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Book Reviews
The status of justification by faith in Paul’s thought: a brief survey of a modern debate

Ronald Y. K. Fung

Ronald Fung teaches theology at China Graduate School of Theology. He was awarded his PhD from Manchester University in 1975.

It is well known that Martin Luther considered justification by faith to be the article of Christian belief by which the Church would stand or fall. From the Reformation period to comparatively recent times, that doctrine was generally held to represent the content of at least the central tenet of Paul’s theology. Since the mid-nineteenth century, however, some have disputed the estimate of that doctrine and given an entirely different appraisal of its status in the apostle’s thought, while others have upheld, with or without modification, the traditional understanding. The following survey of the course of scholarly research that bears upon this subject, which makes no claim to being exhaustive, will reveal that four broad positions may be distinguished.

1. The first view regards the doctrine of justification by faith as being of merely subsidiary significance to Paul and considers the centre of his theology to lie elsewhere.

a. R. A. Lipsius was apparently the first to suggest that there were two trains of thought in Paulinism, the one based on the judicial idea of justification, the other having its starting point in the condition of need of the new life created by the Spirit, and that what was really effective in redemption was union with Christ, brought about by the Spirit, which transformed the believer’s personality. A. Sabatier made the first important attempt to prove the existence of different phases in the thought and life of Paul: his theory was that the apostle advances from the simple doctrine of justification by faith, which occupies a dominant position in his Hauptsbegriffe, to a speculatively developed doctrine of justification by faith, and from the latter to the ‘captivity epistles’, and he (i.e. Sabatier) did not give the same prominence to the coexistence of the juridical and ethical series of ideas as did some of the later writers. Similarly, H. Lüdemann, who designated these two lines of thought as ‘a religious or subjectively ideal line’ and ‘an ethical or objectively real line’ respectively, saw ‘a noteworthy transformation of the central idea of Pauline theology’ whereby the juridical-subjective doctrine of justification by faith was gradually eased out of the central position which it once occupied in Paul’s gospel and its place taken by the ethicological doctrine of redemption which was the apostle’s actual, definitive view of man’s salvation in Christ.

b. In C. von Weizsäcker’s construction of Paulinism, the concept of ethical renewal is replaced by the notion of divine sonship, in which Weizsäcker found the central point of salvation to Paul. For the juridical doctrine of righteousness, Weizsäcker observed that (i) it did not exhaust the whole of Paul; (ii) it was given prominence only in Romans and Galatians and nowhere else in the construction of conflict with Jewish doctrine, and (iii) in his independent doctrinal system it did not occupy the chief place.

To R. Kabisch, Pauline theology was eschatological on one hand, and eschatological orientation being consciously dependent upon Jewish conceptions of his time, and ‘justification’ (like ‘reconciliation’) was subservient to salvation, which Paul conceived in terms of eschatological deliverance and destruction. Thus, as Lüdemann had made religion independent of his starting-point in trying to understand the apostle’s doctrine of redemption from a single point of view, so Kabisch took eschatology as his point of departure; both agree with the interpreters mentioned above, that the centre of Paul’s doctrine lay elsewhere than in justification.


Shortly after the turn of the century, T. Wrede—a name which is often only known through the work of W. G. Kümmel, whom W. G. Kümmel has called the ‘real radical’ in the field of Pauline studies—gave in his study of the apostle what might be considered an elaboration on Weizsäcker’s thesis. Categorically denying the Reformation view of justification by faith as the central point of Pauline doctrine, Wrede claims that ‘the whole Pauline religion can be expounded without a word being said about this doctrine’, the ‘real significance’ of which he finds in the affirmation that ‘it is the polemical doctrine of Paul, only made intelligible by the struggle of his life, his controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity, and is only intended for this’. This doctrine, according to Wrede, ‘had its immediate origin in the exigencies of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles’ and furnished ‘the theoretical support for emancipation from Jewish institutions’, and the true essential Pauline doctrine is not justification, but redemption—redemption from the powers of the present world, flesh, sin, Law, death. How the polemical doctrine of justification is related to the essential doctrine of redemption Wrede does not say.

A similar view of the Pauline doctrine was proposed by W. Heitmüller in the course of a speech delivered at Philippus University in Marburg on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation. In attempting to demonstrate that Luther’s Christianity was not a reproduction or revival of Jewish religion, Heitmüller asserted that whereas with Luther justification stands absolutely in the centre for the simple reason that his conversion consisted in the experience of justification, Paul’s conversion was not a matter of sin and forgiveness but only the question whether the crucified Jesus was the Messiah.

The doctrine of justification was in his case fundamentally a polemical and apologetic doctrine: it first grew upon Paul and the missionary in the course of his mission and served to defend his law-free Gentile mission against Jewish-Christian attacks and perspectives. That the heathen do not need to boast had to do with the fact that the Jewish religion is not capable of leading to salvation, that is its original meaning.

As for Paul’s essential doctrine, Heitmüller would find it in the conception of the Holy Spirit as summing up the complex of religious experiences: ‘the Spirit makes the Christian certain of sonship, of salvation.’ A decade later, K. Holl could refer to the ‘logic view of Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith represented by Heitmüller as a widespread if not dominant view of his day.

It was A. Schweitzer who made perhaps the most elaborate attempt at showing the secondary nature of Paul’s doctrine of righteousness by faith. As he sees it, there are in fact three different doctrines of redemption in Paul’s theology: the centre of Paul’s thought is given in the mystical doctrine of dying and rising again with Christ, which replaces by an ‘internal’ one the ‘external interpretation’ of Jesus’ death and resurrection provided by the eschatological doctrine of redemption, while the juridical doctrine of righteousness by faith ‘is only a fragment from the more comprehensive mystical redemption-theory, which has broken off and polished to give him the particular refraction which he requires’. This judgment is based on a series of facts: (i) in Galatians, the doctrine is not yet independent but is worked out by the aid of the eschatological doctrine of the in-Christ mysticism; (ii) whether in Romans or Galatians, it appears always only in connection with the discussion required by his scriptural argument: what Paul ‘wants this subsidiary doctrine for is to enable him, through the particular construction of the atoning death of Christ, to conduct his controversy with the law by means of the argument from Scripture’; (iii) the doctrine is not brought into connection with the other facts of redemption and the resurrection of the Spirit, and it is impossible to develop the doctrine of redemption as a whole from the juridical doctrine of righteousness by faith, which is possible only from the mystical doctrine of the being-in-God.

Schweitzer holds that Paul’s conviction of the essential link between freedom from the law and forgiveness of sins is derived from the mystical doctrine of being-in-God, according to which when the dying Christ is free both from sin and from the Law. Since, on the one hand, ‘there is no argument against the
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1. The first view regards the doctrine of justification by faith as being of merely subsidiary significance to Paul and considers the centre of his theology to lie elsewhere.

R. A. Lipsius was apparently the first to suggest that there were two trains of thought in Paulinism, the one based on the judicial idea of justification, the other having its starting-point in the conception of the new life created by the Spirit, and that what was really effective in redemption was union with Christ, brought about by the Spirit, which transformed the believer’s personality. A. Sabatier made the first important attempt to prove the existence of different phases in the thought and life of Paul; his theory was that the apostle advances from the simple doctrine of justification by faith, which occupies a dominant position in his Hauptschriften, to a speculative development of that doctrine, the so-called ‘apostolic ideal’, and that Paul finally rejected the ‘captivity epistle’, and he (i.e. Sabatier) did not give the same prominence to the coexistence of the juridical and ethical series of ideas as did some of the later writers. Similarly, H. Lüdemann, who designated these two lines of thought as ‘a religious or subjectively ideal line’ and ‘an ethical or objectively real line’ respectively, saw ‘a noteworthy transformation in the very centre of Pauline anthropology’ whereby the juridical-subjective doctrine of justification by faith was gradually eased out of the central position which it once occupied in Paul’s gospel and its place taken by the ethico-psychological doctrine of redemption which was the apostle’s actual, definite view of man’s salvation in Christ.²

In C. von Weizsäcker’s construction of Paulinism, the concept of ethical renewal replaced the concept of divine sonship, in which Weizsäcker found the central point of salvation in Paul. For the juridical doctrine of righteousness, Weizsäcker observed that (i) it did not exhaust the whole of Paul; (ii) it was given prominence only in Romans and Galatians and even there only in a setting of conflict with Jewish doctrine; and (iii) in his independent doctrinal system it did not occupy the chief place.³

To R. Kabisch, Pauline theology was eschatologically oriented, this eschatological orientation being consciously determined even by Jewish conceptions of his time; and ‘justification’ (like ‘reconciliation’) was subservient to salvation, which Paul conceived of as eschatological deliverance from judgment and destruction. Thus, as Lüdemann had made it, ⁴ young Kabisch started out in trying to understand the apostle’s doctrine of redemption from a single point of view, so Kabisch took eschatology as his point of departure; both agreed with the interpreters mentioned above, that the centre of Paul’s doctrine lay elsewhere than in justification by faith.⁵

Shortly after the turn of the century, W. Wrede—who named ‘the real radical’ in the field of Pauline studies—gave rise to the study of the apostle what might be considered an elaboration on Weizsäcker’s thesis. Categorically denying the Reformation view of justification by faith as the central point of Pauline doctrine, Wrede claims that ‘the whole Pauline religion can be expounded without a word being said about this doctrine’, the ‘real significance’ of which he finds in a term from which ‘it is the polemical doctrine of Paul, is only made intelligible by the struggle of his life, his controversy with Judaism and Jewish Christianity, and is only intended for this’. This doctrine, according to Wrede, ‘had its immediate origin in the exigencies of Paul’s mission to the Gentiles’ and furnished ‘the theoretical support for emancipation from Jewish institutions’, and the true essential Pauline doctrine is not justification, but redemption—redemption from the powers of the present world, flesh, sin, law, death. How the polemical doctrine of justification is related to the essential doctrine of redemption Wrede does not say.⁶

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The doctrine of justification was in his case fundamentally a polemical and apologetic doctrine: it first grew upon Paul the missionary in the course of his mission and served to defend his law-free Gentile mission against Jewish-Christian attacks and perspectives. That the heathen do not need to be led to order to be blessed, and that the Jewish religion is not capable of leading to salvation, that is its original meaning.

As for Paul’s essential doctrine, Heitmüller would find it in the conception of the Holy Spirit as summarizing the complex of religious experiences: ‘the Spirit makes the Christian certain of some salvation.’⁸ A decade later, K. Holl could refer to the ‘low’ view of Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith represented by Heitmüller as a widespread if not dominant view of his day.⁹

It was A. Schweitzer who made perhaps the most elaborate attempt at showing the secondary nature of Paul’s doctrine of righteousness by faith. As he sees it, there are in fact three different doctrines of redemption in Paul’s theology: the centre of Paul’s thought is given in the mystical doctrine of dying and rising again with Christ, which replaces by an ‘internal’ one the ‘external interpretation’ of justifying faith, the death and resurrection provided by the eschatological doctrine of redemption, while the juridical doctrine of righteousness by faith ‘is only a fragment from the more comprehensive mystical redemption doctrine, which Paul has broken off and polished to give him the particular fraction which he requires’. This judgment is based on a ‘series of facts’; (i) in Galatians, the doctrine is not yet independent but is worked out by the aid of the eschatological doctrine of the in-Christ mysticism; (ii) whether in Romans or Galatians, it appears always only in connection with the discussion required by his scriptural argument: what Paul ‘wants this subsidiary doctrine for is to enable him, realizing the sacrificial and resurrectional conception of the atoning death of Christ, to conduct his controversy with the law by means of the argument from Scripture’; (iii) the doctrine is not brought into connection with the other facts of redemption or of the vindication of the Spirit, and it is impossible to develop the doctrine of redemption as a whole from the juridical doctrine of righteousness by faith, which is possible only from the mystical doctrine of the being-in-christ. Schweitzer holds that Paul’s conviction of the essential link between freedom from the law and forgiveness of sins is derived from the mystical doctrine of being-in-christ, according to which Christ’s doctrine that Christ and his followers are free both from sin and from the law. Since, on the one hand, ‘there is no argument against the

¹ W. Heitmüller, Luther’s Stellung in der Religionsgeschichte des Christentums (Marburg: N. G. Elwerts Verlag, 1904), 204f.
² K. Holl, Geschichte der Kirchengeschichte (Stuttgart, 1904), 204f.
⁹ Cf. A. Schweitzer, Paul and his interpreters, pp. 31ff.
validity of the Law to be derived directly from the atoning death of Jesus; and, on the other hand, according to his doctrine of the mystical being-in-Christ, freedom from the law and forgiveness of sins go hand in hand for Paul, he is 'forced by his mysticism to recast the doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus, in the sense of inserting into it the doctrine of freedom from the law'; in other words, he is forced to formulate freedom from the law, which is founded in his mysticism, also as righteousness by faith. The only way, however, for Paul to bring into close two even opposite ideas of freedom from the law and the death of Christ is 'by means of logical ingenuity', viz 'by showing by the argument from Prophecy that the only valid righteousness is that which comes from faith alone and that work-righteousness is incompatible with faith-righteousness'. 'The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore, Schwartz' concludes, 'a subsidiary crat, which has formed within the rim of this temple—the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ'; it is 'something incomplete and unfit to stand alone.'

This evaluation of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith is followed by H. J. Schoeps, who speaks of it as the scheme of Paul's thought 'a fragment of a doctrine of redemption, a polemic doctrine connected with the abrogatio legis and unconnected with ethics, a doctrine which may be understood only against the background of the very immature stage of Paul's thought'.

In the English-speaking world, one writer who has espoused a similar position is C. H. Buck, Jr. Largely on the basis of the non-use of the antithesis faith/works in 1 Corinthians 2 and 2 Corinthians 1:19-20 and in prominence in Galatians and Romans, Buck draws the 'inescapable conclusion' that 'justification by faith, while not incompatible with Paul's earlier doctrine, was actually formulated and expressed by him for the first time when he found it needed to meet the arguments of the Judaeans in Galatia'. Buck thinks it 'not at all unlikely' that the term justification derived its importance and at least a part of its meaning (as attested in Galatians and Romans) 'not from Paul's theological vocabulary but from that of its opposites'.

In a similar vein, K. Stendahl judges Schweitzer to be 'certainly right' in assigning only a limited function to Paul's teaching about justification, and considers that 'it was his grappling with the question about the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God... which led him to a new interpretation of the Law which was to become his in a unique way. Salvation history, then, described especially in Romans 9-11, rather than justification by faith, is to Stendahl the essence of Paul's theology.'

The heartrend-est encouragement of Schweitzer's evaluation of justification as a subsidiary doctrine in Paul has come from W. D. Davies and, most recently, from E. P. Sanders. Davies adduces the following arguments:

(i) in some contexts justification is merely one metonym which among other things is employed to describe his deliverance through Christ, and we are not justified in petrifying a metaphor into a dogma;

(ii) in those contexts where the idea of justification by Faith is central, we find that this is so only because of a certain presupposition (i.e. Paul's attitude to the old Torah (he practised obedience to it) and urged other Jewish Christians to do likewise) is only understandable when the doctrine of justification by Faith is regarded not as the essential principle of Paul's thought but as a secondary transformation which leads to the resurrection and ultimate transformation, in Christ's body and in the Spirit.

As for the juristic category of righteousness by faith, Sanders holds that (a) it is not a set doctrine with any fixed content, but a 'parlant' unparticular about terminology and the definition of the righteousness of faith varies—and (b) that it serves a primarily negative purpose—'as a negative argument against keeping the law as sufficient or necessary for salvation'.

It is significant that even when it is once that Paul was not conscious of any bifurcation in his own thinking: 'Christ's death was for acquittal and to provide participation in his death to those who were conceived not as two different things, but as one.'

Yet, even though Paul himself did not make this distinction, it is clear that the 'participationist' way of thinking brings one closer to the heart of Paul's thought than the theory of justification as distinguished. Sanders believes that 'there is a basic coherence in all this, but it is not systematically worked out.

Davies therefore has no hesitation in relegating the doctrine 'to the periphery... of Paul's thought'. As for E. P. Sanders' thought, the Davies suggests that this is to be found 'in his awareness that with the coming of Christ the Age to Come had become present fact the proof of which was the presentment of the Spirit' in his preaching.

In his study to locate a beginning point for the study of Paul, E. P. Sanders notes the debate between E. Käsemann and his critics and makes an observation in the manner of a syllogism: 'the heart of Paul's theology cannot be centred on the individual' (in Käsemann's view, Stendahl and others are correct); 'the particular formulation 'righteousness by faith' does primarily concern the individual' (e.g. Bultmann, Bornkamm and Conzelmann clearly maintain); 'hence the catch-word 'righteousness by faith' is the form of that faith which is central to Paul's thought'.

Sanders accepts Schweitzer's arguments against considering the terminology 'righteousness by faith' as central to Pauline thought as, 'cumulatively considered, convincing', and he maintains with Schweitzer that to take that phrase as the central theme of Paul's gospel is to miss the heart of his theology. In Sanders' view, the central place in Paul's soteriology is taken by the theme of participation: participation in Christ's death so that the body and the soul shall be transformed which leads to the resurrection and ultimate transformation, in Christ's body and in the Spirit.

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precise relation, for example, between acquittal and death to the power of sin did not appear to Paul as a question of moral judgement, but rather as a question of how one is to live a new life'.

If Davies, Sanders and others reveal in it the attempt by faith off the abiding influence of Schweitzer's original thesis, Strecke holds (i) that up to the time of 1 Thessalonians (taken to be Paul's earliest extant letter) the Problem of the law had not yet been fully thought through by Paul, since there is in this letter no reflection on the subject of justification; (ii) that Paul's persecution of the churches had not been motivated by the opposition between a Jewish piety based on the law and the (Gentile-)Christian freedom which was offered of a framework of sins that is declared in the name of Jesus Christ; (iii) that Paul's Damascenc encounter with Christ and the origin of his doctrine of justification are 'temporally and materially to be removed from each other', since in Galatians 1:12ff, despite the fact that in the letter Paul is seeking to combat Judaicist doctrine by working out his message of justification, he does not describe either his conversion or his commitment as an apostolic conversion; (iv) that according to Philippians 3:4-11 Paul originally did not interpret his call in the language of justification but rather 'in the Christologicontological sense, as the beginning of his recognition of the primacy of the advent'.

II

Over against the previous position, the second view

19 Ibid., pp. 502, 520, 423.
20 Geoscience and Reformation; zur Stellung der Reformation in der Theologie des Paulus, in Johannes Friedrich, Wolfgang Pöhlmann und Peter F. Xenophontes, ed., Thüringer Studien zur Kirchenverfassung, Nachrufe (Ernst Käsemann zum 70. Geburtstag) (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck, Vandenhoek und Ruprecht, 1967), pp. 497-508, especially (i) 481; (ii) 483, 505-506; (ii) 483; (iii) 485; (iv) 497; 579; (v) 508.
21 Ibid., p. 507; cf. Sanders, p. 501, 508, 519-520.
validity of the Law to be derived directly from the atoning death of Jesus; and, on the other hand, according to his doctrine of the mystical being-in-Christ, freedom from the law and forgiveness of sins go hand in hand for Paul, he is 'forced by his mysticism to recast the doctrine of the atoning death of Jesus, in the sense of inserting into it the doctrine of freedom from the law'; in other words, he is forced to formulate freedom from the law, which is founded in his mysticism, also as righteousness by faith. The only way, however, for Paul to bring into close connection two events of freedom from the law and the death of Christ is 'by means of logical ingenuities, viz. by showing by the argument from Prophecy that the only valid righteousness is that which comes from faith alone and that work-righteousness is incompatible with faith-righteousness'. The doctrine of righteousness by faith is therefore, Schweitzer concludes, a 'subsidiary crater, which has formed within the rim of the crater— the mystical doctrine of redemption through the being-in-Christ'; it is 'something incomplete and unfit to stand alone'.

This evaluation of the Pauline doctrine of justification by faith is followed by H. J. Scheps, who speaks of it as the scheme of Paul's thought 'a fragment of a doctrine of redemption, a polemic doctrine connected with the abrogatio legis and connected with ethics, a doctrine which may be understood only against the background of the very inimical practice not as a completely valid'. In the English-speaking world, one writer who has espoused a similar position is C. H. Buck, Jr. Largely on the basis of the non-use of the antithesis faith/works in 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians 1:9 and 11, Schweitzer draws the 'inescapable conclusion' that justification by faith, while not incompatible with Paul's earlier doctrine, was actually formulated and expressed by him for the first time when he found it necessary as the result of the arguments of the Judaizers in Galatia. Buck thinks it 'not at all unlikely' that the term justification derived its importance and at least a part of its meaning (as attested in Galatians and Romans) 'not from Paul's theological vocabulary but from that of its opponents'.

In a similar vein, K. Stendahl judges Schweitzer to be 'certainly right in assigning only a limited function to Paul's teaching about justification, and considers that 'it was his grappling with the question about the place of the Gentiles in the Church and in the plan of God . . . which had driven him to insert into the Law which was to become his in a unique way. Salvation history, then, described especially in Romans 9—11, rather than justification by faith, is to Stendahl the centre of Paul's theology'.

The heartrendingly honest of Schweitzer's evaluation of justification as a subsidiary doctrine in Paul has come from W. D. Davies and, most recently, from E. P. Sanders. Davies adduces the following arguments:

(i) In some contexts justification is merely one method among others (e.g. 2.7.11) to describe his deliverance through Christ, and we are not justified in petrifying a metaphor into a dogma;
(ii) In those contexts where the idea of justification by Faith is central, we find that this is so only because there is a certain parallelism (i.e. Paul's attitude to the old Torah (he practised obedience to it and urged other Jewish Christians to do likewise) is only understandable when the doctrine of Justification by Faith is regarded not as the essential principle but as a means of prefiguring and fostering a new relationship with the Spirit);
(iii) A doctrine such as justification by Faith, which has always to be hedged about so as not to lead to antinomianism, a plague that Paul dreaded, and which, as Schweitzer has rightly insisted, to any extent (e.g. as is often unparticular about terminology and the definition of the righteousness of faith varies—and (b) that it serves a primarily negative purpose—"as a negative argument against keeping the law as sufficient or necessary for salvation''.

It is clear that such a doctrine of justification forms 'a distinctive basis for understanding the law's role in the Christian's life'.

Davies therefore has no hesitation in relegating the doctrine 'to the periphery . . . of Paul's thought'. As Stevens has observed, Davies' thought does suggest that this is to be found 'in his awareness that with the coming of Christ the Age to Come had become present fact the proof of which was the impact of the Spirit on the converts'.

In his effort to locate a beginning point for the study of Paul, E. P. Sanders notes the debate between E. Käsemann and his critics and makes an observation in the manner of a syllogism: 'the heart of Paul's theology cannot be centred on the individual' (in W. D. Davies, Stendahl and others there are correct); 'the particular formulation 'righteousness by faith' does primarily concern the individual' (so Bultmann, Bornkamm and Conzelmann correctly maintain); hence 'the catch-word 'righteousness by faith' is not Paul's thought'. Sanders accepts Schweitzer's arguments against considering the terminology 'righteousness by faith' as central to Pauline thought as, 'cumulatively considered, convincing', and he maintains with Schweitzer that to take that phrase as the central theme of Paul's gospel is to miss the heart of his theology.

In Sanders' view, the central place in Pauline soteriology is taken by the theme of participation: participation in Christ's death so that participation in Christ's resurrection, transformation which leads to the resurrection and ultimate transformation, in Christ's body and in the Spirit. As for the juristic category of righteousness by faith, Sanders holds (a) that it is not a set doctrine with any external criteria but 'a Pauline non-logic which has not been the dominant factor in the thought of one who could never have separated religion and life'.

11 C. H. Buck, Jr, 'The Date of Galatians', JBL 70 (1951), pp. 113-122 (111f). Dr K. T. France kindly informed me that Buck's view is greatly expanded in the latter's book (with G. Taylor), Saint Paul: a study of the development of his theology (New York, 1962). The book is subject to analysis and heavy criticism in J. W. Drane, "Literary Diversity in Galatians 1:9-11" (Journal of Biblical Literature 79, 1960), pp. 498-505. Yet, even though the book has been published, I was not able to consult Buck's book for myself while reading my article's manuscript (e.g. esp. pp. 10f.) has given me, understanding, no new information on the specific point with which we are immediately concerned that 'we cannot accept as legitimate' as a re-formulation of justification as a late formulation in Paul's thought.

12 K. Stendahl, Theological and the subjective conceptions of the West, JTHR 56 (1963), pp. 191-204 (with n. 10). This article is reprinted in Stendahl's book, Theology of Paul (London, 1937), pp. 78-96 (84f. with n. 10; cf. 22f.); the latter work also contains a long and important letter (pp. 132-136) for his own statement of his thesis) to E. Käsemann's 'Die theologische Theologie Paul' (K. Stendahl, ed., Theology, Logical, and Rational Judaism (London: SPCK, 1993), pp. 22f.

13 Id., pp. 222f. Cf. Davies in IDB III, 111 (1900) for the same view.


16 Id., pp. 505-506.

17 Id., p. 507; cf. pp. 501, 508, 519-520.

precise relation, for example, between acquittal and death to the power of sin did not appear to Paul as a question of justification, which is, in fact, the meaning of Paul's 'I have not been the offer of a forgiveness of sins that is declared in the name of Jesus Christ; (iii) that Paul's Damascene encounter with Christ and the origin of his doctrine of justification are 'temporally and materially to be removed from each other', since in Galatians 1:12ff., despite the fact that in the letter Paul is seeking to combat Judaistic doctrine by working out his message of justification, he does not describe either his conversion or his assessment as an accomplishment of justification. (iv) that according to Philippians 3:2-11 Paul originally did not interpret his call in the language of justification but rather in the 'Christologico-ontological sense, as the beginning of his recognition of the (i.e. preaching) of justification transforms the view of justification forms 'a distinctive basis for understanding the law's role in the Christian's life'.

18 Over against the previous position, the second view

19 Id., pp. 502, 520, 433.

upholds the fundamental significance and even centrality of justification by faith in Paul’s theology. He depicts Paul’s Bekennenslehre in Paul was deprecated by J. G. Machen, to whom Wrede’s representation of Paul ‘reverses the real state of the case’:

The real reason why Paul was devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith was not that it made possible Millennialism, but rather that it was true. Paul was not devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith because of the Gentile mission; he was devoted to the Gentile mission because of the doctrine of justification by faith. 3

Similarly, G. Schrenk protested against Wrede’s account of the Pauline doctrine on the ground that Paul must first justify himself before his own earlier thinking, and his whole theology is rooted in this radical clarification of the question of the Law... That justification is a millennial doctrine and a keypost in the Christian mission is because there is exposed in it a new insight concerning the relation of the Law and the Christ. 4

Schweitzer’s assertion of a dichotomy in Paul is based on the assumption that redemption on the one hand and the juridical doctrine of justification on the other, also, was challenged by W. Grundmann, who, while accepting the juxtaposition of the two trains of thought, finds their Einheitspunkt in Paul’s interpretation of the law. Paul’s Damascus experience having made righteousness by law an impossibility for him, two inseparable questions arose for Paul out of his situation of legal piety:

(1) Since there is no righteousness of God in the law, where then is it to be found? (2) Since dominion of law and duration of life belong together, how is the situation with regard to the possibility of freedom from the law after death and the possibility of a new life that does not stand under the dominion of law?

Paul answers these questions with his doctrine of the righteousness of faith and his mysticism of being-in-Christ, respectively. Both are based on the act of God’s grace in the death and resurrection of Christ. 5

Paul’s doctrine of justification is founded both on the idea of the unity, as passages like Romans 3: 24, 6: 7, 7: 1-6; Galatians 2: 15-21; 2 Corinthians 5: 14-21 clearly show. Grundmann concludes that eschatology, mysticism and justification represent a Dreieinheit which realizes itself as redemption-event are its two sides, mysticism of the being-in-Christ and justification by faith, whereby the first provides the presupposition for the last. The Reformation view of justification as the basis of all the preaching was positively upheld by H. D. Wendland. He emphasizes the fact that Pauline theology is basically eschatological, and that this holds also for his doctrine of justification: it is not a ‘reception of the moral law’ or ‘adoption to it’. As eschatology to the position of man before God; it is ‘applied’ or anthropological eschatology. Justification is also christological in character: ‘In death and new life is Jesus the mediator of justification. There is no other justification-doctrine for Paul than a christological one.’ Nor is justification unrelated to ‘ethics’: ‘Paul turns the relationship of justification and work (as man’s moral behaviour) around: not that the work procures justification, but that the justification of faith makes it possible for it to become the power and basis of work, since it is realized in the coming of Christ.’ Justification has also an ecclesiological character: ‘Reception of the Spirit and baptism as incorporation into the church of God belong together, as also justification and membership in the church;’ justification and the sacraments are connected in that the sacrament is eschatologico-historical sacrament; it has the event of justification in Christ’s death and resurrection and his ascension and in Christ and the concept of church are finally bound together in Christology. On the basis of these observations, Wendland concludes that in Paul’s doctrine of justification by faith there is an isolated piece of teaching, where a definite concentration and tapering off of his entire message and theology. 10 To M. Dibelius and W. G. Käsemann, ‘there can be no doubt that Paul is to be understood in this context and not in relationship to mysticism’. To Conzelmann, the doctrine of justification is the central theme which holds together and normalizes other themes of theology: ‘in it the criteria for Gentile theology in theology will have to be sought’, and the correct approach to the ethical problems and crises of today is, he suggests, ‘to strive even more intensively for the doctrine of justification, to set it forth as the article of a standing and falling theology’. 11

But perhaps the stoutest defence in recent years of the centrality of justification in Paul that has come from G. Bornkamm and E. Käsemann. In Bornkamm’s view, ‘the unmistakably personal and peculiar factor in Paul’s understanding of the primitive kerygma’ consists in the fact that he ‘expounds and develops the Christian gospel as the gospel of justification by faith alone’; to set out the gospel concerning Christ as a gospel of justification, the gospel of salvation and vice versa, is a decisive concern of his whole theology, and ‘his whole teaching, even when it says nothing expressly about justification, can be properly understood only when taken in closest connection with justification’. As for those ‘schemes of classification not directly stemming from his doctrine of justification’, such as sacramental statements and existential terms, they are not to be played off against his gospel of justification, or separated from it or ranked above it. Influential as these mystico-ontological concepts and expressions are, Paul hardly uses them unqualified by his doctrine of justification. 12 In conclusion but it is true (in his words) that Käsemann affirms—largely in criticism of his master K. Stendahl whom he charges with ‘setting salvation history thematically over against the doctrine of justification’—that ‘Paul’s doctrine of justification, with the doctrine of the law that belongs to it, is essentially his interpretation of Christology’: it is the ‘centre of his theology’, the theme which dominates the whole of his theology; and while it indeed is ‘a fighting doctrine, directed against Judaism, the struggle which it represents is not a merely anti-Jewish affair and is not superseded even today. 13

The emphasis thus placed by Bornkamm and Käsemann on the centrality of Paul’s doctrine of justification is justified by his own statements and not only in polemical situations is regarded by F. F. Bruce as properly given; against the view of C. H. Buck and W. Wrede referred to above, Bruce maintains that ‘it is essential to justify faith in
upholds the fundamental significance and even centrality of justification by faith in Paul's theology. Paul's assertion that "freie Willenslehre" in Paul was deprecated by J. G. Machen, to whom Wrede's representation of Paul 'reverses the real state of the case':

The real reason why Paul was devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith was not that it made possible mission, but rather that it was true. Paul was not devoted to the doctrine of justification by faith because of the Gentile mission; he was devoted to the Gentile mission because of the doctrine of justification by faith. 1

Similarly, G. Schrenk protested against Wrede's account of the Pauline doctrine on the ground that Paul must first justify himself before his own earlier thinking, and his whole theology is rooted in this radical clarification of the question of the Law... That justification is a militant doctrine and a keypoint in the Christian mission is because there is exposed in it a new insight concerning the relation of the Law and Christ. 2

Schweitzer's assertion of a dichotomy in Paul's thought is a science of redemption on the one hand and the juridical doctrine of justification on the other, also, was challenged by W. Grundmann, who, while accepting the juxtaposition of the two trains of thought, finds their Einheitspunkt in Paul's interpretation of the law. Paul's Damascus experience having made righteousness by law an impossibility for him, two inseparable questions arose for Paul out of his situation of legal piety:

(1) Since there is no righteousness of God in the law, when then is it to be found? (2) Since dominion of law and duration of life belong together, how is the situation with regard to the possibility of freedom from the law after death and the possibility of a new life that does not stand under the dominion of law?

Paul answers these questions with his doctrine of the righteousness of faith and his mysticism of being-in-Christ, respectively. Both are based on the act of God's grace in the death and resurrection of Christ and on faith both in the idea of the oneness of humanity, as passages like Romans 3:24, 6:7, 7:1-6; Galatians 2:15-21; 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 clearly show. Grundmann concludes that eschatology, mysticism and justification represent a Dreieinheit, an "organic unity", which realizes itself as redemption-event are its two sides, mysticism of the being-in-Christ and justification by faith, whereby the first provides the presupposition for the last.

The Reformation view of justification as the centre of Paul's preaching was positively upheld by H. D. Wendland. He emphasizes the fact that Pauline theology is basically eschatology, and that this holds also for his doctrine of justification: it is the "condemnation of the old order". "Justification is the position of man before God; it is 'applied' or anthropological eschatology'. Justification is also christological in character: 'In death and new life is Jesus the mediator of justification. There is no other justification-doctrine for Paul than a christological one.' Nor is justification unrelated to 'ethics': 'Paul turns the relationship of justification and work (as man's moral behaviour) around: not that the work procures justification, but that justification is the condition of it. And this means that it can become the power and basis of work, since it is realized in the coming of Christ.' Justification has also an ecclesiastical character: 'Reception of the Spirit and baptism as incorporation into the church of God belong together, as also justification and membership in the church'; justification and the sacraments are connected in that 'the sacrament is eschatologico-historical sacrament; it has the event of justification in Christ's death and resurrection existentially and in itself and the concept of justification and the concept of church are finally bound together in Christology'. On the basis of these observations, Wendland concludes that in Paul's doctrine of justification by faith, it is an isolated piece of teaching, and that after a definite concentration and tapering off of his entire message and theology. 3 To M. Dibelius and W. G. Kummel, 'there can be no doubt that':

Paul is here that heart of Paul 'the thinker beats most vitally, and that it is here that we have to look for the core of his message'; while J. Packer adduces five considerations as pointing to 'the centrality of justification in Paul's theological and religious outlook'. These are that (i) the doctrine of justification is the Epistle to the Romans, which 'is evidently to be read as a treatise' and 'as a statement of Paul's gospel'; (ii) justification was evidently the root of Paul's personal religion; (iii) it is to Paul 'God's fundamental act of blessing, for salvation, past and secure for the future'; (iv) it is the basic reference point in Paul's doctrine of salvation; (v) it is 'the key to Paul's philosophy of history'. 4

If the dispute concerning Paul's doctrine of justification by faith has been largely a problem within Protestant theology, this does not mean that Catholic scholars have been completely silent about it. Thus, O. Kuss has taken issue with Wrede and (especially) Schweitzer, considering that it cannot be conducive to a historical understanding of the Pauline preaching to set the doctrine of righteousness by faith 'rigorously and one-sidedly' over against the mystical doctrine of being-in-Christ. And K. Kergelte, addressing himself specifically to the problem, bases his conclusion on the twofold consideration that (i) justification is 'the theological centre of gravity in the chief epistles of Paul', and that (ii) the theological function of the concept of justification is more than passing, polemical value ('it is valued as such by the Church in relation to God—hence the doctrine of justification is 'the real theology, and certainly the anthropologically inflected theology of Paul'. While, therefore, the doctrine is related to Paul's actual historical situation, it is also an element of the church and gospel and stands in the centre of his theological reflections. 5

The same emphasis is found, not surprisingly, in the works of other German, Protestant scholars. The subject occupying various passages where Paul 'cites and expounds stereotyped doctrinal formulae' to a formgeschichtlich analysis, concludes that 'where Paul expounds the tradition of the church it is his consistent intention to work out his doctrine of justification and not in relationship to mystery'. To Conzelmann, the doctrine of justification is the central theme which holds together and normalizes other themes of theology: 'in it the criteria for the right tending theologian in theology will have to be sought', and the correct approach to the ethical problems and crises of today is, he suggests, 'to strive ever more intensively for the doctrine of Jesus Christ, not as the article of a standing and falling theology'. 6

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2. G. Schrenk, TDNT II, p. 202, s.v. dikaiosynë. Cf. H. R. Mackintosh, Theologico-moralistic of Stoicism (1927); Fontana Books, 1961), pp. 103f., who had written, independently of the debate under review: Paul had 'a Judaeus in his own heart, with whom from the outset he was bound to reach an understanding', so that it is reasonable to suppose that the Judaist insight formed part of his personal religion from the first.
More was probably implicit in the logic of his conversion.\(^\text{10}\)

III
A third view dissents both from Wee and Schweitzer's estimate of justification as of merely subsidiary significance in Paul and from the opposite view which accords the doctrine a central place.

This view is represented by J. Jeremias, to whom the formula 'justification by faith' is but one of 'a multitude of illustrations' which Paul uses to show to the newly converted what the rite of baptism means to them.

It is the description of God's grace in baptism using a figure taken originally from the judicial sphere: God's grace in baptism consists in his unreserved pardon. It is that formulation of the grace of baptism which Paul used in his conflict with Judaism. Therefore it is not a 'subsidiary crater', but it occupies a place of equal importance with all the other descriptions of the grace of baptism—e.g. being 'washed' and 'sanctified' (1 Cor. 6:11).

Hence the doctrine 'should not be isolated'; rather, 'we must include justification in all the other sayings interpreting baptism in order to put it in its proper setting'.\(^\text{11}\)

In this connection we may note that E. P. Sanders also considers 'the righteousness by faith' to be 'only one formulation among many'; he treats 'justification and righteousness' as part of Paul's 'transfer terminology' together with 'participation in the death of Christ', 'freedom', 'transformation, new creation' and 'reconciliation', and concludes from the study of several Pauline texts that 'justification' as a 'transfer' term can be paralleled either with 'sanctify' and 'reconcile' (referring to past transgressions), or with 'set free' (referring to sin as an enslaving power).\(^\text{12}\)

This should not, however, mislead one into thinking that Sanders' position as a whole is similar to that of Jeremias, since, as we saw above, Sanders does not regard the participatory and the juristic categories as of equal significance but unequivocally gives priority to the former as representing the heart of Paul's thought.

IV
The fourth position may be described as a modification of the Reformation view of Paul's doctrine of justification as the centre and content of Paul's gospel.

An outstanding proponent of this view is H. N. Ridderbos, who in general stands firmly within the Reformed tradition. His objection to the Reformed view of this matter is not that it attaches too great an importance to justification by faith; over against Wee and Schweitzer he affirms that the doctrine 'unmistakably belongs to the very heart of Paul's preaching'. But, he observes, by approaching Paul's doctrine exclusively from the standpoint of justification by faith there is a danger of depriving Paul's preaching of its redemptive historical dynamic and of making it into a timeless treatment of the vital question: how is one justified before God? Justification by faith as proclaimed by Paul is rather one aspect, although a very central aspect, of the great redemptive event of which Paul knew himself to be the herald, and which he described as the fulness of time in which God has sent the Son (Gal. 4:4), so that it can now be said, old things are passed away; behold all things are become new (2 Cor. 5:17).

Ridderbos sees 'the dominating perspective and foundation of Paul's entire preaching' as that of 'justification by faith' and concludes: 'before everything else, he was the proclaimer of a new time, the great turning point in the history of redemption, the intrusion of a new world aeon; and he maintains that such a perspective 'alone can illuminate the many facets and interrelations of his preaching, e.g. justification, being-in-Christ, suffering, dying, and rising again with Christ, the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, the cosmic drama, etc.'.\(^\text{13}\)

This view is shared by F. P. Bruce, who, while agreeing (with Bornkamm and Käsemann, as noted above) that justification by faith is central to the Pauline gospel, at the same time recognizes that 'it does not exhaust that gospel', but that 'Paul sets his doctrine of justification, together with his other doctrines, in the context of the new creation that has come into being with and in Christ'.\(^\text{14}\) It is espoused also by G. E. Ladd, who expresses agreement with Ridderbos (and W. D. Davies) to the effect that the unifying centre of Paul's theology is the 'redemptive work of Christ in the context of redemptive history'; to him, Paul's conversion meant a recovery of the sense of redemptive history that Judaism had lost: Paul's experience of Christ forced him back beyond the

Mercy triumphs over justice: James 2:13 and the theology of faith and works

William Dyrness

William Dyrness is Associate Professor of Theology at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila.

(a) Introduction
Ever since Luther's Prefaces to the New Testament (1522) the book of James has suffered a great deal of abuse at the hands of Bible scholars. Some have come to the point of doubting whether the book is Christian. Butmann says of James in his Theology of the New Testament: 'Every shred of understanding for the Christian situation as that of "between-nests" is lacking here. The moralism of the synagogue has made its entry.\(^\text{15}\)

At the same time recent advances in New Testament studies have illuminated many aspects of the setting and character of the epistle. M. Dibelius pointed out in 1920 the indebtedness of James to the Greek and Jewish paraenetic traditions. He claimed that James is best understood as a 'text which strings together admonitions of general

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\(^{12}\) E. P. Sanders, op. cit., pp. 493, 463-472 (especially 472).


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was more probably implicit in the logic of his conversion.18

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A third view dissents both from Wrede and Schweitzer's estimate of justification as of merely subsidiary significance in Paul and from the opposite view which accords the doctrine a central place. This view is represented by J. Jeremias, to whom the formulation 'justification by faith' is but one of a multitude of illustrations which Paul uses to show to the newly converted what the rite of baptism means to them.

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Ridderbos sees 'the dominating perspective and foundation of Paul's entire preaching' as that of 'justification by faith', and hence 'given for everything else, he was the proclaimer of a new time, the great turning point in the history of redemption, the intrusion of a new world aeon'; and he maintains that such a perspective 'alone can illuminate the many facets and interrelations of his preaching, e.g. justification, being-in-Christ, suffering, dying, and rising again with Christ, the conflict between the spirit and the flesh, the cosmic drama, etc.'22 This view is shared by F. F. Bruce, who, while agreeing (with Bornkamm and Käsemann, as noted above) that justification by faith is central to the Pauline gospel, at the same time recognizes that 'it does not exhaust that gospel', but that 'Paul sets his doctrine of justification, together with his other doctrines, in the context of the new creation that has come into being with and in Christ'.23 It is espoused also by G. E. Ladd, who expresses agreement with Ridderbos (and W. D. Davies) to the effect that the unifying centre of Paul's theology is the 'redemptive work of Christ and the new redemptive history'; to him, Paul's conversion meant a recovery of the sense of redemptive history that Judaism had lost: Paul's experience of Christ forced him back beyond the Mosaic law to rediscover the promise given to Abraham and to see its fulfilment in the recent events in the person and work of Jesus.24 The same heilsgeschichtliche emphasis underlies the proposition of R. B. Gaffin, Jr., that 'not justification by faith but union with the resurrected Christ by faith (of which union, to be sure, the justifying aspect stands out perhaps most prominently) is the central motif of Pauline soteriology'.25

By way of conclusion, we may perhaps make three observations and one suggestion. (i) It is clear that the primary issue in the modern debate on the status of justification by faith in Paul's thought is, in the words of K. Kertelge, 'whether the doctrine of justification plays only a subordinate role in the totality of a doctrine of redemption which proceeds on a multiple track, or whether, from its basic intention, the central place in Pauline theology belongs to it?'.26 (ii) With the possible exception of the works of H. D. Wendland and K. Kertelge, there has appeared since Schweitzer propounded his thesis no monograph which takes up the issue in a fundamental and comprehensive way, although various scholars have expressed their own position with regard to it. (iii) The debate has been carried on mainly among German scholars, and their counterparts in the English-speaking world have by and large taken little part in it. It would seem that a thorough study of the issue by a scholar from the English-speaking world might make a welcome contribution to the debate. (iv) If theological judgments, to be sound, must be firmly rooted in careful exegesis of Scripture, then one of the best approaches—not to say the best approach—to the dispute in question is by way of patient exegesis of Paul's letters, at least those parts of his letters which are pertinent to the subject. Such a study, we submit, will make it abundantly plain that the last of the positions in the above survey approximates most closely the Pauline perspective. At least that is how it has turned out for one student of Paul.27


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Mercy triumphs over justice: James 2:13 and the theology of faith and works

William Dyrness

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(a) Introduction

Ever since Luther's 'Prefaces to the New Testament' (1522) the book of James has suffered a great deal of abuse at the hands of Bible scholars. Some have come to the point of doubting whether the book is Christian. Bullmann says of James in his Theology of New Testament: 'Every shred of understanding for the Christian situation as that of "between-necessity"

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23 F. F. Bruce, Romans, p. 40.

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Mercy Triumphs Over Justice: 
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At the same time recent advances in New Testament studies have illuminated many aspects of the setting and character of the epistle. M. Dibelius pointed out in 1920 the indebtedness of James to the Greek and Jewish paraenetic traditions. He claimed that James is best understood as a ‘text which strings together admonitions of general ethical content’. Though we may debate some of Dibelius’ conclusions, it is hard to deny his general view that James represents a practical manual of Christian instruction addressed to early Christians in general (rather than to any particular church). Most would also agree with him that James does not contain a developed theology, but features rather early reflections on the Christian life in the light of the teaching of Jesus.

Further study has likewise illumined the special relation between James and the logia of Jesus, especially the teaching that makes up what we call the sermon on the mount. Its setting has been further explained by the discoveries at Qumran and their revelations about Jewish community life at the time of Jesus. Parallels between James and Qumran are so interesting that T. H. Gaster concluded: ‘the Dead Sea Scrolls indeed open a window upon the little community of Jewish Christians clustered around James in Jerusalem. These men may have been originally the urban brethren of the hardier souls that betook themselves to Qumran.’

3 Dibelius however surely overstates the matter when he says: ‘James has no theology.’ Ibid., p. 22.
If exegesis is the attempt to find—as James Robinson has put it—‘the point originally scored’, we must take very seriously this background in order to understand the audience James had in mind. It is with these conditions in mind that James speaks and that we must hear. We hope to show that a closer attention to James’ actual intention will help us overcome some of the supposed difficulties of interpretation. James is writing then a practical treatise for Jewish Christians, not only in Jerusalem, but throughout the Roman empire. He writes about AD 60, just before the first severe persecution breaks upon the Church, but at a time when behaviour within the community and its attitude toward those outside have already become a problem.

(b) The Problem Posed: The Structure of James 2

The issue in the interpretation of James 2 has become problematic whenever James and Paul are set over against each other as theological opponents. Paul stresses faith as the sole means of justification; James insists faith and works must go together. Surely, this line of thinking concludes, we have here an example of theological diversity in the NT which cannot be reconciled. James Dunn for example concludes:

It is obvious then that what is reflected here is a controversy within Judaism—between that stream of Jewish Christianity which was represented by James at Jerusalem on the one hand, and the Gentile churches or Hellenistic Jewish Christians who had been decisively influenced by Paul on the other.

But we hope to show that James and Paul were using their terms differently and in any case addressing themselves to different situations. To support this we will seek to examine the context of James’ statement in the entire second chapter as evidence for the fact that ‘works’ in James are the ‘doing of mercy’ that was required of God’s covenant people in the OT and that is to be the special characteristic of Christians, what James elsewhere calls the ‘law of liberty’ (1: 25 and 2: 12).

The central teaching of James is found in the second chapter and consists in two related sections: vs. 1-12 on partiality in the assembly, and vs. 14-26 on the interrelationship of faith and works. Verse 13 stands between those sections and provides a link between them as well as giving a clue to the point he wishes to make in the chapter. Let us examine this verse first:

For judgment is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy; yet mercy triumphs over judgment (RSV).

To a Jewish mind judgment would at once call to mind the final judgment at which God would bring about final justice. The idea James expresses here is common in Jewish literature. As an example we may quote the following from the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs:

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Have therefore yourselves also, my children, compassion toward every man with mercy, that the Lord also may have compassion and mercy upon you. Because also in the last days God will send His compassion on earth, and wheresoever He findeth bowels of mercy He dwelleth in him. For in the degree in which a man hath compassion upon his neighbours, in the same degree hath the Lord also upon him (Zeb. 8:1-3, (Charles ed.)).

[p.13]

As elsewhere in James, however, what was common in Jewish tradition is recalled in the light of the fulfilling word of Jesus’ teaching:

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy (Mt. 5: 7; cf. Jas. 1: 5, 22 and 5: 12).

The particularly Christian element, and that which characterizes Jesus’ teaching in a particular way is found in the second half of the verse: Mercy boasts, glories, or triumphs over judgment. That is, mercy does not merely vindicate itself, it is able to triumph. These two phrases then expressing related ideas, in a kind of synthetic parallelism, point both back to the previous verses and ahead to those which follow, and, we will see, summarize the teaching that James intends to give in the chapter.

Verses 1-12. The idea of judgment in v. 13 brings to mind not only the final judgment, but that judgment which we are called upon to exercise in our human affairs. Verse 1 is a counter example to the righteous judgment that God will give at the end of history. Here discrimination rests on outward and external standards. The word for partiality, prosopolempsia, is found only here in the NT but reflects the semiticism, prosōpon lambanō, and recalls Deuteronomy 10: 17 (LXX) where God ‘ou thaumazei prosōpon’. One cannot impress God with his appearance, and God’s people are to be similarly unwavering (interestingly the word for ‘wavering doubt’ in 1: 6 and ‘distinction’ in 2: 4 are the same in Greek). In Job 34: 19 it is this characteristic of God, his not showing partiality, which qualifies him to govern.

This possibility of impartial treatment in human affairs lies at the basis of all human justice, and the author clearly has this human judgment in mind as well as God’s final judgment. The different instructions given to visitors in verses 2 and 3 is a clear allusion to Rabbinic instructions for those appearing before the tribunal, as R. B. Ward has pointed out. Commenting on Deuteronomy 16: 19 R. Ishmael says: ‘If before a judge two men appear for judgment, one rich and another poor, the judge should say to the rich man: “Either dress in the same manner as he is dressed, or clothe him as you are clothed” ’ (Dt. R. Shofetim, V, 6). In another place the instructions read: ‘You must not let one stand and the other sit’ (Sifra, Kedoshim Perek, 4, 4). The allusion is so obvious that Ward believes the author of James actually has in mind two members of the community appearing before a tribunal. He makes this suggestion to account for the phrase ‘among yourselves’ in verse 4 which he takes to mean that both must already be members of the community (he also points out that ‘synagogue’ can be used of the tribunal).
While the tribunal must surely be in the writer’s thinking, we would rather see this as an exhortation to impartial hospitality, for, as we will see, it is this idea that becomes prominent in the second section.

But James’ allusion to the tribunal—which would have sprung readily to the listener’s mind—is quite intentional. The author is making here an argument from the lesser to the greater. That is, if this kind of impartiality obtains in the court, how much more appropriate is it to the messianic community where the royal law of love reigns (v. 8)?

The fact that James focuses on rich and poor deserves attention in this connection. Dibelius points out that the usage of ‘the poor’ in James continues the OT tradition which had come to identify the pious with the poor. The Messianic era was to come and bring salvation to the needy (Is. 61: 1 and Lk. 4: 18-21). By the time of the NT, poverty had taken on a religious nuance that is reflected here. James must have recalled Jesus’ promise that the normal social stratification was being overturned (Lk. 6: 20ff.), and this background must have given a note of irony to his instructions in these verses. In verses 5 and 6 James makes his point in two ways. First God has chosen those who are needy to enjoy the riches of faith and to be heirs of his kingdom. Jesus did not come to call ‘righteous’ but sinners—we shall have more to say on this theme below. Secondly, the rich prove their enmity to Christianity by dragging believers into courts (v. 6. The court system is obviously working in favour of the rich and against the poor, which was the reverse of God’s intention), and, by doing this, they blaspheme the name by which Christians are called (v. 7). One thinks here of Paul’s vision on the road to Damascus wherein his persecution of Christians was considered an attack on Christ himself. The irony is this: those who were the poor of this world were beginning to give honour to those who were well clad (notice James does not say ‘rich man’ in verse 2), and to dishonour the poor man thus playing the role of the very rich who drag them into courts. James probably has no specific situation in mind, but fears, as Dibelius notes, a gradual acceptance of this world’s standards of judgment.9 Sadly the history of the Church has all too often borne out James’ fears.

We are in a position now to draw these brief comments together and see the point of verse 13a.

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Showing mercy is the way that love will express itself in this new community. This will involve at the very least a welcome for the poor (as for the rich) and it will lead to an active outgoing compassion toward all those in need (see 1: 27).10 Moreover the judgment that God will bring will be directly related to the judgment we pass on those around us (cf. Mt. 6: 14ff: and 18: 23-35).

Verses 14-26. James now follows Jesus’ teaching further. It is not enough that we show no partiality. That is after all a negative conception. Implicit in these verses (and hinted at already in verse 8) is a more inclusive idea that the author expresses in the phrase: ‘Mercy triumphs over

justice,’ and which bursts onto the centre of the stage in verses 14-26. James begins by asking in verse 14: what good is faith apart from works? Here it is crucial that we understand what he means by ‘works’. Against the background of verse 8 he explains in verses 15 and 16 what he has in mind: works are giving to a brother or sister what they need. It is in a word, the gift of hospitality, an open giving of yourself and your goods to the needy. Notice that these expressions of love are not strictly speaking demanded by the law. They are expressions of doing mercy that go above and beyond the demands of the law—the second mile of the Sermon on the Mount—but that by that very fact reflect the character of God himself.

That this is the intent of the passage is evidenced by the use of Rahab as an illustration and arguably lies behind the reference to Abraham as well. Rahab is shown righteous specifically in her opening her home to the spies. In spite of the social and economic reasons why she should not have done so, she received them freely. Abraham too was known for his hospitality (see Gn. 18: 4-8). In fact Ward believes that this is James’ main point in mentioning this father of faith. He contends Abraham was so well known for his hospitality that this needed no emphasis. The meaning of verse 23 then (which quotes Gn. 15: 6 LXX) could be that because Abraham had proven himself a friend of God (by his hospitality) he was acquitted at his trial by not having to offer up Isaac.11

This then is how mercy triumphs, not just in showing impartiality, but in a loving hospitality and welcome for those in need. But there is an added irony in the choice of Rahab as an example. For here it is not strictly the community that lies open to those outside, but mercy has triumphed to such an extent that an outsider—a Gentile and a harlot—herself exhibits the character of doing mercy, just as the Samaritan has done in Jesus’ parable. The kind of good works that Christ had come to initiate overturn all our social expectations: the hungry he has filled and the rich he has sent empty away (Lk. 1: 53).

(c) Illumination of the setting of James

Three areas of the context of James are especially significant for understanding the epistle. First James reflects something of the concerns of the Jerusalem Church in its primitive stage: still very Jewish in character and not yet aware of its universal mission. Then James reflects a close acquaintance with the OT Scriptures, especially in its Greek translation. And finally he reflects a close awareness of the teaching of Jesus, especially that which finds expression in the Gospel of Matthew.12

As to the context of the early church one can easily imagine the situation pictured in the early chapters of Acts as a background of James’ teaching. Acts 2: 45, for example, gives us a glimpse of the spontaneous love for one another that characterized that first group of believers. The initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit created a natural openness and sharing and it is surely with these early days in mind that James writes his letter. He is painfully aware that the first flush of loving

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12 Cantinat, op. cit., pp. 27, 28.
enthusiasm had not lasted. The unity had begun to give way to a partiality that judged people by human and external standards. As we noted above James fears that believers might lose that essential mark that set them out as God’s own people: that loving concern for one another that reflected their faith in God.

But the phrase James employs in 2: 13, poiēsanti eleos, shows that he has in mind the larger OT context as well. There God’s people were to respond to their election by obeying his voice and keeping the covenant, in this way he would be their God and they his people (Ex. 19: 4, 5). True they were to confess in their worship that God is one, as the famous Shema of Deuteronomy 6: 4 records. James clearly has this text in mind in 2:19; believing this he says, you do well kalōs poieis. But Israel was also to choose life by keeping the commandments (Dt. 30: 16-20). And so it came to be regarded as a special sign of the covenant people that they, reflecting God’s own mercy toward them, showed mercy, especially toward the unfortunate. The righteous, says the Psalmist, is ‘ever giving

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liberally and lending’ (Ps. 37: 26). But unfortunately Israel and Judah all too often came to interpret their covenant obligations in terms of a strict keeping of the law, so that the prophets had to offer a critique of their obedience. They were a people who followed with their lips, but whose hearts were far from God (Is. 29: 13 quoted by Christ in Mt. 15: 8). And it was just at the point of coldness toward those in need that this hypocrisy showed itself. Jeremiah had to remind the people to ‘do justice and righteousness, deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed’ (22: 3). Hosea reminded the people that God required mercy and not sacrifice’ (6: 6); Micah listed God’s requirements as: ‘Doing justice and loving mercy (6: 8). Finally Zechariah is similar to James 2: 13 when he urges the people to: ‘Judge truly and show kindness and mercy eleos ... poieite to your brother,’ which he goes on to define as not oppressing the widow and the poor (7: 9, 10).

The third context of the book of James is the teaching of Jesus. Perhaps because James was the brother of Jesus and benefited from close association, he makes significant use of the logia of Jesus. Three instances make direct reference to Jesus’ words (Mt.1: 5-7; Mt.1: 22-7; Mt. 5: 12-5: 34-37). Beyond this the background of some of James’ teaching must certainly be the Lord’s teaching. The flowers that fade in 1: 10, 11 and the spring and two kinds of water in 3: 11 are two examples. But even more important for our purposes than specific references to Jesus’ words is the echo of his voice to be found in James’ prophetic critique of the Christian community’s self-understanding as God’s people.

To take but one example from the teaching of Jesus let us recall Luke’s account of the parable of the great supper (Lk. 14: 12-24). In this parable, J. A. Sanders believes, Jesus is offering a prophetic critique of what the religious leaders of his day had done with the Deuteronomic

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13 See most recently the discussion of this in Franz Mussner, Der Jakobusbrief (Frieburg: Herder, 1975), pp. 7, 8.
14 Discussed in Lohse, op. cit., p. 9.
As their fathers before them they had come to see their place in God’s call as a special privilege which God would not revoke. They, in the terms of the parable, were sure who would be invited to the messianic banquet and who be excluded. They even believed they knew the guest list and the seating arrangement! In other words, they had completely lost sight of the fact that God’s call—the call they were to echo—was itself a ‘showing mercy’ to the needy and was intended to include as many as had need, even, or shall we say, especially, if these do not meet our human expectations about goodness (‘Go out to the highways and hedges’ 14: 23). It was this idea which underlay much of the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount and which James reiterates in his book, especially in the second chapter. Righteousness is not a matter of calculating observance of laws, but it is a spontaneous, overflowing expression of love. In James’ language its harvest is sown in ‘peace by those who make peace’ (3: 18).

(d) Conclusion

We are now in a position to draw these brief observations together and suggest the implications for a comparison of James and Paul. There are two major theological streams in James which are interrelated: Christians are to reflect God’s merciful call to the poor and to realize his wisdom in their lives (cf. 1: 5). We have focused only on the first of these, but it is not hard to see the connection between the two. The one who makes distinctions by human standards does not show wisdom, he is not expressing the firm, well-grounded character of God in his judgment. J. A. Kirk has argued that wisdom functions in James in the same way that the Holy Spirit functions in the life of the believer in Galatians, giving us good fruit and making us like God (cf. 3: 17,18). He concludes: ‘In James wisdom is that which enables man to continue in steadfastness, which produces as its real fruit the man who is perfect and complete.’ According to James then this perfection is reflected in a special way by our hospitable receiving of the needy. It is as though James is writing an extended commentary on Jesus’ words: ‘He who receives you, receives me’ (Jn. 13: 20, cf. Mt. 18: 5).

What then can we say about James’ relation to Paul? We have not spoken of the background of Paul’s teaching. But if we had we would have found that Paul’s Gentile mission provided a wholly different context from James’ ministry in Jerusalem. James for his part clearly speaks from an OT and

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16 Sanders notes such lists were well known in Qumran, Ibid., 262.
17 Dr Newton Flew has suggested that James 1: 1-10 lists all the topics James will cover in his letter, verse 2 introducing 1: 12-27 and verses 3, 4 all of chapter 2. If this is so it lends weight to the view that steadfastness and perfection are shown supremely in receiving the needy. This whole question of the structure of James is discussed in P. B. R. Forbes, ‘The Structure of the Epistle of James,’ Evangelical Quarterly 44 (1972), pp. 147-155.

Jewish view of faith and works. Faith for him means merely the intellectual belief in monotheism. To the Jew this faith is ‘meritorious, if it is a quality of obedience leading to performance of good works’.

By contrast James’ use of ‘works’, while growing out of OT ideas, is markedly different from the ‘works’ of Judaism and of Paul. They are not the ‘works of the law’. Rather they are that which fulfills the royal law of love, the showing of the mercy of God himself. It is this which reveals the presence of genuine (that is living) faith. James in other words reflects Jesus’ prophetic attack on the ethic of election and law keeping, and, in doing so, uncovers the real intention of God’s calling of his people in the OT. Paul on the other hand represents a theological reflection on Jesus’ person and work and the subsequent deepening of the uniquely Christian conception of faith as the response of the whole person to the revelation of God’s love. James interprets Judaism in the light of Jesus’ teaching. Paul develops Christian truth against the background of Judaism. Professor Jeremias puts the matter in these terms: Paul is speaking of Christian faith and Jewish works; James speaks of Jewish faith and Christian works.

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21 Jeremias, op. cit., p. 370.
Three Current Challenges of the Occult

Anthony Stone

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This article discusses challenges of the occult in the three areas of interpretation of scripture, astrology (as a particular occult subject) and the use of power.

One way of defining the occult is to list things such as magic, spiritism, card reading, and so on. Otherwise it may be defined simply as the supernatural without God.

A Challenge in the Interpretation of Scripture: Are there hostile spiritual powers?

If there are no hostile spiritual powers, all psychic and spiritual experiences arise either from natural human faculties or from God. But if hostile spirits exist, the number of possible sources is three. If there are only two sources, the occult cannot be particularly dangerous, and may even be helpful spiritually.

Although the biblical writers themselves clearly believed in the existence of evil spirits, many today would deemethylate, reinterpret or otherwise explain away this belief. We find disbelief in a personal devil, demon possession reduced to a synonym for illness, and so on. Even some of the more conservative may deny that Satan is active today.

We shall approach this question by looking briefly at (a) scripture, and (b) experience.

(a) Important scriptural passages. The cross is of central importance here. Jesus himself interpreted his death as due to ‘the power of darkness’ (Lk. 22: 53) and said that ‘the ruler of this world’ would be driven out of the world. (John 12: 31). The disciple, however, is now far above every archon (princely), exousia (authority), dynamis (power), kurioiēs (dominion) and every other name (Eph. 1: 21; cf. 1 Pet. 3: 22; these terms being names of orders of angels in Jewish thought).

In Ephesians 6: 12 archai and exousiai were among the ‘spiritual hosts of wickedness’, and in Colossians 2: 15 Paul states that the archai and exousiai were defeated on the cross. The Colossian passage is a much discussed one. All who hold that Eph. 6: 15 refers only to the angels who mediated the Mosaic law (and that the angels in 2: 18 are holy angels). Many scholars do not take this view, especially with improved understanding to the first century Judaism—view; they understand 2: 15 to declare the defeat of hostile cosmic powers.

Hebrews 2: 14f. states that Christ’s death removes the fear of death by ‘destroying the devil’. This verb for ‘destroy’ (kariēgeō) is not always as strong as in English. The thought in Hebrews is that the devil is frustrated in his work of binding people by their fear of death. The devil is still active, and we are all engaged in spiritual warfare (Eph. 2: 2; 6: 11-13; 1 Pet. 3: 8f). However, Christ’s victory has made certain the final destruction of Satan and his angels (the demons; evil spirits) (Mt. 25:41; Rev. 20: 10).

We conclude that these matters are an essential part of what the Bible teaches.

(b) The place of experience. Mrs. Jessie Penn-Lewis produced a comprehensive treatment of Satan’s deception and oppression of believers, based on her experiences after the Welsh revival at the beginning of the 20th century. Dr. Kurt Koch’s early work reveals connections between Satanic activity and the occult, such as those involved in occult practices developing an aversion to Christian things, and the power of Christ giving release from the ill effects of the occult.

We must avoid the trap of arbitrarily interpreting the Bible according to our own situation, but the study of the above shows this to be impossible.

1. Science and divination contrasted

Science: 2. Divination

1. Study empirical relationships

2. Uses non-empirical relationships (symbolic connections)

3. Uses chance and/or ‘intuition’

4. Rejects inadequate theories

5. Theories are public

6. Substantiates

7. Success expected

8. Success doubtful

Science and divination. The main features of science (see Table 1) are (1) the study of empirical relationships by direct or indirect observation; (2) interest in regularities, especially for prediction; (3) rejection of inadequate theories. It follows that (4) scientific theories are public; (5) science is undogmatic (ideally); and (6) success is expected.

An example of divination is the use of the Chinese classic, 1 Ching. The user mentally poses a question and then spins coins to pick out, by the combination of heads and tails, one of the book’s ‘hexagrams’ (i.e. a diagram of six parallel lines, each either broken or unbroken). Each hexagram...
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II The challenge of astrology: What if it works?

Argument about astrology is sometimes limited to trying to prove that it cannot work. If, however, (as in an instance known to the writer), a person's opposition to astrology is merely the belief that it does not work, a successful astrologer can make a closed argument. In any case, this approach is usually (wrongly, as I shall try to show) that astrology is an attempt to trace celestial influence. Thus Galileo rejected the suggestion that the moon influences the tides, as an astrological fancy.

If, in spite of what some dictionaries and astrologers may say, astrology is not an attempt at a science of celestial influences, the alternative is that it is divination. This distinction, vital for the preliminary question of the nature of astrology, will now be explained.

Table 1 Science and divination contrasted

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<th>DIVINATION</th>
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<tr>
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provide, for the first time, rigorous and objective evidence about the basic fundamentals of astrology, upon which everything else depends. This conclusion depends on Dean’s definition of astrology as ‘the study of correlations between living organisms (especially man) and extraterrestrial phenomena’. But since astrology, as traditionally pursued, has not had a scientific approach but a divinatory one, it is better not to use the term ‘astrology’ for the scientific investigation of celestial influences and correlations. We may then follow Gauquelin’s results have nothing to do with astrology, but only with science.

What if it works? Dean explains some of the ways in which astrology may come to be believed for the wrong reasons, such as gullibility; he also notes that ‘intuition’ can give correct results, even from wrong hypotheses.

Indian astrologers often stress the need for ‘intuition’ if predictions are to be correct. What is meant is that as the astrologer considers the horoscope, the predictions to be made come into the mind. Naturally this approach opens the astrologer to the influence of outside forces. That demonic forces are involved, at least in some cases, is illustrated by the experience of a man known to the writer. This man made correct predictions by ‘intuition’, but suffered physical, mental and spiritual depression until he made a commitment to Christ.

We may also note two points made by Koch, the first being the fear which may develop from taking note of astrological predictions. The second point is seen in the case of a pastor who had detailed predictions made from his horoscope: they began to come true, until he repented and asked God’s forgiveness and protection from demonic powers.

The point about taking note of the demonic element, if any, in astrological predictions is not clear. But since astrology is condemned by God, it belongs to the kingdom of darkness and will lead to harmless results of various intensities. Paul speaks of deceiving spirits (1 Tim 4:1) as may be to give correct astrological (and other) predictions, or to make some of these predictions come true.

Our conclusions may be summarized as follows:

(i) Scientific studies of cosmic influences and correlations, as such, are not astrology.

(ii) There is no test of ‘astrology’ (in our divinatory sense of the word), only of individual astrologers.

(iii) Some astrologers do develop a predictive ability.

(iv) The Bible condemns the use of astrology.

The final challenge brings us to the basic matter of power.

III The challenge of power: Should we try to develop our psychic abilities? This question arises because some in the church are saying, softly perhaps, that we should. We have to remember that while there seem to be some natural psychic occurrences (e.g. at the death of a distant loved one), psychic abilities also develop as a result of involvement in occult, and may be a burden. Koch mentions, among other things, the appearing of clairvoyance after magical charming. It will be helpful to look at a few psychic-type events recorded in the Bible.

A number of events could predict future events (1 Sa. 9: 6, 19f; 10: 1–6). Elisah seemed to be clairvoyant (2 Ki. 6: 8–12). Ezekiel experienced out-of-the-body travel (Ezk. 8–11).

The New Testament also records short-range prediction (Mt. 11:27f; 21:10f) as well as healings and exorcisms (Acts 19:11f).

The point about these examples is that they all happened by the power of God and not by occultism (e.g. Ezk. 8:1,3; Acts 19:11). On the other hand, clairvoyance can also produce ‘signs and wonders’, which, however, lead away from the truth (2 Thes. 2:9f; Mt. 24:24).

It is possible for a sincere Christian to be misled into thinking that his or her occult powers are from God, while they are in fact satanic. Koch gives a salutary example of this.

The other aspect is that the occult does provide power. It is noteworthy that Hindu astrologers generally worship the planets for success in prediction and also for protection against ill effects following from power.

Whatever powers there are, Christ is far above them (Eph. 1:21). In the spiritual warfare the challenge to Christians is not that we should develop psychic abilities but that we should be channels of Christ’s power. This means being available to do whatever he wishes us to do.
is associated with a cryptic text which the user has to apply to his or her particular circumstances in order to answer the original question.

The characteristics of divination (cf. Table 1) are just the opposite of those of science: (1) there is no demonstrable empirical relation between the divinatory eigns (e.g. the hexagrams) and what they are taken to signify. Instead, symbolic connections are used. (The commentary on the I Ching interprets the hexagrams in terms of qualities based on whether the lines are broken or unbroken.) (2) Chance and intuition are used, rather than regularities.

Thus (3) a diviner may call a particular method of divination inadequate if he or she is unsuccessful with it, but there is no way of obtaining a consensus that a certain method has been falsified. Hence all methods of divination coexist. (4), (5) Rules of divination are laid down without explanation and the choice of a particular method is for individual reasons. (6) Success is uncertain (though not entirely lacking).

Astrology as divination. Indian astrology includes a wider range of methods than the Western form, making it easier to see the divinatory nature of the subject.

In Indian astrology there are various ways of constructing a new horoscope for a person whose original horoscope is irretrievably lost. Some of these methods use the number of people present when the client approaches the astrologer, the direction the client faces, or similar data. It is not thought that the new horoscope will be very accurate, but that the astrologer will be able to predict correctly from it. This is clearly a divinatory approach using multiple methods and symbolic connections based on chance.

Another interesting example concerns answering a query from a horoscope constructed for the time the query is made. One work uses a rough approximation to the time (based on shadow measurement) and also modifies it so that when the sun is in the same position before or after noon, and is in the same position north or south of the equator but moving northwards or southwards, four different times are used although the actual time of day is the same in all four cases. This is an attempt to give different astrological qualities to these four periods of time. The result is another set of symbolic connections.

By way of example, Western and Indian astrology share some other features of this kind, including the use of additional, imaginary planets and 'rectification' of birth times (by astrological methods) in order to produce more appropriate predictions.

Some astrologers, however, use accurate birth times and tory signs of the planets. Does this represent a scientific enclave within astrology? The answer must be no, because the horoscope is still a set of symbols, interpreted with the help of symbolic connections and intuition. Astrologers follow different systems in many of the details of astrology, and the rules have not been subject to falsification.

Astrology falls under God's condemnation both explicitly (e.g. Jb. 10: 2) and also as divination (e.g. Dt. 18: 9-14). It follows that any use of astrology will be spiritually dangerous. It should never be 'tried out'. However, it is possible to study many aspects of astrology from the outside, without any involvement in the predictive process itself.

Celestial influence as science. Just as the moon's gravitational pull causing the tides is a scientific fact, many things are now being discovered by scientists. One author speaks of 'a new science of cosmic influences'.

One of the most detailed (and therefore somewhat technical) surveys of this 'new science' is contained in a paper by Dr. Aradhana Gauquelin on the work of another astrologer. Dean was interested in evaluating the objective validity of the large number of varying methods and rules used by different astrologers, as well as studying other work on cycles, etc. He is very certain that the horoscopes do have a significance, and so is taking a scientific approach.

For Dean, the most important work is that of the French scholar, Michel Gauquelin (not an astrologer), who has found statistically significant correlations between certain personality traits and certain planetary positions at birth. (This does not give rise to any rule of prediction, since only about 20% of the people showed the effect.) Dean says that Gauquelin's results provide, for the first time, rigorous and objective evidence about the basic fundamentals of astrology, upon which everything else depends. This conclusion depends on Dean's definition of astrology as the 'study of correlations between living organisms (especially man) and extraterrestrial influences.' But since astrology, as traditionally pursued, has not had a scientific approach but a divinatory one, it is better not to use the term 'astrology' for the scientific investigation of celestial influences and correlations. We may then follow Gauquelin, that his results have nothing to do with astrology, but only with science.

What if it works? Dean explains some of the ways in which astrology may come to be believed for the wrong reasons, such as gullibility; He also notes that 'intuition' can give correct results, even from wrong hypotheses.

Indian astrologers often stress the need for 'intuition' if predictions are to be correct. What is meant is that as the astrologer considers the horoscope, the predictions to be made come into the mind. Naturally this approach opens the astrologer to the influence of outside forces. That demonic forces are involved, at least in some cases, is illustrated by the experience of a man known to the writer. This man made correct predictions by 'intuition', but suffered physical, mental and spiritual oppression until he made a commitment to Christ.

We may also note two points made by Koch, the first being the fear which may develop from taking note of astrological predictions. The second point is seen in the case of a pastor who had detailed predictions made from his horoscope: they began to come true, until he repented and asked God's forgiveness and protection from demonic powers. Koch makes a distinction between mortal and demonic elements, if any, in astrological prediction is not clear. But since astrology is condemned by God, it belongs to the kingdom of darkness and will lead to harmful results of various intensities. Phillip's answer to deceiving spirits (1 Tim. 4: 1) may be to give correct astrological (and other) predictions, or to make some of these predictions come true.

Our conclusions may be summarized as follows:

(i) Scientific studies of cosmic influences and correlations, as such, are not astrology.

(ii) There is no test of 'astrology' (in our definatory sense of the word), only of individual astrologers.

(iii) Some astrologers do develop a predictive ability.

(iv) The Bible condemns the use of astrology.

The final challenge brings us to the basic matter of power.

11 The challenge of power: Should we try to develop our psychic abilities? This question arises because some in the church are saying, softly perhaps, that we should. We have to remember that while there seem to be some natural psychic occurrences (e.g. at the death of a distant loved one), psychic abilities also develop as a result of involvement in occult, and may be a burden. Koch mentions, among other things, the appearing of clairvoyance after magical charming. It will be helpful to look at a few psychic-type events recorded in the Bible.

Fact and fiction: We could predict future events (1 Sa. 9: 6, 19f.; 10: 1-6). Elisha seemed to be clairvoyant (2 Ki. 6: 8-12). Ezekiel experienced out-of-the-body travel (Ezk. 8-11).

The New Testament also records short-range prediction (Lk. 11: 27f.; 21: 10f.) as well as healings and exorcisms (Acts 19: 11f.).

The point about these examples is that they all happened by the power of God and not by occultism (e.g. Ezk. 8: 13; Acts 19: 11). On the other hand, we can also produce 'signs and wonders', which, however, lead away from the truth (2 Ths. 2: 9f.; Mt. 24: 24).

It is possible for a sincere Christian to be misled into thinking that his or her occult powers are from God when they are in fact satanic. Koch gives a salutary example of this.

The other aspect is that the occult does provide power. It is noteworthy that Hindu astrologers generally worship the planets for success in prediction and also for protection against ill effects following from wrong prediction. Following other powers there are, Christ is far above them (Eph. 1: 21). In the spiritual warfare the challenge to Christians is not that we should develop our psychic abilities but that we should be champions of Christ's power. This means being available to do whatever he wishes us to do.


Footnote 5, p. 118.

Ibid., p. 40.
Christian Ministry in its Theological Context

Craig M. Watts

We welcome this first contribution from Craig Watts a scholar who is studying theology in the United States. His degree and is pursuing a course leading to the ministry.

The results of any attempt to conceive a theology of ministry are profound. The doctrines of the Christian faith will come forth rich. Christian ministry can be adequately understood only in relation to the great themes of the faith. Perhaps one can speak of ministry in isolation from the doctrines of revelation or ecclesiology, but the ministry of which one would speak could not be Christian ministry. The identity of ministry as Christian is preserved only when it is seen in the context of Christian theology as a whole. For this reason the minister dare not view the task of theologian as peripheral to the activity of ministry.

This essay is an attempt to see ministry in its theologcal context. Because of the nature of the subject matter, many questions must remain unanswered, and some important issues must be left unaddressed. What is offered here is a broad—though hopefully suggestive—outline that is not so much a developed argument as it is an affirmation. It is an affirmation that Christian ministry is first and foremost the ministry of God in Christ, and as such is an outgrowth of God's will, rather than human need, of God's purpose, rather than human plans, of God's faithfulness, rather than human technique. This ministry is ours only because it was first God's and it remains Christian only in so far as it remains His.

1. The Revelational Presupposition

The ministry of the church is called into being and is guided by the revelatory Word of God. This indicates that revelation precedes the church both temporally and in terms of pre-eminence. It is the given data of faith with which the church must reckon. This revelation must never be equated with any aspect of the history of the church, nor with the experience of the Christian. Hence, by referring to revelation as the 'data of faith' we mean that faith 'lives by the power which is power before faith and without faith. It lives by the power which gives faith itself its object, and in virtue of this object its very existence'. Thus revelation can be present to the church only because it was first past. By faith we can now be recipients of the saving activity of God, and, indeed, we can participate in a mission of salvific significance. Yet these present experiences are not to be compared with or considered equal to the original revelatory acts of God, for it is upon these latter that the former are based and by which they are conditioned. Therefore, faith is a subsequent act which appropriates in the present the power and meaning of that which has taken place in the past. The present experience is dependent upon the past activity. Hence faith is relativized.

It should be clear from what has been said thus far that when we speak of revelation as the Word of God what is meant is not man's word about God, but God's own Word as God lives and speaks in it. It is a principle of faith in the attitude of otherwise about revelation. The Word of God is neither man's word about God, nor primarily God's Word about man, but most fundamentally God's Word about God. Revelation, then, is divine self-disclosure. The author of revelation is its contents.

The fact and form of revelation reflects a personal quality which is inseparable from the revelation itself. This is as it should be since the content of revelation is not a thing or an idea, but a person. The fact of revelation is spoken of here as an intentionality which is appropriately attributed only to a person. The truth of revelation is the truth of God as a speaking person. What God speaks cannot be true abstracted from Himself for it is true through the fact that He Himself said it and is present in and with what He has said. This personalizing of the concept of revelation should not be seen as a mere anthropomorphism since God Himself chose to give us the fullest revelation of Himself in the person of Jesus Christ.

This personal quality of revelation points to the fact that though revelation is characterized by an otherness, both in its source and its content, nevertheless, in intention it encompasses us. Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, I, 1, ed. G. W. Bromley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), p. 154.

This reveals that Christian ministry is determined by God for the world, rather than by the world for the sake of the world. Therefore, one can say that 'we cannot contemplate the nature of God in His revelation without contemplating our own nature and purpose'.

Only in relation to the revelation of God can the Church know itself, for its identity is not self-grounded. It is derived from that which calls it into existence. For both its existence and its identity the Church must refer to that which is other than itself. This is just as true in the case of the individual as it is in the case of the corporate body of the Church. A loss of identity occurs when the creature no longer looks to the revelation of God to answer the question, 'Who am I?'. Without a final, absolute, definition independent of the creative and revelatory Word of God is an illegitimate and faithless manifestation of self-assertion in which there is an implicit rejection of the category of 'creature' as a category of creature is a creature in one's own right. Relative to this problem Helmut

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The results of any attempt to conceive a theology of ministry can be influenced by doctrinal movements. The Christian faith will come forth from a wellspring of Christian ministry and can be adequately understood only in relation to the great themes of the faith. Perhaps one can speak of ministry in isolation from the doctrines of revelation, soteriology, and ecclesiology, but the ministry of which one would be speaking could not be Christian ministry. The identity of ministry as Christian is preserved only when it is seen in the context of Christian theology as a whole. For this reason the minister dare not view the task of theologian as peripheral to the activity of ministry.

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Thielicke has insightfully remarked, 'The I am' is a statement about being in relation, for in every dimension of life I am characterized by what God is for me. I am created, fallen, and visited. I am judged and blessed. The I is thus determined from without by what is done to it, by what God is for it. Yet this revelation is not a passive experience; it is impossible to begin with a self-understanding or pre-understanding. For this would mean excluding the I from that relation and seeing it as a prior entity. Who I really am I learn only from the word that proclaims God's condensation, His covenant, and His mighty deeds. Rather than attempting to explicate further the relevance and ramifications of the doctrine of revelation for a theology of Christian ministry, perhaps it is best at this time to turn our attention to the form of revelation in Jesus Christ in order that we might move towards a clearer vision of the shape of ministry.

2. The Christological Form

Because divine revelation is the presupposition and source of Christian ministry, the contour and form of ministry is determined by the shape and mode of the revelation. It is in recognition of this that we speak of the Christological form of Christian ministry.

Revelation is not a thing which is neither God nor man. Rather it is God addressing humanity in such a way as to make his existence a concrete and identifiable individual who in this particularity is inextricably identified with the revelation of God. In Christ that which is beyond and before human existence participates in it. The ground of existence becomes a creature to be both God for man and man for God, to be both the Word addressed to humanity and the obedience rendered to God in order to overcome the estrangement of humanity from God.

In Jesus Christ, God takes on a personal and verbal form. The verbal is not to be detached from the personal as occurred in Protes-
tant scholasticism, since the revelation is the revelation of the infinite-personal God. Revelation is not simply a deposit of information which is detachable from the personal encounter with God. The verbalization of revelation is possible precisely because it is personal. Thus in Christ, God reveals Himself in Word and deed, as He interprets the meaning of the personal in the personal. Revelation without the verbal dimension since the acts of God become revelation in their interpretation. In fact we can speak of the acts of God as revelation only if we understand the verbalization or divinely given interpretation of these acts as an aspect of the act itself. In Christ, 'God's Word has become speech to men as man to man, for in Him God has graciously assumed our human speech into union with His own, effecting it as the human as one act, one being, and as such an essential place in His revelation to man.'

Revelation of God always involves divine accommodation to the limitations intrinsic to the human condition. The Word of God comes in human form as human words and acts—truly human, but never merely human. It comes in a way which is available to human comprehension, but that frustrates our expectations. The manner in which deity is expressed in the humanity of Jesus, and most especially in the cross, contradicts all our familiar ideas about God. Rather than revealing himself in the power and glory of a king, he comes in the powerlessness, humility and insubstantiality of a servant to challenge, not only our conceptions of God, but our visions of ourselves as well. The revelation of God in Christ is the revelation of One who gives himself through self-limiting and self-emptying (kenosis). As Walter Kasper has observed, 'God evidently exercises such supreme power and freedom that he can as it were renounce speaking of his universal worth-making and the self-renunciation of 'the dynamic dimension of love as activity.'

God loves freely, and in freedom he loves absolutely. This is the central Christian confession concerning God. In creation God enters into relationships with his creature. In this way he performs real limitation on the part of God. However, the physical creation does not require a limitation of God to any significant degree, since He could, if He willed, completely control all aspects of this creation. But real limitation is required if God is to enter into relationships with another who has a

2 Torrance, op. cit., p. 149. Also see Torrance, Theological Science and Christian Religious Faith, p. 292.

3 Torrance, op. cit., p. 149. Also see Torrance, Theological Science and Christian Religious Faith, p. 292.


7 Thus the cross is a sign of redemption and the Reality of God (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), p. 179.


10 Anderson, op. cit., p. 182.
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The answer to the question of how God can accept the limitations of humanity while remaining divine can best be considered by viewing the self-emptying of God in the incarnation as a stratagem by which He expresses His transcendence to humanity as a human Self. In light of this, the incarnation bears a double meaning. First, the self-emptying of God in the incarnation is not entirely discontinuous with God's relation to creation as a whole. Divine life in relation is divine life in limitation.

Kenosis is present throughout the history of God's relation to humanity. However, the kenosis in Christ is the supreme demonstration of the kenotic love of God for humanity.

Second, in becoming incarnate, God has shown that humanity is not something alien to Himself; rather, it is a reality which participates in the being by the free act of divine love by its very nature is kenotic.

The personal quality of God's relation to the world is observed in the fact that the world does not stand in perfect relation to God. If the relation of God to the world was primarily based upon his omnipotence there would be no lack of perfection in the relation, but such a relation would be mechanical and finite freedom would be impossible. The alienation of creation from God could be resolved by God through an abandonment of human freedom. But God seeks to establish a reconciliation which preserves freedom. Just as alienation is possible through human freedom, so also is the fulfillment of the divine purpose possible only if human freedom is retained. Thus the manner by which God seeks to fulfill this purpose must be responsive to the concrete and ever changing situation of the human race. Therefore, He perfectly relates the concrete events of his own unwilled world. But this diversity and changing actions of God reflect His perfect and unchanging love. In the words of Karl Barth, 'There is such a thing as a holy mutability of God. . . . His constancy consists in the fact that He is free of all change in every way.' God is absolutely relative yet absolutely faithful to His purpose. Hence, the absoluteness of God can accurately be defined as the unlimited capacity to respond to the changing concrete situations in a totality of situations and to give them to His eternal purpose. We are likewise capable of relating changes in the world to our overarching goals, but we do this in a very limited way. It is God's unlimited capacity that sets Him absolutely above all change.

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Anderson, op. cit., p. 185.
the kinetic way of life is the way of community. True community always entails self-emptying, for it can endure in no other way, and apart from community there is no Christian existence. As Bonhoeffer described grace without works as 'cheap grace,' we might aptly designate ministry without suffering as 'cheap Christian.' The kinetic way of life is threatening since it is contrary to self-interest, and at times even to personal safety. But this aspect of Christian ministry was certainly not unknown to the one who said, 'He who loses his life will find it.' The preservation of the identity of Christian ministry is possible only if the ministry of the Church is an embodiment and re-enactment of Him who, 'being found in human form humbled himself, and became obedient unto death' (Phil. 2: 8). This identity is lost if the Church seeks to preserve itself by asserting itself over against the world or through protective self-containment. 'It is most surely separate from the sinful world when it most fully embodies and humbly expresses the Servant-form of the incarnate Lord, and becomes the Servant suffering for the world, bearing in its body the dying of Christ for men, and thus demonstrating in action its willingness to make the world's suffering its own.14 Christian ministry is ministry in word and deed. The Church both proclaims the great work of God in Christ and continues the ministry of Christ in the world through various forms of direct service. Christian ministry is never to be mistaken for mere humanitarianism or philanthropy; it is grounded in human need, not motivated by a notion of the intrinsic worth of human being. Rather it is the free service of those who have been freely served by Jesus Christ. It is the expression of thanks-giving that bears the image of Him to whom thanks is being given.

3. ECCLESIAL CONTEXT

By referring to the ecclesial context of Christian ministry we mean to indicate that ministry takes place, not as individuals go out from the Church into the world, but as the Church lives and acts out its calling into the world. Christian ministry is the ministry of a community, or to use a Biblical image, we can say that Christian ministry takes place in the body of Christ in which each member has a function which contributes to the whole. There is an interdependency which forbids us to identify the activity of any individual with the ministry of the Church except insofar as it relates to the whole. Christian existence is never simply the relationship of the individual to God, nor is Christian ministry ever merely the service of the individual to the world. While the individual who, as a believer in Christ by faith is to take one's place in the community of the Church. The discipleship of each individual, called to live in his neighbour by love, is caught up into a corporate service which has direction, scope, and shape of its own. It is in this fellowship of service that believers receive their high privilege, granted by grace, and secured only through the Holy Spirit, that God's own service to His world in the person of Jesus Christ should be mediated through their persons and their actual worldly service.15

Since the existence, identity and purpose of the church is derived from the revelation of God, our ecclesiology must be Christologically determined, and therefore, a theology of the church in ministry must bear the image of Christ. This means that the Church must first and foremost be a community that is the servant for God and because it is for God it exists for the world. The stance of the Church toward its own life and service is a commitment to God, therefore it cannot simply identify itself with the position of the world so as to conform to the world. Hence, there are times when the Church must stand against the world in order to make the world's evil more evident. For all of this the Church is to remain the servant of the world, the 'kinetic community' (Anderson).16

The Church is not in the world and for the world by any power, right, or dignity of its own. Because it is that which has been freely given by God to the world, we might ask whether there is any basis to the claim that the Church exists for the world in any special way that the world does not exist for itself. To this we must answer that it can be for the world in a unique manner only because it is not 'of the world,' just as the One whose life it shares and who sends it forth into the world is Himself 'not of the world' (Jn. 17: 11, 16). Its life and ministry is derived from Him who preceeded it into the world. As the community that follows Christ the Church can do no other than go into the world as a servant for the sake of the world.17

Several aspects of this relationship can be observed. First, it is in and through the community of Jesus Christ that persons can know the world. The world's self-knowledge is defective because without the knowledge of God and His covenant the world does not know its origins, its condition or its goal. It knows neither the depths of its damnation nor the heights of its salvation. The Church is given to the world to know the world as it is and to be the point where the world can come to know itself. The Church could not truly minister to the world without its knowledge of the world, a knowledge that can come only from the revelatory and redemptive act of God accomplished in Christ. This knowledge is of both judgment and promise. It calls into question the possibilities, goals, and achievements of the world. It unveils the corruption, guilt, and false meanings in human existence. On the other hand, it affirms the world as God's good creation.18 The Church, the body of Christ, is the recipient of His grace. The Church knows the world as the world can never know itself because the Church knows God and is known by Him. Second, the Church is the community that stands in the world in order to bring its own existence and solidarity without slipping into conformity. Conformity occurs only when the Church's presence in the world loses its 'not of' quality, at which point it no longer retains its distinctive ability to be truly for the world. Third, the Church attempts to avoid conformity by shunning solidarity with the world the Church inadvertently shuns the love of God who for love sent His Son into the world. Solidarity with the world entails full common participation in it. Certainly, there are times when the Church must contradict or oppose the ways of the world in order to be for the world but the value and meaning of such actions cannot be perceived except where there is deep companionship and communion. To quote once more from Karl Barth:

The solidarity of the community with the world consists quite simply in the active recognition that it, too, since Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, can exist in worldly fashion, not unwillingly nor with bad conscience, but willingly and with good conscience. It consists in the recognition that its members also bear themselves in and in some way actualize all human possibilities. Hence it does not consist in a continuous interchange, but rather in a moral witness, in which it makes itself known to others as akin to them, rejoicing with them that do rejoice and weeping with them that weep (Rom. 12: 15), not confirming and strengthening them in evil nor bearing bad witness and making itself known as good, but confessing for its own good, and thereby contending against the evil of others, by accepting the fact that it must be honestly and unrestrainedly among them and with them, on the same level and footing, in the same boat and within the same limits as any or all of them. How can it boast of and rejoice in the Saviour of the world and men, or how can it win them—to use another Pauline expression—to know Him and to believe in Him, if it is not prepared to be human and worldly like them and with them?19

Third, as the community of Jesus Christ the Church is under obligation to the world. Knowledge of and solidarity with the world is insufficient. The Lord of the Church is the Lord of the world. As such he has an active and vital relation with the world. While the Church cannot assume responsibility for the creation and redemption of the world, it is called to co-operate with God in His work within the limits of its ability. Faith in One who came in the form of a servant can never mean an isolated faith in relation to those for whom Christ died. Because the Church is to be faithful to God it must be responsive to the suffering and lack of the world. While the world is not the object of the Church as God is, 'the Church lives and defines itself in action vis-a-vis the world'. For the Church to exist in itself and for itself alone is to conform to the world and to betray who called the Church into being. The relations of the Church and the world are infinitely variable, but through it all is the realization that the Church is servant only because it was first served. The creative call and the radical imperative that the Church be emptied in service, to be thekenotic community comes from the kenotic Christ. The path of that Christ, the Sacrifice should lead us to question to what extent our painless acts of 'service' deserve to

14 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
17 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
18 Ibid.
19 For the following see Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/3, pp. 769ff.
the kinetic way of life is the way of community. True community always entails self-emptying, for it can endure in no other way, and apart from community there is no Christian existence. As Bonhoeffer described grace without works as 'cheap grace', we might aptly designate ministry without sacrifice as 'cheap Christian'. The kinetic way of life is threatening since it is contrary to self-interest, and at times even to personal safety. But this aspect of Christian ministry was certainly not unknown to the one who said, 'He who loses his life will find it.' The preservation of the identity of Christian ministry is possible only if the ministry of the Church is an embodiment and re-creation of Him who, ‘being found in human form humbled himself, and became obedient unto death’ (Phil. 2: 8). This identity is lost if the Church seeks to preserve itself by asserting itself over against the world or through protective self-containment. ‘It is most surely separate from the sinful world when it most fully embodies and humbly expresses the Servant-form of the incarnate Lord, and becomes the Servant suffering for the world, bearing in its body the dying of Christ for men, and thus demonstrating in action its willingness to make the world’s suffering its own. 15 Christian ministry is ministry in word and deed. The Church both proclaims the great work of God in Christ and continues the ministry of Christ in the world through various forms of direct service. Christian ministry is never to be mistaken for mere humanitarian aid, which is handed out in human need, nor motivated by a notion of the intrinsic worth of human being. Rather it is the free service of those who have been freely served by Jesus Christ. It is the expression of thanksgiving that bears the image of Him to whom thanks is being given.

3. Ecclesial Context

By referring to the ecclesial context of Christian ministry we mean to indicate that ministry takes place, not as individuals go out from the Church into the world, but as the Church lives and acts out its calling in the world. Christian ministry is the ministry of a community, or to use a Biblical image, we can say that Christian ministry takes place in the body of Christ in which each member has a function which contributes to the whole. There is an interdependence which forbids us to identify the activity of any individual with the ministry of the Church except insofar as it relates to the whole. Christian existence is never simply the relationship of the individual to God, nor is Christian ministry ever merely the service of the individual to the world. Christian ministry is the service of the Church in Christ by faith is to take one’s place in the community of the Church. The discipleship of each individual, called to live in his neighbourhood by love, is caught up into a corporate service which has direction, scope, and shape of its own. It is in this fellowship of service that believers receive their high privilege, granted by grace, and secured only through the Holy Spirit, that God’s own service to His world in the person of Jesus Christ should be mediated through their persons and their actual worldly service. 16

Since the existence, identity and purpose of the church is derived from the revelation of God, our ecclesiology must be Christologically determined, and therefore, a theology of the church in ministry must bear the image of Christ. This means that the Church must first and foremost be a community that is the servant for God and because it is for God it exists for the world. The world is the Church for Christ of this loving and life-giving commitment to God, therefore it cannot simply identify itself with the position of the world so as to conform to the world. Hence, there are times when the Church must stand against the world in order to avoid serving only the world. In all of this the Church is to remain the servant of the world, the ‘kinetic community’ (Anderson). 17

The Church is not in the world and for the world by any power, right, or dignity of its own. Because it is by the action of the Word, that is, the Word of the world, we might ask whether there is any basis to the claim that the Church exists for the world in any special way that the world does not exist for itself. To this we must answer that it can be for the world in a unique manner only because it is not of the world, just as the One whose life it shares and who sends it forth into the world is Himself not of the world’ (Jn. 17: 11, 16). Its life and ministry is derived from Him who precedes it into the world. As the community that follows Christ the Church can do no other than go into the world as a servant for the sake of the world. 18

Several aspects of this relationship can be observed. First, it is in and through the community of Jesus Christ that persons can know the world. The world’s self-knowledge is defective because without the knowledge of God and His covenant the world does not know its origin, its condition or its goal. It knows neither the depths of its damnation nor the heights of its salvation. The Church is given to the world to know the world as it is and to be the point where the world can come to know itself. The Church could not truly minister to the world without its knowledge of the world, a knowledge that can come only from the revelatory and redemptive act of God accomplished in Christ. This knowledge is of both judgment and promise. It calls into question the possibilities, goals, and achievements of the world. It unvels the corruption, guilt, and false meanings in human existence. On the other hand, it affirms the world as God’s good gift and the world as the true recipient of His grace. The Church knows the world as the church can never know itself because the Church knows God and is known by Him.

Second, the Church is the community that stands against the world in order to avoid the world’s sin and solidarity without slipping into conformity. Conformity occurs only when the Church’s presence in the world loses its ‘not of’ quality, at which point it no longer retains its distinctive ability to be truly for, and of God. The Church attempts to avoid conformity by shunning solidarity with the world the Church inadvertently shuns the love of God who for love sent His Son into the world. Solidarity with the world entails full communion in it. Certainly, there are times when the Church must contradict or oppose the ways of the world in order to be for the world but the value and meaning of such actions cannot be perceived except where there is deep communion to the end of humanity. To quote once more from Karl Barth:

The solidarity of the community with the world consists quite simply in the active recognition that it, too, since Jesus Christ is the Saviour of the world, can exist in worldly fashion, not unwillingly or with bad conscience, but willingly and with good conscience. It consists in the recognition that its members also bear in themselves and in some way actualize all human possibilities. Hence it does not consist in a choice of mask, but rather in an honest acceptance of the world in which it makes itself known to others as akin to them, rejoicing with them that do rejoice and weeping with them that weep (Rom. 12: 15), not confirming and strengthening them in evil nor being the same whether good or evil. Such involvement is good, but confessing for its own good, and thereby contending against the evil of others, by accepting the fact that it must be honestly and unreservedly among them and with them, on the same level and footing, in the same boat and within the same limits as any or all of them. How can it boast of and rejoice in the Saviour of the world and men, or how can it win them—to use another Pauline expression—to know Him and to believe in Him, if it is not prepared to be human and worldly like them and with them? 19

Third, as the community of Jesus Christ the Church is under obligation to the world. Knowledge of and solidarity with the world is insufficient. The Lord of the Church is the Lord of the world. As such he is called with the world. While the Church cannot assume responsibility for the creation and redemption of the world, it is called to co-operate with God in His work within the limits of its ability. Faith in One who came in the form of a servant can never be separated from the call to servanthood to those for whom Christ died. Because the Church is to be faithful to God it must be responsive to the suffering and lack of the world. While the world is not the object of the Church as God is, ‘the Church lives and defines itself in action vis-a-vis the world’. 20 For the Church to exist in itself and for itself alone is to conform to the world and to betray him who called the Church into being.

The relations of the Church and the world are infinitely variable, but through it all is the realization that the Church is servant only because it was first served. The creative call and the radical imperative that the Church be emptied in service, to be the kenotic community comes from the kenotic Christ. The third use of the Church, through the Suffering Servant, is that the Sacrifice should lead us to question to what extent our painless acts of ‘service’ deserve to

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18 Ibid., p. 401f.
19 ‘Theodicy along the lines of the model that Avery Dulles would label ‘The Church as Servant’, those characteristics are inescapable from the secular form that he criticizes. See chapter six of His Model of the Church (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976) for such a model. I see such a model clearly as a servant or servant like in such a way that it excludes the other models that he discusses. For example, I see such a model clearly as a servant or servant like in such a way that it excludes the other models that he discusses.

20 For the following see Karl Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/3, pp. 769ff.
21 Thid., pp. 774-775.
Book Reviews


The author of this book is Associate Professor of Theology at the Asian Theological Seminary in Manila. He says that his specialty is systematic theology, not OT studies. However, the book shows that he has read widely in the OT and has a good command of what he has read. The result is a book that contains little that is original but which presents a judicious and valuable survey of the major themes of the OT in the last 30 or 40 years. Whilst writing from an avowedly evangelical position Dyrnes is ready to lay under tribute good scholarship from any source. The result will be of text value as background reading and source material for teachers and preachers, and will provide a useful introduction to OT theology for college and university students.

Dyrnes is well aware of the debate that is going on about the propriety, even the possibility, of writing an ‘OT Theology’. He makes his position clear. Firstly he denies that there is any central element in the OT around which the rest can be organized: ‘there are central themes, but no single OT theme that would make it the unity of the whole’ (p. 19). Hence the title of the work and the topical arrangement of the material within it. Secondly, he makes no apology for the fact that ‘we read the OT in light of the appearing of Jesus Christ and the NT elaboration of his work’ (p. 17). The NT, he says, takes up OT themes, develops them and transposes them into a higher key: ‘It does not leave the OT behind so much as bring out its deepest reality’ (p. 19). He therefore says that he is going to agree with all of Dyrnes’ exposition of the themes with which he deals. However, apart from matters of detail there are some more general criticisms that can be made of the book:

(a) At points one fears that the author’s adoption of a Christocentric approach to the OT leads to a reading back into it of OT concepts that are only there in embryo. E.g. his interpretation of Deuteronomy 6: 4 and 1 Kings 18 as showing ‘evident monotheism’ rather than incipient or practical monotheism.

(b) His desire to show the unity of Scripture sometimes leads to a glowing over of differences of approach within the OT. E.g. the discussion of the covenant theme hardly does justice to the tension between the Sinaitic and Davidic Covenants (contrast the insightful discussion of this in J. Bright, Covenant and Promise).

(c) As is inevitable when an historical approach is adopted, some of the conclusions depend on decisions regarding the dating of the OT sources. On the whole evangelicals will agree with Dyrnes, but one of his more questionable assumptions is that the Hexateuch (i.e. the first six books of Moses) was written earlier than the Deuteronomistic History (i.e. the latter part of the book of Deuteronomy). This is a hotly debated question which will not be settled by this book.

The fourth section is an introduction to textual criticism. The treatment of each sub-topic is brief (the whole section covers only pp. 103–119) but long enough to sketch out the main argument and to give a few examples. The result is a well-organized and fluent treatment which will help the reader no end.

The book concludes with a bibliography for each chapter, a list of abbreviations, a list of sigla from BH and Indices of authors, bibilical citations, very few errors in the publication, which, when considered, is remarkable.

In conclusion, the reviewer believes that this book could well serve as a textbook for a course in Old Testament Introduction, i.e. textual criticism. It will be useful and deserves its place on the bookshelf of every serious student of the Bible.

Robert L. Allen, Reviewer in honor of Dyernt Old Testament at the Baptist Seminary in Denver, Colorado, USA.


Remember the first time you looked at Kittel’s Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia to be a language stranger than Hebrew itself. And the sigla et commenta in the Prolegomena hardly helped sort out the confusion. Without a Hebrew map you need to find your way through that wilderness of manuscripts. However, crude as it may be, Wüthrich’s Old Testament at Philips-Universität, Marburg, West Germany, wrote his first edition of the Stuttgartensia Concordance in 1955 Peter Ackroyd translated it into English with certain updates. The book’s fourth German edition appeared in 1973, and this translation by Erroll F. Rhodes, senior researcher for the American Bible Society, also incorporates references to literature published after 1973 and autographically as representing the history of the community in which it arose.

It is often not clear to what specific edition of the NHC text is referring, and the abbreviations are now archaic. The approach to Johnnian literature which Brown uses appears to have been in recent years and has been applied with some thoroughness by J. L. Martyn in his History and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. It is no longer appropriate for biblical studies. The book is divided into five major sections. The first section deals with the transmission of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The second section deals with the different writing materials, on the Masoretic text, and on the Samaritan Pentateuch. A third section is longest and most detailed in the book with the considerable amount of information on the hasidim and on the Masoretic Text. A fourth section deals with spelling and a solid effort at listing, describing, and evaluating all the major and many of the minor Hebrew manuscripts and printed editions.

The second large section covers the primary versions with chapters on the Masoretic text itself, followed by a chapter on the Syriac. Naturally the first of these is the most comprehensive of the chapters and sets the stage for the rest of the book. The book is divided into five major sections. The first section deals with the transmission of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The second section deals with the different writing materials, on the Masoretic text, and on the Samaritan Pentateuch. A third section is longest and most detailed in the book with the considerable amount of information on the hasidim and on the Masoretic Text. A fourth section deals with spelling and a solid effort at listing, describing, and evaluating all the major and many of the minor Hebrew manuscripts and printed editions. The second large section covers the primary versions with chapters on the Masoretic text itself, followed by a chapter on the Syriac. Naturally the first of these is the most comprehensive of the chapters and sets the stage for the rest of the book. The book is divided into five major sections. The first section deals with the transmission of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The second section deals with the different writing materials, on the Masoretic text, and on the Samaritan Pentateuch. A third section is longest and most detailed in the book with the considerable amount of information on the hasidim and on the Masoretic Text. A fourth section deals with spelling and a solid effort at listing, describing, and evaluating all the major and many of the minor Hebrew manuscripts and printed editions. The second large section covers the primary versions with chapters on the Masoretic text itself, followed by a chapter on the Syriac. Naturally the first of these is the most comprehensive of the chapters and sets the stage for the rest of the book. The book is divided into five major sections. The first section deals with the transmission of the Old Testament in Hebrew. The second section deals with the different writing materials, on the Masoretic text, and on the Samaritan Pentateuch. A third section is longest and most detailed in the book with the considerable amount of information on the hasidim and on the Masoretic Text. A fourth section deals with spelling and a solid effort at listing, describing, and evaluating all the major and many of the minor Hebrew manuscripts and printed editions.

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