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

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A Mini-Markan Sandwich: Simon of Cyrene Pressed Between Jesus and His Cross

Mark 15:20-22

James T. Dennison, Jr.

The Kidron Valley lies on the east side of Jerusalem and divides the city of David proper from the Mount of Olives. You may recall that it was across this valley that Jesus walked on the night in which he was betrayed by one of his disciples (John 18:1). In 1941, while excavating an ancient cemetery in the Kidron Valley, archaeologists unearthed an ossuary with an intriguing inscription etched into it. An ossuary is a clay or limestone box or chest used for holding the bones of the dead. On this particular ossuary were written the words: "Alexander, son of Simon." You will notice from out text that Simon of Cyrene had a son named Alexander. Is the ossuary, discovered in 1941, the bone-box of the bother of Rufus and the son of the man press-ganged into carrying Jesus' cross? Is it? Perhaps; perhaps not.

Cyrene or Cyrenaica was a country located in North Africa, next door to Egypt on the west. We call it Libya today. More than three hundred years before Christ, the Egyptians under their King, Ptolemy I, had captured and relocated some Jews from Palestine to Cyrene. These Jews became part of a flourishing North African Jewish community—the most famous center of which was in Alexandria. Later, some of the Jews of Cyrene returned to Jerusalem where they established a synagogue in connection with other North Africans

from Alexandria and Asians from Cilicia and Asia Minor. You will find this story in Acts 6:9. It is possible that the Jews from Cyrene who were present at Pentecost (Acts 2:10)—an occasion on which they heard Peter's powerful sermon in which three thousand souls were converted—it is possible that the Jews from Cyrene at Pentecost were guests of the Cyrenaican synagogue in Jerusalem. And perhaps some of those Cyrenaican Jews were converted as well by Peter's sermon, because we read in Acts 11:20 and Acts 13:1 that men of Cyrene came to Antioch where they preached the Lord Jesus to the Jews.

Simon—In and Out

Simon of Cyrene is described in Mark 15:21 as coming in from the country or from the field (as some versions put it). That Simon worked fields outside of Jerusalem suggests that he was a native of Cyrene, who, with other Jews from that North African locale, had migrated to Palestine. He was undoubtedly part of that synagogue in Jerusalem which included African and Asian Jews. Of the gospel writers, Mark alone tells us about his sons, Alexander and Rufus. That the evangelist names the boys is significant—especially when he names very few of the minor characters in his gospel. (You may recall the woman with the alabaster vial in the previous chapter—the unnamed woman of Mark 14. She remains anonymous, though she acts magnanimously and affectionately.[1]) These two boys are known to us by name, though we know nothing more than their names. No; that is not quite accurate. Alexander and Rufus are known to Mark's audience—to his readers. How do I know that? Well, Mark mentions them, albeit parenthetically, by name because the names Alexander and Rufus, sons of Simon of Cyrene—these men of this family would be recognized by Mark's readers as Christians—followers of the crucified Savior. Mark is writing to his readers; "You know Alexander and Rufus; you know these men. They are sons of Simon who carried the cross of our Lord—carried that cross to Golgotha where our Savior was put to death." And in his characteristically abbreviated, yet open-ended manner, Mark is suggesting the rest of the story in the mere mention of the appellations. Alexander, Rufus, Simon: you know all three as followers of Jesus, the Christ, the Son of God.

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1 Cf. James T. Dennison, Jr., "The Unnamed Woman and Jesus." *Kerux: The Journal of Biblical-Theological Preaching* 10/2 (September 1995): 41-47. Also available at kerux.com.

Is it for this reason that Luke also tells us that Simon followed behind Jesus on his way to Calvary? "And. . . they laid hold of Simon . . . and placed on him the cross to carry behind Jesus" (Luke 23:26). Is Luke foreshadowing what Simon would become? a believer, following behind his dying Lord?

Simon joins Jesus, the Roman soldiers and the jeering crowds on a journey out of the city. Simon, coming into the city from his fields, is compelled to do an about face and travel outside the city. Only a few days before, Jesus was coming into the city—coming to Jerusalem and the crowds cheered his advent with branches—branches cut from the fields (Mark 11:8). The fields supply the banner "Hosanna, Hosanna. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord." Now the fields provide the bearer of the crossbeam to the accompaniment, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Jesus expelled from the city; Simon compelled to go outside the gate with him. The clash of directional vectors is not only hauntingly ironic—the clash of vectors is theologically poignant. Who walks the way Jesus walks? Simon of Cyrene. Who treads the path Jesus treads? Simon of Cyrene. Who turns his back—who, with Jesus turns his back on Jerusalem? Simon of Cyrene. Who bears the cross Jesus bears? Simon of Cyrene.

Jesus—In and Out

Jesus, who had freely come into the city, now compelled to go out. And that duplicated in Simon—freely coming into the city, now compelled to go out following Jesus. The intersection of these lives—Jesus' and Simon's—the intersection of these lives is bound together, intimately woven together, interfaced and mirrored, bracketed together. Yes, Jesus and Simon, bracketed together. It is there in the text—the pronominal brackets—the pronouns which surround, enclose, fold in Simon of Cyrene. The third person singular pronoun "him" in verse 20; and again in verse 22, "him". It is Jesus—unnamed here!—it is Jesus who brackets Simon—Simon, the one named here. Mark puts Simon's name between the anonymous Jesus. Simon surrounded by him; Simon enclosed by him; Simon enveloped by him whom they intend to crucify—him whom they plan to nail up on the Place of the Skull. Simon sandwiched between an about-to-die Jesus. Even as Jesus will be sandwiched between two about-to-die criminals. How Mark's spotlight shifts from Simon to Jesus, from Jesus to Simon—ever so briefly the one mirrored in the other.

Simon Framed in the Picture

But you will notice, it is not only the third person personal pronoun referring to Jesus which frames Simon's story here in Mark's gospel: it is also the cross. Mark places two purpose clauses around the presentation of Simon of Cyrene. At the end of verse 20, they led him out "for the purpose of", "in order to" crucify him. At the end of verse 21, they seized Simon "in order that", "for the purpose of" bearing Jesus' cross. Do you see it? Simon is not only bracketed by the person of Christ (Jesus enfolds him); Simon is also bracketed by the cross of Christ (the death of Jesus enfolds him). Simon of Cyrene is placed by Mark at the center of a twofold, duplicate inclusio—the person of Christ and the cross of Christ. Something marvelously significant is occurring here! Mark's tiny sandwich here in 15:20-22 is a tiny cameo of his entire gospel—this gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mark 1:1). Are we to see here in Mark 15:21 a brief interlude with a man from far off Africa folded into the life and death of Jesus of Nazareth? Surely there is more here than that! Are we to read over this verse, jot down in our memories that Jesus collapsed on his way to Calvary and that Simon was pressed into carrying the crossbar on which Jesus would be nailed—a curious fact? Surely there is more here than that! Are we to log Mark 15:21 away in our memory so that we can retrieve it for a Bible Trivia game? Surely there is more here than that!

Yes, there is much more in the brief appearance of Simon—much more! Simon's story is a tiny cameo of your story—each one of you who has been encircled by Jesus—each one of you who has taken up his cross.

Simon as Disciple

At the virtual center point of this gospel is Jesus' statement in Mark 8:34, "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." Now that statement of our Lord is a cameo summary of discipleship—what it means to follow Jesus. Becoming a disciple, being a disciple of Jesus means coming behind him, denying yourself, taking up the cross and following him. And what do we find in the case of Simon of Cyrene? He comes behind Jesus, denies himself (albeit initially by force), takes up the

cross and follows after Jesus. When all the disciples of Jesus have forsaken, denied and abandoned him, Simon, from outside the band of disciples—Simon acts like a disciple! In the most unexpected way, an outsider to the person and the cross of Jesus—a non-disciple—an outsider takes on the role of a disciple—takes on the role of an insider, following the bringer of the kingdom of heaven. In Mark 15:21, an outsider assumes the role of a disciple—an insider—he is pressed down into being enveloped by Jesus, taking up his cross and following the dying Savior.

Insiders, Outsiders

This is no mere fortuitous and coincidental story. In a gospel full of the transition which takes place when outsiders become insiders by the power of heaven's kingdom—in a gospel where lepers (outsiders) are healed and sent to the temple (to become insiders); in a gospel where a woman with a twelve-year hemorrhage (outsider) touches Jesus' robe and miraculously becomes an insider ("daughter, go in peace"); in a gospel where a naked demon-possessed man (outsider) sits at the feet of Jesus, clothed in his right mind (an insider); in a gospel where a Syro-Phoenician mother (outsider) is content with crumbs thrown to the dogs at the table of the kingdom (an insider)—in such a wonderful gospel of the transition Jesus brings with the coming of the kingdom of heaven (those outside the kingdom are brought into the kingdom by the love, grace and power of Christ Jesus)—in such a wonderful gospel, are we surprised at the presence of an outsider—at the presence of Simon of Cyrene—on the Via Dolorossa? Are we surprised that Simon is portrayed as a cameo disciple following Jesus by taking up his cross? No! we are not surprised because that is exactly why Mark has included Simon's cross-bearing story in his gospel. Simon is the definitive example of a disciple at the definitive crux of Mark's story of Jesus. He does what a true disciple does: he comes after Jesus, denies himself, takes up his cross and follows the crucified one. The cameo of Simon is the cameo of a disciple in a gospel about discipleship.

But there is more to discipleship in Mark's gospel than following Jesus. Yes, discipleship is following Jesus, but it is more than that. The transition of being pressed down into following Jesus includes being conformed to his death and resurrection. In that same 8th chapter of Mark, verse 35, Jesus says,

"whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." Losing one's life for Christ's sake is death. It is death to self; it is death to pride; it is death to the ego; it is death to the guru mentality; it is death to the control-freak attitude; it is death to the power-broker agenda; it is death to the "if you don't preach by my canons, you have denied the heart of the gospel." Losing one's life for Christ's sake is death, suffering, agony, crucifixion, ridicule, mockery, ostracism, being taken outside the gate. Christ is saying: "being my disciple means jeers and sneers and hatred; means suffering—agonizing, excruciating, heart-breaking suffering." Christ is saying, being my disciple is being pressed down into participation with my death. Union and identification; participation and conformity to death on the cross—that is what being my disciple means. It means you must let go—let go of life—lose your life; it means you must let go of it—allow it to be crucified; let it die so that from the tomb of your dead life may arise life from the dead. The transition in genuine discipleship is the transition from death—death on the cross—to life—life from the dead. "Whosoever will lose his life for my sake . . . will save it." Save it? How? by resurrection from the dead! The life of a disciple is pressed down into, united to, identified with, participates in the death of Christ; and the life of a disciple is pressed down into, united to, identified with, participates in the resurrection of Christ unto new life. Discipleship begins in death and resurrection—crucifixion with Christ, resurrection with Christ. Discipleship continues with death and resurrection—crucifixion with Christ daily, resurrection with Christ daily. Discipleship consummates with death and resurrection—death unto reception by the Lamb that was slain and resurrection from the dead (at last) when we shall live body and soul before the face of Jesus in heaven for ever and ever.

Jesus as Disciple

But what about Simon of Cyrene? He is not crucified to death and raised up from the dead. He only appears in this tiny cameo of one verse in a gospel of over six hundred verses. Where is discipleship as death and resurrection in the case of Simon of Cyrene? The answer to that question is in the masterful inspiration of the Holy Spirit working upon the mind and pen of Mark. It is the mission of Christ in Marks' gospel "to give his life a ransom for many"

(Mark 10:45). He will ransom them by taking their place—substituting himself on their behalf—vicariously identifying with them. So if death is their lot, he too must die. If suffering is their lot, he too must suffer. If being treated as an outsider is their lot, he too must be treated as an outsider. The Substitute must take the place of the guilty, the condemned, the ones worthy of death—those whom he has enveloped in himself.

And so he begins his trek in participation with them: his trek to death, he begins by denying himself, taking up his cross, following to the place of execution. In Mark 15:20, the Master becomes the disciple; the teacher becomes the follower; the one who makes the condition performs the condition. Jesus becomes what he requires—he becomes the incarnate disciple. Jesus in Mark 15 becomes the eschatological disciple.

But as he goes—as the eschatological disciple goes the way of self-denial, shouldering his cross—as he goes, he draws another into his story—draws him into the drama he himself experiences. The eschatological disciple mirrors himself in the semi-eschatological disciple. Do you see it? Simon becomes a substitute; Simon of Cyrene becomes a substitute for the Substitute. Simon is folded down into, united to the story of the eschatological disciple; and in that union begins to participate in self-denial, cross-bearing, following after Jesus, death and resurrection. In the gracious plan of God, Simon of Cyrene becomes identified with the eschatological disciple; and his former Jewish life dies even as his new life as a Christian rises from the dead.

Jesus, you see, has laid hold of Simon. Without ever touching him, Jesus has drawn Simon's story—Simon's life—into ineffable union with his story—his life. Jesus is saying to Simon, "Simon, today you are learning about death and life. Simon, today you are learning about substitutionary, yea vicarious, death and life. Simon, today you are learning about me—experiencing following me. Simon, it is about dying and rising again. Simon, you are now presently substituting for me, taking up my cross, denying yourself as I too have taken up my cross, denying myself. Simon, you are going for me, carrying my death, carrying my cross to Calvary. Simon, you are being pressed down, molded into, substituting for me."

"But Simon, you and I will reach a place where only I can substitute for you. Simon, we will reach a place on that hill called 'The Place of the Skull'—

we will reach a place where I must take your place. And in that place, I will die for you. In that place, I will lay down my life a ransom for you. Simon, you must join me in taking up the cross, but Simon only I can hang there in your place so as to save your life. And dear Simon, as you see me hang there upon that tree, you will see yourself die the death. And Simon, in that hour, you will know that your former life has died when I breathe out my last. And dear Simon, you will also see yourself raised up from the dead on that third day when I rise again. Simon, I will live—I will live again. And Simon, you too will live. In me, you will be raised up to newness of life with me. Simon, our lives—your life, my life—are indelibly mirrored. You are reflected in me, Simon; I am mirrored in you."

The Believer Sandwiched

Reader, I leave you at the point of transition—enclosed, bracketed, enveloped by Jesus and his cross. I leave you stooping with Simon of Cyrene, denying yourself, shouldering the cross and following Jesus to Calvary—to Calvary and beyond—to the garden of the resurrection. I leave you with Simon of Cyrene and participation—participation in the kingdom of heaven. I leave you mirrored in the eschatological disciple, Jesus Christ, who died for you and was raised again from the dead for you, that you might be his semi-eschatological disciple.

Enveloped by the person of Christ, arrogance—puffed-up, egocentric arrogance is crucified, so that humility, bowed-down, lowly humility may be raised up.

Sandwiched by the cross of Christ, factious, party-spirit divisiveness is crucified, so that union—sweet union and communion of the saints may be raised up.

Enfolded by Christ and his cross, vicious, biting name-calling is crucified, so that dear brothers and sisters (however imperfect) may be loved as Jesus loved them—loved as followers of the Savior.

Cocooned by Jesus' death and resurrection, abuse—verbal, emotional, even physical abuse is crucified, so that the lambs of Jesus—Jesus' weak and

helpless lambs may be raised up and carried on the shoulders of the Good Shepherd.

Enfolded by Christ and his cross, measuring faithfulness to the gospel by yourself is crucified, so that the Word of God may be raised up.

Surrounded by the cross of Christ, false, simpering piety which veils a ruthless, reckless and brutal disregard for weak and tender consciences—false simpering, veiled-fisted piety is crucified, so that genuine devotion without deceit and pretense may be raised up.

Encircled by the person of Christ, stubborn attachment to men and man's fallible agendas, systems and typological paradigms is crucified so that Christ—Christ—may be set forth to the eyes of faith.

I leave you sandwiched by the true and final disciple, so that you may fall down before him at the foot of the cross. Even as you embrace his nail-scarred hands and his wounded side. Even as you do what Jesus' disciple, Simon of Cyrene, did.

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Calvin on Christian Pilgrims

Here follows the thing that was treated [before], namely the [Israelites] eating of the Paschal lamb with their staves in their hands, their shoes on their feet and their loins girded up (Ex. 12:11). For we cannot have the company of Jesus Christ unless we are as wayfarers in this world, to go on forward to seek our inheritance elsewhere (2 Cor. 5:6, 8). And St. Paul, in the epistle to the Colossians (3:3) says plainly that our life is hidden with Christ, and that we must be as dead men, if we will be united to the Son of God. And why? For he is in heaven, and therefore it follows that our life ought not to be tied here to the earth. What is to be done then? If we will have Jesus Christ to avow us to be members of his body and to quicken us by his Spirit, we must get us out of the world (not that we should not dwell in it, but that we should not be wedded to it)…. God's children should be conversant in this earthly life and yet nevertheless be heirs and citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Accordingly, as the apostle says to the Hebrews (11:16) that God can well find in his heart to take us for his children, if we are not tied to this world, but pass on beyond it. Wherefore let us mark that to have fellowship with our Lord Jesus Christ, we must depart out of this world: that is to say, our earthly affections must not reign in us… we must not be snarled here, but we must consider that seeing God has set us here to make a journey, yea and a short journey, every one of us ought to hasten himself a pace and to look well to the ridding ourselves of the things that may hinder us from attaining to the heavenly life. And we must understand that if we do so, Jesus Christ will come unto us and reach his hand to strengthen us (John Calvin, "Sermon 98 on Deuteronomy," *Sermons of M. John Calvin upon the Fifth Book of Moses Called Deuteronomie* [1583/1987] 604. Spelling and grammar has been modernized).

[*K:NWTS* 24/2 (Sep 2009) 13-39]

Paul and Semi-Eschatological Justification: With a Critique of N.T. Wright[1]

Scott F. Sanborn

In what follows, I wish to examine Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification. To put it another way, we will consider justification as it has already come to the church in Christ's death and resurrection. The church's possession of semi-eschatological justification (as her possession of all God's semi-eschatological benefits) arises from her union with Christ, as he now possesses all the eschatological benefits of his completed work. Further, as a semi-eschatological act, it is an intrusion of God's final eschatological declaration to the cosmos that his people are justified in him. Therefore, semi-eschatological justification possesses the finality of all God's eschatological acts in Christ.

As we consider Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification, we will suggest that it brings something new to the people of God in this semi-eschatological period (i.e., the period between Christ's resurrection and the final resurrection of the dead). This is not to deny the unity of justification, given equally to both Old and New Testament saints. For this unity of justification is taught by Paul in Romans 4 with reference to David. Both David and Paul were equally justified by grace alone through faith alone with respect to the essential nature of the covenant of grace, of which both the old and new covenants are administrations.

1 This article is a revision of an address given at the 2005 Kerux Conference, entitled "Paul and Eschatological Justification with a Critique of Dunn and Wright."

At the same time, this article will argue that Paul's application of the term *justification* involves something new when applied to new covenant Christians. This newness is *not* found in the *essential* nature of the new covenant (which is identical to the old), but in its *formal* aspect,[2] its unique administration. This formal newness is connected to the heightened semi-eschatological nature of the present time; hence the designation semi-eschatological justification.

We will then use our insight into the nature of this newness (which itself involves forensic imputation) to argue that the essential nature of justification[3] (which it mirrors) must also have the character of forensic imputation. It will be our contention that Paul's semi-eschatological teaching of justification enriches and supports the Reformation's doctrine of justification. In this way, we will argue against N.T. Wright, who denies that justification essentially involves the forensic imputation of the righteousness of Christ to believers. We will begin by looking at N.T. Wright's position so that the state of the question (and contrast) between him and the Reformation on justification is made clear.

The primary difference between Wright and the Reformation is that Wright does not believe that justification involves the imputation of Christ's active obedience to Christians. Involved in this, Wright does not believe that justification is part of the *ordo salutis*. That is, he does not believe that justification is an aspect of what happens when we are savingly united to Jesus Christ. He simply relates it to the *historia salutis*.

According to Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and the other Reformers, Christ actively obeyed the law on our behalf. His obedience was perfect, and that obedience is declared to be ours through faith in Christ. Thus Christ did more than simply take our punishment as a passive victim. He actively obeyed the law, and his active obedience to the law involved him in actively laying down his life unto death. In this active obedience, Christ earned eternal life for us. This

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2 My thanks to the editor of this journal who, after I delivered this address, suggested the term "formal" instead of the terms "external" or "visible" to describe this aspect of the new covenant.

3 When we speak of justification in terms of the essential nature of the covenant, this is not to be confused with the view of Andreas Osiander, who taught that justification involved the essential righteousness of God. Here we are simply using the term "essential" to describe the "essence" of the covenant of grace, which is identical in both the Mosaic administration of the covenant of grace and the new covenant. And we are contrasting this to the "formal" aspect of each covenant, which represents their unique administrations.

active obedience is then imputed to us. That is, God declares Christ's perfect righteousness to be ours legally and judicially (we might say externally) at the same time as our internal righteousness wrought by the Spirit is imperfect (and deserving of judgment, if that is all we had).

However, Dr. Wright does not believe that God imputes the *active* righteousness of Christ to us, only his *passive* obedience. At best, he sees salvation (where we are included in it) as taking place in baptism. Therefore, justification is at best God's declaration that we are either in the covenant or not in the covenant. That is, God is simply looking at our state as it already exists in baptism and then declaring whether we are in or not, whether we are baptized or not, whether we are in the covenant community or not. But justification does not describe how one gets into the covenant. It is not describing how one is savingly united to Christ in the covenant. Thus, it does not describe the imputation of Christ's righteousness whereby one is constituted legally righteous and accepted by God into the covenant.

Thus, we may say Wright pulls the doctrine of justification apart, separating it into two pieces and believes only in the second piece. What we might call the first piece is God's active imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers (the gift of God). The second part is God's declaring them to be righteous based upon the gift of righteousness. Since God imputes to us the righteousness of Christ and we have the perfect righteousness of Christ, then it would be clear that God could justly make a declaration that we are indeed righteous—but based upon the imputation of that righteousness, not based upon our internal righteousness. Wright only believes in the second half. That is, he only believes that justification is declaring the state that we have. He does not believe that it is imputing to us a particular state. He does not believe it is a gift of God.

From the point of view of the Reformers, God could not justly declare people righteous unless they had been imputed with Christ's active obedience. Like Wright, Roman Catholics also believed in this second aspect of justification—at least in the future—that God will declare to the world that some people are righteous. But what will be the basis upon which they are declared righteous in the Roman Catholic view? It will be on the basis of their own obedience as wrought by the Holy Spirit. Wright disagrees with Rome when she indicates that this infusion of grace is actually justification. Wright

does not believe that the infusion of grace is justification. He believes that infusion is simply baptism. Only the second aspect of this declaration (that one is already baptized) is justification.

However, neither Wright nor Rome believes that there is a first part of justification that involves the imputation of Christ's righteousness. They do not believe that justification is the gift of God imputed to us. Admittedly, Wright, unlike Rome, believes that the *second aspect of this declaration* has ***already*** happened in some sense. It has already occurred based on our baptism.[4] However, he does not believe that this justification (already declared to be ours) is grounded in the first aspect of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. Justification is not the gift of God imputed to us, even insofar as it has already occurred. However, this is precisely what distinguished the Reformation from Rome at the most crucial point.

Wright's antipathy to the Reformation's doctrine of justification can be seen in his own words. "In all the church's discussions of what has come to be called 'justification'…Paul himself is of course constantly invoked[5]…it is therefore vital, and I believe, urgent, that we ask whether such texts have in fact been misused. The answer to that question, I suggest, is an emphatic Yes."[6]

He is emphatically against the Reformation's use of Paul's texts on jus-

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4 Rome (unlike Wright) believes that this declaration will only occur in the future. She does not believe that baptism is already a declaration of future justification. She only believes that baptism (as an infusion of grace) is the first stage of justification. However, (in Rome's opinion) the initial justification that takes place in baptism might not be followed by final justification (in the case of those who have committed mortal sin). Therefore, she does not believe that this infusion is a *declaration* (before the time) of final eschatological justification. According to our discussion, she does not believe that the second aspect of justification (as a declaration of righteousness) takes place in *baptism*. We would think (though this is not clear to us) that Dr. Wright would have to *disagree* with Rome's claim that the initially justified might still be damned. For Dr. Wright believes that baptism is a foretaste of final eschatological justification (which we presume means it cannot be reversed). If, on the other hand, Dr. Wright agrees with Rome on this point, then even he does not believe in what we have called the second aspect of justification. Instead, we would need to modify our claim, stating that while Wright rejects the first aspect of justification altogether, he gives lip service to the second aspect of justification. This second aspect he then reduces (on this construction of his view) to the declaration that one is presently in the covenant community, while tomorrow one may not be (which is little different from Rome).

5 N.T. Wright, *What Saint Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (1997) 115.

6 *Ibid*., 116.

tification. He goes on to describe how one becomes a Christian. "But if we come to Paul with these questions in mind—the questions about how human beings come into a living and saving relationship with the living and saving God—it is not justification that springs to his lips or pen. When he describes how persons, finding themselves confronted with the act of God in Christ, come to appropriate that act for themselves, he has a clear train of thought, repeated at various points. The message about Jesus and his cross and resurrection—'the gospel', in terms of our previous chapters—is announced to them; through this means, God works by his Spirit upon their hearts; as a result, they come to believe the message; they join the Christian community through baptism, and begin to share in its common life and its common way of life. That is how people come into relationship with the living God."[7]

Notice he says that it is simply by a change of their hearts. That is what the Reformed churches called regeneration. The Reformation argued that regeneration alone was not sufficient because the work of the Spirit in our hearts was still imperfect. We still sin. And if God were to look simply at our hearts (to the degree that they are regenerated), he would still see sin, and as a righteous judge he would still have to condemn us. So we also needed the external robe of Christ's perfect righteousness imputed to us—declared to be ours. That is justification; it is the *imputation* of righteousness. Wright denies this. For him, this is not what justification is about.

Wright continues: "If you say that this is what you mean by justification by faith, I reply that we must take note of the fact that when Paul is setting out this train of thought, as he does (for instance) in 1 Thessalonians 1, he does not mention justification. That is not what he is talking about. If you respond that the entire epistle to the Romans is a description of how persons become Christians, and that justification is central there, I will answer, anticipating my later argument, that this way of reading Romans has systematically done violence to that text for hundreds of years, and that it is time for the text itself to be heard again. Paul does indeed discuss the subject matter, which the church has referred to as 'justification', but he does not use 'justification' language for it. This alerts us to the negative truth of McGrath's point. Paul may or may not agree with Augustine, Luther or anyone else about how people come to

7 *Ibid*., 116-17.

a personal knowledge of God in Christ; but *he does not use the language of 'justification' to denote this event or process*. Instead, he speaks of the proclamation of the gospel of Jesus, the work of the spirit, and the entry into the common life of the people of God."[8]

Clearly, N.T. Wright does not believe that the Reformation properly appealed to Paul's texts on justification. According to him, these texts do not teach what the Reformers believed they did. And if the Bible elsewhere teaches something akin to justification (for Wright), it simply teaches the "event or process" initiating the Christian life, that of regeneration or sanctification (actualized in baptism). Wright gives no indication that he believes the Scriptures elsewhere teach the event of the active imputation of Christ's righteousness to believers simultaneous to (but separate from) regeneration. Thus, Wright does not believe in justification as part of the *ordo salutis*, as we find it in Romans 8:30: "Whom he predestined, these he also called; and whom he called, these he also justified; and whom he justified, these he also glorified."

Still, Wright believes that the work of Christ in his death somehow has a saving effect in the lives of believers at the time of regeneration, administered to them through baptism. However, Rome also asserts the same thing with its doctrine of infusion. Neither teaches the imputation of Christ's perfect righteousness in justification.[9]

Therefore, the state of the question is: did Paul teach that justification involves the imputation of Christ's righteousness? We hope to show that he did, and that this is indicated by his semi-eschatological doctrine of justification.

We need to get clear in our minds what Paul teaches about semi-eschatological justification. Then we can show how it requires the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the church in union with him. Our point will be that

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8 *Ibid.,* 117.

9 Wright further departs from the Reformation in his analysis of Christ's objective historical work of redemption (the *historia salutis*). Wright does not believe that Christ's active obedience to the law (during his own lifetime) contributes to our salvation. Nor does he recognize that Christ's active obedience culminated in the righteousness Christ now possesses in his resurrection life, a righteousness that goes beyond Adam's righteousness in the Garden of Eden. Even though Wright refers to Christ's justification in his resurrection, he essentially reduces its background to Christ's passive obedience. Basically, for Wright, only Christ's passive obedience of suffering on the cross contributes to our salvation.

the present semi-eschatological justification of God's people requires the active imputation of Christ's righteousness. And thus the essential justification of all God's people (old and new) must also require active imputation as well.

As a result of this, in our discussion of imputation, we will sometimes talk about the relationship between the *historia salutis* and the *ordo salutis*. *Historia salutis* is what God does in redemptive history, and the *ordo salutis* is how we are identified with that redemptive history in Christ—how we are identified with Christ's death and resurrection.

Let's look first at the semi-eschatological justification of God's people. We are using the term semi-eschatological as follows. As eschatology describes the final end of history, we are now talking about that eschatological finality coming into the midst of history—as Paul would say, that the end of the ages has come upon us. So we live in this time of an overlap between this age that is passing away and the age to come that is in Christ. And we are suggesting (following Vos, Ridderbos, Gaffin, and others) that the resurrection of Christ involves a declaration of his righteousness—declares Christ to be a possessor of the age to come in the heavenly places. And we too are declared to be joint possessors with him in that heavenly glory. This is the hinge of semi-realized eschatology.

Two Backdrops to Semi-Eschatological Justification in the Old Testament

We are going to suggest that there are two Old Testament backgrounds to Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification. One is that we are all fallen in Adam. Romans 5 is very clear on this. But the second aspect is that of Israel under the law. Wright and James Dunn make much of this, but misunderstand it in significant ways. Getting this background right will help us understand Paul's semi-eschatological doctrine of justification.

The fact that we are "Fallen in Adam" is an obvious backdrop for justification (Rom. 5). But it is often downplayed in New Perspective writers. However, to properly understand Paul we need to understand how this backdrop is related to the other backdrop of Israel under the law. We will not be develop-

ing the background of "Fallen in Adam" in this article. Wright suggests this background, but he does not develop it or recognize its implications.

How can "Israel under the Law" form a backdrop to the doctrine of justification? In two ways, both positively and negatively. Positively, we can see that Old Testament saints were justified by grace alone through faith alone—as in the case of David (Rom. 4:6-8). Therefore, new covenant saints must also be justified in Christ by grace alone through faith alone. This is the positive backdrop of Israel under the law.

In the negative backdrop, we can see a relative movement from the old to the new. For the law brought the curses of the covenant on Israel. Thus, Israel was under the curses of the law and waited for the day when she would be eternally delivered from them. That is, she waited for the day in which she would receive eschatological justification in the Messiah.

We may say this has been fulfilled semi-eschatologically for us. Hence our present justification is semi-eschatological because we participate in the great day the prophets looked forward to.

But if righteous Israelites were justified by faith alone, how could they be under the curses of the covenant? What examples do we have of this? I wish to consider one such instance in Daniel 9. Daniel reflects on the exile and includes himself (a justified Israelite) when he says "the *curse* has been poured out on *us*" (v. 11); "He has confirmed his words *against us*" (v. 12); "all this calamity has come upon *us*" (v. 13); "the Lord has kept the calamity in store and brought it on *us*" (v. 14). Daniel (with the people) was in some sense under the curse of the law.

How is this possible; he was a justified Israelite? Our suggestion is: this is the flip side of 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 6. In these passages, unregenerate people externally participate in the blessings of the covenant. We are going to suggest that in the case of Daniel we have the flip side. If a person who is condemned can externally participate in the blessings of the covenant, then a person who is justified can externally participate in the curses of the covenant. It is something of a flip reversal.

Looking at 1 Corinthians 10, we see that it was Paul's own conviction that unregenerate people sometimes participated in the blessings of the covenant.

In this passage, Paul says: "our fathers…all drank…from…Christ. Nevertheless, with most of them God was not well-pleased; for they were laid low in the wilderness" (vv. 1, 4-5). It must be that they only drank Christ externally, that is, in a way that did not give them a new heart. Otherwise, if they had a new heart, they would not have perished. For "he who began a good work in you will perfect it unto the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

Thus, these unregenerate people participated in the blessings of the covenant externally, though they did not have them internally. (We are using the terms external and internal differently than we might use them of justification—as an external forensic work—and sanctification as an internal work of the Spirit.) Thus it might be better to say that these Israelites participated *formally* in the blessings of the covenant, but *not really* and essentially. Though they were actually under God's wrath, they participated formally in the blessings that came to God's people because of justification. But they were not justified.

Our suggestion is that the reverse took place for Daniel. He was actually justified, but he externally or formally bore the curse of the law. That is, some externally participate in blessings while actually being cursed (1 Cor. 10; Heb. 6). But others externally or formally participated in curses while actually being justified (Dan. 9). This happened to people like Daniel under the law. He was externally cursed in relationship to his inheritance in the land though he was actually justified.

Paul Reverses Daniel's Language

When Daniel acknowledged that he was under the curses of the covenant he said: "Righteousness belongs to Thee, O Lord, but to us open shame" (9:7) and "Open shame belongs to us" (v. 8) under the curses of the covenant (v. 11). But Paul says: "I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes… for in it the righteousness of God is revealed" (Rom. 1:16-17).

Paul is not ashamed because the curses of the covenant have been lifted. Christ, though he deserved long life in the land—yea everlasting life in the eternal inheritance—has been cut off from the land of the living in an escha-

tological exile of shame and death. Then, having satisfied God's eternal wrath, he was justified in his resurrection.

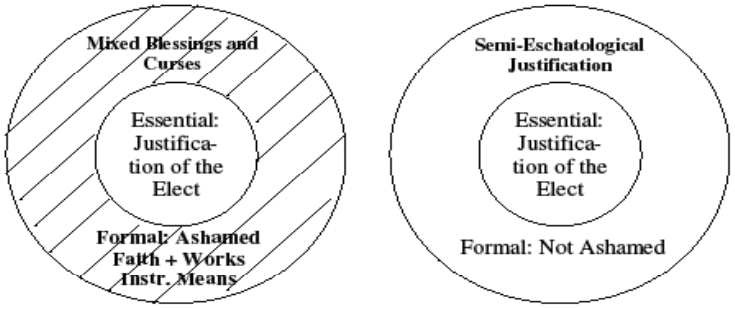
God has heard the prayer of Daniel. "Oh Lord, in accordance with your righteous acts, let now …your wrath turn away from your city Jerusalem" (9:16); "Oh Lord, forgive" (v. 19). And God has brought semi-eschatological justification for he told Daniel about the day he would "bring in everlasting righteousness" (v. 24) and Paul proclaims that that day has arrived in Christ Jesus and his resurrection.

This also helps us understand the words of Galatians 3:23-25. "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed." Included here is the life of Israel under the curse of the law. "Therefore the law has become our tutor to lead us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (v. 24). "That we might be justified by faith" clearly has an historical reference to something unique in the new covenant in some respects. This is further implied by verse 25: "But now that faith *has come*, we are no longer under a tutor." "Now that faith has come," implies that 'now that justification by faith has come.' There is newness in the fullness of the time with respect to justification.

Paul appears to be saying that justification has come to the new covenant people of God in a new way. He is not denying what he says elsewhere of the justification of old covenant saints as in the case of David (Rom. 4:6-8). He appears to mean that semi-eschatological justification takes the new covenant church out from under custody to the law. That is, it delivers them from the curses of the law even in the external (formal) way that Daniel and other old covenant saints experienced them.

Once again, we suggest that Paul's statement "I am not ashamed of the gospel" is a reversal of Daniel's shame under the curses of the covenant. If this is so, it informs Paul's discussion throughout Romans. Justification in Romans is a reversal of the curse placed on Israel in exile. Thus, this semi-eschatological justification brings a new semi-eschatological exodus. N.T. Wright is correct as far as this latter point goes. But we will see that the redemptive-historical significance of this point supports the Reformation's doctrine of the imputed righteousness of Christ in justification, something that Wright rejects.

The following diagram helps illustrate the situation we have been describing. In it, the first circle represents the old covenant and the second represents the new covenant.



The Imputation of Christ's Righteousness: Necessary for the Arrival of a New Exodus

Recall that N.T. Wright believes that justification is simply a declaration of God. It is not a gift of God bestowed by imputation. Thus, while Wright may speak of a new exodus, his view does not do justice to the eschatological character of the new exodus in Christ. This is evident when we see that eschatological righteousness must be a gift of God because it is contrasted to the disobedience of Israel under the law.

About the new exodus, God says to Daniel: "Seventy weeks have been decreed for your people and your holy city…to bring in everlasting righteousness" (9:24). This righteousness is the reversal of Israel's unrighteousness (vv. 7, 16, 18). Verse 25 implies that the Messiah will bring in everlasting righteousness (as in Is. 9:7). This point (along with the contrast to Israel's unrighteousness) implies that he will give them this semi-eschatological righteousness as a gift. That is, God says there are seventy weeks decreed to bring in eternal righteousness, and then he points to the Messiah who will bring in everlasting righteousness, that is, give it as a gift.

It only remains to discover whether Paul believes this gift of righteousness (in justification) is infused or imputed to the new covenant people of God. The very fact that Paul sees this fulfilled in a semi-eschatological setting makes the answer clear. For Daniel is contrasting the sinfulness of the people (some of whom possessed the Spirit) with the perfect righteousness needed for eschatological righteousness.

Thus, the imperfect work of the Spirit even in old covenant saints did not suffice. So why would the imperfect work of the Spirit in new covenant saints be sufficient? Daniel spoke of God bringing in everlasting righteousness. Paul could not mean that this was accomplished by God's righteousness being infused within his people, for that infusion is imperfect. And it is precisely imperfect righteousness that Daniel was decrying when he contrasted it to the future eternal righteousness to come. Daniel must have spoken of a future perfect righteousness. And this righteousness has now been fulfilled in the saints of the present semi-eschatological period. But they remain sinners. Therefore, there must be a separate work (besides regeneration and sanctification) that gives them perfect righteousness without simultaneously making them perfect. This fits with imputation which credits Christ's perfect righteousness to sinners while they simultaneously remain sinners. As sinners, they must be imputed with the perfect righteousness of Christ in order to participate in everlasting righteousness.

Further, their semi-eschatological justification must involve the imputation of Christ's own righteousness to them. This greater righteousness of the new age cannot simply be the declaration that they are in the covenant community (N.T. Wright), because even in the Old Testament they were in the covenant community. The prophet is not simply looking forward to a time when they will be in the covenant community again. He is looking forward to a time in which they will be participants in a greater fullness—in greater new covenant blessings. To secure this for them, God must declare them to have a righteousness that they did not possess in the old covenant (relatively speaking). Thus, he must impute to them a semi-eschatological righteousness (in terms of the *formal* aspect of the new covenant) as well as declare them righteous (in terms of the *essential* aspect of the covenant, together with old covenant saints).

The New Creation Results from an Act of Imputation

Again let us ask the question, how do the curses on Israel relate to the doctrine of imputation? And how is this fulfilled? Looking ahead, we will see this fulfillment in 2 Corinthians 5:17-21.

But first, as a background to 2 Corinthians 5:17-21 (especially v. 19), let us consider Ezekiel 15:7: "I will set my face against them." This describes what Ezekiel writes in 6:11-12: "Alas, because of all the evil abominations of the house of Israel, which will fall by sword, famine, and plague…thus I shall spend my wrath on them." God is saying, I will set my face against my people in the covenant curses in exile, and they will have these curses—sword, famine, and plague. God uses this language for the curses of the covenant: "I will set my face against you." That is, I will impute your sins to you, and you will bare the curses of the covenant. But, if God does not impute their sins against them they will not receive the curses of the covenant. Now, that is what has happened in Christ. Now that Christ has come God does not impute the sins of his people against them. They do not bare the curses of the covenant.

This is expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:17-19. "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old thing passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them." Notice that Paul says "not counting their trespasses against them." We are suggesting that this is a reversal of the covenant curses in which God said "I will set my face against them." Here Paul is saying he will not count their sins against them. And what does it bring in verse 17? "Therefore, if any man is in Christ he is new creation." 'Not imputing their sins against them' brings 'new creation'. Semi-eschatological reconciliation and justification brings new creation. This is the fulfillment of what Daniel looked forward to.

As suggested, in verse 17 we can legitimately substitute the term "new creation" for "a new creature" because the term in Greek has a range of meanings. Paul will use it in Romans 1:20 to describe the act of the first creation. Here, we believe, he uses it to describe the new creation that has appeared with

Christ's reconciling work. Notice once again that the new creation is "from God" (v. 18). God has brought it to pass by means of his reconciling work in Christ. Indeed, God's act of *not counting* or "*not imputing* their trespasses against them" resulted in the new creation. When God canceled the curses of the covenant in the formal realm of the covenant, he brought greater reconciliation (in that respect) to the new covenant people of God. He brought them greater participation in the new creation (received in smaller measure by old covenant saints), and therefore he can call it a "new creation." This arises from not imputing their sins against them in curse and exile.

But why does God give us a "new creation" when he takes away the curses of the covenant? That is, what connection is there between this "not imputing" and the "new creation"?

We suggest that the curses of the old covenant kept Israel from enjoying the fullness of their inheritance in the land. And therefore, it kept them (at that time) from enjoying the fullness of the new inheritance in Christ Jesus—to the degree that new covenant saints would experience it. (Although we would claim that they possessed the end from the beginning already by their participation in God through the Mosaic covenant of grace. Thus, we are only talking about a relative newness here.) Their inheritance in Canaan was a foretaste and picture of heaven to come. Thus, the curses kept Israel from participating in the fullness of the heavenly kingdom to come. Once those curses were eliminated, they could participate in the kingdom to come in its fullness. Thus, when Christ bore the curses of the covenant, the kingdom came.

At first glance, this may seem to support N.T. Wright's claim that the passive obedience of Christ was sufficient for our salvation, for this alone was necessary to reverse the curse. However, Paul's claim that reconciliation arises from "not imputing their trespasses against them" is balanced by his assertion that Christ's work was his "one act of *righteousness*" (Rom. 5:18). The background for Paul's use of the term "righteousness" is that of the Hebrew Scriptures. It reminds us of the full active righteousness God required of his people in the Old Testament, which, for Christ, culminated in the cross. In fact, it was because his people did not attain to this full righteousness (Rom. 8:3), that they were under the curses of the law (in respect to the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant). Thus, the new creation is more than the reversal of the

curse. Its very nature brings us beyond the Garden of Eden and beyond the land of Israel (contrary to Wright, who conceives of the new creation as if it were the Garden of Eden returned on a grand scale[10]). Eliminating curse alone is not sufficient. The perfect obedience that Israel failed to attain is also needed. And Christ alone has accomplished this by his active obedience, which has now been imputed to believers, bringing them the new creation.[11]

10 Actually, N.T. Wright's view does not really do justice even to the fact that Christ has eliminated the curse from the inheritance. For Wright, like many Restorationists (who seek to restore the garden paradise of God in this world through a process of Christian activity), assumes that this present world is the inheritance of God's people. The goal of Christian activity involves eliminating the curse from this present world (as the inheritance). However, Paul teaches that the curse has already been eliminated from the inheritance. Therefore, Dr. Wright (together with other Restorationists) is at odds with Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification—even in terms of the imputation of Christ's passive obedience. His Restorationist view is a failure to recognize that the kingdom has come semi-eschatologically. And since semi-eschatological justification is for Paul the fountainhead, of which the justification of Old Testament is an intrusion, it is no wonder that Dr. Wright and his disciples also deny the classic Reformation doctrine of justification as applied to all the people of God (old and new).

11 To put it another way, we are suggesting that Paul's conception of the "new creation" *as semi-eschatological* mitigates against Wright's claim that Christ did not merit *active obedience* to be credited to our account. Here we will argue that the nature of the righteousness that God now imputes to Christians semi-eschatologically must be equal to the righteousness he will give Christians *internally* in the final eschatological state. Since the internal righteousness of the final eschatological state depends on Christ's active obedience, so also, the present imputation of Christ's righteousness (semi-eschatologically) must depend on his active obedience. To begin, we will consider the nature of the "new creation". The eschatological character of this "new creation" implies that it is eternal. It can never be reversed in the way the first creation was reversed (by the fall). If Christ only suffered to reverse the effects of the fall (as Wright implies), then he would only return Christians to a state similar to that of the Garden of Eden. This garden state (even in its final "eschatological" form) would possess all the same qualities as those of the Garden of Eden except those earned for it by Christ's passive obedience. Thus, it would be one in which transgression was possible—even if the guilt of these transgressions had already been forgiven by Christ's passive obedience. For what in Christ's passive obedience rewards Christians with the gift of perfect future obedience? However, for Paul, such a state is out of the question. The eschatological nature of the new creation will bring people into a new state in which they cannot fall. And this is only possible if Christ performed the perfect obedience that God once required of Adam. Only by accomplishing this active obedience could Christ give to believers their own perfect obedience in the final eschatological state. Pure innocence (and lack of guilt) did not earn Adam the final eschatological state or else it would have been his reward within seconds of his creation. No, Adam was required to perform positive active obedience in order to attain to a future eschatological state in which he could not fall. This he never accomplished. However, the arrival of the final eschatological state (in which Christians cannot sin) will manifest that Christ has already accomplished this perfect active righteousness. He has brought Christians to a state that Adam did not have. He has actively accomplished what the first Adam failed to do. Thus, the *internal* righteousness of Christians in heaven will reveal that Christ has earned this for them by his active obedience. It is this final eschatological state that has already been manifested semi-eschatologically. For Christians to participate in the eschatological state even now (semi-eschatologically) they must be imputed with this same eschatological righteousness in its

Semi-Eschatological Justification and the Heavenly Inheritance

Once again, for Paul, what does semi-eschatological justification entail? The answer is that it declares God's people semi-eschatological possessors of the final inheritance above in Christ Jesus. This is seen in Galatians 3:10-14. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law in order that in Christ Jesus the *blessing promised to Abraham* might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." What was the blessing promised to Abraham? It was the "the promise of the Spirit." Therefore, the removal of the curse of the law on Israel brought the age of the Spirit. Then Paul connects the Spirit with the inheritance in verse 18. Once again, he speaks of the promise given to Abraham—and says that this was a promise of the inheritance. Thus, Paul now speaks of the promised Spirit as the promised inheritance. Clearly he implies that the Spirit is the eschatological inheritance.

Bringing together the teaching of 3:10-14 with verse 18, we may say this: Christ bore the curse of the law in order that the eschatological inheritance would come to the Gentiles. If taking away the curse brings the eschatological inheritance, this implies that the curse of the law kept the people of the Old Covenant from that inheritance. Now that this curse has been removed in Christ, the eschatological inheritance can come to the people of God.

It is an eternal inheritance, without curse in the heavenly places. It is not the present world now being transformed from its cursed state (N.T. Wright). The transcendent nature of the inheritance in Christ allows the church to possess it while living as *suffering* servants in this age. Since her inheritance is the transcendent Jerusalem above, the church can fully possess it even while she is persecuted in this age (Gal. 4:26-31). She experiences a semi-eschatological freedom that transcends the freedom of Israel, which was clouded with exilic bondage (in terms of the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant, Gal. 4:1-3). For the curse and bondage of the old has been reversed by semi-eschatological justification (Gal. 5:1-6), in which there is no distinction between circumcised or uncircumcised.

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complete nature—as both passive and active obedience.

This greater abundance of the new covenant in terms of semi-eschatological justification is again revealed in Romans 8:1-3 and 33-37. As Romans 8:1 states: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Paul's use of the term "now" suggests a redemptive-historical contrast between the period of the law and the present time (as it does in Rom. 3:21 and 7:6). In it, Paul is making a relative contrast between righteous Israel under the law (Romans 7:7-25) and the new age in Christ. In terms of the formal aspect of the new covenant, there is no condemnation as there was under the formal aspect of the old covenant.[12] That this is entailed in Paul's claim that there is "no condemnation" is further substantiated by the end of Romans 8, which forms a loose bookend to the beginning of the chapter.

In Romans 8:33-34, we read: "Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?" This lack of condemnation exceeds that found under the law. For under the law, "famine…nakedness…peril" and "sword" were curses of the covenant. They expressed the condemnation of the law on Israel in terms of the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant. We saw this in Ezekiel 6:11-12.

In terms of the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant, these curses kept Israel from the full enjoyment of God's covenant *love* (relatively speaking). So that Paul can quote Hosea 2:23 (speaking of the new covenant) as saying, "I will call…her who was not my beloved, 'beloved'" (Rom. 9:25). This greater love has now arrived so that Paul can say, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" Since the curse of the law has been eliminated (even in terms of the formal aspect of the covenant), these things are no longer a curse to the people of God in terms of their covenant relationship to him. Instead, in all these things they are more than conquerors.[13]

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12 Paul is simultaneously saying that there is no condemnation (absolutely speaking) for those in Christ Jesus. As I have suggested elsewhere, Paul often uses the same words to express both a *relative* contrast between the old and new covenants and an *absolute* contrast between life in Christ and that of absolute curse in bondage to this age. See my "Paul and the Law," in *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 17/2 (September, 2002), esp. 37-38.

13 Once again, this is contrary to Wright's Restitutionist perspective, in which the forward march of the kingdom is ultimately found in the triumph of earthly blessedness for the church and world. It may be asked, if Paul is speaking of a new reality of the kingdom, why does he quote a psalm from the Old Testament to support it (Rom. 8:36)? We would again suggest that Paul is only speaking of a relative contrast between the old and new covenants. Thus, the essentially

This results from the semi-eschatological justification Paul expresses in the words, "Who will bring a charge *against* God's elect?" (Rom. 8:33). This reverses the words of Ezekiel 15:7: "I will set my face *against* them." Again, Paul expresses this semi-eschatological justification saying, "God is the one who justifies; who is the one who condemns?" This semi-eschatological justification reverses the curse (even in terms of its expression in the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant of grace). Christ has triumphed over those things that were once opposed to God's people (in the formal aspect of the covenant). He has brought semi-eschatological justification and it can never be reversed because it is grounded in his own resurrection-life at the right hand of God; he now presents to God a greater intercession on our behalf (Rom. 8:34).

This indicates that saints of the new covenant possess a greater union with Christ that brings them beyond the period of the law (relatively speaking). And it brings us back to the beginning of Romans 8 where Paul claims that there is "now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." For there he also indicates that this redemptive-historical transition took place in Christ saying: "What the law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did, send-

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gracious nature of the Deuteronomic provisions bore the seeds that would lead to the restructuring of its formal lines of development. The incompleteness of these formal Deuteronomic provisions (and the need of Christ's coming kingdom) became more and more evident with the progress of Old Testament redemption and revelation. Throughout her history, the national blessedness of Israel both progressed and regressed (in terms of the formal relation of the Mosaic covenant). In this way, God revealed that the fullness of his kingdom had not yet arrived and could only do so by his direct hand in both the essential and formal aspects of the new covenant. As in other respects, the Psalms portray this progression and regression when they more clearly unfold the *blessing* of the righteous *in the midst of curse* and oppression, thus more fully anticipating the time when God's blessings would overcome the curse in the midst of suffering in union with Christ (in his death and resurrection). Psalm 44 appears to represent a further revelation along this line of development. It was probably written at a time when *the people as a whole* were faithful (vv. 17-22) and yet God turned them over to their enemies. As a result, some interpreters believe this psalm represents an exception to the general Deuteronomic perspective, in which God promises to prosper the obedient nation but to send his unfaithful people into exile. In this way, Psalm 44 seems to look ahead, stretching our eyes (through a glass darkly) beyond the blessings and curses of the old covenant administration. Regardless of any mysteries that still surround this psalm, we believe that when all the data is taken into consideration (including that already examined in Rom. 8:33-37), it is sufficient to persuade us that Paul was arguing in these verses that the new covenant administers a greater expression of 'no condemnation' in terms of the formal aspect of the covenant. Again, we speak here only of degrees, for even the formal aspect of the old covenant was primarily gracious, not condemnatory. And this formal expression of grace was dependent on the perfect justifying verdict found in the essential nature of the Mosaic covenant. Our only claim is that the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant (grounded in this grace) was also mixed with visible curses that have now been reversed in the new covenant.

ing His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sin offering." Christ accomplished what Israel could not do, and therefore he brought the semi-eschatological justification that reversed the curse and brought in everlasting righteousness (as prophesied by Daniel).

Justification Implies the Inclusion of the Gentiles

This is a bone of contention for many people who want to follow the New Perspective on Paul and who want to deny the classic doctrine of justification. They think that N.T. Wright and James Dunn provide a way of understanding justification that ties it essentially to the inclusion of the Gentiles (as we often find in Romans). They do not believe that the classic doctrine of justification does this because it claims that Jews and Gentiles are both justified in the same way in both the old and new covenants. As such, the classic doctrine of justification does not seem to imply the transition from the old to the new eras and the newly established inclusion of the Gentiles. However, we will try to show that semi-eschatological justification implies the inclusion of the Gentiles. And this semi-eschatological doctrine of justification supports the Reformation's doctrine of justification.

First, let us briefly establish the fact that Paul's full doctrine of justification (whatever it is) demands the inclusion of the Gentiles. Paul states in Romans 3:28-30: "For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from works of the Law. Or is God *the God* of Jews only? Is he not *the God* of Gentiles also? Yes, of Gentiles also, since indeed God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith is one." The very fact that God justifies by faith apart from the works of the law (Paul's doctrine of justification) implies that God will justify Gentiles who are without the law. If God did not justify the Gentiles, he would be the God of the Jews only, for only they have the law. Thus, the full expression of justification brings with it the inclusion of the Gentiles.

But the crucial point here is that it brings about a state in which God is the *God of* (covenant language) the Gentiles. More precisely, justification, in its full significance, implies that God is *equally* the God of the Gentiles as much as he is the God of the Jews. Paul's identical language (*God of* the Jews, *God*

of the Gentiles) requires this. And Romans 3:30 teaches that this unity of Jews and Gentiles results from justification.

However, the gift of justification (administered through the Mosaic covenant of grace) did not imply this. That administration (even when given to Gentiles as well as Jews) did not imply that God was equally the God of those Gentiles. There was still a covenantal distinction between uncircumcised God-fearing Gentiles and the Jews. The Jews were more fully God's people (in terms of the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant of grace).

When Paul expresses the fact that justification ultimately implies the equal covenantal union of Jews and Gentiles in Christ, he is describing a situation that is only true (in fullness) in the new covenant era. What we have called semi-eschatological justification can account for this fact. For semi-eschatological justification legally reverses the curse (found in the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant) and destroys this barrier between Jews and Gentiles.

Looking at things from the point of view of the prophets (as we have previously), we may consider this from a different angle. If the imputation of eschatological righteousness is necessary for the Jews to receive the new exodus and its eschatological inheritance, how much more is this the case for the Gentiles? In Hosea, the more Israel becomes like the Gentiles (*lo ami*, "not my people"), the more she is in need of the imputation of eschatological righteousness (Hos. 2:19). Therefore, it appears that the Gentiles themselves are in need of the positive imputation of Christ's righteousness in order to bring them eschatological justification. It would seem that the exile of Israel allowed for a situation in which Jews and Gentiles became one as 'not my people.' As a result, (for Paul) they can now become one people of God through semi-eschatological justification.

Dunn and Wright believe their view—that "works of the law" simply refers to Jewish boundary markers—helps explain why Paul connects his teaching on justification with the inclusion of the Gentiles. As the argument goes, if "works of the law" simply refers to circumcision and dietary laws then justification means that Gentiles do not have to keep these boundary markers to be a part of the covenant community.

Semi-eschatological justification can explain why Paul connects justifica-

tion with the inclusion of the Gentiles without reducing the works of the law to "Jewish boundary markers" alone. Our suggestion is that Paul's critique of the Judaizers is a critique of their eschatology—their desire to bring in the kingdom by force, their desire to bring eschatological righteousness *by their obedience to the law*. And if they believe that they can bring in eschatological righteousness by their obedience, then they believe that their present participation in that justification is also grounded in their own obedience (connecting *historia salutis* with *ordo salutis*). That is, they are at least semi-Pelagians with a pre-Reformation confusion about justification (tending toward the Council of Trent) because it fits with their eschatology.

On this Jewish view of man-made eschatology, those who would be included in the kingdom must circumcise themselves. And all uncircumcised Gentiles would be excluded. However, Paul's semi-eschatological doctrine of justification paves the way for the Gentiles. For Paul teaches that since the eschatological righteousness of God has arrived in Christ, the kingdom has come. The eschatological inheritance has arrived in Christ. It is now semi-realized in the church. This opens the door for the Gentiles in at least several ways.

Now that the inheritance is wholly above in Christ, transcendent and eternal, it is not tied to any particular geographical location. Thus, Gentiles can participate in this transcendent inheritance without connecting themselves to the land of Israel through circumcision. As we have shown, this transcendent inheritance above is a result of semi-eschatological justification. Therefore, the inclusion of the Gentiles (made possible by this transcendent inheritance) is also a result of semi-eschatological justification.

The curses of the old covenant separated most uncircumcised Gentiles from any participation in the covenant-life of Israel. Now that Christ has borne the curses and broken down the dividing wall of partition, the gospel has gone to the Gentiles, and they now have equal access to the presence of God in Christ (Eph. 2:14).

Even uncircumcised God-fearing Gentiles in the old covenant did not have full access to the privileges of Israel. For the curses of the law embodied in the purification rites kept them from it. This was reversed when Christ broke down the dividing wall, making them one body. This fits with what we have seen above in Romans 3:28-29. Semi-eschatological justification requires the

inclusion of the Gentiles into one body so that God is equally the God of the Jews and the God of the Gentiles.

Like the Jews, the curses of the old covenant kept the Gentiles from full semi-eschatological participation in the inheritance above. Now that Christ redeemed them from the curse of the law, they can participate in this heavenly inheritance. Thus, semi-eschatological justification implies the inclusion of the Gentiles.

Thus, Paul's view of semi-eschatological justification does greater justice to the relationship between justification and the inclusion of the Gentiles. This can be illustrated from Galatians 3:23-4:7.

Galatians 3:23-29 and the Inclusion of the Gentiles

Looking at Galatians 3:23-26, Paul writes: "But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor, for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."

Before looking at this text, we should note that many New Testament scholars do not recognize the implications we will suggest. For, in our opinion, they wrongly restrict the "we" of these passages to Jewish believers. To justify their view, numerous New Testament scholars point to the fact that in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21, Paul restricts the phrase "under the law" to Jews, implying that Gentiles are not under the law. Then they apply this interpretation to Galatians 3:23-4:7, suggesting that Paul is here restricting his discussion to Jewish Christians (i.e., only they were once under the law and so redeemed from it). Following this, they conclude that when Paul stated "we were kept in custody" and "we are no longer under a tutor," he was referring to Jews only. For only Jews were under law.

However, we would suggest that Paul's distinction in 1 Corinthians 9:20-21 is one he makes when contrasting Jews and Gentiles. But when he discusses their common plight under the curse of the law, he can speak of Gentiles as also under law.

The flow of thought in Galatians 3:23-26 seems to indicate this. For right after saying "we are no longer under a tutor," he gives the reason—"for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." This "you" certainly includes Gentile believers as we find in verse 28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek… for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Thus, he here speaks to the whole church, Jews and Gentiles alike, when he states, "you are ***all*** sons of God" (emphasis mine). Further, since there is every indication that the "we" referents and the "you" referents are the same, the "we" referents must also refer to Gentiles. Thus, "we were kept in custody" describes Gentiles as well as Jews.

In any event, it is clear to most that the "we" passages must include the Jews. And this makes Galatians 3:23-29 most interesting. For it implies that Jews (in Christ) have been justified in a new way since his coming. It implies semi-eschatological justification. We can see this by first recognizing that verses 23 and 25 describe faith as coming. This coming of faith is not simply the coming of faith to the individual soul (although this is implied as well). Instead, it describes the historical coming of faith in a new way with the historical arrival of Christ and his work.

This can be seen from the fact that this coming of faith resulted in greater equality among the people of God than existed under the old covenant. Under the period of the law, there were distinctions among God's people in terms of their inheritance rights in the land. Even God-fearing Gentiles did not possess the inheritance rights of Jews. Also the male, as opposed to the female, usually possessed the inheritance. And finally, the free man possessed his inheritance while the slave worked for another and contributed to his property.[14] Paul is here suggesting that the coming of faith is the coming of the new era, in which these distinctions no longer exist.

Connected with this historical coming of faith is the historical coming of justification. "Therefore the law has been our tutor *to lead us* to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3:24-25). Here we can see that Paul intimately connects the coming of faith with the coming of justification. The period of tutelage

14 This theme of the relative contrast between the old and the new *inheritance* occurs throughout Galatians 3, from Paul's quotations in 3:10-14 to the explicit mention of the eschatological inheritance in 3:18. That this theme continues till the end of the chapter is seen in Paul's reference to "heirs according to promise" in verse 29.

under the law awaits the coming of faith and justification in the new era. As if to say, justification comes in a new way after the historical accomplishment of Christ's work. This suggests Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification: that justification came to the people of God in a new way after Christ's resurrection.

This fits with what we have previously recognized, that this semi-eschatological justification involved the reversal of the curse expressed in the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant. For the tutelage of the law (seen from the point of view of the contrast between the old and new covenants of grace) was not absolute, but only relative. It dealt with the visible blessings of inheritance in the old covenant. And these visible blessings were still mixed with the curse of the law.[15] But now in Christ Jesus, semi-eschatological justification has reversed the curse, making us full and equal "heirs" (Gal. 3:29) of all that is our inheritance in him.

Now we come full circle to our claim that the "we" passages include the Gentiles. If semi-eschatological justification brings something new to the Jews, it also brings something new to the Gentiles (who are included in the "we" passages). This has already been glimpsed in the Gentiles's equal participation in the inheritance in Christ. Thus, Galatians 3 suggests that semi-eschatological justification opens the way to the full participation of Gentiles in all the covenant blessings of God. Semi-eschatological justification implies the inclusion of the Gentiles. The New Perspective does not have a corner on this market.

By understanding semi-eschatological justification, we can see how it has reversed the situation of both Jew and Gentile—for it has reversed the curse of the law that kept them both from the fullness of the eschatological inheritance.

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15 Paul further suggests this in other parts of Galatians 3-4. First, we note Galatians 4:4-5 where Paul teaches that being under the law required redemption. For once this redemption was accomplished, something was removed that finally allowed the new period of sonship to arrive (4:4-6). Second, Galatians 3:13-14 teaches that when the curse of the law was borne by Christ, this resulted in something new in the history of redemption, namely, the arrival of the semi-eschatological inheritance of the Spirit, which itself opened the way for full participation by the Gentiles (v. 14). Since this removal of the curse resulted in a relative contrast between the old and the new eras, we suggest that it involved the removal of the curse in terms of the formal aspect of the Mosaic covenant. This is further suggested by Paul's quotations in the immediate context (Gal. 3:10-13). At the same time, we affirm that these same words (vv. 13-14) also refer to Christ bearing the absolute curse his people deserved as members of fallen humanity. The same gospel is for both Jews and Gentiles alike.

The reversal of this curse brings a new exodus. However, as we have seen from the prophets, the reversal of the curse requires the positive imputation of righteousness. This is not lost on Paul—who expounds the freedom of the Jerusalem that is above—a Jerusalem that is more than just the earthly Jerusalem without curse.

Ordo Salutis and Historia Salutis

The fact that Jews and Gentiles are both redeemed from the curse of the law shows us how the *ordo salutis* and the *historia salutis* are interrelated. We note this in response to Wright, who subtly undercuts the *ordo salutis* by reference to the *historia salutis*. When we consider the movement of the first Jewish Christians from the old to the new covenant, the *historia salutis* is primarily highlighted. But when we consider many of the early Gentile converts to Christianity, the *ordo salutis* is highlighted. For they were not previously part of the covenant people of God. Thus, most of them never lived like Daniel—being justified, yet externally under the curses of the covenant. They did not move from one redeemed state to a greater one. Instead, they moved from a completely unredeemed state to that of semi-eschatological justification. As a result, the *ordo salutis* is brought to our attention. The movement from wrath to grace in the life of these individuals is highlighted. This is the case even though it was the new redemptive historical situation that allowed them to be participants in the *ordo salutis*. That is, they come to participate in the new semi-eschatological justification in Christ, but they do so by moving from a situation of complete wrath to grace. So they must be coming from that at a point in their lives. For their new redeemed state is absolutely different from their previous unredeemed state.

As a result, the *ordo salutis* is an essential part of the *historia salutis* for the Gentiles. When the Gentiles are brought to participate in semi-eschatological justification they are united to the *historia salutis* represented in it at a particular point in their personal lives (*ordo salutis*). And this is also true of all Jewish Christians who were regenerated by Spirit for the first time after Christ's resurrection.

Justification of Old Covenant Saints

You now may be wondering—if we are proving the need for imputation based on semi-eschatological justification, does this have any implications about the justification of Old Testament saints? Did their justification require imputation? We strongly affirm that it did. For eschatological finality determines Paul's way of understanding the fundamental nature of God's grace in the old covenant. The demonstration of God's eschatological righteousness is the basis for the justification of Old Testament saints whose sins he passed over in his forbearance (Rom. 3:25). This then informs our understanding of the way in which Old Testament saints were justified (Rom. 4:6-8). Their justification before God's throne must have been by way of the imputation of Christ's righteousness. For Paul then uses David's justification as an example of our semi-eschatological justification in Christ.

Thus, their justification gave them all the benefits of justification articulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, although it did not then deliver them externally from the covenant curses as semi-eschatological justification does now for new covenant saints. However, in their justification, they possessed the end from the beginning—anticipating final eschatological justification in Christ. Thus, their life was a foretaste of the final eschatological end of the ages, and in that foretaste they participated in the end from the beginning, making them final participants in the resurrection of Christ and final eschatological justification in him.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we have attempted to show that *semi-eschatological justification involves* the *forensic imputation* of Christ's perfect righteousness to new covenant saints in the formal sphere of the new covenant. It is also the foundation of the justification that both old and new covenant saints receive through the essential nature of the covenant of grace. For this essential grace in all periods of redemptive history is an intrusion of the eschatological justification of Christ, declared to be his in his resurrection.

Therefore, we have concluded that the *justification of all God's people*

throughout redemptive history must also be by *forensic imputation*. For it must bear the imprint of semi-eschatological justification. That is, just like semi-eschatological justification, the justification of old and new covenant saints alike (in relation to the essential nature of the covenant of grace) is grounded in their union with Christ. As such, it must involve the imputation of Christ's righteousness (contrary to N.T. Wright).

Further, we have attempted to show that Christ's righteousness, declared to be his in his resurrection, is the culmination of both his *active and passive obedience* to the law of his Father. Therefore, it is this righteousness (both of Christ's active and passive obedience) that must be imputed to Christians, that they might be the righteousness of God in him.

In these ways, Paul's doctrine of semi-eschatological justification requires the Reformation's doctrine of justification, as the imputation of Christ's active and passive obedience to believers. Far from detracting from the Reformation's doctrine, a redemptive-historical assessment of it both supports and enriches it. And it leads the people of God to glory only in Christ Jesus, his coming, his resurrection, and their participation in his righteousness alone. *Soli Deo Gloria*.

[*K:NWTS* 24/2 (Sep 2009) 40-50]

Exsul, Peregrinus, Viator: Selderhuis on Calvin, A Review[1]

James T. Dennison, Jr.

Peripatetic student, European peregrinator, French refugee, earthly sojourner. John Calvin was all of these, even as he frequently declared that God "sent his gospel . . . to draw us out of this world that we might [draw near[2]] to him . . .that we might not doubt…the inheritance of everlasting life is prepared for us as it was so dearly purchased for us by our Lord Jesus Christ" (John Calvin, *Sermons on the Epistles of Timothy and Titus* [1579/1983] 1035, hereafter *Timothy and Titus*). That is to say, we are to take "hold of the heavenly life which he has promised us"—"to have an eye to the heavenly life whereunto God calls us" (ibid., 1149, 1148). Selderhuis's subtitle, "A Pilgrim's Life", is an apt reflection of Calvin's own semi-eschatological, wayfaring self-consciousness. Calvin was conscious of belonging to the heavenly world already ("we are set already in the heavenly places," ibid., 1235), even though his earthly world-consciousness often reflected that of a wilderness. The concomitant experience of Israel's Exodus-Wilderness sojourn, graciously inaugurated by the redemptive hand of God, provided a paradigm for Calvin's own pilgrimage: "for the life that we lead here beneath is answerable to the journey which the people of Israel made those forty years in the wilderness. . . .

1 Herman J. Selderhuis, *John Calvin: A Pilgrim's Life*. Downer's Grove, IL: Inter-Varsity Press, 2009. 287pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8308-2921-7. $25.00.

2 The French text reads *tendions* and is retranslated accordingly; cf. CO[CR 82] 54:390.

And verily we are in this world as in a wilderness" (*Sermons of M. Iohn Calvin upon . . . Deuteronomie* [1583/1987] 368). As Christians "are only guests on this earth" (Selderhuis, 146), nonetheless "we are but as pilgrims and do not cease to be for all that citizens of heaven" (*Timothy and Titus*, 1235). Indeed, a semi-eschatological consciousness in Calvin's persona and biography was pioneered and perfected by the consummately eschatological pilgrim, Jesus Christ. Selderhuis's subtitle offers a unique Quincentenary perspective on Calvin's career—a perspective which emerges from Calvin's own Biblical and Christocentric identity.

We have here an engaging portrait of the "Geneva Star" arranged chronologically from his birth 500 years ago (1509) to his death more than fifty-four years later (1564). Selderhuis illustrates his narrative with copious selections from Calvin's own corpus.[3] The source of these citations and allusions are listed in the "Notes" (260-85) and are coordinated by chapter and page. The book is a pleasure to read and contains numerous *bon mots* as well as insightful turns of phrase. We learn that Calvin "spoke of Christ as present and not present at the Lord's Supper" (154). That his *magnum opus*, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, had "drifted onto the market in 1536 as a sailboat, but by 1559 . . . had grown into a cargo ship" (229). That the Academy Calvin established in 1559 was "a sort of boot camp for the army of salvation" (238). Indeed, Selderhuis writes with an attractive and winsome style.

The young motherless boy from Noyon is directed by his father to the University of Paris when he is but fourteen years of age (1523)—directed to master the humanities in preparation for undertaking the priesthood of the Roman Catholic church. As his maternal want thrust him into loyal submission to his earthly father, a heavenly Father was ordering his steps in the most surprising and unexpected ways. Calvin's later consciousness of the sovereign providence of God was a product of his own biography interfaced with the Word of God—his participation in a disposing drama which originated in heaven. Paris turned out to be a proving ground for the brilliant young Calvin (his extraordinary memory for primary documents took form here), as well as a hotbed of evangelical or Protestant agitation. Calvin's circle of friends would include many subsequent defenders of grace alone via faith alone through

3 One of the obvious benefits of our author's work compiling the Calvin DVD; cf. "Calvin on DVD." *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 21/2 (September 2006): 45-46.

Christ alone. But Selderhuis is rather too premature in suggesting Calvin was reading "forbidden books" by Luther and Melanchthon during his days at the Collège du Montaigu (14)—a suggestion, incidentally, which he does not document; nor is it supported by other standard biographers of our subject, i.e., Beza, Parker, Bousma, de Greef, Cottret, van t' Spijker. Which makes the absence of Melchior Wolmar from the account of Calvin at Bourges all the more anomalous (15). It was Wolmar who introduced Calvin to the Greek language at Bourges (1529) and it was this German who would eventually cast his lot with Luther and Protestantism.

By his all-disposing providence, Calvin's heavenly Father was acting concurrently with Calvin's earthly father to alter his vocational career. Accused by the Bishop of Noyon of embezzling ecclesiastical funds, Girard Calvin was excommunicated in 1527 and, in turn, interdicted his son from preparation for the priesthood by directing him to take up the study of law. Thus, our young pilgrim goes to Orleans (1528) and Bourges (1529) in peripatetic pursuit of a degree in law. However, the more evangelical friends back in Paris are becoming militant in defense of *sola Scriptura* (they clash with the Faculty of the Sorbonne in 1530) and Calvin is drawn into the circle of this debate perhaps through his own cousin, Pierre Robert Olivétan, and his friend, Nicholas Cop. He acknowledges a *subita conversione* ("Preface," *Commentary on Psalms*) occurring between 1532 and 1533. Selderhuis (18) suggests his conversion was "unexpected" (a possible lexical definition for *subita*). But Calvin's testimony is to the 'suddenness' of the 'unexpected' turning of his heart to Christ. A quotation about conversion in general is particularized to Calvin himself by Selderhuis on the top of page 20. The remark is lifted from "Sermon 18 on 2 Timothy 2:25-26" (*Timothy and Titus*, 864), where Calvin specifies his remark for "everyone of us." While Calvin himself may be mirrored in "everyone", the context of the sermon does not necessarily dictate that conclusion. And now, John Calvin, newly turned from self and personal merit to Christ alone and his all-sufficient merit makes his formal break with Roman Catholicism. In May 1534, he returns to Noyon and renounces "the superstitions of the papacy."

Selderhuis confuses us with the chronology of *l'affaire des placards* (October 17, 1534) and the university address of Nicholas Cop (November 1, 1533) (26-27). In fact, Calvin and Cop both fled Paris shortly after the fateful

address in order to avoid the edict of King Francis I to crush the "accursed Lutheran sect." The placard affair occurred nearly a year later.

But we have failed to note the singular act of God's providence which disposed Calvin to "conversion", to leave the Roman Catholic church and to identify with Cop and his courageous address (in which the latter defended salvation "because of the grace of God alone" and declared that "reconciliation and justification do not depend on our own worth and merits"). The death of Calvin's father in the spring of 1531 altered our pilgrim's course once and for all. In the fall of that year, Calvin is back in Paris, not practicing law, but studying Hebrew, Greek, the church fathers, theology. The Lord had set him free for a different pilgrimage—free to pursue the deep knowledge of himself and the Triune God. The balance of Calvin's earthly sojourn is a testimony to his eager pursuit of this *duplex cognitio*.

Selderhuis observes that Calvin's letters contain expressions of self-reflection—grist for the historian's and biographer's mill. Our author also notes Calvin's personal reflections in his sermons (30). In this reviewer's opinion, there are in fact a plethora of biographical reflections in the sermonic corpus—reflections as yet insufficiently tapped. The record of our subject's pilgrimage has left its traces in surprising places.

Calvin writes his first theological work in 1534. Entitled *Psychopannychia* (treating "soul sleep"), it was not published until 1542 (cf. de Greef, *The Writings of John Calvin* [2008] 151). Selderhuis incorrectly places the date of publication at 1545 (41). As much against the modern Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh-day Adventists as select 16th century Anabaptists who held to the unconscious state of the believer's soul between death and the final resurrection, Calvin pointed to 2 Cor. 5:8 ("absent from the body at home with the Lord") as sufficient repudiation of this aberrant view of the intermediate state. The consummation of a Christian's pilgrimage is not delayed by a sleep of unconsciousness. Rather the sojourner arrives as Lazarus in Luke 16—carried consciously into the bosom of Abraham (heaven), there to be known immediately even as immediately known.

In 1535, we find him in Basel taking pen in hand in order to compose his monumental *Institutes* in the space of nine months. The first of five editions appeared in Basel in 1536. Subsequent revisions appeared in 1539, 1543,

1550, culminating in the major final edition of 1559. The first edition would catapult him to fame and notoriety—which Calvin despised. It was enough that the Triune God and his way of salvation and Christian living were described (originally) for suffering French Protestants. That Christian "foundation" (Latin, *institutiones*) was what Calvin drafted in 1536 and enlarged later. It was a Biblical basis of faith for Christian pilgrims; hence, a handbook to accompany the Scriptures on the way.

The eschatological pilgrim who had redeemed this semi-eschatological pilgrim would now providentially dispose his steps to Geneva and William Farel. Unwittingly, Francis I and Charles V were the instruments of the detour. Calvin was returning from Paris to Basel in 1536 when the troops of the two royal antagonists blocked his way. Circling to the south, our *viator* sought lodging in Geneva on a summer's night. Fiery Farel had been laboring in the city for four years—his efforts crowned with the abolition of the Roman Catholic Mass by the city fathers but a few weeks prior to Calvin's arrival. Farel had read the *Institutes* and when he learned the author was in town overnight, he immediately accosted him with the famous "dreadful curse" (52-53). The story is well known and Calvin, cringing in horror, bowed his will to God's boney-fingered providence, agreeing to aid Farel in organizing the Reformation in Geneva. The pilgrim had found a home as a stranger in a strange land, albeit by imprecation!

Selderhuis presents us with a portrait of Calvin's integrity in his office at Geneva—indeed, in his role as a humble servant of Christ throughout his career (59f.). These reflections mark a sober contrast with the careers of the ecclesiastical thugs who dominate the current Reformed landscape. Ever conscious of their public image, these modern egoists posture, preen and leverage themselves to advantage while ruthlessly trampling upon others—even launching blogsites which are vicious and defamatory. Such self-promoters, Calvin would label "charlatans" and "pettifoggers". Alas, like the poor, they are ever with us.

Calvin and Farel quickly drafted two documents for structuring the Reformation in Geneva: *Instruction in Faith* (a catechetical summary of Reformed Christianity) and *The Geneva Confession* (both are available in J. T. Dennison, Jr., *The Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in*

English Translation: Volume 1, 1532-1552 [hereafter *RC*] 354-92 and 395-401 respectively). The former I label 'Calvin's *Institutes* Lite'; it is, in fact, a precise abridgement of the 1536 edition condensed to aid in the instruction of children. Calvin would provide a Latin translation of the 1537 French original in 1538 (ibid., 402-42). The second document became the infamous sticking point. Our author, however, touches on the real problem (83)—power. Power over others by subjecting them to imperious intransigence and self-interest. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose!* Current Reformed circles are too full of this abusive self-aggrandizement. Calvin and Farel would insist that all persons seeking admission to the Lord's Supper subscribe the Geneva Confession (the full title reads: "A Confession of Faith which all the Citizens and Inhabitants of Geneva and Subjects of the Country are to Swear to Keep and Hold," ibid., 395). *Au contraire*, the magistrates ruled; "the Lord's Supper was not to be refused to anyone." The die was cast. Would ecclesiastical prerogative be subject to the power of the state? Would the civil magistrate hold the power of the keys (Mt. 16:19; 18:18) opening and closing the door to the sacraments? Calvin and Farel declared, "No!" And on Easter Sunday 1538, Calvin refused to serve the Lord's Supper until the matter was resolved. Resolution was quick: the power-broker civil magistrates gave Calvin and Farel three days to clear out of town. More pilgrimage!

Our sojourner's next resting place was Strasbourg, whose reformer, Martin Bucer, welcomed, influenced and frustrated Calvin. He welcomed the French-speaking theologian because he respected him and also because he had a bevy of French refugees on his hands in need of a pastor. Calvin obliged in what became the happiest days of his earthly sojourn. Bucer's influence helped shape Calvin's doctrine of the church (88-89), especially the liturgical simplicity which has now become passé in progressive modern Reformed circles, where the Neo-Orthodox liturgical renewal movement has finally caught up to the Reformed fundamentalists. Bucer frustrated Calvin as he exasperated others. Ever the irenicist, he gave away the bank ("stooped so servilely"—Calvin wrote in a letter to Peter Martyr Vermigli, January 18, 1555)—especially to the Lutherans ("bent on appeasing the Saxons," ibid.)—while requiring little Reformed collateral in exchange.

Selderhuis suggests Calvin was critical of Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper (95), but provides no documentation. Perhaps, he is unaware of

Zwingli's remark: "but Christ is present in the Supper by his Spirit, grace and strength" (*Werk*, VI [1828-42] i, 758.33-36; cpr. W. P. Stephens, *Theology of Huldrich Zwingli* [1986] 244). And what are we to make of the "light" which joined Calvin and Bullinger (Zwingli's successor and staunch defender) in the 1549 Consensus Tigurinus (*RC*, 538-45)?

But our author is spot on when he explores Calvin's desire to progress deeper into the riches of the Scriptures (98). Beyond the work of the church fathers, medieval glossators, even contemporary evangelical and Reformed authors, Calvin sought "penetration" into the mind, heart, will and acts of God as revealed in his Word. Again, we are struck by the moribund lack of penetration into the Word of God in contemporary evangelical and Reformed circles. There is not only resistance to deeper insights and new tools for Biblical penetration—there is outward indifference and contempt for such methods resulting in even more dull, duller, dullest preaching which is lifeless, drab and unexciting. Most Reformed seminary graduates cannot preach and have little interest in the subject beyond the superficial. Not so the pilgrim occupant of the pulpit at 16th century San Pierre.

It was at this stage that Calvin's ecumenical doctrine of the church was revealed in his stunning letter to Bishop Jacob Sadeleto (100f.). Sadeleto's approach was to exploit the Roman Catholic notion of ecumenical visibility as confirmation of Rome's exclusive claims. Calvin brilliantly counters with a non-institutional unity of the body of Christ, affirming instead the unity of the Spirit in faith in Christ. This invisible unity does indeed transcend denominational barriers and acknowledges an innumerable host of every tribe and tongue under heaven (Rev. 14:6).

Selderhuis omits treating Calvin's marriage to Idelette de Bure in the Strasbourg years (104), but compensates with a section on Calvin's view of marriage (167ff.) in which he reviews the Reformer's union with the widow of John Stordeur. Our author adds a number of sensitive touches with respect to Calvin's emotions about his wife, his son (who died soon after birth), his circle of friends (especially Farel and Viret) and the church. Selderhuis successfully parries the "Stoic" charge leveled against Calvin with these poignant remarks (cpr. 251-52). He reviews Calvin's opinions on divorce as preeminently Biblical. Unlike the 'scandalous' Bucer, Calvin recognized divorce for adultery only

and the so-called "Pauline privilege" (i.e., willful desertion, 1 Cor. 7:15). The cases of marital difficulty which confronted Geneva's Venerable Company of Pastors demonstrates the challenge which the Biblical doctrine demanded of the church and the state.

In 1541, Geneva would reverse its ban and beg Calvin to return. While he hesitated ("I would rather die a hundred deaths"), he nevertheless submitted once more to the all-disposing providence of God. Promptly and sincerely (eventually), he offered his heart and his life to the Lord in moving back to Geneva on September 13, 1541. The pilgrim returns!

One condition of his return was agreement on church discipline. But though tacit accord was granted, it would be fourteen long years (1541-1555) of struggle with the ruling Council before Calvin's Biblical views were firmly in place. Even when they agreed in principle, in practice the magistrates held the reins of their political power in a death grip. Only their death and replacement would bring Calvin the real separation of church and state on ecclesiastical discipline.

Calvin now began his remarkable preaching regimen at San Pierre and lecturing protocol at la Madeleine: twice each Sunday (morning and afternoon); everyday of the week on alternate weeks; Friday lectures at la Madeleine (the basis of many of his commentaries). He is known to have preached more than 2000 sermons, only about 700 of which survive due to the foolish decision of a 19th century librarian in Geneva to discard some old manuscripts in order to free-up shelf space. The librarian's dilemma turned into a nightmare—the old manuscripts were, in fact, Calvin's sermons in transcription. A few bundles of these precious documents were eventually recovered (thanks to the Monods). Today, the on-going task of editing and translating these surviving manuscripts advances apace.

There were, of course, opponents. Selderhuis reviews the tensions with Sebastian Castellio (140-42), Pierre Ameaux (148f.), Ami Perrin (151-52), Michael Servetus (203-6) and Jerome Bolsec (189-94). Every orthodox Christian pilgrim faces thorn bushes along the way.

Our author disappoints with his treatment of the disagreement between Calvin and the brilliant classics teacher he recruited from Strasbourg, Sebastian

Castellio. In particular, the dispute between the two over the canonicity of the Song of Solomon was far more pointed than our biographer lets on. Castellio had labeled the sublime Song a "lascivious and obscene poem" (CO 11:675). Calvin, in defending this beautiful expression of marital love, had aligned himself with the historic Jewish and Christian opinion about the work.

But Selderhuis reviews the Servetus affair with care and fairness. We acknowledge that Calvin was a man of his time in this matter (heretics were executed by Roman Catholic states as well as Protestant ones in the 16th century; in fact, had Servetus not escaped from a Roman Catholic prison, he would have been executed by the Tridentine Counter-Reformation. The fact that he begged, on his knees, to be tried in Geneva and not in Vienne, sealed his fate to a Protestant tribunal); nevertheless, we are also reminded that Christianity is not a religion of the sword in matters of personal religious belief. As Paul reminds us, "the weapons of our warfare are not carnal" (2 Cor. 10:4). Yet, it has taken some Christians many years to learn and appreciate this truth—that the Christian sojourn often requires submission to suffering, not the imposition of suffering. N.B.: our author appears to be mistaken when he writes that Calvin asked for Servetus to be "hanged" (205) rather than burned at the stake. Other sources indicate he appealed for beheading as the more merciful alternative.

Jerome Bolsec troubled Calvin over predestination, accusing him of making God the author of sin. Calvin's response also completed his previous work on the bondage of the will (*The Bondage and Liberation of the Will*) against Albert Pighius (1543). Selderhuis has traced the Pauline doctrine of predestination in Calvin throughout his biography—a pilgrim to the celestial city is one predestined from the foundation of the world. Calvin found it to be so in his own experience of union with Christ (as Augustine before him) and so proclaimed and defended that marvelous doctrine in perhaps his most mature formulation of the matter—"Consensus Genevensis: Calvin on Eternal Predestination" (*RC*, 693-820). As John Gerstner once quipped (and Calvin would agree), predestination is "double or nothing"—election and reprobation.

With the political and social crisis of 1555, the "winds were finally at Calvin's back" (214). Precipitated by the xenophobia of the French refugee immigrants to Geneva, the so-called *Enfants de Genève* ("Children of Geneva," old native Genevans or *citoyens*) reacted with resentment and political maneu-

vering. Led by Ami Perrin (ironically one of those who begged Calvin to return in 1541) and his allies, they planted a rumor that the new French immigrant *bourgeois* were a fifth column intent upon subverting the city and capturing it for the king of France. On May 16, 1555, a riot broke out in which the mayor of Geneva intervened personally in order to pacify the crowd. Perrin seized the mayoral staff (symbol of his authority in office). This was a visible act of treason (grasping for the reins of power) and the official reaction quickly forced Perrin to flee Geneva, while four of his collaborators were arrested and executed. A number of the Children of Geneva also left the city. The election of 1555 placed the supporters of Calvin firmly in control of ecclesiastical and political functions. At long last, the dispute over the particular prerogatives of the church in distinction from those of the state was settled. The old guard which brought the Reformation to Geneva retired from the scene (214). But Selderhuis does not note that this element was simply laying low for another day—their grandsons and grand-daughters would be the vanguard of the literati and proto-Enlightenment forces of the mid-17th to 18th centuries. Pierre Bayle, Jean-Alphonse Turretin and Voltaire would repudiate the heritage of Calvin in the name of a different pilgrimage—a sojourn to tyranny and the suppression of Christian freedom with the ridicule of the gospel as well as the ethic of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Our author is aware of the Weber-Tawney thesis and its reflection on Calvinism and capitalism (218). Addison H. Leitch, once President of Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary, explored this issue in his own sadly forgotten dissertation (*Calvinism and Capitalism*, 1938).

Selderhuis provides a useful overview of Calvinistic resistance theory (246-48), i.e., the liberty of subjects to resist, even by revolution, unjust rulers through the actions of their duly constituted political representatives. This noble tradition of liberty over tyranny unfolds through Theodore Beza, Francis Hotman, the English Puritans, the Scots (and Scots-Irish) Presbyterians and thus distinguishes the American Revolution (1776) from the Enlightenment-spawned anarchistic bloody French Revolution of 1789 (cf. George L. Hunt, *Calvinism and the Political Order*).

On pages 233-34, there is a thoughtful reflection in which Calvin engages the question of serving the Lord's Supper to members of the church

who are shut-in or otherwise physically unable to attend at the place of public worship. More contemporary Reformed churches would do well to consider these remarks, for, in fact, pastoral and spiritual neglect, not moral fault, lies behind this custom. Why should the church penalize those whom God in his providence has hindered through physical indisposition by withholding the sealing ordinances from them, otherwise members in good standing? Calvin's remarks here are worthy of imitation.

My strongest criticism of this book is Selderhuis's sneering remarks about the Puritan Sabbath (224-25). He uses the Puritan doctrine to promote what he regards as Calvin's decidedly non-Puritan view. Well, what did Calvin advocate on the Lord's day Sabbath? Our author notes: "going to church, praising God, prayer and confession of faith" (225). What Puritan Sabbatarian would object?! He continues by noting that Calvin had all restaurants closed on Sunday so everyone could be in church? What Puritan Sabbatarian would object?! He further notes that Calvin insisted servants were to be granted Sunday rest in order to join the saints in worship. What Puritan Sabbatarian would object?! Hence, our author's denigration of Puritan Sabbatarianism turns out to be unfounded prejudice. In practice, Calvin was as Puritan as the Puritans (as a reading of his sermons on Dt. 5:12-15 will confirm).

John Calvin's semi-eschatological pilgrimage ended May 27, 1564. He had written: "we are always heading towards death, it comes near to us and we must in the end go to it" (250). Calvin went to it in faith and confidence in the eschatological Pilgrim. He too from the time of his birth was heading toward death and when it came near him, surrendered himself to it that in the end he might go beyond it to resurrection and life eternal body and soul. The soul of John Calvin on that May day went beyond; his body lies in an unmarked grave in Geneva awaiting the full consummation of his pilgrimage—resurrection conformity to the body-soul union of the risen Lord Jesus, his Savior. That is the legacy of every believer in the Son of God—a pilgrim's life now and not yet, a sojourn completed "in Christ". Reading Selderhuis's book will awaken and refresh that blessed hope in the believer who walks with John Calvin from Noyon (1509) to Geneva (1564) and into the kingdom of heaven.

"Our life is framed as it ought to be . . . by [the] effect that our inheritance is in heaven, and that we pass through this world, and never stay in it" (John Calvin, *Timothy and Titus*, 1022).

Reviews

[*K:NWTS* 24/2 (Sep 2009) 51-60]

Peter C. Bouteneff, *Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008. 240 pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3233-2. $22.99.

Peter C. Bouteneff is an associate professor of theology at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Crestwood, New York. His "Eastern" bias is immediately apparent in his choice of subjects: mostly Greek-speaking theologians prior to Augustine. In the preface, Bouteneff especially thanks John McGuckin (a fellow Orthodox scholar) for reviewing a draft of the book before publication. Those familiar with McGuckin's name will be initially encouraged, as he has published a number of helpful books on patristic subjects, particularly his very handy *The Westminster Handbook to Patristic Theology* (2004).[1] McGuckin's penchant for primary sources is shared by Bouteneff and is evident throughout this work.

Bouteneff begins his study with Genesis 1-3. This is followed by a brief survey of other Biblical references to the account, as well as later interpretations in the Jewish apocrypha. Chapter 2, which focuses on the New Testament, is devoted solely the apostle Paul, with no references to the Gospels, General Epistles, or Revelation. Again, Bouteneff's Eastern bias is immediately apparent in his choice of post-canonical subjects—Tertullian is the only Western author included in his treatment. As he covers only the first four centuries, the

1 Previously reviewed in *Kerux* (19/3 [December 2004]: 38-40) by James T. Dennison, Jr.

important views of Augustine (a Western theologian!) on this matter are left outside of his scope. This shortcoming is balanced by the fact that although he is aware of contemporary scholars (following Walter Bauer) who attempt to blur the line between "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in the early fathers, he himself tends to resist this temptation.

In his initial treatment of Genesis 1-3, Bouteneff clearly embraces some form of the classic documentary hypothesis, attributing the "two creation narratives" to separate authors, brought together in a redaction which allegedly "took place quite late"—perhaps as late as the "first and second centuries BCE" (2). His later argument that "Genesis 1 reflects the priestly interest in (cultic) order, in placement, and in distinction…" (3), confirms this suspicion. Bouteneff had previously informed us that the project of his book was to "listen to what the early Christian tradition has to say about Genesis 1-3" and to "take the writers on their own terms" (xiv). Well said. But it would have been good for him to have extended this courtesy to Moses as well.

Because of this critical bias, Reformed readers will find little fruitful biblical theology in Bouteneff's initial treatment of the "creation narratives." Bouteneff seems entirely concerned in this chapter with amputating Genesis 1-3 from the rest of the organically unfolding divine self-disclosure—something the fathers he discusses in the later chapters never did. This leads him to theological conclusions that would find happy reception only among the likes of Pelagius and Socinus.[2] However, in these pages Bouteneff openly lays most of his theological cards on the table, and gives the reader a clue as to what he will be looking for in his treatment of the early fathers.

Because his interest is in the Greek-speaking theologians, it is no surprise that he devotes several pages to a discussion of the LXX versions of Genesis 1-3. But this is largely devoted to some of the translational difficulties that arise whenever one language is rendered into another. His treatment of the later OT references to the creation account are largely an exercise in explaining them away, as Bouteneff refers to only a few of them as "rare cases of explicit

2 "The transgression, too, is an ongoing reality or activity; Scripture does not present the fall of man as an event but as humanity gone awry…it is not because Adam sinned that everything is askew; it is because everyone *is sinning*" (8). A rejection of the historicity of Adam and Pelagian soteriology go hand in hand. If the former is rejected, Adam's only soteriological function can be to serve as a symbolical-mythical example which humans imitate.

reference to the paradise story outside the Pentateuch and before the second century BCE" (14). It is as if the creation theme is systematically dissected from God's progressively and organically unfolding self-revelation. This only serves to confirm the fact that no real biblical theology can be formulated upon critical lines. As Geerhardus Vos so insightfully noted over 100 years ago:

> These [destructive critical views] however much may be asserted to the contrary, *disorganize* the Scriptures. Their chief danger lies, not in affirmations concerning matters of minor importance, concerning errors in historical details, but in the most radical claims upsetting the inner organization of the whole body of truth.[3]

Again, Bouteneff's critical bias comes out when he argues that "it has long been shown that Babylonian and Canaanite creation myths had considerable influence on the resurgent interest in, and the content of, the biblical creation narratives" (16).

Bouteneff's treatment of Paul is characterized by the same critical emphases. For him, Paul is ultimately controlled by the paradigms of his contemporary Judaism, though introducing several new elements within it. His analysis focuses primarily on Romans 1 and 5, as well as 1 Corinthians 15 as these texts relate to the themes of "sin" and "death." Incidentally, statements that Augustinians would find objectionable in this section are too numerous for us to count.[4]

Chapter 3 brings us out of this critical-liberal wilderness and into the refreshing land of the second century apologists. He begins with the great Justin Martyr. Here Bouteneff rightly characterizes Justin's exegetical approach as both typological and Christocentric: "[he sees] Christ as the key to reading the OT, and the OT as the key to reading Christ" (61). However, since Justin's (extant) discussion of Genesis is very brief, it only receives a few pages of treatment. The next to receive treatment is Melito of Sardis. As with Justin,

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3 Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (2001) 22.

4 For example: "The idea of 'original sin' as a causal factor lies not with Paul but with Jerome and, on the basis of Jerome's translation, with Augustine. Neither in Paul nor in the rest of the Bible is there a doctrine of original guilt, wherein all are proleptically guilty in Adam" (41-42).

his discussion of Melito's Christocentric typology is accurate, but his extant writings leave little material to develop his doctrine of creation. In contrast to Justin and Melito, Bouteneff's next subject, Theophilus of Antioch, says next to nothing about the person of Christ. Bouteneff's discussion of myth and history in Theophilus accurately reveals the latter's concern for the concrete historicity of the biblical narrative (72-73), but his accusation that Theophilus engaged in allegory does not seem well-founded.[5] The final figure to receive discussion in this chapter is Irenaeus of Lyons. All the main points of Irenaean theology are highlighted: the unity of the testaments, Christological reading of Scripture, the rule of faith, and the Trinity. This is followed by a more extensive discussion of Irenaean "recapitulation," specifically as it applies to his understanding of Genesis 1-3. However, Bouteneff's reading of Irenaeus is tainted at several points. He seems to resist the idea that for Irenaeus, Adam's historicity is essential[6]:

> Adam…has a primarily symbolic function for Irenaeus. Adam's creation and predicament represent those of the human person generally and reflect the logic of the divine economy. Adam's historic existence, seemingly taken for granted, is not a factor in the discussion (84).

To us, this seems to reflect Karl Barth's reading of Genesis 1-3 much more than Irenaeus's.[7] So much for reading the fathers "on their own terms."

Chapter 4 contains a discussion of Tertullian (about 5 pages) and Origen (about 35 pages). His treatment of the latter reflects a growing scholarly

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5 In his *Letter to Autolycus* (2.14), Theophilus compares the movement of the growth of a tree to the resurrection from the dead. His words are: "Consider, further, their variety, and diverse beauty, and multitude, and how through them resurrection is exhibited, for a pattern of the resurrection of all men which is to be. For who that considers it will not marvel that a fig-tree is produced from a fig-seed, or that very huge trees grow from the other very little seeds?" Must this be classified as allegory? In our mind, it is no different from the apostle Paul's use of agricultural imagery to describe the resurrection of the dead in 1 Cor. 15:35-38. Christ himself, in John 12:23-26, spoke in a similar manner. Theophilus's hermeneutic seems in keeping with that of the NT (and especially Jesus) on this point, where the natural world everywhere contains, as it were, a parable of the supernatural.

6 As we shall see, this is a theme that will recur throughout the book.

7 This is no mere conjecture on our part. On pages 45-46, Bouteneff actually cites (approvingly) Barth's famous take on the fall narrative in Genesis 2-3.

consensus on a re-reading of Origen's understanding of allegory and history in Origen's exegesis, namely, that Origen's "spiritual" (or allegorical) sense of Scripture was not intended to supplant the literal. However, here Barth's specter raises its head again in his discussion of Origen's view of the historicity of Adam and Eve. Bouteneff argues that "…Origen's ambivalent treatment of paradise leaves ambiguous their status as historical persons" (110). Later he concludes that "…even if Origen had no particular reason to doubt Adam's historicity, it is of no consequence as such to his theological vision" (112). Once again, it seems the unwitting college or seminary student is being prepared to accept a broad Neo-Orthodox paradigm through a study of the church fathers. On this point, Bouteneff seems more concerned about how Origen fits with modern theological paradigms than with his stated goal of reading the fathers "on their own terms."[8] Aware of this flaw, the reader can still benefit from his helpful discussion of Origen's thoroughly Christocentric exegesis (115-16).

Chapter 5 is an extended discussion of the Cappadocian Fathers, prefaced by a very short discussion of Cyril and Athanasius. Bouteneff's brief discussion (2 pages) of the latter is simply a continuation of his apparent Neo-Orthodox apology. He alleges that for each of these fathers Adam is simply a "timeless element in an ongoing story" (122) and "something of a mythical figure" (123). His treatment of the Cappadocians is more detailed, and focuses a great deal on their relationship to Origen. While other aspects of their interpretation of the creation narrative are not neglected, special attention is given to their understanding of the historicity of Adam. As before, his importance is viewed largely in Pelagian or semi-Pelagian terms, sifted through a modern "Barthian" grid (138-39, 150-51, 166, 173-75). Bouteneff never seems to deal with the burning question: if it is not necessary to believe in the historicity of the first Adam, why believe in the historicity of the second Adam? The book concludes with a collective summary of the father's views on the Hexaemeron in general, Paradise, and Adam, as well as a concluding analysis of their understanding of the hermeneutical issues related to allegory, type, myth, and history.

We do not have the space in this review to engage all of Bouteneff's argu-

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8 In private correspondence with this reviewer, Bouteneff denied that his goal was to show how the fathers' views on creation harmonize with the teachings of modern theology and science. However, we cannot help but feel that he has to some degree read the concerns of modern theologians regarding biblical history and science back onto the early fathers.

ments regarding the early Patristic views on the creation narratives. We will have to limit our critical interaction to his exposition of Irenaeus's view of the historicity of Adam. As noted above, Bouteneff claims that "Adam…has a primarily symbolic function for Irenaeus" and that his historic existence "is not a factor in the discussion" (84). In other words, Bouteneff maintains that the historicity of Adam is non-essential in Irenaean theology. He may have affirmed it, but it is simply not important in his theology.

We do not have the space to engage in a full-fledged defense of an Augustinian reading of texts like Romans 5:12-21 and 1 Corinthians 15:21-22. Our point here lies with Bouteneff's reading of Irenaeus: is Adam's historicity theologically essential for him? Let us listen to Irenaeus's own words. In *Against Heresies*, 5.16.3, Irenaeus speaks of the God

> …whom indeed we had offended in the first Adam, when he did not perform His commandment. In the second Adam, however, we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death.[9]

Note the parallel: we offended God "in the first Adam (εν μεν τω πρωτω Αδαμ), when he did not perform His commandment." His sin was our sin; his offense, our offense; his disobedience, our disobedience. Likewise, "in the second Adam (εν δε δευτερω Αδαμ) …we are reconciled, being made obedient even unto death." For Irenaeus, the first Adam's historical disobedience is as theologically important as the second Adam's historical obedience: the latter is recapitulatory of the former. There is an actual, historical-temporal solidarity that binds Adam to his descendants—a solidarity that cannot be reduced to exemplaristic categories. For Irenaeus, we "offended in the first Adam, *when* he did not perform (μη ποιησαντες) his commandment." The aorist active participle "ποιησαντες" is accurately translated with the word "when" or "after," and indicates a past completed action.[10] In other words, it throws the emphasis on the time in which we are reckoned to have "offended in the first Adam." His thought is not that we are presently offending God when we imitate

9 *ANF*, 1:544

10 "…when a Greek present participle is translated by a temporal clause in English, the English word that introduces the temporal clause it naturally *while*, and when it is an aorist participle that is to be translated into English, the English word introducing the temporal clause is naturally *when* or *after*." J. Gresham Machen, *New Testament Greek for Beginners* (1923) 117.

Adam's bad example, but that we had offended (προσεκοψαμεν - note the aorist) God *when* (ποιησαντες) Adam did not perform his commandment. The aorist tense serves to underscore not merely the mythical-symbolical, but rather the temporal-historical solidarity between Adam and his descendents (they are "εν...τω πρωτω Αδαμ"). They sin not only *as* he sinned or *after the pattern* of his sin, but they sinned *when* he sinned (cf. Rom. 5:14).[11]

Another passage from *Against Heresies* (5.14.1) indicates that Irenaeus not only affirmed, but also attributed fundamental theological significance to Adam's historicity:

> [Christ] had Himself been made flesh and blood after the way of the original formation [of man], saving in his own person at the end that which had in the beginning perished in Adam.[12]

For Irenaeus, the creation of the first historical Adam provides the pattern for Christ's incarnation. The same nature of the first man which had been corrupted was purified through a true incarnation. Christ, the second Adam, had to be made flesh and blood in the same way as the first Adam. This is not merely a theologically indifferent affirmation of Adam's historical existence, but an attribution of fundamental theological (recapitulatory) significance to such historicity.

This point is further underscored by Irenaeus's earlier comments in *Against Heresies*, 3.21.10. Though lengthy, it is necessary to have Irenaeus's own words before us so we can read him "on his own terms":

> For as by one man's disobedience sin entered, and death obtained [a place] through sin; so also by the obedience of one man, righteousness having been introduced, shall cause life to fructify in those persons who in times past were dead. And as the protoplast himself Adam, had his substance from

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11 This is not to deny that Irenaeus (and the NT writers) refers to Christ and the saints as an example for believers (cf. *AH*, 2.22.4, 4.27.3, 4.5.5, 4.31.1). It is to affirm, however, that the significance of the obedience of Christ and the disobedience of Adam cannot be *reduced* to mere exemplarism, as Boutenheff seems to maintain (8).

12 *ANF*, 1:541

> untilled and as yet virgin soil ("for God had not yet sent rain, and man had not tilled the ground"), and was formed by the hand of God, that is, by the Word of God, for "all things were made by Him," and the Lord took dust from the earth and formed man; so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling Him to gather up Adam [into Himself], from Mary, who was as yet a virgin. If, then, the first Adam had a man for his father, and was born of human seed, it were reasonable to say that the second Adam was begotten of Joseph. But if the former was taken from the dust, and God was his Maker, it was incumbent that the latter also, making a recapitulation in Himself, should be formed as man by God, to have an analogy with the former as respects His origin. Why, then, did not God again take dust, but wrought so that the formation should be made of Mary? It was that there might not be another formation called into being, nor any other which should [require to] be saved, but that the very same formation should be summed up [in Christ as had existed in Adam], the analogy having been preserved.[13]

Here Irenaeus draws attention to the recapitulatory analogy (ανακεφαλαωθη… ομοιοτητος) between the formation of the first and second Adam. As it was (*quemadmodum*) with the first Adam, so also (*sic et*) it is with the second. Even as the first Adam was formed by the Word of God without a father and from the "virgin soil," so also the second Adam was formed by God through the Virgin Mary. Like Adam, he is born without a Father, but in such a way that he truly assumes the substance (*substantiam*) of man so as to "gather up Adam [into himself], from Mary."

In this passage, Irenaeus not only affirms Adam's historical existence, but attributes to it profound theological (yea, incarnational!) significance. Indeed, we would go so far as to say that for Irenaeus, a denial of the historicity of Adam is as inimical to Christianity as a denial of the true manhood and incarnation of Christ. To paraphrase the apostle Paul, if there was no creation

13 *ANF*, 1:454

of an historical Adam then Christ became incarnate in vain. It was necessary (εδει / *oportebat*) that the "very same formation" (αυτος εκεινος / *eadem ipsa*) that is characteristic of the first Adam be summed up in the second. Therefore, we can hardly conclude (with Bouteneff) that in Irenaeus's theology Adam's historic existence is "not a factor in the discussion" (84). Nor can we say that "Adam's creation and predicament represent those of the human person generally" (ibid.). On the contrary, Irenaeus attributes significance to Adam's formation and disobedience that finds it's *only* parallel in the formation and obedience of the second Adam, and not in any other human individual or humanity in general.

The greatest strength of this book is how it points to the Christocentric exegesis of nearly all of these early Greek fathers. This book is just as much about Biblical interpretation as it is about early readings of Genesis 1-3. Readers of this journal will be happy to find so many kindred spirits in the early church. Furthermore, the book is also very well-written in smooth academic prose. The major weakness of this book is that it fails to live up to its stated goal of reading the fathers "on their own terms." At many crucial theological points, this book reads much more like a Patristic primer for a Barthian reading of the Genesis narrative. In our opinion, those truly interested in reading the fathers "on their own terms" will have to turn elsewhere.[14] The best place to go, of course, will be to the primary documents. At the very least, those interested in the patristic understanding of Genesis 1-3 will find this book helpful in locating the relevant passages scattered throughout the writings of these fathers. If one follows the citations and utilizes Bouteneff's commentary critically, this book can serve a very useful purpose in exploring the early church's understanding of these marvelous chapters of sacred Scripture. This book does have its strengths. The author has clearly read his sources, and will expose the reader to the Christocentric richness of much Patristic exegesis. Bruised and broken sons of Adam will find their exegesis and proclamation of the second Adam sweet balm for their helpless souls. But because of the major interpretive and theological weaknesses outlined above, we must regrettably say that most

14 In fairness to Bouteneff, he does provide a mild disclaimer on page xiv when he tells us that the book "does not pretend to be an entirely disinterested study. Rather it seeks a purposeful discussion that highlights writers selected for their seminal importance in Christian theology and life, in particular within traditions such as my own." However, at crucial points, we believe that these contemporary concerns have kept Boutenheff from an accurate portrayal of these fathers's theology.

(Augustinian) readers of this journal will find that one of the best things about Bouteneff's *Beginnings* is that it eventually came to an end.

—Benji Swinburnson

[*K:NWTS* 24/2 (Sep 2009) 60]

Francis X. Gumerlock, trans. *The Seven Seals of the Apocalypse: Medieval Texts in Translation*. Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 2009. 96pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-1-58044-108-7. $11.00.

We mention this small contribution by our friend, Frank Gumerlock, because it is a fascinating window into the Medieval interpretation of the book of Revelation. Frank has translated into English fifteen texts featuring the seven seals of Revelation 5-8. These range from the 6th (Apringius of Beja, Portugal) to the 15th century (Giovanni Nanni of Viterbo, Italy). The texts are divided into: Christological interpretation (i.e., the seven seals refer to seven phases of the life of Christ—incarnation, baptism, passion, etc.); ecclesiastical interpretation (i.e., the seals refer to future events in the history of the Christian church); and historical interpretation (i.e., world history is divided into seven ages which are identified with the seven seals).

Each of these interpretations is summarized in a brief but thorough introduction (15-25), followed by the representative texts (27-72). The notes are excellent; the bibliography virtually definitive; and the translations fluid and clear. Students of the history of interpretation will find the selection from Joachim of Fiore especially intriguing on account of its popularity even among modern millenarian expositors.

Bizarre interpretations of the book of Revelation is nothing new, as these selections demonstrate. All of which makes us appreciate the simplicity of the amillennial approach in contrast to these oft fanciful expositions. But throughout these selections, the adoration and exaltation of the Son of God is expressed. The church in every age, regardless of eschatological opinion, surely rejoices in him—the "Lamb that was slain" (Rev. 5:6, 9), who is worthy of all praise, honor, glory and blessing (Rev. 5:12).

—James T. Dennison, Jr.