly' double standard? After all, a uniform 'scientific' method of investigation would apply to all letters, Christian and non-Christian alike. Our point here is the flat-out inconsistency in Klauck and all critical fundies. They do not treat secular, pagan authors the way they treat Christian, biblical authors. And the reason for this is plain: they are unfairly biased against the integrity of Paul and the authors of the Catholic Epistles because of their biased presuppositions which have

been forged in critical fundamentalist lobbies and (un)hallowed halls.

It is time for these progressives to put off their blinders, to break free of their tunnel vision, to through off the shackles of the critical fundamentalist past which enslaves them and use the tools of research in a new and fresh exploration of the unique and distinct features of the ancient letters of the NT.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 57-58]

Ehud Netzer, *The Architecture of Herod the Great Builder*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008. 443pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3612-5. $69.99.

The week after the review copy of this title arrived, the news-wires were abuzz with Netzer's announcement that he had unearthed the tomb of one of Herod's (ten) wives at the Herodium on the West Bank, just outside of Jerusalem. Netzer claimed the remains of the wife, Malthace, were contained in a limestone sarcophagus. The Herodium is the location of one of Herod's numerous palaces and it was here, in 2007, that Netzer located what he has identified as the sarcophagus of Herod himself (cf. pages ix-xiv of this volume). Malthace was Herod's sixth wife, a Samaritan and mother of Archelaus, who became ruler of Judea and Samaria on Herod's death in 4 B.C. (Mt. 2:22). This latest stunning announcement but adds to the remarkable finds recounted and described in this book.

Netzer focuses on 'Herod the Builder' (*not* 'Herod the Butcher'; cf. Mt. 2:16-18, a narrative which receives not even a mention in this very thick and very expensive paperback). Extracting the narrative history of Herod's brutally savvy political career from Josephus, Netzer provides the reader with a thorough biography of his subject (3-16). We learn how he drowned a brother-in-law, Aristobulus (too popular with the masses); murdered one of his wives, Mariamme (obsessed with suspicion about her); even his first-born son, Antipater, was dispatched (political threat). And all the while his hands were covered with blood, he built and built and built: the Temple in Jerusalem, the Herodium, palaces in Masada and Sebaste (Samaria), a hippodrome in Jericho, a port on the Mediterranean (Caesarea Maritima). Ever building, as if to assure

himself of immortality in the face of his base infamy. *Sic semper tyranni!*

The story is all here, in profuse detail, with charts, photographs, maps, schemata, etc., an impressive record of archaeological work surrounding the King of the Jews (37-4 B.C.). Netzer finds his subject "a practical and thorough man" (306)—certainly true with respect to the "slaughter of the innocents" of Bethlehem. This book reminds us of the façade of glory with which brute despots aggrandize to themselves power, wealth and oppression. The "stones cry out", even as they are uncovered once more: here are the remains of a human beast, a monster, a demagogue, a wretch. Netzer's volume cannot sanitize the stench of death which rises from the sarcophagi as well as the bricks and stones laid with the sweat, blood and tears of slave and prison labor.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

[*K:NWTS* 24/1 (May 2009) 58-64]

Willem van't Spijker, *Calvin: A Brief Guide to his Life and Thought.* Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009. 197pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-664-23225-2. $24.95.

Throughout this year of the Calvin Quincentenary (1509-2009), we will encounter a spate of conferences, studies, articles, books, DVDs, even *bon-bon au chocolat Suisse Calviniste*—the later with 'soft' centers, as opposed to 'hard' Calvinism! Spijker's book is an early as well as worthy representative of this flurry. We are also anticipating the release of the new biography by Herman Selderhuis (*John Calvin—a Pilgrim's Life*) by IVP. In the meantime, the reader seeking a competent, informed and balanced 'brief guide' to Calvin may confidently curl up with this very fine work. Spijker devotes the bulk of his pages to Calvin's biography (1-126), which he follows with shorter chapters on his theology (127-47) and his impact (148-71). The bibliographies contain scholarly materials to about 2000 because our translator (Lyle Bierma) has used an unpublished ms. by Spijker and a 2001 German edition of this work. Hence, where the bibliography contains materials beyond 2001, they have been included by Paul Fields, formatter of the bibliographies (and compiler of the exhaustive annual Calvin bibliography which appears in the *Calvin*

Theological Journal).

Spijker does not interact with the finest biography of Calvin to date—Bernard Cottret's *Calvin: A Biography*. Published in France in 1998, the English translation was released by Wm. B. Eerdmans in 2000. While Cottret uses shocking, obscene (even lewd) language (*caveat lector!*)[1], his research is thorough and his writing style engaging. He far surpasses Parker, McGrath, Bousma and others in penetration (in this reviewer's opinion). I must not fail to commend the superb biographical summary (not to mention the virtually unsurpassed survey of Calvin's written corpus) in Wulfert de Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin: An Introductory Guide* (1993/expanded edition 2008).

Spijker organizes Calvin's thought around union with Christ. This will be of interest in the midst of the contentious spirit between Westminster East (Philadelphia) and Westminster West (Escondido). Leaving these institutions to their internal debate, we observe Spijker rightly drawing Calvin's doctrine of predestination and election from union with Christ; rightly drawing Calvin's doctrine of justification by faith alone from union with Christ; rightly drawing Calvin's doctrine of the church (calling, regeneration, conversion, profession of faith, participation in the sacraments) from union with Christ. What is obvious to Spijker as he reads Calvin, as to anyone who can read the plain English of the 1559 edition of Calvin's *Institutes*—that is, anyone who is not trying to force John Calvin to look like a 16th century pre-incarnate appearance of the late Meredith G. Kline and other Lutheran and Amyraldian pan-confessionalists, i.e., those who read Calvin with an agenda; a presuppositional agenda; an agenda which such persons bring to Calvin via Kline (e.g., Mark Karlberg, John Fesko), especially on the covenants; an agenda which thumbs its nose at the plain sense of the primary documents—what is obvious to numerous others who read Calvin as they read Biblical and New Testament doctrine (especially that of the apostle Paul) is the demonstrative and all pervasive evidence of union with Christ. Paul's favorite expression is "in Christ": sounds like "union with Christ" language is the inspired apostle's inspired language (at least, to anyone who has passed the course in Theology for Beginners).

1 Eerdmans may be properly scored for printing these offensive expressions. No Christian publisher should have allowed these without red-lining them. Cottret's points are as easily made with less perverse expressions. The modern demand for the 'realistic' and 'authentic' is simply one more expression of depraved man's unbridled lust for license. Publishers as well seem unable to resist the temptation to descend into the gutter. For shame!!

Spijker is even apparently convinced that Calvin believed in the inerrancy of the Bible (133). How this line got past the red pencil of Donald McKim, Executive Editor for Theology and Reference at Westminster John Knox Press (ix) remains a mystery. After all, golden boy McKim made his entry into the pantheon of 20th century theologians by denying that John Calvin ever believed in inerrancy. Along with his cohort, Jack Rogers (former Moderator of the mainline liberal PC[USA]), McKim burst upon the world like a veritable epiphany in 1979 (*The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible: An Historical Approach*). Having greased the skids of the media and religious press (Rogers had already played Benedict Arnold to his former mentor, John Gerstner), these two took the proverbial ride to fame and fortune. Rogers and McKim informed us that no one in the history of the church had believed in the inerrancy of the Bible until the benighted Francis Turretin (17th century) and his followers at old Princeton Theological Seminary (19th century) foisted the theory ("an approach almost the exact opposite of Calvin's"[2]) upon an equally benighted American culture. If ever two opportunists caught the 'times a changing' 'blowin' in the wind' of the heady leftwing evangelicalism of the 1970s, it was these two who cruised like they had Hollywood agents. And what a ride—all the way to the top of the 'In Club' of the trendy and affluent UPCUSA, aka PC(USA).

Spijker uses a pregnant expression to make an incisive point about Calvin: *doctrina caelestis* ("heavenly doctrine", 133). Once again, the term occurs in Spijker's discussion of Calvin's doctrine of Scripture. The Scriptures convey/relay "heavenly doctrine". That is, for Calvin the words of Scripture are the words of God from heaven. From his heavenly throne, God speaks his words (the revelation in the Bible) into history. Heaven's truths (as God's truths) come

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2 *The Authority and Interpretation of the Bible*, xvii. John Woodbridge provided the devastating response to this flawed and biased trumpery in *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (1982). Richard Muller, premier expert on 16th and 17th century primary documents, embarrasses Rogers and McKim with, among other trenchant observations, the following. "Luther, equally clearly ["like Calvin, Bullinger, and later orthodox thinkers, both Lutheran and Reformed"], can speak of the Scripture as free from error" (66); "To claim that Calvin did not hold 'any doctrine of exact verbal inspiration' is to ignore the plain sense of the words" (237)—*Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: Volume Two, Holy Scripture, The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* (2nd edition, 2003). Calvin frequently labels the Word of God, the doctrine of God, the Ten Commandments, our "infallible rule (*reigle infallible*)" (cf. *The Sermons of John Calvin on Deuteronomy* (1583/1987) 530, 680, 732, 816; also "Sermons on the Harmony of the Gospels" CO 24:374). An infallible Word of God is "incapable of erring" (OED); it cannot err. More than the fact that it truly "does not err" (OED *sub* inerrant), it is impossible that it can err. "God cannot lie;" the stronger term in this discussion is "infallible".

upon man's consciousness, come into man's hearing, enter into man's heart as the Word of God in heaven. In other words, Calvin's "heavenly doctrine" aspect of Scripture is equivalent to an eschatological orientation and organization of revelation. If Scripture is heavenly (eschatological) doctrine, it is because it comes down from and is reflected/oriented up to heaven's own teaching source. Hence, an eschatological vector in Scriptural revelation is a given for Calvin. The eschatological orientation of all of Scripture ("every Scripture is God-breathed"—2 Tim. 3:16) is given with the nature of God giving revelation itself. To read the Scriptures as un-eschatological (un-heavenly) is as foreign to Calvin as it is to the recipients of revelation from Genesis to Revelation.

Here are a few sober reminders salient to the present theological debates which roil Reformed constituencies. Calvin teaches (as does Scripture) that the covenant is substantially one—a covenant of grace (134). Advocates who phantasize a Sinaitic works covenant will find no ally in Calvin or his primary documents.[3] The justification of sinners is via the imputation of

3 "[I]t is written, he that does these things shall live in them (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5). Now then (says Saint Paul) let every man look into himself and examine his whole life: is there any man that is able to vaunt that he has fulfilled God's law? No, we are all disobedient. Seeing the case stands so, there is no more life in the law: but we must rather flee to the free forgiveness of sins and especially beseech God to give us power to do that which we cannot. And so whereas the Papists do make themselves drunken with their devilish imaginations of meritorious works and such other like things: let us understand that after our Lord has allured us by gentleness, he adds a second grace: which is, that albeit we are not able to perform his commandments thoroughly in all respects, yet he bears with us as a father bears with his children, and imputes not our sins unto us…," John Calvin, "Sermon 19 (Dt. 4:1-2)," *The Sermons of John Calvin on Deuteronomy* (1583/1987) 112-13.

This is, of course, pure Augustinianism: sinful man has no more ability to perform the demands of the law than he does to "repent and believe the gospel". Ability does not correspond with demand. All Pauline, Augustinian, Calvinistic anthropology and psychology has emphatically underscored the proposition that obligation (demand) does not imply ability, i.e., "ought does NOT imply can". Though a sinner ought to repent and believe the gospel, he is unable to do so. That ability requires an act of God in his corrupt heart. Though a sinner ought to perform the law and thus live, he is unable to do so. That ability requires an act of God in his corrupt heart. God who makes the demand must perform the demand he makes. Hence any suggestion that Israel at Sinai is able to perform the law and live, as if they had plenary ability to do so and gain real, actual even typological merit thereby, is semi-Pelagian Roman Catholicism at best and crass Pelagianism at worst. It is not historic Pauline, Augustinian, Calvinistic orthodoxy. It is, in fact however unwittingly, a blatant rejection of the Protestant Reformation.

Notice how Calvin himself expresses just what I have said above. "True it is that here Moses exhorts the Jews to circumcise their hearts: but yet we shall see hereafter, how he will say, the Lord our God will circumcise your hearts (Dt. 30:6), it may well seem at the first sight that these two things stand not well together, but that there is some contrariety in them: and yet they agree both together very well. For (as I have touched before) it is our duty to be circumcised; that is to

Christ's righteousness (138). Advocates of imputed righteousness as reduced to forgiveness of sins alone need to be reminded of Calvin's comments.[4] As

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say, to cut off all that is of our own nature, and to rid it quite away that God may reign in us. But do we discharge ourselves thereof? No: but God must be fain to supply our want. And therefore it is he that circumcises us. Why then does he command us to do it, seeing we have neither power nor ability to do it? It is to the end that we should be sorry at the sight of our own wretchedness, and that seeing we fail and are so blameworthy, we should on the other side resort unto our God condemning ourselves, and on the other side be encouraged to desire him to do that which we ourselves cannot. . . But yet by the way we must understand that this serves not to magnify our own free will as the Papists have imagined. We have shown already that we are so little able by nature to come unto God that we draw clean back from him. Nevertheless to the intent to show us plainly what out duty is, he says unto us, do it: and although we are not able to set hand to the work, no, not to put forth a finger towards it; yet does he command us to do our duty, notwithstanding that we are utterly unable by any means to perform it. And that is to the end that we seeing our default, should be the more ashamed of it, and humble ourselves before God, and again that we should be provoked to pray him to work in us, seeing it is he that does all in us, notwithstanding that it is his will that we should be instruments of the power of his Holy Spirit. For as he is so gracious unto us as to impute his own doings unto us and to make us partakers of them: so also it is his will that we should acknowledge and take them for our own" ("Sermon 72 (Dt. 10:15-17)," *The Sermons of John Calvin on Deuteronomy* (1583/1987) 441-42.

Calvin comments on the one "inviolable", "perpetual" covenant of grace, which is the same with Israel at Sinai as with Abraham at Hebron: "Now, as to the *new* covenant, it is not so called, because it is contrary to the first covenant; for God is never inconsistent with himself, nor is he unlike himself; he then who once made a covenant with his chosen people, had not changed his purpose, as though he had forgotten his faithfulness. It then follows, that the first covenant was inviolable; besides, he had already made his covenant with Abraham, and the Law was a confirmation of that covenant. As then the Law depended on that covenant which God made with his servant Abraham, it follows that God could never have made a new, that is, a contrary or a different covenant. For whence do we derive our hope of salvation, except from that blessed seed promised to Abraham? Further, why are we called the children of Abraham, except on account of the common bond of faith? Why are the faithful said to be gathered into the bosom of Abraham? Why does Christ say, that some will come from the east and the west, and sit down in the kingdom of heaven with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (Luke 16:22; Matthew 8:11) These things no doubt sufficiently show that God has never made any other covenant than that which he made formerly with Abraham, and at length confirmed by the hand of Moses. This subject might be more fully handled; but it is enough briefly to show, that the covenant which God made at first is perpetual" (Calvin, *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Lamentations* (1950) 4:126-27 on Jer. 31:31-32. For more primary documents from the 16th and 17th centuries affirming that the Sinai covenant is a covenant of grace, not a covenant of works, see http://sites.google.com/site/themosaiccovenant/Home.

4 "Now then, let us learn that whereas the keeping of the law might be imputed to us for righteousness, if it could be found in us: we are utterly deprived and bereft thereof. . . Therefore when we have acknowledged ourselves to be utterly forlorn and damned in our own nature, and thereupon repair to our Lord Jesus Christ, suing to be partakers of his righteousness, and to be justified by virtue of the obedience which he yields to God his Father: then God not only receives us to mercy, and covers us with the perfection that is in our Lord Jesus Christ, as with a cloak, to the intent that we should obtain salvation . . .," "Sermon 50 (Dt. 6:20-25)," ibid., 301.

"Then are we all disappointed of righteousness, so as we cannot in any wise stand in God's

Spijker observes, Calvin is "salvation-historical" (134) vis-à-vis justification, i.e., life, death, and resurrection in history are required for *iustificatio coram Deo*. Spijker also argues that Calvin knows nothing of a Lutheran doctrine of two kingdoms. Rather, for Calvin, we are part of a "twofold kingdom under one Lord" (81, 143).

I have a few quibbles. Spijker's treatment of Calvin's marriage to Idelette de Bure is a perfunctory single paragraph. Yes, this is a "brief" survey, but Calvin's estimate of "his dearest life companion" needs some enriching from, e.g., his treatment of Ephesians 5:22-33 (cf. his *Sermons on Ephesians*).

Spijker uses quotations from CO (*Ioannis Calvini opera quae supersunt omnia*; Corpus Reformatorum, vols. 29-87). Kudos! But these citations are not translated from the Latin or French. Boo! Yes, this is an 'academic' work, but for "beginning students" (blurb)—especially general lay readers—it would have been very helpful (and would not have expanded the book greatly!) if the publisher had included full English translations of the quotes. As it stands, these 'foreign language' remarks will "put off" the uninitiated reader. Sadly, this bias against the well-read lay audience will reduce the book's otherwise broader appeal. To the lay readers of this journal, I plead: "Do not be intimidated by the footnotes!!" Read the text and benefit from Spijker's work, in spite of the publisher's thumbing his nose at your inexperience.

There is no treatment of Calvin's doctrine of personal eschatology (cf. *Institutes*, III.ix and xxv): separation of the soul from the body at death (in spite of Spijker's mention of Calvin's first theological work, *Psychopannychia* [1534, though not published until 1542]); intermediate state (i.e., between the death of the body and the resurrection of the body); resurrection of the dead; Heaven and Hell (i.e., eternal life and eternal torment). These important points are treated in all of Calvin's catechisms (1537, 1538, 1541, 1545) as foundational to Christian hope.

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favor. But yet are we righteous in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. And why? For he being the sovereign king in whom there was no bondage nor subjection, did willingly submit himself to the law, and bear the yoke thereof for us: for we know that he performed the will of God his Father in all points to the full. And so by that means we are taken for righteous in Jesus Christ. Why so? Because he was obedient. Yea and that obedience of his was not for himself; there was no subjection in him, neither was he bound to anything: for he is altogether above the law: therefore it follows that he was obedient for us . . . and all is applied unto us by the virtue of faith," "Sermon 124 (Dt. 21:22-23)," ibid., 763.

There is very little treatment of Calvin's sermons or his preaching. This oversight is glaring. Calvin preached more than 2040 sermons, of which about 680 survive (irresponsibly, in the early 19th century, hundreds were sold in order to gain shelf-space in *la Bibliothéque de Genève*). The remnant are the object of continuing editorial and scholarly attention (Supplementa Calviniana). Several good books have been written on the topic (T. H. L. Parker, *Calvin's Preaching*; E. A. de Boer, *John Calvin on the Vision of Ezekiel*; cf. de Boer's superb introduction to his critical edition of *Sermons sur le Livre des Revelations du prophete Ezechiel Chapitres 36-48*, Supplementa Calviniana, vol. X/3). Spijker needs to tell us more about this major aspect of Calvin's life and theology than the seven lines on pp. 148-49.

The date for William Farel's *Sommaire* is given as 1515 (38); in fact, the alleged 1525 version is a misprint and appears never to have existed; cf. the discussion and English translation of Farel's "Summary" in James T. Dennison, Jr., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: Volume 1: 1523-1552*, 51-111).

The Latin phrase *censura morum* is translated (70, 108) "mutual censure". The lexicons do not allow "mutual" for a definition of *morum*; "customs", "manners", "morals" or "behavior" would be more accurate. If "mutual" is intended, the preferred term would be *mutuus* or *alternus*.

Spijker states that Giorgio Biandrata "stirred up some unrest" (115). This is a vast understatement. Biandrata was a notorious Arian heretic who disrupted the Reformed churches of Poland, Hungary and Transylvania with his anti-Trinitarian fulminations after mid-century of the 1500s.

Quibbles aside, this is a successful overview of Calvin's career and theology. In this "Calvin Year", it should refresh and stimulate those interested in the remarkable Geneva Reformer.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.