

RESURRECTION
— AND —
REDEMPTION
A Study in Paul's Soteriology

Formerly *The Centrality of the Resurrection*

RICHARD B. GAFFIN, JR.


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Foreword

It is a privilege to commend this new edition of Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.'s seminal study in Pauline theology. It is a work that I have personally found instructive and illuminating, and I am glad that it is being republished for the coming generation of scholars, pastors, and teachers.

Dr. Gaffin's work merits study for a number of reasons. The first is that he is a careful and faithful exegete of the New Testament. All who handle the text of Scripture as serious students are aware of the constant struggle for self-discipline to allow the text to speak for itself. In this respect Dr. Gaffin is a reliable guide and example. Almost every page of his work evidences the fruit of that struggle to let Scripture be its own interpreter. To that extent, *Resurrection and Redemption* has value, even beyond its content, as a model of diligent scholarship.

Secondly, Dr. Gaffin writes as an experienced and enthusiastic Pauline scholar. He is sensitive to the distinctive role in the church to which Saul of Tarsus was called—to serve as a witness to the risen Christ (Acts 26:16; I Cor. 9:1; 15:8). One of the pleasures of being Dr. Gaffin's colleague is to observe at first hand the impact his teaching on Pauline theology has on so many of his students. This work provides a taste of such teaching.

Thirdly, this study stands in the honored tradition of Old Princeton and Westminster Seminaries in recognizing the significance of biblical exegesis and theology for the formulations of systematic theology. In particular, *Resurrection and Redemption* raises important critical questions for the traditional formulations of the *ordo salutis* in Reformed theology.

Dr. Gaffin, however, is no iconoclast. His study exemplifies the Pauline spirit in scholarship: seeking to understand the wide dimensions of the gospel in communion with the people of God in all ages (Eph. 3:13).

Fourthly, Dr. Gaffin impressively demonstrates the way in

which the risen Christ is central to both the accomplishing and the application of redemption. His study underlines how profoundly true it is that every spiritual blessing (justification, sanctification, adoption, glorification) is ours only *in Christ* (Eph. 1:3).

One of the more serious malfunctions in some contemporary evangelical teaching has been the tendency to offer the benefits of the gospel virtually separated from Jesus Christ as the Benefactor. Consequently salvation is severed from the lordship of Christ. This distorts the truly evangelical teaching of our forefathers, who emphasized that it is Christ clothed in the gospel whom we preach and in whom men believe for salvation. In this study, Dr. Gaffin points us back to this emphasis. His exposition of the resurrection as Christ's own justification, adoption, sanctification, and glorification is strikingly reminiscent of John Calvin's great dictum that "our whole salvation and all its parts are comprehended in Christ" (*Institutes* II. xvi. 19—the whole section is instructive in this regard). Thus the centrality of Jesus Christ as the Savior and the one *in whom* we receive the rich fullness of salvation is highlighted.

Resurrection and Redemption presents a stimulating challenge to dogmatic theology to assess its traditional formulations in the light of Scripture. But it also challenges the pulpit more fully to proclaim "Jesus and the Resurrection" as Paul did (Acts 17:18). This will be done not by the mere repetition of the thesis presented here, but by its imaginative translation into Christ-centered preaching which shapes Christian experience. Who is to say whether the challenge to the lectern or the pulpit is the greater?

I commend this work also out of deep personal admiration for the author. Those who know Professor Gaffin as a Christian, a scholar, a teacher, or a friend prize him and his judgment highly. Integrity is one of his hallmarks, and it is stamped clearly on the pages of this volume.

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Preface to the Second Edition

This volume is a reprinting of *The Centrality of the Resurrection: A Study in Paul's Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1978), with minor changes and the correction of typographical and pagination errors. The decision to return to the title of the underlying doctoral dissertation has been made because that title better reflects the book's content. Also, some readers, and at least one reviewer, were misled by the word "centrality," finding in it a suggestion of tension between Christ's death and his resurrection, as if the former is somehow less central for Paul. That was hardly my intention; in focussing on the resurrection I hope to have maintained the balance trenchantly expressed by Calvin in the quotation on page 115, footnote 117.

The pertinent literature that has appeared subsequently does not seem to call for significant revisions. With regret, and apologies to the few readers who have expressed an interest, I have not been able to include interaction with the views of J.D.G. Dunn previously anticipated in footnote 1 on page 77. While I would still wish to maintain their tentative character, the passing of time has left me convinced that the observations about *ordo salutis* in the Conclusion (pp. 136-43) are substantially correct.

My thanks to the Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company for its commitment and willingness to make this study available again.

RICHARD B. GAFFIN, JR.
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January 1987

Preface

This study, under the title *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Pauline Soteriology* (University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Michigan; order number: 70-10, 417), was originally presented to the faculty of Westminster Theological Seminary in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Theology in 1969. It has been thoroughly rewritten for publication but with only minor alterations in substance. Foreign language quotations from secondary sources have been put into English. Occasionally, references in footnotes to works in foreign languages or to works no longer accessible to the average reader have been deleted. Use of the original biblical languages has been kept to a minimum and, where included, should not keep the reader who is unfamiliar with these languages from following the discussion. The bibliography has been significantly condensed.

The relevant literature which has appeared in the meantime does not, in my judgment, require substantial changes in the work as a whole. I am keenly aware of the tentativeness of some points made in the conclusion and the need to expand and clarify them. But such an expansion is better served by a study of its own.

Part I has appeared with some alterations in *Jerusalem and Athens: Critical Discussions on the Theology and Apologetics of Cornelius Van Til*, edited by E. R. Geehan (Presbyterian and Reformed, 1971), pp. 228-237.

My thanks to Mrs. Betty Stevenson and Miss Dorothy Krieke for their work in typing the manuscript.

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December 1977

Abbreviations

ATANT	<i>Abhandlungen zur Theologie des Alten und Neuen Testaments</i> , ed. W. Eichrodt and O. Cullmann
CNT	<i>Commentaar op het Nieuwe Testament</i> , S. Greijdanus and F. W. Grosheide, founders
ICC	<i>The International Critical Commentary</i>
KNT	<i>Kommentaar op het Nieuwe Testament</i> , ed. S. Greijdanus and F. W. Grosheide
MeyerK	<i>Kritisch-exegetischer Kommentar über das Neue Testament</i> , H. A. W. Meyer, founder
NA	<i>Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen</i>
NICNT	<i>New International Commentary on the New Testament</i> , ed. N. B. Stonehouse and F. F. Bruce
NTD	<i>Das Neue Testament Deutsch</i> , ed. P. Althaus and G. Friedrich
SBT	<i>Studies in Biblical Theology</i>
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> , trans. G. W. Bromiley, vols. 1-4, ed. G. Kittel, vols. 5-7 ed. G. Friedrich, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964ff.
WTJ	<i>The Westminster Theological Journal</i>
ZahnK	<i>Kommentar zum Neuen Testament</i> , ed. Theodor Zahn
ZTK	<i>Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche</i>

Introduction

Biblical interpretation never takes place in a vacuum. A variety of contextual elements on the side of the interpreter inevitably come into play, exerting a decided, if not always recognized, control. Two factors especially shape the overall direction of this study and significantly influence its emphases.

(1) Reformed theology has always thought itself to be distinctively Pauline, more sensitive than other traditions to the deeper motives and trends of the apostle's teaching and more consistent in its expression of them. In the course of its development, however, it has not found particular *dogmatic* significance in Paul's statements regarding Jesus' resurrection. The convergence of two factors explains this state of affairs. On the one hand, Paul's distinguishing interest has been seen to lie in the area of soteriology, i.e., the application of redemption to the individual believer. Forensic aspects, the doctrine of justification by faith in particular, have been judged to be central. In other words, access to the structure of Paul's teaching has been sought in terms of the *ordo salutis*.¹ On the other hand, in the locus of christology or the accomplishment of redemption, dogmatic reflection has tended to concentrate almost exclusively on the sufferings and death of Christ understood as an atonement for sin. Interest in the resurrection for the most part has been restricted to its apologetic value and as a stimulus to faith. When it has received limited dogmatic attention as the initial phase of the *state of exaltation*, it has been viewed as sealing the effec-

1. Here and throughout this study the expression *ordo salutis* is not being used in the wider sense it has in the earlier Reformed dogmaticians; rather, as has become customary, it refers to the application of redemption in the life history of the individual sinner.

tiveness and facilitating the applicability of the redemption wrought by Christ's death.²

(2) Another controlling factor is the relatively recent acceptance of a biblical-theological approach to Scripture in Reformed circles. The explanation for this no doubt lies in the fact that the method as initially employed was bonded to rationalistic presuppositions which made it an inevitable and effective instrument for the denial of the divine origin and unity of Scripture.³ Only gradually has orthodox scholarship

2. The statements in this paragraph are generalizations and therefore subject to qualification and supplementation. As generalizations, however, they do have definite weight and validity. It is true that Reformed theology has not been guilty of the one-sided Paulinism of Lutheran theology. It has not, for instance, made the proclamation of justification by faith a virtual criterion of canonicity. Still in fidelity to its Reformation roots it has continued to find nothing to be more characteristic and important to Paul than the notion of a graciously imputed righteousness. The legitimacy of the above observations respecting christology or the accomplishment of redemption, may be easily verified by a summary perusal of the standard works on dogmatics. Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1893), vol. 2, devotes four pages to the resurrection (pp. 626-630) in contrast with a lengthy treatment of the atonement (pp. 464-591). W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, n. d.), vol. 2, passes directly from a discussion of "Vicarious Atonement" (pp. 378ff.) to "Regeneration" (pp. 490ff.). The major writings of B. B. Warfield in this area concentrate exclusively upon the death of Christ understood as atonement (*Biblical Doctrines* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1929], pp. 327-445; *Studies in Theology* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1932], pp. 261-297.). The approach of Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1959), is similar to that of Hodge. After a brief discussion of the resurrection (pp. 346-349) he moves on to a lengthy treatment of the atonement (pp. 361-399). The approaches of Abraham Kuyper, *Dictaten Dogmatiek*, *Locus de Christo*, pars secunda (Grand Rapids: B. Sevensma, n. d.), 3: 109-114, and Herman Bavinck, *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*, 3: 425ff. provide no significant exceptions to this general pattern. This virtual equation of the accomplishment of redemption with atonement which characterizes traditional Reformed dogmatics is nowhere made more clear or expressed more programmatically than in the opening sentence of John Murray, *Redemption—Accomplished and Applied*: "The accomplishment of redemption is concerned with what has been generally called the atonement" (p. 13; cf. the opening sentence of the preface). In calling attention to this preoccupation with the atonement, my purpose is not at all to challenge the validity and necessity of this development, far less to call into question the conclusions reached. Rather I wish only to point out that this dominating interest in the death of Christ has had associated with it a relative neglect of the resurrection. Here again it is not as if Reformed theology has had no insight into the matter. For example, Berkhof (p. 349) writes: "What is still more important, the resurrection enters as a constitutive element into the very essence of the work of redemption, and therefore of the gospel." But this observation is not developed; nor is the resurrection effectively related to the structure of redemption.

3. Cf. Kuyper, *Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*, 3: 167-170, 401-405. The sources for the rise of modern biblical theology have been conveniently collected and edited by W. G. Kümmel, *The New Testament: The History of the Investigation of Its Problems*, trans. S. M. Gilmour and H. C. Kee (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), pp. 98-107; cf. the survey of O. Betz in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (New York: Abingdon), 2: 432-437.

come to recognize that biblical revelation is given as an organically unfolding process, that is, as a *history*, and that therefore dealing with the biblical writers in terms of their respective places in this history, that is, with respect to their individual contributions, is not only desirable but necessary. Consequently, in the Reformed tradition of interpretation there are only two attempts to deal comprehensively with the teaching of Paul as a distinct unit. These are Geerhardus Vos's study on Pauline eschatology⁴ and the recent volume of Herman Ridderbos.⁵ Both these works will be referred to repeatedly below. Here our concern is with their programmatic importance.

Both men have, independently,⁶ come to the same basic conclusion. Further, this conclusion represents a marked shift so far as the traditional Reformed consensus is concerned. The center of Paul's teaching is not found in the doctrine of justification by faith or any other aspect of the *ordo salutis*. Rather, his primary interest is seen to be in the *historia salutis* as that history has reached its eschatological realization in the death and especially the resurrection of Christ.

With Vos this shift is not immediately evident, although it is given with the title, *The Pauline Eschatology*. This title can be misleading to the reader who understands "eschatology" in terms of the *loci* method of dogmatics. He looks for a specialized study of the "last things" associated with the future return of Christ. Vos, however, intends something more. In the opening chapter he states that "to unfold the Apostle's eschatology means to set forth his theology as a whole";⁷ and in this chapter he is concerned for the most part with uncovering the foundations and basic structure of Paul's thought. Chapter II is an implicit rejection of the notion that the *ordo salutis* as traditionally conceived, or a particular aspect thereof, is Paul's central interest. Rather he views the present soteriological realities of the believer's experience out of a broader eschatological perspective and as themselves the realization of the *eschaton*.

Ridderbos likewise maintains that a redemptive-historical or eschatological orientation governs Paul:

4. *The Pauline Eschatology*. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1930). This work appeared originally in 1930 and has been reprinted several times.

5. *Paul. An Outline of His Theology*, trans. J. Richard DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975). The Dutch original appeared in 1966.

6. Ridderbos is aware of Vos's work but makes only minimal reference to it.

7. *Eschatology*, p. 11; cf. p. 28.

It is this great redemptive-historical framework within which the whole of Paul's preaching must be understood and all of its subordinate parts receive their place and organically cohere. . . . It is from this [eschatological or redemptive-historical] principal point of view and under this denominator that all the separate themes of Paul's preaching can be understood and penetrated in their unity and relation to each other.⁸

This point is stressed repeatedly.⁹ Moreover, Ridderbos appears to be aware that he is making a new emphasis, at least so far as the tradition in which he stands is concerned. He deliberately employs the *heilshistorisch/heilsordelijk* distinction, which he uses in a variety of contexts to underscore that the apostle's interest is the former (i.e., redemptive-historical) rather than the latter (i.e., in terms of *ordo salutis*).¹⁰

In view of the dominant, indeed constitutive place Pauline material has always had in the formulations of Reformed soteriology, specifically its *ordo salutis*, there is little difficulty in sensing that far-reaching dogmatic consequences may be involved in this changed assessment of the apostle. What is particularly important for the present study is the fact that their common conclusion concerning Paul's basic outlook brings both Vos and Ridderbos to a new and deepened appreciation of the central place of Christ's *resurrection* in his teaching. According to Ridderbos, for Paul the resurrection of Jesus is the central event of redemptive history.¹¹ Consequently, it is the center of his preaching.¹² His eschatology (which is his theology) is pointedly "resurrection-eschatology."¹³ Vos seeks to be more penetrating. He is interested in "the religious and doctrinal principles underlying the resurrection," and develops at some length the thesis that "Paul has first made it a focus of *fundamental* Christian teaching and built around it the entire conception of the faith advocated and propagated by him."¹⁴

This combination of factors, then—the relative neglect of Christ's resurrection by traditional Reformed dogmatics and

8. *Paul*, pp. 39, 44.

9. Cf., eg., pp. 49, 65, 162, 208, 429f., 516.

10. Pp. 14, 63, 173f., 205f., 211; cf. pp. 45f., 91, 214ff., 221f., 268f., 365, 378, 404f., and cf. H. Ridderbos, *When the Time Had Fully Come*, Pathway Books (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), pp. 47-59.

11. *Paul*, p. 55.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 537.

13. *Ibid.*, p. 57.

14. *Eschatology*, pp. 147f. The italics are Vos's.

the renewed interest of recent Reformed biblical theology in what Paul has to say on the subject—defines the orbit in which we will consider the place of the resurrection in Paul's soteriology. Approaching the topic in this fashion necessitates certain restrictions. Our focal interest is in the *doctrinal* significance of the resurrection for Paul. What is its distinguishing redemptive efficacy, its specific soteric efficiency? This means that matters in themselves important such as the nature of the resurrection body, the question of the empty tomb, or the debate concerning alleged development in his teaching on resurrection will be dealt with only as they have a bearing on this central question.

In keeping with the basic conception of this study, attention will be given primarily to the Reformed interpretation of Paul, but viewpoints of other traditions will not be neglected. Even with expanded horizons, however, the available literature is decidedly limited. The primary explanation for this no doubt lies in the wider applicability of the observation already made with reference to Reformed theology. Western theology since the time of Anselm, particularly in its dogmatic reflection, has concentrated heavily, if not exclusively, upon the death of Christ. This emphasis, in turn, has governed its approach to Paul's soteriology.¹⁵ At any rate, treatment of his views respecting the saving significance of the resurrection as a distinct theme has been restricted to several short articles appearing in various periodicals. The lengthy study of the Roman Catholic scholar, D. M. Stanley, appears to be the exception.¹⁶ Pertinent material is, of course, to be found in commentaries, the various New Testament theologies and theologies of Paul,¹⁷ and in some of the

15. Cf. M. Barth and V. H. Fletcher, *Acquittal By Resurrection* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964), p. v: "Moreover, even if one adopts a broader historical perspective, it is noteworthy that, unlike the Eastern theological tradition, Western theological thought, while affirming that 'on the third day he rose again from the dead,' has nonetheless given relatively more weight to the crucifixion as the primary dimension of the Christ event."; A. M. Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1946), pp. 117ff.; G. C. Berkouwer, *The Work of Christ*, trans. C. Lambregtse (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 192f.

16. *Christ's Resurrection in Pauline Soteriology*, *Analecta Biblica*, 13, (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1961).

17. Here again, however, the yield is not so rewarding as might be expected. Usually the death and resurrection of Christ are dealt with together with almost exclusive stress on the former. Fairly typical is the treatment of D. E. H. Whiteley, *The Theology of St. Paul* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964). In the chapter, "The Whole Work of Christ" (pp. 130-154), he devotes roughly a page to the resurrection (pp. 151f.).

longer monographs on the apostle's thought. Here again the work of Vos and Ridderbos, particularly the former, is important. It is fair to say that this study is primarily an attempt to develop and put in a somewhat broader setting the brief, but exceedingly rich and provocative sketch that Vos has given of Paul's resurrection theology.¹⁸

In these introductory remarks a shift in Reformed thinking concerning Paul's distinguishing interest has been tentatively established. Usually when such a turn takes place, particularly *within* a tradition, it signals a corresponding change in approach and method. Part I will attempt to show that a change in method has in fact taken place and to give some attention to the proper *way* to approach Paul. Part II will seek to uncover the basic structure of his resurrection theology and to identify the central theme which governs the whole. Part III will discuss the way Paul develops and makes use of this theme. The Conclusion will note some implications for the problems and program of Reformed dogmatics.

18. *Eschatology*, pp. 147-171.

PART ONE

Methodological Considerations

GEERHARDUS VOS'S *Pauline Eschatology* is of abiding value not only for its rich and penetrating analysis of the basic elements of Paul's teaching but also for its variety of instructive statements concerning the *way* he approaches Paul. This methodological or hermeneutical significance of the book, which so far appears to have been entirely overlooked, is that to which we now will give careful attention.

Vos's approach to Paul is controlled by his conviction that Paul can "justly be called the father of Christian eschatology" (p. vi) and even that Paul's is "the genius of the greatest constructive mind ever at work on the data of Christianity" (p. 149). Statements with a similar tone can be multiplied. Because the apostle's mind "had by nature a certain systematic bent, which made him pursue with great resoluteness the consequences of given premises" (p. 60), and because it was "highly doctrinal and synthetic" (p. 148), one must think in terms of Paul's "theological system" (p. 60), his "system of truth," his "construction of Christian truth" (p. 148). Paul's "energetic eschatological thinking tended toward consolidation in an orb of compact theological structure" (p. 61). The facile one-sidedness of which all too many of his interpreters have been guilty results in part "because Paul's mind as a theological thinker was far more exacting than theirs . . ." (p. 149).¹

Taken together, these statements make an unmistakable impression. In particular, two factors stand out. (1) They reflect a deep appreciation of the distinctiveness and individuality of Paul, specifically his capacity as a *thinker*. The nature of Paul's mind is reflected upon in some detail. (2) They show a definite sense of continuity between Paul and

1. Cf. *Biblical Theology*, p. 17: "The Gospel having a precise, doctrinal structure, the doctrinally-gifted Paul was the fit organ for expressing this, because his gifts had been conferred and cultivated in advance with a view to it." (This volume, which first appeared in 1948, is a reworking of class lectures given at Princeton Theological Seminary, prior to Vos's retirement in 1932.).

his interpreter. Both have a common interest: the "data of Christianity." Christian eschatological reflection has Paul as its initiator, its "father." Moreover, the nature of this continuity, its specifically "theological" character, is indicated in a variety of ways. In short, it is not going too far to say that Vos approaches the apostle as one with whom he is involved in a common theological enterprise. And he does this without any sense of incompatibility with a conviction of the unity and divine origin and authority of Scripture.

Vos's approach stands in sharp contrast to Abraham Kuyper's rejection of the expression "biblical theology."² This contrast is instructive because the latter's work on theological encyclopaedia has had a decisive influence in shaping Reformed theological method, an influence which continues, at least indirectly, to the present.

At a first glance Kuyper's objections appear to be primarily historical in character, based on reaction to rationalistic theology which masqueraded its thinly-veiled attacks on the authority of Scripture under the slogan, "biblical theology." This factor certainly is important,³ but closer examination shows that his rejection has a much deeper basis.

Nothing less than the way in which Kuyper understands Scripture as the *principium theologiae* prohibits his use of the expression "biblical theology." Scripture itself is not theology but underlies it.⁴ The biblical writers must not be called theologians (p. 176), because theology is unthinkable apart from previously formed dogmas, and dogma is a product of the life of the (institutional) church.⁵ Thus stress is placed exclusively upon the disjunction, the discontinuity in principle, between Scripture and the biblical writers on the one hand, and the dogmas and theologians of the church on the other. The Bible itself contains no dogmas but rather the "material" out of which the church "constructs" dogma.⁶ The biblical revelation is given in the "stylized, symbolic-aesthetic language of the East;" only when the "Western

2. *Encyclopaedie der Heilige Godgeleerdheid*, 3: 166-180.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 169f., pp. 401-404.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 167: "If Holy Scripture is the principium of theology, then theology only *begins* when Holy Scripture is there" (Kuyper's italics).

5. *Ibid.*, p. 169: "Dogmatics is unthinkable unless dogma has previously formed, and dogma is as such a fruit of the life-process of the *church*" (Kuyper's italics); cf. pp. 395ff.

6. *Ibid.*: "There are no dogmas in Holy Scripture, only the material from which the church, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, has to construct dogmas"; p. 404: "... and Scripture does not provide us with dogmas themselves, but with the material from which the church has to build dogmas"; cf. pp. 355ff.

mind" with its penchant for "dialectical clarity" goes to work on the biblical material does theology come into being.⁷

It is essential to see, then, that in terms of the sequence: Scripture, church, dogma, dogmatics (theology),⁸ and because of the way the stress on discontinuity is distributed, Kuyper rejects biblical theology not only in name but in *concept*. To be sure, he does go on to approve the material interest of biblical theology, namely, its concern with the historical character of the Bible. He laments the shortcomings of the *loci probantia* method of dogmatics in this respect, and looks for real progress in biblical understanding to result from a study of the *historia revelationis*.⁹

Even from these brief sketches it is not difficult to recognize a decided difference in emphasis and approach between Vos and Kuyper. In fact, the stress of the one is precisely the opposite of the other. (1) Kuyper's construction is characterized by a "leveling" treatment of the biblical authors. In the sphere of *encyclopaedia* no attempt is made to take into account their respective differences. In fact, it seems there is an implicit tendency in the opposite direction.¹⁰ While Vos thinks in terms of the "systematic bent" and the "highly doctrinal and synthetic" quality of Paul's mind,¹¹ for Kuyper, the apostle, along with the other biblical writers, speaks the "stylized, symbolic-aesthetic language of the East."¹² (2) Kuyper stresses exclusively the *discontinuity*

7. Ibid., p. 168: "Revelation is given to us in Holy Scripture, wrapped in the symbolic-aesthetic language of the East. Its content is now transferred out of the oriental world into that western consciousness which attempts to bring the general human consciousness to dialectical clarity; and only where this transition takes place does theology originate"; cf. vol. II, pp. 247f.

8. Just how determinative and clearly defined this pattern of distinctions is in Kuyper's thinking appears from the fact that it furnishes the designations for three of the four major subdivisions of special encyclopaedia: De Bibliologische, De Ecclesiologische and De Dogmatologische (which includes dogmatics).

9. *Encyclopaedie*, 3: 170ff.

10. Ibid., p. 176: "Certainly each one of these men lived in a religious thought-world, and this thought-world is used in revelation, used even with the individual variations which more than one of them discloses; but in the history of revelation both this religious thought-world and these individual variations do service only as the canvas on which the Holy Spirit embroiders; and not that canvas but the embroidery itself is that which constitutes revelation and with which we should be concerned."

11. Cf. *Biblical Theology*, p. 16: "The didactic, dialectic mentality of Paul. . . ."

12. It is difficult to see how anyone who has read the letters of Paul could make such a generalization. Apparently Kuyper's encyclopaedic interests have at this point blinded him to what he himself recognizes elsewhere: "What makes the letters of Paul so difficult is that there the mystical-oriental and western-dialectical streams flow into each other" (*Dictaten Dogmatiek*, vol. I, part 2, p. 54); "Paul is a more acute thinker than James . . ." (*Encyclopaedie*, 2: 241).

between the biblical writers and the theological activity of subsequent Christian generations. Accordingly, Vos's description of Paul as a specifically "theological" thinker and his repeated references to the apostle's "theological system" are modes of expression forbidden to Kuyper *in principle*.

These two points of view are mutually exclusive in key respects. Which, if either, is correct? Kuyper's position may represent the characteristically Reformed attitude, particularly concerning the relationship between the interpretation of Paul and dogmatic formulation. Nevertheless, a variety of considerations points to Vos's approach as the proper way to deal with Paul as a biblical writer, that is, as an instrument of revelation.¹³

Biblical revelation has an *historical* interest. Scripture is a record of the history of revelation, which includes its own production. Analysis of this history—analysis welcomed by Kuyper himself—has made increasingly clear that revelation is a differentiated phenomenon, coming as acts or words. God reveals himself both in redemption and in revelation, in what he does as well as in what he says. The organic relationship between these two facets has also become more and more evident. Revelation never stands by itself, but is always concerned either explicitly or implicitly with redemptive accomplishment. God's speech is invariably related to his actions. It is not going too far to say that redemption is the *raison d'être* of revelation.¹⁴ An unbiblical, quasi-gnostic notion of revelation inevitably results when it is considered by itself or as providing self-evident general truths.¹⁵ Consequently, revelation is either authentication or interpretation of God's redemptive action. Usually both description and explanation can be found in a given biblical writer or instrument of revelation, although in each instance one element will be more prominent than the other.¹⁶

13. In discussing these here, attention for the most part will have to be limited to initiating and sketching lines of argument without fully expanding upon them. Many related questions, in themselves important, must be bypassed completely.

14. Vos's is still among the best discussions of this and related points (*Biblical Theology*, pp. 14f., 24, 124, 324ff.).

15. *Ibid.*, p. 24: "Revelation is so interwoven with redemption that, unless allowed to consider the latter, it would be suspended in the air."

16. The basic structure of the New Testament canon reflects this distinction: gospels (attestation)/epistles (interpretation). That this pattern is *intentional* or *constitutive* is confirmed by the shape of Marcion's canon: edited Gospel of Luke/the Epistles of Paul with the exception of the pastorals. (For a brief presentation of the evidence favoring the position that Marcion's canon is molded according to the church's and not vice versa, cf. T. Zahn, *Grundriss der Geschichte des neutestamentlichen*