

Zeal for Establishing their Gospel:  
Summary and Reflections on ‘Covenant, Justification, and Pastoral Ministry  
Essays by the Faculty of Westminster Seminary California’

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This book breaks down into fourteen chapters plus an appendix of sorts. I have included specifics on essay titles, authors, and page numbers since as of yet the amazon webpage does not have the option to look at the title page. This review, especially with the summary outlines of each essay, is somewhat lengthy. My explicit reflections and comments comprise the final ten paragraphs.

### Chapter Summaries

#### Part 1: Orientation

##### **1. How We Got Here: The Roots of the Current Justification Controversy over Justification, by R. Scott Clark, Associate Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology (p3-24).**

This chapter seeks to sketch some historical and ecclesiastical context for the book, the controversies it seeks to address, and the point of view from which the authors are coming. Clark explains that the book mainly aims to address the claims and proponents of the Federal Vision within Reformed circles and/or those in Reformed circles influenced by the New Perspective on Paul, especially with respect to Justification. Clark also identifies debates about the covenant of works, whether the Law-Gospel distinction is historically Reformed, and Christ’s active obedience as important historical and theological issues closely associated with the discussion. He also identifies the above three doctrines as of central importance and fixtures of true Reformed theology. Clark puts forth some ecclesiastical-contextual reasons for the current debates and outlines previous Protestant controversies over Justification.

This essay’s 3-4 pages focusing on Norman Shepherd within this outline do fit in with how the whole book takes specific issue with Shepherd and his views. Clark concludes his opening essay explaining that the book cannot cover everything. He acknowledges “that no essay touches directly the question of the relation between covenant and election.” He continues with, “Other equally important issues might have been but were not addressed. The concern of this collection of essays is perhaps the central matter of the Christian faith: the righteousness of sinners before a just and holy God.” (p23) Stendahl, Sanders, Dunn, and Wright come up in the essay, also foreshadowing the rest of the book’s concern with their work as well.

The essay certainly sets the tone for the rest of the book. *It is unapologetically explicitly Reformed.* It comes from a point of view that true Reformed theology and Reformed churches associated with it stand as the most pure—only pure?—expressions of the church universal and should certainly separate themselves from other conservative/evangelical Christianity in terms of theoretical self-identity, life, and practice. Playing on Tertullian’s well known question, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?,” Clark writes, “What have Reformed and Presbyterian Christians to do with [in the context of the essay, basically, other conservative-evangelical

Christian groups]...?” (p10, see esp. p6-12). One can read a pdf of Clark’s opening essay at [http://www.wtsbooks.com/pdf\\_files/Clark,%20Covenant\\_chapter%201](http://www.wtsbooks.com/pdf_files/Clark,%20Covenant_chapter%201).

## **2. Where We Are: Justification under Fire in the Contemporary Scene, by David VanDrunen, Professor of Systematic Theology (p25-57).**

Professor VanDrunen outlines his main aim on p26: “Justification is indeed under fire in the contemporary church and academy, and three distinct lines of attack demonstrate it: recent ecumenical [trends?], the new perspective on Paul popular among many biblical scholars, and the proposals of those I call ‘Reformed revisionists.’ This essay is not a critique per se of the views expressed in these lines of attack, but rather an attempt to describe the views accurately and fairly, to contrast them with the traditional position of Reformed Christianity, and to identify similarities among these lines of attack in the midst of their differences.” He specifically treats: Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification (p27-30), The Gift of Salvation (p30-33), The Oden Proposal (p33-34), The Finnish School on Luther (p35-36), Krister Stendahl (p37-38), E.P. Sanders (p38-41), James Dunn (p41-44), N.T. Wright (p44-48), Norman Shepherd (p48-52), The Federal Vision (p52-54). As a side-note, VanDrunen accurately describes Sanders on points on which almost every opponent of the NPP, whom I have read, distorts Sanders.

## **Part 2: Exegetical and Biblical Theology**

### **3. Covenant Nomism and the Exile, by Iain M. Duguid, visiting Professor of Old Testament (p61-87).**

In brief, Duguid argues that ‘covenantal nomism’ does not accurately describe the dynamic of the relationship between YHWH and Israel as described in literature of the Hebrew Bible relating to the exilic and post-exilic circumstances. His primary point is that while Israel’s faithfulness does, in ways, continue to relate to blessings within the covenant in the theology of the literature in question, it cannot account for the continuing of the covenant relationship between YHWH and Israel in the theology of the literature in question. Duguid commences with, “At first sight, covenantal nomism may seem to be strongly supported by the analogy of a marriage relationship that the Old Testament uses to describe the relationship between the Lord and Israel.” (p63) But, after looking at Ezekiel 16, Hosea 2, Isaiah 50, and Jeremiah 3, Duguid concludes that, “The marriage relationship between God and his people cannot ultimately be destroyed by the unfaithfulness of the bride.” (p67). No matter how unfaithful Israel was as a bride, such faithlessness could not ultimately sever her relationship with YHWH. Something other than Israel’s faithfulness thus determines her continuance in the covenant relationship.

Duguid moves on to examine Jeremiah 31, Ezekiel 34, and Ezekiel 36 explaining that such passages show a future after the exile determined by YHWH “radically alter[ing] the constitution of the people” and bringing them to a state better than prior to the exile. For, “It would be no comfort to tell a generation who had experienced the full weight of the covenant curses for their disobedience and that of their forefathers that future blessing depended on their future faithfulness.” (p68) Duguid goes on to examine Ezekiel 37, Haggai 2, and Zechariah 3 claiming that God will bring about a transformation of the people that does not just happen “automatically” as part of the return from exile. Duguid emphasizes that such acts are “from God” and thus not simply reflexes of Israel’s faithfulness. Duguid’s explains the rewards for

faithfulness theology within the relevant literature, mainly looking at Haggai 2 and Ezekiel 40-48, “not as [a theology of] means of staying within the covenant relationship but as the source of receiving reward” (p78) within the covenant.

Duguid goes on to explain the place of Jesus as the “substitute who suffers in place of his people and a covenant keeper who takes Israel’s place (and, even more profoundly, Adam’s place) in fulfilling the righteousness that God demands as the condition of blessing.” (p82). Without Jesus “perfectly fulfilling all of the demands of Torah” (p84), God’s people are simply “those who rely on their own efforts to keep the Sinai covenant as the means of blessing [and] find there nothing other than curse (Gal 3:10).” (p83) Concerning the place of human faithfulness, ultimately, Duguid writes at the end of his essay, “The function of the Scriptural teaching of rewards is...twofold: the equality of inheritance stresses that all who enter heaven have a glorious reward, while the principle of gradation of reward stresses that accountability of the saints to God and the certainty of their future vindication by him.” (p86-87)

#### **4. The Covenant of Works in Moses and Paul, by Bryan D. Estelle, Associate Professor of Old Testament (p89-135).**

Estelle’s essay is an essay in favor of exactly what the title says. “My presentation [of the covenant of works], however, is unique in some respects: it incorporates modern research in biblical studies in order to supplement the traditional presentation of the doctrine; it is concerned with the exegesis of some of the ideal biblical passages...it describes the doctrine with current objections and objectors in view; it includes exegetical theology, biblical theology, and systematic theology in its methodology; and it supplements the traditional disciplines of biblical interpretation with modern linguistics.” (p91-92). Throughout the essay Estelle does an excellent job remaining very conscious of working within a Reformed theological tradition of the covenant of works. He provides numerous references to and quotes from figures in Reformed historical, systematic, and biblical theology in the footnotes. True to the above quotation as well, he references to and quotes from figures in modern biblical and historical scholarship, Jon Levenson, Gary Anderson, Christopher Stanley, etc.

Estelle does all this while working through the traditional passages usually identified within the, especially Vosian and Kline-ian, Reformed tradition as teaching and relating to the covenant of works most directly. With Genesis 2-3, Estelle specifically discusses sanctuary symbolism (p100-2), royal ideology (p102-4), “Eden: The Cosmic Mountain of God in Ezekiel’s Vision” (p104-5), the trees (p105-9), “Genesis 2:15-17: A Seminal Text” (p109-15), “Theophany, Death, and the Protevangelium (p115-16). From here Estelle moves to dealing with the covenant of works in Paul. Estelle principally concentrates upon “The Adam-Christ Typology and the Law’s Continuing Requirement for Perfect Obedience,” concentrating on Romans 5:12-21 and Galatians 3:10 (p116-33). Concerning the question of the requirement of perfect obedience to the law in Paul, Estelle concludes that, “[Galatians 3:10], along with many others in Paul, teaches the necessity of perfect obedience [to the law], albeit hypothetical this side of the fall [very lengthy footnote added with quotes from Hodge and Machen discussing the significance of such hypothetical obedience teaching].” (p128)

#### **5. The New Perspective, Mediation, and Justification, by S. M. Baugh, Professor of New Testament (p137-63).**

After claiming that the new perspective constitutes “a relatively small but vocal group” and that “The various positions of this group have been subject to considerable critique and rebuttal in scholarly literature, for its underlying analysis of both ancient Judaism and Paul’s theology [there is a lengthy footnote for this as well],” Baugh proceeds to outline his understanding of some important unifying points of the new perspective on Paul. Baugh then outlines four “methodological difficulties in the new perspective literature.” First, “...a pervasive tendency in new perspective scholars to use a word, word group, or phrase in Paul as levers to shift out understanding of Paul’s doctrines from what has been painstakingly established to their own eccentric interpretations” (p141-43). The Second has to do with an alleged difference new perspective scholars posit between Greek and Hebrew/Semitic conceptions of righteousness, God’s righteousness, and judgment along with the consequences of Paul falling within the Jewish/Semitic conceptual framework (p144-45). The Third “...methodological problem haunting new perspective exegesis is the consistent tendency to limit the meaning of Paul’s own teaching to what his supposed Jewish contemporaries either taught or what they would have understood” (p145-47). Fourth, “...is the rather abrupt way we are told that justification is not a definitive, judicial act of God but a process connected with continuance in the covenant relationship” (p147-148).

Pages 148-63 then constitute the official meat of Baugh’s discussion topic with Baugh focusing on Romans 5. The threads of this discussion lead to, “Paul’s forcefully clear focus on Christ’s substitutionary mediation in Romans 5 relates to Justification...I concentrated here on clear and necessary conclusions from Romans 5: the righteousness resulting in divine approval at the last day comes to us as a free gift of the righteousness of Christ as Second Adam and our mediator. It is his obedience to the covenant stipulations of the law imputed to us that forms that only ground for our justification, and eschatological verdict rendered now in Christ.” (p162) Just to make explicit some of Baugh’s points in his discussion that are still visible in the above quote, Baugh wants to emphasize that Romans 5 and Paul are explicitly concerned to counter notions and questions of sinful-human DOING of THE LAW being able to contribute anything to the justification of sinful humanity.

### **Part 3: Systematic Theology**

#### **6. The Covenant before the Covenants, by David VanDrunen and R. Scott Clark (p167-96).**

This essay concerns the ‘pactum salutis,’ which the authors explain was a fixture within Reformed theology historically but has suffered neglect and sustained criticism recently. “In Reformed theology, the pactum salutis has been defined as a pretemporal, intratrinitarian agreement between the Father and the Son in which the Father promises to redeem an elect people. In turn, the Son volunteers to earn salvation of his people by becoming incarnate...by acting as the surety...of the covenant of grace for and as mediator of the covenant of grace to the elect. In his active and passive obedience, Christ fulfills the conditions of the pactum salutis and fulfills his guarantee...ratifying the Father’s promise, because of which the Father rewards the Son’s obedience with the salvation of the elect...For the Son, the pactum salutis is a legal/works covenant of obligation, merit, and rewards wherein, as Louis Berkhof says, ‘eternal life could only be obtained by meeting the demands of the law.’” (p168) According to the authors, contrary to modern critics who claim the pactum salutis to be “a late transplant,” “The pactum salutis has

appeared in every era of reformed theology in every region where Reformed theology flourished...” (p170)

On p171-79 the authors work through confession teaching concerning the *pactum salutis* along with modern literature whose authors support it, discuss it, modify it, and criticize it. After mentioning some criticisms leveled against the *pactum salutis*, the authors claim that, “First, Scripture describes the relationship between the Father and the Son as one conditioned on the obedience of the Son with the promise of a reward for obedience. Second, this relationship is portrayed in Scripture as covenantal in nature. Finally, this covenant is properly understood in Scripture as established in eternity, even while executed in time.” (p180) The authors try to support this on p180-94. They conclude mentioning some further objections that tend to cluster around the doctrine being speculative and respond that such objectors, basically, advocate “a sort of Socinian-biblicist approach to theology that...[no] significant Reformed theologian has ever followed.” (p194)

### **7. Which Covenant Theology?, by Michael S. Horton, Professor of Systematic theology and Apologetics (p197-227).**

In general, Horton sets out to show that, “Paul, the Reformers, and the federal theology that forms the warp and woof of the Reformed system stand on one side, while the revised covenant theologies espoused by the new perspective on Paul, Norman Shepherd, and the federal vision—despite their differences—reflect together something very similar to the covenantal nomism that the Reformation repudiated.” (p198) Thus the reformers were essentially correct in comparing the Galatian heresy and early Judaism, for example, with medieval theology and Rome, etc. From p198-211, Horton touches upon several topics he considers interrelated. He discusses the similarities between Sanders’ understanding of Judaism and Roman theology as represented by Trent asserting that both, basically, “hold to the necessity of our own meritorious obedience in some sense as a condition of justification.” The contrast between Sanders’ monocovenantal Judaism and Paul, who declares such Judaism to be “in bondage to works-righteousness” “could not be greater.” (p200).

On p201-11 he does several things. Horton argues against Norman Shepherd’s and Rich Lusk’s views that merit is an unacceptable category in Reformed theology. Horton claims that in contrast to their views, merit has been a foundational and core category in Reformed theology throughout its history and remains central. Horton further argues that a notion of Christ’s merit, congruent merit at least, still functions in the thought of Lusk and Shepherd. Furthermore, Horton posits Shepherd and the federal visions’ theology as enshrining a notion of congruent merit in the believer’s justification and thus being similar to “late medieval theology.” Moving back to Sanders within these pages, Horton claims, “It is impossible to read Sanders’ description of Second temple Judaism and Heiko Oberman’s description of late medieval nominalism and not recognize striking similarities. This covenantal nomism is the official position of post-Tridentine Rome...” (p205-6) Horton also claims that the Reformers were aware of arguments that works of the law concerned ceremonial law, Dunn and Wright’s understanding from Horton’s point of view, and argued against them. Thus the Reformers anticipated a supposedly modern discovery. Horton concludes the section on p201-11 claiming that “The new perspective on Paul unwittingly repeats the medieval arguments as if they were fresh exegetical discoveries, and the federal vision demonstrates no greater familiarity with the sources that they assume to have gotten Paul so badly wrong.” (p211)

Horton treats his understanding of the Law/Gospel distinction and how it comes up in contemporary discussion and scholarship on p211-21. Horton discusses the importance of distinguishing between the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinaitic, how to associate Gospel-grace with one and Law-merit-doing with the other, conditional versus unconditional covenants, the importance of understanding law redemptive-historically and “as a principle of works-righteousness,” how the Reformers observed these distinctions, how proper understanding of such distinctions and their centrality are crucial for understanding Justification, how federal vision advocates muddle them and are wrong to call them Lutheran, how Justification in true Reformed theology is basically the same in substance as Lutheran understandings of it, and that such distinctions and their centrality are genuinely Biblical and Pauline.

On p221-26 Horton, to oversimplify, argues that a final Justification according to works is not Biblical and certainly stands as gross misunderstanding of Paul: “With Paul, the Reformers challenged [final justification according to works as represented by covenantal nomism, Wright’s Paul, federal vision theology, Shepherd, etc, all similar to Rome and medieval theology] by insisting that one not only gets in but stays in by grace alone. They realized that the law, which we could not fulfill, nevertheless had to be fulfilled. Clearly this involves some notion of merit: either Christ’s or our own...Paul’s contrast [doing versus believing with respect to justification] is also that of the Reformers...” (p221-22) One should note that Horton does recognize some of the nuances of Wright and various NPP scholars that he does not find in federal vision advocates. On the final page Horton also notes that the new perspective has made “important contributions to our understanding of Paul and Israel.”

Lastly, Horton has the following nuance concerning all this discussion of Justification, salvation, and obedience in Reformed theology: “[Reformed theology] has never said that there are no conditions in the covenant—or even in justification. Rather, it argued that the condition of justification is faith and that the conditions of salvation as a whole process are many: lifelong repentance and faith, sanctification, and glorification. This theology, however, emphasized that these conditions are fulfilled by the gifts that come to us through union with Christ. Thus, God promises to give faith and perseverance, justification and sanctification, throughout the course of our life, all the while distinguishing justification from the process of renewal.” (p217)

## **8. Do This and Live: Christ’s Active Obedience as the Ground of Justification, by R. Scott Clark (p229-65).**

On p230-37 Clark details the history of the doctrine, which he claims is found in the “major Reformers.” On p237-43 Clark moves to the modern discussions of the doctrine and outlines its supporters and critics. Clark gives the following thesis on p243-44: “I contend that, as the voluntary surety entailed by the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son... and as the Second Adam required by the covenant of works, God the Son became incarnate to fulfill the legal obligations of these covenants. By his active obedience to God’s law as expressed in these covenants, he not only propitiated the divine wrath and expiated sin but also merited justification and eternal life for his people.” Clark provides his Biblical argumentation on p244-49. 249-52 contain Clark’s explanation of some theological points to help understand active obedience, namely God’s justice and its relation to sin and how “Adam owed total, active obedience to the law, and the law continues to require nothing less than active and perfect fulfillment.” (p250)

Clark's other main theological point here, on Christ's work, concerns the Reformed understanding that Christ came to actually be a substitute for his people and so save them, not simply to make salvation possible or to render obedience for himself. On p252-64 Clark mentions and seeks to counter what he sees as the main objections put forth against the doctrine of the imputation of Christ's active obedience: it makes God unjust (p252), it leads to antinomianism (p252-53), it diminishes the cross (p253-54), it relies on Roman categories of merit (p254-58), it relies on a legal fiction (258-59), it makes the filial superior to the legal (p259-61), it should be replaced by union with Christ (p262), it is not confessional (p262-64). Concerning the objection that the doctrine of active obedience relies on Roman categories of merit, Clark comments that, "If this complaint were conceded then we should have to reverse not only the Reformation doctrine of justification, which was premised on the notion of Christ's merits, but we should also have to repudiate most of two millennia of Western theology. In fact, merit is a central theological and hermeneutical category [footnote added here with references to Reformed confessions]." (p254-55) One of Clark's concluding comments is that "This is not just another intramural Reformed scrimmage." (p265)

From my point of view, it is too bad that Professor Clark was not able to interact with the two part article, "The Sufficiency of the Cross," by Professor J.R. Daniel Kirk concerning active obedience that recently appeared in the Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology. In it Professor Kirk argues that not only is the discussion concerning active obedience an intramural discussion within Reformed circles subscribing the Westminster Confession, but that the doctrine lacks biblical support (Part 1). Part 2 deals with "the theological logic of the New Testament as it takes up the question of the interrelationships among Jesus' work, the law, and justification." I imagine the article was published too late for Clark to interact with it?

### **9. Faith Formed by Love or Faith Alone? The Instrument of Justification, by W. Robert Godfrey, President of Westminster California and Professor of Church History (p267-84).**

Godfrey appears to be particularly concerned with the criticism "that the Reformed somehow have a distinctive doctrine of Justification [from Lutheranism]" and to show that such a complaint "can be articulated and defended only by those who do not understand either Lutheran or Reformed theologies." (p268) Godfrey seeks to examine Justification by looking at "the medieval definition of faith, what Calvin taught on faith alone, and the apostle Paul's doctrine... To anticipate our conclusion: we will find that Calvin faithfully summarized what Paul taught." (p269) In discussing Calvin and the Reformed, Godfrey wants to hold that, "For the Reformation, reconciliation precedes sanctification." (p275) Concerning the Biblical data (p277-84), Godfrey argues that the Reformation/Lutheran understanding of Justification is clearly that of Paul. Furthermore, Biblical scholars and other readers who disagree with such a Reformation understanding of Justification do so because they have a moral problem, "They do not want to have to acknowledge that they can do nothing to help themselves." (p277) Furthermore, such readers and scholars have wrongly held that Scripture is not essentially clear (p277-78). Godfrey concludes with a common note for the book as a whole, "The new perspective on Paul and the federal vision are not really new, but a reiteration of medieval theological errors." (p284)

### **10. Justification by Faith Alone: No Christian Life Without It, by Hywel R. Jones, Professor of Practical Theology (p285-306).**

According to Jones, “The question to be considered therefore is the following: What role does justification play in sanctification? The answer can be summarized in advance as follows: The realization that one is pardoned and accepted by God on the basis of Christ’s righteousness, without any works of one’s own, motivates and supports one in doing the will of God—as nothing else does or can do.” (p287) Jones devotes a major part of the essay’s examination to looking at “the noun faith” and “the verb justify,” especially through examining and discussing Paul and James (p288-96). Such an examination shows no contradiction between the two and vindicates the Reformation doctrine. Like Saul who “became Paul, willingly bound to Jesus Christ, who had kept the law, and borne the curse for each one of his people” (p299), Christians die to the Law, through co-crucifixion with Christ, and have freedom from the law’s demands for obedience and doing to merit salvation and avoid damnation. Concerning the fulfillment of the law, “[Christians]...not only...die to their attempts to keep the law as a way to God, but they also begin to live to God through Christ’s law keeping and curse bearing for them.” (p301) They do, though, love to keep the law; “Walking in the Spirit—that is, doing the law...” (p304)

#### **Part 4: Pastoral Theology**

##### **11. Preaching sola fide Better, by Hywel R. Jones (p309-30).**

The essay is about the message of sola fide, which through a Berkouwer quote Jones contends “is central to almost everything Christian,” and the proclamation of sola fide. Jones breaks down his essay into sections, the need for preaching sola fide better and the benefits of preaching sola fide better. Under “the method of preaching sola fide better,” Jones discusses the necessity of the preacher understanding it and thus includes sections of “what is justification by faith all about?” and “what is special about Justification by faith.” Jones comments that “Justification is therefore distinguishable from all other blessings of salvation because while they all have some connection with faith, only justification can be said to be by faith alone.” (p314) Upon reaching the homiletical part of the essay, Jones states, “Given what has been said, we approach the homiletical part of our task in the realization that the message of sola fide forms the nexus between God’s truth and man’s saving reception of it. Such a connection gives to the preaching of sola fide an importance that is second to none from the standpoints of the differing responsibilities of both preacher and hearer.” (p318) Jones states that hermeneutics and homiletics are to be in service of this and, “In our view, the best way to do this is by using the categories of law and gospel and certainly not a single, undifferentiated view of covenant [footnote added about Shepherd and his contradiction of the WCF].” (p319) Jones works through Biblical support for preaching sola fide, especially from Romans 1:18-5:21, along with discussing the focus of preaching it, which is essentially Jesus Christ and his “...becoming incarnate, the Son of God became the representative and substitute for sinners, in his life keeping the law of God in all its demands and in his death bearing the full punishment that sin merits in the estimate of God.” (p321) Jones’ final main section is “the aim of preaching sola fide.”

##### **12. Letter and Spirit: Law and Gospel in Reformed Preaching, R. Scott Clark (p331-63).**

Clark commences his essay acknowledging that all interpret and read the Bible in the light of their broader understanding of the Bible and as part of the history of interpretation. He continues, “Since the sixteenth-century Reformation, the Protestant understanding of that ‘whole

plan'...has been that Scripture contains 'two words:' law and gospel. This essay will endeavor to explain the meaning and application of these categories more fully, but it is enough here to say that as a hermeneutical and homiletical category law in its pedagogical use speaks of the demand for 'perfect, personal and perpetual obedience'..." (p331-32) Like many other contributors who have sought to counter notions of this and that being Lutheran and not Reformed, so Clark here is concerned that "in some contemporary discussion, it has become a datum that the law/gospel distinction is Lutheran and not Reformed [long footnote listing some such critics, starting with Peter Lillback]. This essay argues, however, that the Protestant law/gospel hermeneutic is not only Reformed, but also a basic part of 'interpreting correctly'...and preaching God's word." (p333)

For several pages Clark works through some patristic and medieval material concluding that they did not really have the law/gospel distinction. Then comes "The Reformation Breakthrough," with Luther and the Reformers understanding and exercising the law/gospel hermeneutic. Clark devotes p337-50 to arguing this and his tracing of the centrality of the law/gospel hermeneutic in Reformed theology through history and p350-52 to discussing "The Twentieth-Century Rejection of Law and Gospel." Clark gets to a section with the title "Preaching Law and Gospel" on p352 and devotes p352-58 to his contention that Law/Gospel structures the 'Reformed Symbols' (Heidelberg Catechism, Westminster Confession, etc), with special focus on the symbols and Reformed Orthodox seeing a restatement—typological reinstatement?—of the covenant of works at Sinai (p356-57). Back to his main point in this section, Clark contends, "According to the Westminster Confession of Faith, the gospel is that Christ has met the terms of the law for his elect." (p357) On p358-361 Clark discusses preaching the law. A minister "must, of course, first recognize the law for what it is—God's unbending moral will requiring 'personal, entire, exact, and perpetual obedience' (WCF 19.1) before and after the fall. This is how Paul read Deuteronomy 27:26 in Galatians 3:10..." (p359). Clark works through what most know as the parable of the Good Samaritan with Jesus' interaction with the lawyer (Luke 10:25-37) setting forth this as showing that "Jesus was the preacher of the law par excellence...Again, Jesus preaches the law to the lawyer: 'Go and do likewise.'" (p359-60) Clark also works through Acts 2's account of Peter's preaching: "It was because Peter roared the law to those Israelite men gathered at Pentecost that they were 'stabbed in the heart' (Acts 2:37)." (p361) Thus, it is not the case that the Reformed minister proclaims the Gospel and not the law. (p360) Clark discusses "Preaching the Gospel" on p362-63. In short, "The gospel refers to the second mood or word to be preached, the announcement that the Second Adam by his one act of obedience (Rom 5:18) has kept the law, fulfilled the covenant of works, and made a new covenant in his blood for us sinners...and was crucified, buried, and raised...for our justification (1 Cor 15:1-3)." (p362)

### **13. The Rise of Moralism in Seventeenth-Century Anglican Preaching: A Case Study, by Julius J. Kim, Associate Professor of Practical Theology and Dean of Students (p365-97).**

Professor Kim seeks to explain the context and rise of Anglican Latitudinarianism preaching in the Seventeenth-century as an example of erosion from Reformed Orthodoxy into moralism preaching. On p369-78 Kim seeks to sketch British preaching in general during that time along with a couple specific types. On p378-91 Kim discusses "Restoration Latitudinarian Preaching," mainly by looking at Benjamin Whichcote, along with his interaction with the Orthodox Anthony Tuckney, and John Tillotson. Throughout, especially this part of, the essay

Kim seeks to explain how this moralistic-Latitudinarian preaching arose plausibly within its cultural, social, ecclesiastical, and political context for the men in question, even how they seemed to think they were trying to be faithful to Reformed theology as they understood it. Up through this point of the essay Kim's most explicit interaction with and criticisms of the federal vision proponents, and those whom the book as a whole has targeted, has occurred in several footnotes (n39 on p379, n56 on p384, etc). On p391-95 Kim puts forward Christ centered preaching and hermeneutics as an excellent remedy for such problems in theology and preaching. *These 4-5 pages seem to comprise an excellent concise outline of Vos-ian and Clowney-ian Christ-centered Biblical-theological reading and preaching of the Bible with explicit reference to some of the usual Scriptural foundations for it.*

#### **14. Simul iustus et peccator: The Role of Justification in Pastoral Counseling, by Dennis E. Johnson, Professor of Practical Theology and Academic Dean (p399-429).**

Johnson argues that *though* "At first glance, it would appear that the Reformation doctrine that sinful persons are justified, decisively and irreversibly, merely through relying on Jesus' covenant keeping (active obedience) and covenant curse bearing (passive obedience) alone, would hamstring Christians' motivation to race towards holiness, thereby depriving the pastoral counselor of much needed leverage to overcome counselees' internal inertia..." (p400), *truly* justification is "the foundation and fountain of a God-given, grace-instilled motive that overpowers the appeals of both sin and self-righteousness, producing a freedom to obey for sheer love of the Savior, for God's glory alone." (p401) Professor Johnson works from two main Scriptural 'case-studies' to show this: Luke 7:36-50 and Galatians (p402-16). He follows these with quotes and discussion on the topic from John Calvin (p416-19), Guido de Bres and the Belgic Confession (p419-21), the Marrow of Modern Divinity (p421-23), and Thomas Chalmers (p423-25). He includes some general comments concerning several different types of pastoral counseling situations as part of his concluding pages (p425-29).

#### **Appendix. Our Testimony on Justification, by The Faculty of Westminster Seminary California (p431-43).**

This is a run through of the teaching of various Reformed Confessions on doctrines that are closely associated with Justification and of great importance in Reformed theology from the point of view of the faculty at Westminster Seminary California. Online at:

<http://www.wscal.edu/about/doctrine/testimonyonjustification.php> .

### **My Thoughts and Reflections**

With one important caveat, which I will make at the end of my reflections and thoughts, the authors show themselves to be very knowledgeable historical theologians, immersed within and very competently conversant with the Reformed traditions. Such expertise stands out in places where they seem to present nuanced historical-theological understandings of issues. In the light of such understandings, some of the Reformed historical-theological views espoused by some proponents of the Federal Vision look like overly-sweeping and simplistic assertions. Furthermore, Professors VanDrunen and Horton are to be commended for providing more

nuanced and accurate descriptions of some New Perspective scholars than I usually find in Reformed treatments that are critical of the New Perspective.

To be fair to Professor Clark, and to acknowledge his disclaimer (p22-24), the book truly cannot treat everything. Nevertheless, I would like to touch upon some questions and issues that the book notably does not treat and whose importance in contemporary discussion, I think, demands attention. From a more *general point of view*, the book does not explicitly deal with and frame its discussions in terms of the all-important issue(s) of text, context, and the factors associated with shifting hermeneutical-horizons. *The importance of context, the situatedness of all knowledge, and how these are determinative matters* and issues within current discussions of and attempts to bring about the interaction between Reformed systematic-theology, historical study of the Bible and the early church, and the relationship to, along with everyone's situatedness within, the history of interpretation, *really cannot be overstated*. Clark himself gives an analysis of the socio-contextual reasons for greater plausibility of current positions within the current debate (p6-11) as well as explicitly acknowledging the situatedness of all knowledge (footnote 5 on p7). **Yet, the contributors do not raise questions and touch issues concerning the application of such contextual-hermeneutical awareness to their own traditional Reformed positions and exegesis.** The failure to do this—self apply issues contextual hermeneutical awareness as well as engaging the writings of the Bible with issues of text, historical context, and shifting hermeneutical horizons informing the engagement—is just that, a *failure* of the book. In my opinion this is not simply a criticism that the authors missed some important points while still touching on many others. **Rather, the failure to treat and self-apply these issues undermines much of the content of the book.**

To approach this from a more *narrowly focused point of view*, the contributors never really argue for important assumptions within their exegetical and theological arguments and positions. For example, the centrality and fundamental determinative importance of the believing vs. DOING (justification without reference to doing) principle is never really argued. Contemporary debates and historical scholarship on Paul have called into question, as much as anything, the reality of such a principle, and questions and issues associated with it, functioning so actively and explicitly within Paul's thought. Many historical scholars argue that questions and issues associated with believing vs. DOING, the works-principle, etc, do not explicitly and consciously operate within the cultural-religious horizon of Paul himself the way they do in the horizon of traditional Reformed readings of Paul, if at all. Simply complaining that such a criticism presupposes a fallacious view that Paul could not think anything new or different from his surrounding Jewish and/or Greco-Roman contemporaries (p145-47) misses the point. One's Paul (reading of Paul) must be a Paul who plausibly fits within his ancient-Mediterranean Jewish Hellenistic context. Perhaps such a Paul differs, at least slightly?, from a Paul whose all-determinative believing vs. DOING principle with respect to justification fits so well in Reformation and post-Reformation debates with Rome? Clark's discussion (p244-49) concerning 'Biblical Teaching of the Imputation of Active Obedience' comes closest to actually arguing for the fundamental explicit-conscious and determinative importance of the believing vs. DOING principle (the importance of receiving without reference to DOING in justification, matters of sin, wrath, and death) in Paul. Yet, even here, the lack of engaging explicitly the issues of text, context, and importance of hermeneutical-horizons leads to readings and theological arguments already functioning with a hermeneutical horizon dominated by the *assumed importance and prominence* of issues of believing vs. DOING and receiving with and without reference to DOING, concepts of merit in relation to DOING within the traditional Reformed-Catholic-

medieval horizons, etc. Thus here, and elsewhere in the book, the referencing of Scripture passages and traditional types of Reformed exegesis associated with them does not occur with the importance of the horizon and context issue in taken into account. Without a hermeneutical-horizon in which issues and questions associated with a believing vs. DOING principle in relation to God, salvation, and Justification are prominent, the questions and decision making factors associated with the traditional Reformed readings and theological conclusions given within the book are out of place. Traditional passages from Paul usually adduced for traditional Reformed readings, especially ones showing an outworking of Paul's supposed fundamental believing vs. DOING salvific-dynamic, do not so 'clearly' (p277-78?) read in the traditional ways.

I hope I am making clear the extent to which the horizon issue looms large over any serious discussion of the interaction between the historical study of Paul (or any Scripture, or any text period) and systematic theology. Not explicitly bringing up issues of context and issues of shifting hermeneutical horizons, and applying them to Reformed exegesis and theology itself, inevitably leaves open an all-important challenging QUESTION. To what extent did/do Luther, Calvin, the Reformers, and theological readings of Scripture in their 'tradition' attempt to read Paul, for example, in a different hermeneutical horizon than Paul's himself? Perhaps those of medieval theology and Reformation and post-Reformation debates with Rome, etc? Related to this, *the fact that the book explicitly does not touch said issues and self-apply them, and that it does* constantly comment that Paul thus refutes the semi-pelagianism of Rome and medieval theology, or that Paul and the Reformers stand opposed to Early Judaism, Medieval theology, Rome, semi-pelagians, New Perspective readings, and the Federal Vision, etc, *only open the book up to the QUESTION more.*

The closest anything within the book even seems to come to addressing my questions of context and hermeneutical horizons occurs on p277-78 in Godfrey's essay. His comments under the heading 'The Biblical Doctrine of *sola fide*' should be quoted at length: "In the current situation, however, we must pause to ask whether as the people of God, we can turn to the book of Romans with the expectation of understanding the apostle's basic teaching there. Many voices suggest that we cannot, but that we can understand Paul only if some expert explains him to us. We need to be renewed in the true Protestant conviction that God has spoken clearly in his word... God is successful in revealing himself. Too much of modern theology rests on the idea that somehow God has failed to be clear in his revelation. We must utterly reject that notion. Still, we must explain why there are so many competing interpretations of the Bible. In Romans 1:18 Paul gave a clear answer: sinners suppress the truth in unrighteousness. Why do people fail to understand the Bible [think of what Godfrey would mean by 'understand the Bible']? They have a moral problem as much as an intellectual problem. They suppress the truth... They do not want to have to acknowledge that they can do nothing to help themselves. They do not want to acknowledge that Christ alone has done everything for their salvation. In our day, this moral problem has affected much biblical scholarship and further weakened itself by divorcing itself from the church, the confessions, and the orthodox community of faith... We must reject a biblical scholarship that asks us to trust experts and abdicate our own responsibility to read and reflect. We have to beware of biblical scholars who are constantly creating a speculative environment and context for understanding the Bible by which they make the Bible say the opposite of what it says [footnote added referencing a similar point in Guy Waters' book]." Out of charity I must assume (hope?) that Godfrey, a very competent historian himself, does not mean to attack the centrality of issues of context and shifting hermeneutical horizons for

historically studying the Bible, and/or any text, person, or issue for that matter. That said, I am interested in who Godfrey means to direct such comments against. Should someone claim that the above comments are the books' answer to my questions, I would find them wholly unsatisfactory. Again, the book itself acknowledges issues of context and horizons explicitly (p6-11) and implicitly by including essays that purport to engage texts of Scripture in their ancient context. Estelle explicitly means for his essay to be a hermeneutically self-conscious engagement of Scriptural texts in their ancient context, using all available tools and studies on the ancient world that Estelle finds relevant. To rule such issues of hermeneutics as out of bounds when it comes to allowing them to be applied to one's own readings and theology would be, well, naïve at the least and horribly selective at the most. So much for questions of context, hermeneutics, and the book's not self-applying such issues to its own Reformed traditions' theology and exegesis.

Another set of issues and questions that the book does not address stuck out to me as well. Throughout the entire book, *and fundamental to its arguments*, the idea of Jesus as one who came to keep the Law appears. Yet, I could not find a single place where the book attempts to exegetically argue that any part of the Bible conceives of Jesus as coming to keep the Law or Jesus' obedience as Law-keeping *in the way the traditional Reformed theology of this book means it*. In fact, at page 298 I started noting places where such references to Jesus as a law-keeper, etc occur without argument: p299, 301, 316, 321, 322 (sort of), 324, 325, 332, 344, 350, 356, 357, 362, 396, 413, 414, etc. I do wish I had started this list earlier as the earlier parts of the book, if anything, do this more frequently. The closest the book comes to offering positive argument is referencing some verses here and there, presumably with traditional Reformed interpretive traditions associated with those verses expected to come to mind. Related to this, the book does not explicitly make the reader aware that the traditional Reformed understandings of the law stand at a storm-center of controversy and discussion in modern Biblical scholarship and discussions within ecclesiastical contexts. This is especially true concerning the distinctions it makes, and most especially concerning what much of the tradition understands as the Moral Law with its associations with the covenant of works and God's moral standard, etc. In view of the constant discussion concerning the Law, the Law in Paul, the purpose of the Law, etc, especially such discussion within evangelical and Reformed circles, this also strikes me as a fairly significant un-argued and/or un-touched issue. The authors might claim that the above two issues are addressed as the book addresses other points of theology that imply them. But, that puts us right back in the middle of the issue of text, context, and shifting hermeneutical horizons. The book's discussions only adequately deal with such issues, even by implication, if those discussions deal with such context and horizon issues. Readings of Paul, for example, not assuming all the traditional nuances of a Reformed horizon for reading Paul will not imply or support understanding Jesus' obedience as Law keeping, keeping the Moral Law, the Moral Law as the condition of the covenant of works, and/or even the validity of such Reformed understandings of and distinctions concerning the Law at all.

Even in view of the above issues and questions that the book does not address, I in no way mean to thus claim that the book's positions on these issues are thus necessarily wrong. Nor do I mean to claim that various people against whom the book argues have addressed those issues in excellent and satisfactory ways as well. I simply mean to point up some questions and issues that I understand as important in the current debates that the book did not address. Again, I see this as a significant flaw that directly relates to the book's positive arguments and content.

Lastly, I do have one serious historical-theological comment to make about the book that has to do with some fairly technical and specific issues to Reformed theology. From my reckoning, the book comes from a specifically Meredith Kline-ian understanding of the Bible and branch of Reformed theology. I hope that I am making this point humbly, since I do not have anything close to the historical-theological expertise of the book's editor and contributors. I do consider Kline-ian, or any version of Kline-ian, Reformed theology to be a divergence from strands of Reformed theology represented by Calvin, the Westminster Confession, Old Princeton, Vos, Machen, Murray, Gaffin, etc. Without going into too much detail (I hope!), Kline-ian Reformed theology has ways of seeing the Mosaic covenant and the Law given there, not just as a republication of the standards of the covenant of works (in the ten commandments, as the Confession would hold), but as itself a (typological?) republication and re-establishment of the covenant of works. Kline-ianism seems to charge all types of obedience connected with blessing with works-principle understandings of obedience. Thus, the obedience and blessing theology of Deuteronomy is a type of (covenant of)works-merit principle-obedience. From my understanding, Calvin, the Confession, Vos, Murray, Gaffin, Ferguson, Robertson, etc rather understand a type of obedience within the context of the covenant, promise and obligation. They conceive of a type of obedience that is not final-salvific obedience (obedience earning or meriting salvation), but just obedience within the context of the covenant of grace. For them, from my understanding, such obedience should not be understood as obedience along the lines of the works-principle because Sinai came after the Exodus; a covenant of grace indicative has preceded the imperative here. For this strand of Reformed theology that I understand as different than Kline-ian Reformed theology, the Mosaic covenant is part of the unfolding of the covenant of grace. It is not a (typological?) republication of the covenant of works, putting Israel under a works-dynamic. It is not charged with a typological works-principle, etc. Furthermore, I should make it clear that such a non-Kline-ian understanding of Reformed theology is not a Reformed theology that has collapsed the covenant of works and covenant of grace distinctions. Rather, it just does not so explicitly associate the Mosaic covenant with the covenant of works. As a side-note here, since I have been referencing Murray, though Murray did not like the term 'covenant of works,' he had all the doctrinal substance of it in his theology that other non-Kline-ian Reformed theology meant by covenant of works. I think this Kline-ian position of the Westminster California book impacts how they understand the Law-Gospel distinction and its relation to the Mosaic covenant, etc. Again, I do not mean to claim that Ferguson, Gaffin, the Westminster Confession, etc denied the distinction between a works-principle covenant of works and the covenant of grace. Rather, they did not understand the function of the Mosaic covenant and obedience within the context of that covenant the same way as versions of Kline-ianism do. Ok, so this is a technical and seemingly picky point to be making. But, I think that readers of the book who appreciate the same important points of Reformed theology that the authors do, should be aware of this specific version of Reformed theology from which they come.

This all said, again, I realize that my understanding of historical Reformed theology and Kline-ianisms, especially with respect to Vos, are not the views of an expert. I also realize that the views of the contributors to the book in question are, certainly, views of experts and authorities within the field. R. Scott Clark and the contributors to the Westminster California book have put a lot of work and energy into producing a book that will certainly be important within certain Reformed communities discussing the issues in question. They have certainly shown great zeal and energy to establish and defend their understanding of the Gospel.

Finally, as I made the point of views from which the contributors come an issue, I will attempt to inform the reader of this (too-lengthy) review of my point of view. I consider myself to be a Christian from the Reformed tradition who tries to appreciate many issues raised in contemporary Judaism, Pauline, and Christian Origins scholarship. I hope that we, as a church, can learn to take awareness of various issues and incorporate them into our communal and missional living out the Gospel and theologizing. Far from being a professor myself, I am a ThM student at Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia. Thank you for your time.