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"To open the pages of *Word and Spirit* is to find oneself in a treasure trove of biblical and theological riches that will delight scholars, pastors, and all serious students of the New Testament. Our gratitude is due to Professors Garner and Waters for so fittingly doing with the scattered jewels of Dick Gaffin's essays what he once similarly did for Geerhardus Vos—and, surely, with the same confidence that they will be of lasting benefit to the church.

"Here is a virtual symphony of exegesis, biblical theology and systematic reflection of the finest kind, all expressed with a melody line of deep commitment to Christ. In his own ministry as a doctor of the church Dr. Gaffin has laid bare the deep foundations of the gospel in a way that enhances appreciation of its unsearchable riches and shapes the way in which it is preached and applied. Here then are *shorter* writings calculated to bring *long-term* benefits both for our personal understanding of Scripture and for the preaching of the gospel. It surely belongs to the 'must have' category of books in a minister's library."

—SINCLAIR B. FERGUSON, Distinguished Visiting Scholar of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary

"After decades as both a New Testament scholar and systematic theologian, Richard Gaffin, Jr. has not only mediated but enriched the tradition of Vos, Murray, and Ridderbos. I'm among the many beneficiaries of these labors and finally we have Gaffin's most seminal insights gathered into one place. I heartily encourage readers to digest these amazing explorations. As his life exhibits, these writings come from the life of the church back to the life of the church—not in an ivory tower of speculation."

-MICHAEL HORTON, J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, Westminster Seminary California

"I am delighted to have these shorter writings of Richard Gaffin collected in one volume. To my mind, the eight chapters in Part One on the relationship of biblical and systematic theology are worth the price of the book. Gaffin there shows himself to be the true heir of Geerhardus Vos, a trustworthy Timothy to Vos's Paul. These essays reveal both Vos and Gaffin to be ahead of their time in showing how biblical theology's attention to redemptive-history provides a framework that coordinates the work of exegetes and theologians. These essays speak prophetically to our present situation in which biblical studies and systematics have come apart, often with disastrous results. I love Gaffin's image of the systematic theologian as 'custodial interpreter of Scripture.' These shorter writings are a gift to the church "for such a time as this" (Esther 4:14)."

-KEVIN J. VANHOOZER, Research Professor of Systematic Theology,

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School

"It is a gift to the people of God to have Dr. Gaffin's shorter writings made available to a larger circle of readers, collected under one cover. Gaffin can be relied on to be penetrating, insightful, edifying, and biblically based."

-VERN S. POYTHRESS, Distinguished Professor of New Testament, Biblical Interpretation, and Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary

"I once found myself reading one of Gaffin's shorter articles while simultaneously listening to him lecture on the same subject. It struck me how often a simple cross-reference in the article would receive extended exegetical analysis in the lecture. This is characteristic of Gaffin's work: his subject is the grand history of God's salvation, but his method is rigorous exegetical analysis. Thus, in a few short pages, Gaffin will show his readers the cosmic scope of God's redemption while simultaneously guiding them ever deeper into his word."

— Тномая Кееле, Associate Professor of New Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary

"David Garner and Guy Waters have blessed the church immensely. By collating the best of Dr. Gaffin's writings into a single volume, they have presented us with nothing short of solid gold. What we have here is a treasure trove of biblical theology at its finest, rooted deeply in the Reformed tradition and intentionally aimed at the glory of God in Christ. This volume is sure to be a source of edification for many years to come."

—DAVID BRIONES, Associate Professor of New Testament, Westminster Seminary California

"Professor Richard Gaffin's works have made a significant contribution to our understanding of God's word and our respect for its authority. I am delighted to see that this volume brings together such collection of riches. I am sure that the essays will be read with great profit."

-PETER JENSEN, Former Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of the Province of New South Wales in the Anglican Church of Australia

"The clarity and precision of Dick Gaffin's writings have been appreciated and valued by pastors and scholars across the globe for many years. In a theologically confused and fragmented world, this resource offers important biblical and theological insights that will be welcomed by a global audience, and especially by those who are committed to 'rightly handling the Word of truth."

-STAFFORD CARSON, Principal and Professor of Ministry at Union Theological College in Belfast, Northern Ireland "I am thrilled to witness the publication of *The Selected Shorter Writings* of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. The occasion deservedly calls for appreciation and celebration among all the Reformed community but particularly so for those who have been "Gaffinized" including myself. His passionate voice on "redemptive-historical," "Christ-centered," "eschatological," "biblical-theological-systematic theology" resonates throughout this book. I highly recommend future generations of theological study to explore his teachings on Scripture and Reformed theology."

-KEVIN WOONGSAN KANG, Professor of Systematic Theology, Chongshin University and Theological Seminary

"The genius of a theological education is not just learning answers to various individual questions but learning how to think theologically about anything and everything by having your perspective on the most fundamental topics refined and refashioned according to God's Word. This is exactly what Dick Gaffin's teaching and writing did for me and for many others over the course of his influential career. In fact, several of the articles in this book were such game-changers for me while I was in seminary that I still assign them to my own students today. Take up, read, and be re-formed!"

-MARCUS MININGER, Professor of New Testament, Mid-America Reformed Seminary Selected Writings in Biblical and Systematic Theology

WORD & SPIRIT



RICHARD B. GAFFIN, JR.

Edited by David B. Garner & Guy Prentiss Waters Appendixes by Danny E. Olinger

> ₩SP westminster seminary press

Word and Spirit: Selected Writings in Biblical and Systematic Theology

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APPENDIXES

Few theologians at Westminster Theological Seminary have had more widespread and more durable influence than Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. From his arrival as a student in 1958 until his retirement in 2008 as the Charles Krahe Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Dr. Gaffin's half-century at Westminster has left an indelible mark upon the seminary, the church, and multiple generations of pastors, missionaries, professors, teachers, and counselors. This volume is a collection of fugitive articles, chapters, essays, and reviews published by him over the course of his lengthy career. Many of the works here are little known or difficult to find. They have been gathered here in an effort to preserve their rich biblical and theological insights in some permanent form. It is our sincerest hope that these writings will continue to profit students of the Word of God for generations to come.

At least five features characterize Dr. Gaffin's life and ministry—features that surface in every chapter in this collection. The first is the devotional character of each of his writings. To be sure, fidelity to the doctrine of the Westminster Standards characterizes Dr. Gaffin's teaching and writing. But it is Westminster's piety, with its dual emphases upon the helplessness of the sinner before a just and holy God, and the sovereign, saving grace of God in Jesus Christ, that is particularly evident in these pages. The cross of Christ and the ministry of the Spirit are presented not simply with exegetical precision and theological depth, but also with the devotion of one who has been humbled by the truth of which he writes. But Gaffin's piety extends in other directions as well. When he engages those with whom he disagrees, he does so firmly, charitably, and humbly. He seeks not to vanquish others and to promote himself, but to exalt the truth of Scripture and to build unity around God's Word. Put another way, the doxological tone and demeanor of Gaffin's writings instruct as much as their content does.

Second, Dr. Gaffin's writings are distinguished by a high view of Scripture and an unqualified commitment to its veracity. As a staunch defender and proponent of the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture, Gaffin is an heir of Charles Hodge, B. B. Warfield, Abraham Kuyper, and Herman Bavinck. He safeguards the sufficiency of Scripture in addressing claims of continuing revelation in the church today. He helps readers reckon with the implications of

the Bible's teaching for our understanding of language, revelation, and canon. And he explores the redemptive-historical structure of Scripture in such a way as to underscore the grand, formal, and Spirit-produced unity of the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation.

Dr. Gaffin's high view of Scripture surfaces in his writing itself. Each sentence is meticulously crafted and strives for utmost faithfulness to the Bible's teaching. The very form of his prose testifies to his conviction that accuracy with respect to the teaching of Scripture matters a great deal. Further, his exegetical conclusions are never ends in themselves. They are means to honor the Bible as the Word of God, and to advance the mission of Christ to the world. In other words, Gaffin handles the Scripture in ways that fully align with the purpose for which God has given Scripture to human beings.

Third, Dr. Gaffin's writings model faithful exegesis. His high view of Scripture leads inexorably to a rigorous commitment to represent the meaning of Scripture with care and clarity. He opens passages from across the New Testament—particularly Acts, Paul, and Hebrews— with remarkable depth and deceptive brevity. He does not make blanket assertions, demanding that his readers accept them on his own academic authority. Neither does he overwhelm his readers with masses of footnoted secondary literature. Although thoroughly conversant with contemporary scholarship, Gaffin opts to lay emphasis upon the text of Scripture itself. He patiently and transparently draws meaning from the text of Scripture, striving neither to fall short of nor to go beyond what God has said in his Word. His goal is not that readers would admire the interpreter for his interpretative prowess, but join the interpreter in discovering, admiring, and embracing the truth of God.

Fourth, Dr. Gaffin admirably synthesizes exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology, and historical theology. His exegesis is consciously informed by the biblical theology articulated by Geerhardus Vos at Princeton Seminary at the turn of the twentieth century. This biblical theology was by no means novel to Vos. In fact, as Gaffin has labored to show (and as Vos himself freely recognized), Vossian biblical theology is a refinement and amplification of the bi-covenantal theology articulated in the Westminster Standards. The writings in this volume break down the false dichotomy that is sometimes erected between biblical theology and systematic theology, as though they were incompatible, or even mutually hostile, disciplines. Reformed theology has never recognized such an antithesis, and the Westminster Standards model their fundamental harmony and compatibility. As readers will see, Gaffin stands squarely in and advances this tradition.

One area in Dr. Gaffin's writings where this disciplinary convergence emerges with particular clarity is his treatment of union with Christ. He

recognizes that Paul's teaching about union with Christ arises in Paul's antithetical comparison of Adam and Christ in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5.¹ Union with Christ is the framework within which Paul presents the graces of justification and sanctification—graces that are distinguishable yet inseparable. But, as he is eager to demonstrate, Gaffin is not the first to recognize these teachings of Scripture. On the contrary, they find expression in the writings of John Calvin and in the Westminster Standards. This is just one example how exegesis, biblical theology, systematic theology, and historical theology converge and complement one another in Gaffin's writing. In an age of extreme specialization, even within narrow disciplines, he manages to elude the parochialism and solipsism that characterize so much of contemporary academic writing. In doing so, he models the best of historical Reformed theology in his responsible handling of Scripture and by drawing from across the theological disciplines.

Fifth, there is one theological discipline we have not yet mentioned that, in many respects, integrates and permeates each of them—pastoral theology. Theology is no end in itself. God has given his Word to and for his church, and so theology serves the church of Jesus Christ. The theologian, therefore, studies deeply and writes carefully for the sake of Christ and his church, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints from the very ends of the earth. The design and purpose of truth is to transform lives, and to lead men and women to extol the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

These united strands of theology, ecclesiology, missiology, and doxology surface again and again throughout Dr. Gaffin's writings even as they do in his biography. It is not accidental that his writings reflect a longstanding pastoral commitment to the church. For the duration of his ministry as a teacher of the Word of God, Gaffin has been a faithful churchman, serving in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). He has quietly labored in the courts of the church and alongside fellow elders on congregational session, to feed the sheep with the Word of God. He and his writings reflect that longstanding pastoral commitment to the church. But he is no sectarian. He and his writings breathe a warm and gracious catholicity, recognizing and loving true believers, wherever they may be found. Furthermore, his life and writings reflect a deep commitment to the global church. Born in China to Presbyterian missionaries, Gaffin has devoted himself to serving the church throughout the world, not only in his publications, but also in praying, lecturing, and preaching.

^{1.} It is this recognition that grounds Gaffin's insistence upon the historicity of Adam in response to recent attempts to dilute or to deny this biblical teaching. See *No Adam, No Gospel* on page 381 in this volume.

The author of these essays is, in every way, a servant of the Word of God. He places himself in humble submission to all of its teachings, in doctrine and in life. He is reverent and careful in his treatment of these matters. He consciously recognizes that he is not the first person to interpret and understand the Bible, and that he stands on the shoulders of many giants. He is firm and courageous in articulating biblical teachings and is no respecter of persons when it comes to declaring the truth of God. But he no less understands that, when he speaks and writes, he declares the truth of God to human beings who need the very same mercy and lovingkindness that God has been pleased to give him in Christ. Far from possessing a cold and isolating rigor, these writings winningly wed gracious warmth to a principled commitment to Scripture.

It is for these reasons (and more) that we have compiled this selection of the shorter writings of Dr. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., Distinguished Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology Emeritus at Westminster Theological Seminary. It is our desire that his former students and colleagues will read them with warm memories and deep gratitude to God. But it is our particular hope that readers who have never encountered Dr. Gaffin or his writings—especially readers in generations to come—may learn from his pen not only what the Bible teaches, but also how to be a teacher of the Bible.

David B. Garner, Westminster Theological Seminary Guy Prentiss Waters, Reformed Theological Seminary November 2021

WORD & SPIRIT

PART I



HERMENEUTICS, BIBLICAL THEOLOGY, AND SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

7/26/23 8:24 AM

The Redemptive-Historical View^{*}

The terms *redemptive history* and *salvation history* have a fairly broad currency.¹ My own use will emerge as I sketch the basic elements, as I understand them, of a redemptive-historical (or biblical-theological) approach to interpreting the Bible and then discuss the selected passage in Matthew 2.

IDENTIFYING A REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL APPROACH

The German terms *Heilsgeschichte* and *heilsgeschichtlich* ("salvation history" and "salvation-historical") appeared for the first time about the middle of the nineteenth century.² The approach taken in this chapter, however, does not stem, at least in any direct or substantial way, from the developments that gave rise to this term and its English equivalents above. Rather, its roots are earlier, in developments present in the Reformation and in post-Reformation Protestant, especially Reformed, theology. More specifically, it builds directly on the work of Geerhardus Vos (1862–1949), first occupant of the then newly created chair of biblical theology at Princeton Theological Seminary from 1893 until his retirement in 1932.³

* Originally published in *Biblical Hermeneutics: Five Views*, with some revisions here. In this book each of the contributors provided a chapter first describing his view and then applying it to the interpretation of Matthew 2:7-15, and in a subsequent chapter interacted with the other four views.

1. Robert W. Yarbrough, "Paul and Salvation History," in *Justification and Variegated Nomism*, vol. 2, *The Paradoxes of Paul*, ed. D. A. Carson et al. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2004), 297–322, 339–42. His focus on Paul has a broader sweep and also notes how various salvation-historical views have been and continue to be contested or rejected, often emphatically.

2. A. Josef Grieg, "A Critical Note on the Origin of the Term Heilsgeschichte," *ExpTim* 87 (1976): 118–19, cited in Yarbrough, "Paul and Salvation History," 310.

3. Richard Gaffin, "Vos, Geerhardus," in *Dictionary of Major Biblical Interpreters*, ed. Donald K. McKim (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 1016. Some material from this article (1016–19) is incorporated in this chapter. See also my introduction to Geerhardus Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2001), ix–xxiii [page 149 in this volume].

Writing in 1916, Vos observed of Reformed theology that

it has from the beginning shown itself possessed of a true historic sense in the apprehension of the progressive character of the deliverance of truth. Its doctrine of the covenants on its historical side represents the first attempt at constructing a history of revelation and may be justly considered the precursor of what is at present called biblical theology.⁴

Vos saw essential continuity between his own work in biblical theology or, using what he deemed a more suitable designation, "History of Special Revelation,"⁵ and this earlier appreciation of the historical character of revelation present in Reformation and post-Reformation orthodoxy. His work is an effort to provide an alternative to the dominant view of biblical theology that had begun emerging a century earlier with the late Enlightenment (e.g., Johann Philipp Gabler). This view is wedded to the historical-critical method with its controlling commitment to the rational autonomy of the interpreter and its correlative rejection of Protestant orthodoxy's understanding of the Bible's canonicity and inspiration/divine authorship (e.g., the seminal and highly influential work of Johann Salomo Semler).⁶

At the same time, Vos recognized the need for more adequate attention to the historical aspect of revelation than was present in earlier Protestant orthodoxy. That perception is reflected in two statements that bracket his life's work, the first from his 1894 Princeton inaugural address and the second written in retirement: "It is certainly not without significance that God has embodied the contents of revelation, not in a dogmatic system, but in a book of history, the parallel to which in dramatic interest and simple eloquence is nowhere to be found"; and, "The Bible is not a dogmatic handbook but a historical book full of dramatic interest."⁷ Along with the positive point expressed, the "nots" in these statements point to Vos's concern to redress perceived traces of an intellectualistic or unduly notional understanding of revelation within Protestant evangelicalism more broadly and his own tradition of confessional Reformed orthodoxy in particular, a tradition to which

4. Vos, Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation, 232.

5. Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1948), preface, 23. Vos rarely uses the expression "redemptive-historical" (or "redemptive history"). Still, it aptly describes his hermeneutical approach.

6. For further information on Gabler and Semler, see William Baird, *History of New Testament Research*, vol. 1, *From Deism to Tübingen* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 117–26, 183–93.

7. Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 23; Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 26; "The circle of revelation is not a school, but a 'covenant'" (Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 17).

The Redemptive-Historical View

he remained fully and cordially committed. The hermeneutical stance elaborated in this chapter is in this tradition.⁸

BASIC ELEMENTS OF A REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL OR REVELATION-HISTORICAL APPROACH

1. Distinct from but always within the context of his self-revelation in creation and history (or "general revelation"), God's special revelation has two basic modes: deed revelation and word revelation. These modes may also be distinguished as redemptive deed and revelatory word, or redemption and (verbal) revelation.⁹ Though the point cannot be developed here, apart from general revelation and a biblical understanding of creation and general revelation, redemptive special revelation is basically unintelligible.

2. *Redemption/revelation is historical.* It has its truth and validity as it occurs in history, as multiple historical events that together constitute an organically unfolding whole, a completed history.¹⁰ This history begins when into God's original creation, which he saw was "very good" (Gen 1:31), human sin subsequently enters with its curse-incurring and death-dealing consequences (Gen 3). In its organic and progressive¹¹ unfolding, it incorporates the history of Israel, his covenant nation, until it culminates in Christ. The history of (verbal) revelation may be viewed as a stream within and conforming to the contours of the history of redemption, in its uneven movement marked by epochal junctures (e.g., exodus, Davidic monarchy, exile).

3. Jesus Christ in his person and work, centered in his death and resurrection (e.g., 1 Cor 15:3–4), is the culmination of the history of redemption (revelation).

8. The opening chapter of his *Biblical Theology* ("Introduction: The Nature and Method of Biblical Theology," 11–27) is still among the best introductory statements of a redemptive-historical approach; cf. "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in Vos, *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, 3–24.

9. As these interchangeable expressions show, "redemption" and "revelation" overlap in their senses. The distinction between verbal and nonverbal is irreducible, but God's nonverbal acts are always revelatory and his verbal activity is redemptive, that is, in the interest of his realizing his redemptive purposes.

10. "Redemption" ("salvation") here and throughout refers to its completed, once-for-all accomplishment (*historia salutis*), in distinction from its ongoing application, its individual and corporate appropriation (*ordo salutis*).

11. "Progressive" is not the most apt word here, particularly if taken in the sense of smoothly evolving advancement or steady and untroubled improvement. This description hardly characterizes Israel's history. Marked by constantly recurring decline and apostasy and eventual exile, it is apparently the opposite of redemptive history, *Unheilsgeschichte*. Yet "progressive" is properly retained in view of the inexorable forward movement of this history, in all of its twists and turns, toward its intended goal, Christ.

As its final goal, realized "in the fullness of time" (Gal 4:4), Christ is also, either explicitly or implicitly, its ubiquitous focus throughout, from beginning to end. He does not simply end that history. As the Triune God's final and supreme redemptive self-revelation, he is history's consummation, nothing less than its eschatological omega point, by which redemption restores creation from the ravages of sin and perfects it.

4. The subject matter of revelation is redemption. Revelation—excluding prefall, preredemptive revelation in Eden¹²—is the interpretation of redemption, as revelation either attests or explains, describes or elaborates. There is no hard and fast line between these two revelatory functions; both are always selective and so interpretive. In this sense (verbal) revelation is derivative, relative to God's nonverbal redemptive and revelatory acts. Verbal revelation is always focused on or oriented toward God's activity in history as Creator and Redeemer.

This generalization only holds with an important qualification. As verbal revelation documents and explains God's activity in history, so it also points beyond history to his antecedent self-existence (aseity) in its ultimate incomprehensibility and the ultimate impenetrability of his all-controlling pretemporal purpose ("before the foundation of the world," e.g., Eph 1:4). As the one who dwells with the contrite and the humble, he is, as such, the one who lives in a high and holy place and inhabits eternity (Is 57:15), whose thoughts and ways, ultimately, are as high above ours as the heavens are above the earth (Is 55:9). God is not exhausted in his redemptive/revelatory activity, nor is his person actualized in that activity. As Creator and Redeemer he is more than Creator and Redeemer, infinitely and incomprehensibly more.

With that essential qualification kept in view, however, invariably God's speech is related to his actions, his word to his work. Given the fall, redemptive deed is the raison d'être for the revelatory word. "Revelation is so interwoven with redemption that, unless allowed to consider the latter, it would be suspended in air."¹³

5. Scripture is itself revelation, not somehow less than revelation. The Bible

13. Vos, Biblical Theology, 15.

^{12.} This exclusion hardly means that special revelation prior to the fall has little or no significance for the history of redemption. In fact, as special revelation is unintelligible apart from general revelation, so redemptive revelation is inexplicable apart from God's purposes in view for the creation, especially for his image-bearing creatures, from the beginning. The consummation forfeited in Adam has been realized in Christ (e.g., Rom 5:12–19; 1 Cor 15:21–22, 44–49). "The eschatological is an older strand in revelation than the soteric" (Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 157). Redemption restores and perfects creation.

may be fairly characterized as a record of the actual history of redemption (revelation), as a witness to revelation. As such its own origin, including each of the constituent documents as well as the whole, is an integral part of this history, of which it is the permanent record and witness. In this sense, the redemptive-historical approach in view here is a canonical approach. Our only revelatory access to the history of redemption is the biblical canon.¹⁴ The limits set by the canon provide the boundary to what we can know by revelation about the history of redemption.¹⁵

6. To focus the preceding points hermeneutically: As revelation is the interpretation of redemption, so the interpretation of Scripture is always derivative, the interpretation of interpretation. Biblical interpretation is not autonomous assessment of a distanced textual datum but receptive appropriation of the God-authored preinterpretation of redemptive history consummated in Christ, preinterpretation that includes the revelation of his will for loving service to him and others.

Any valid interpretive approach ought presumably to be appropriate to the text and its subject matter. On that assumption—self-evident, it would seem, even in our hermeneutically turbulent and contentious times—Hebrews 1:1–2 provides a particularly instructive biblical instance of and thus warrant for the redemptive-historical approach just sketched. Along with a couple of other closely correlative references to God's speaking in Hebrews 2:2–3 and Hebrews 3:5–6,¹⁶ this declaration both substantiates and facilitates elaboration of the points made above about a redemptive-historical approach.

God, having formerly spoken at many times and in various ways to our fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us through the Son.¹⁷

14. For a redemptive-historical approach to issues of canon, see esp. Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (revised trans. Richard B. Gaffin Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1988), vii–x, 1–47; cf. my "The New Testament as Canon," in *Inerrancy and Hermeneutic: A Tradition, a Challenge, a Debate*, ed. Harvie M. Conn (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 165–83.

15. In this regard, John H. Sailhamer's basic criticisms of Vos seem misplaced (*Introduction to Old Testament Theology: A Canonical Approach* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1995], 67–70, 111–12; cf. 153, 185, 215). Vos's interest is not a reconstructed history that goes beyond the Bible, but the history that is the subject matter of the biblical text, however factored, considered within the context of the canon as a whole and what "by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture" (*Westminster Confession of Faith*, 1.6).

16. Likewise with theos as the explicit or implied subject of forms of laleo.

17. Scripture translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

This declaration covers, umbrella-like, all, or at least much, of what the writer goes on to say in the rest of the document. As such, it also provides a sweeping, overarching perspective on God's speech or revelation, a controlling perspective arguably shared, more or less explicitly, by the other New Testament writings. Several interrelated factors may be noted about this assertion, reducible to the definitive nuclear assertion "God has spoken."

First, revelation is in view as a historical phenomenon. Further, revelation has taken place as an ongoing history, a history that unfolds in two basic stages. The contrast between the old and new covenants prominent later, especially in Hebrews 8–10, is fairly seen as implicit or anticipated in the twofold division of Hebrews 1:1–2 as well as in Hebrews 2:2–3 and Hebrews 3:5–6. The writer's revelation-historical outlook is as such a covenant-historical outlook.

Second, God's Son is the consummate and integrating focus of this history. The history of revelation is both complete and a unity. God's having spoken "in the Son" is his "last-days" speaking. Any thought that this speech might be surpassed or superseded is plainly foreign, not only here but everywhere else in the New Testament as well. God's Son-speech has nothing less than eschatological finality.

The history completed by the Son is also unified in him. Overall christocentric unity is particularly clear in Hebrews 3:5-6. Here instead of the prophets (Heb 1:1) or angels (Heb 2:2), Moses stands for the whole of the old covenant, for the law (Heb 2:2) as well as the prophets.¹⁸ As such, in his servant capacity "in all God's house,"¹⁹ he is the key witness to "the things that would be spoken,"²⁰ that is, to those things spoken by God in Christ, to God's future last-days speech in the Son.²¹ All told, the old functions as a witness that looks toward and anticipates the new. Explicitly, more clearly than in the other two passages, God's revelation in his Son terminates the covenant-historical house-building process, as he is its completion. He is the *telos* (cf. Rom 10:4), the goal that gives unity and coherence to the history of revelation, old covenant as well as new, in its entirety.

This focus on Christ, as comprehensive and completing as it is unifying, shows clearly that the history of postfall revelation, considered in terms of its subject matter, is in fact the history of *redemption*. God's speech "in the Son"

- 19. Note, all he does is in God's one, single covenant-house building project in history.
- 20. The implied speaker of the substantive future passive participle $t\bar{o}n \ lal\bar{e}th\bar{e}somen\bar{o}n$ is God.
 - 21. Cf. Jn 5:46, "If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me" (NIV).

^{18. &}quot;Moses" (Heb 2:2, 5) as well as "prophets" (Heb 1:1) and perhaps "angels" (Heb 2:2) are each plausibly taken as synecdochic for the whole of the old-covenant period, both before and after Moses.

is "salvation. . .spoken through the Lord" (Heb 2:3), with both its realized and still future (Heb 9:28) aspects. He embodies, climactically and uniquely, both word (verbal) revelation and deed revelation (cf. Jn 1:1) with the former interpreting the latter.

Third, this Christ-centered history, complete and unified in its basic twostage unfolding, is marked by diversity. The diversity of old-covenant revelation is accented by the adverbs *polymerōs* and *polytropōs* and by their position in the Greek text as the opening words in Hebrews 1:1. If, as seems likely, a distinction is to be made between them (they occur nowhere else in the New Testament), the first has in view different parts or instances (different times and places), the second, different modes and genres.²²

Whether or not directly within the purview of the text, this emphasis on diversity accommodates and even sponsors the kinds of concerns that have increasingly occupied biblical interpretation in the modern period, but with a basic proviso. For the author of Hebrews, literary interests and historical interests are never competitive or even independent of or indifferent to each other. Genre factors, no doubt semantically significant, and essential theological considerations do not override or supplant but subserve more basic redemptive-historical concerns as those concerns always involve reliable reference to actual historical occurrence.

The diversity of God's speaking is a function of its taking place "through the prophets." With an eye to the preposition "through" (*en*) we may speak advisedly of the prophets as instruments. The way the author of Hebrews views the activity of Old Testament authors is instructive in this regard. In Hebrews 4:7, the quotation from Psalm 95 (Ps 94 LXX) is what God (the implied subject from Heb 4:3–5) is saying "through David," while in Hebrews 3:7 the same quoted material is, without qualification, what "the Holy Spirit says." The Holy Spirit utilizes David such that what David says in the psalm is ultimately what the Holy Spirit says. Similarly in Hebrews 9:8 both the actual Day of Atonement ritual and the account of it in Exodus and Leviticus seen together (word focused on deed) are what "the Holy Spirit indicates." In Hebrews 10:15, the promise of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31 is what the Holy Spirit "bears witness to" and "says."²³

A redemptive-historical orientation requires giving careful attention to this instrumental role of the human authors of the biblical documents, but that is not due to captivation with the "humanity" of Scripture or at the

^{22. &}quot;At many times and in many ways" (ESV), "at many times and in various ways" (NIV).

^{23.} Accordingly, Hebrews supports the classical distinction between God as the primary author of Scripture and the human authors as secondary authors.

expense of downplaying its primary divine authorship. A concern with revelation as a historical process should inevitably draw one to the varied human instrumentality that is an integral factor in giving shape to that process. The distinguishing characteristics and peculiarities of each of the human authors and what they have written are essential to revelation as historically differentiated. But divine and human authorship, the unity and diversity of Scripture, are not in tension. Attention to the writings of the various authors in all their respective individuality and particularity serves to disclose in its rich diversity the organic unity and coherence of the Bible as revelation. Nothing in Hebrews suggests that diversity involves conflict or disunity. Every indication is to the contrary. Hebrews 9–10 particularly works out the unity of the oldnew relationship in terms of the organic tie between type and its antitype, shadow and the reality shadowed.

A couple of final observations may serve to round out this presentation of the redemptive-historical method.

First, a primary concern of this method is fidelity to the fundamental hermeneutical proposition given with the Reformation's *sola Scriptura*, the well-known "Scripture interprets Scripture."²⁴ The sense of this self-interpretation, which focuses the general interpretive principle that a text is to be interpreted in the light of its context, is that the diverse teaching of Scripture, as God's written Word, is a concordant unity. Any one part is located within an expanding horizon of God-given contexts that, with whatever imponderables involved, serve to clarify. Biblical revelation is self-elucidating because in all its parts it is a unified whole.

This overall unity, considered in terms of its subject matter, is redemptive-historical. Biblical revelation faithfully records the actual history of special revelation. That history, in turn, is unified as the ongoing interpretation of redemptive history, which, centered on Christ, unfolds organically, like a maturing organism. Exegesis controlled by this redemptive-historical, eschatological framework, established by Scripture itself, will not only be prone to reach more thoroughly biblical conclusions but will also tend to begin with the right questions. Not only for Paul and Hebrews but also for the other biblical writers the principle holds, "The historical was first, then the theological"²⁵—and, we may add, with the theological, the literary.

Second, redemptive-historical interpretation is marked by a sense of con-

^{24.} The concept is already clear in Luther, e.g., Martin Luther, "The Bondage of the Will," in *Martin Luther's Works*, vol. 33, *Career of the Reformer* III, ed. J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald and H. T. Lehmann (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1972), 25–26. My thanks to Carl R. Trueman for this reference.

^{25.} Geerhardus Vos, The Pauline Eschatology (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 41.

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tinuity between the interpreter today and the New Testament writers. While essential categorical differences-inspired and uninspired, canonical and noncanonical-need to be properly maintained and safeguarded, at the same time both the New Testament writers and their interpreters share a common concern in their subject matter, the history of redemption, and they share that concern from within basically the same redemptive-historical, eschatological context, bracketed by Christ's resurrection and his return. The church today, like the Thessalonian church, is made up of those who have "turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God, and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, Jesus who delivers us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess 1:9-10 ESV). An indispensable aspect of this "waiting service" of the church is the interpretation of the New Testament, along with the Old, as the redemptive-historically focused, Christ-centered revelation sufficient for the life and needs of the church in every generation as long as this interim continues. If one grants that theology ought to be essentially exegetical, based on sound interpretation of Scripture, then along with due consideration of differences also involved (apostolic and postapostolic), awareness of this redemptive-historical continuity, compounded in terms of context as well as content, tends to ensure a more rigorously biblical focus and more biblical and nonspeculative boundaries to the entire theological enterprise.

MATTHEW 2:7-15

Since the most-discussed issue facing interpretation of Matthew 2:7–15 is the use of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15, before we look at this passage, some general though necessarily brief comment about the New Testament use of the Old is in order.²⁶

The New Testament use of the Old.

The use of the Old Testament in the New has two basic aspects: (1) the specific and varied ways in which the New Testament quotes, appeals to and otherwise utilizes the Old, and (2) general statements about the Old, whether as a whole or in part. Each aspect informs the other and both need to be explored. To ignore or otherwise obscure either will likely result in a distorted understanding of the place and function of the Old Testament in the New.

^{26.} The comments that follow adapt some material from my "'For Our Sakes Also': Christ in the Old Testament in the New Testament," in *The Hope Fulfilled: Essays in Honor of Dr. O. Palmer Robertson*, ed. Robert L. Penny (Phillipsburg, N.J.: P&R, 2008), 61–81. [See page 35 in this volume].

From a redemptive- or revelation-historical and canonical perspective, hermeneutical priority belongs to New Testament statements, especially overall generalizations, about the Old. These statements with their implications provide a controlling framework for understanding numerous instances of quotation like Matthew 2:15, as well as other uses of the Old throughout the New. Two such general statements, particularly instructive, are Luke 24:44–47 and 1 Peter 1:10–12.

Luke 24:44–49 lacks a specific time marker and so is best taken as showing what was typical or characteristic between the resurrection (Lk 24:1–43) and the ascension (Lk 24:50–53). Luke 24:44–47 shows it to be a period marked largely by instruction (cf. Acts 1:3), a forty-day intersession, as we might picture it, in which Jesus gave a crash course in Old Testament hermeneutics and theology from a postresurrection perspective.

Two things about this teaching are clear. First, its substance (Lk 24:44–45), pre- ("while I was still with you") as well as postresurrection, was the necessary fulfillment of everything written about him "in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms." The scope of this prepositional phrase (cf. "in all the Scriptures," Lk 24:27) is best taken as all-inclusive and comprehensive, not partial. It covers the Jewish Scriptures in their entirety, not just certain strands within each of the three major sections of the canon.

The summary nature of the passage just noted favors this conclusion. It is highly implausible that throughout this period Jesus only discussed certain parts of the Old Testament and kept the rest a closed book. More decisive is Luke 24:45: "Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (Esv; cf. Lk 24:32). The content of the teaching was not "these Scriptures" in distinction from others, not a specific set of Scriptures or a particular aspect of the Old Testament but simply "the Scriptures," a conventional designation within contemporary Judaism and the New Testament for the Old Testament as a whole. Nothing in the Old Testament, Jesus taught, is not "about me." In its entirety the Old Testament is essentially forward-looking and, in that sense, prophetic. Further, the focus of that fundamentally prophetic outlook is Christ.

Second, if Luke 24:44–45 circumscribes the Old Testament's outlook, then Luke 24:46–47 specifies its center: "written" there are the Messiah's suffering, his resurrection, and, syntactically coordinate, worldwide preaching of the gospel or, with an eye to the effective outcome of that proclamation, the church. "Everything about me" written in the Law, Prophets and Psalms (Lk 24:44) has its central focus in Christ's death, his resurrection and the consequent worldwide, church-building preaching of the gospel.

Since no one Old Testament passage mentions together the Messiah's

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death, his resurrection, and the church, either verbatim or as a paraphrase, "it is written" is best read here in a looser, more general sense. Christ is foreseen in the Old Testament as a whole in the sense that his death and resurrection are its integrating focus. The various parts and diverse teaching of the Old Testament have their coherence and unity in him. He is "the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole," to borrow the language of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (1.5).

In 1 Peter 1:10–12, the general concern of the Old Testament prophets with the grace that would come to New Testament believers has an even more direct bearing on Matthew 2:15. We can see this in three ways.

First, given that "this salvation," predicated on Christ's resurrection, is in view in its present-future comprehensiveness (1 Pet 1:3–9), and considering as well the compound Greek verbs in 1 Peter 1:10 (they "searched intently and with the greatest care," NIV), the prophets' preoccupation was both comprehensive and intensive, as absorbing as it was complete.

Especially pertinent is the indication of the prophets' comprehension of what they wrote. With all that was undoubtedly limited and shadowy about their understanding, these verses express an essential and pervasive continuity between their limited understanding and the divine intention of what they wrote. They also indicate the organic flow from the prophets' seedlike grasp of what they wrote to the final and fully flowered revelation of the New Testament.

A specific instance is the Evangelist's comment in John 12:41 (cf. Jn 12:38–40): "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him" (NIV). Not only did Isaiah speak (or write) but also, in speaking, he himself saw or understood. In fact, with an eye to the syntax of John 12:41, he spoke "because he saw"; he said it because he saw it.

Further, in ministering as each did in his own time and place, the prophets understood, by revelation (1 Pet 1:12), that ultimately they were not serving themselves and their contemporaries but New Testament believers. This passage, in other words, affirms continuity between the ministries of the prophets, including the Scriptures they wrote, and the post-Pentecostal, Spirit-empowered proclamation of the gospel.

Second, what the various prophets say is unified and integrated, for ultimately the one Spirit, as "the Spirit of Christ,"²⁷ was indicating and predicting

^{27.} As the subject of the verb in its clause, this expression is best taken to refer to the unified activity of the preincarnate Christ along with the Holy Spirit under the old covenant (cf. 1 Cor 10:4), adumbrating their conjoint post-Pentecost activity, based on the cross and resurrection (e.g., Acts 16:7; Rom 8:9–10; 1 Cor 15:45; 2 Cor 3:17; Eph 3:16–17).

through each of them. Because of this overarching activity of the Spirit, "the consent of all the parts, the scope of the whole" is present and discoverable in Old Testament prophecy as a whole. The prophets' multiauthored diversity constitutes an organically unfolding and divinely determined didactic unity.

Third, at the center of the comprehensive and integrated body of Old Testament prophecy is "the sufferings of Christ and the glories to follow." Its overall focus is messianic humiliation and exaltation, the same centering outlook on prophecy as a whole present in Luke 24 for the Old Testament as a whole.

The global and unifying outlook of Luke 24 and 1 Peter 1 as well as Hebrews 3 (Moses, standing for the entire old covenant, as witness to Christ; Heb 3:5-6), fairly taken as representing the remaining New Testament writers, hardly squares with the view that the Old Testament comprises unrelated or discordant trajectories of meaning. Instead, a unidirectional path or set of multiple paths leads to Christ, however obscure and difficult at points the way may be to follow. In any event, multivalent, even contradictory, trajectories will appear to be the case when the Old Testament documents are read "on their own terms" in the sense of bracketing out fulfillment in Christ and the interpretive bearing of the New Testament. For new-covenant readers submissive to both the Old and New Testaments as the Word of God, such a disjunctive reading of the Old Testament is illegitimate, as well as redemptive-historically (and canonically) anachronistic. To seek to interpret the various Old Testament documents for themselves and apart from the vantage point of the New exposes one ultimately to misinterpreting them. The Old Testament is to be read in the light of the New not only because Jesus and the New Testament writers read it this way, but also because Jesus and the New Testament writers are clear about the continuity in intention and meaning that exists between themselves and the various Old Testament authors and what those authors wrote in their own time and place.

Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15.

The fulfillment of Scripture is a central theme in all four Gospels, as each is concerned in its own way with showing that Jesus as God's Son is Israel's promised Messiah. That motif is particularly in evidence in Matthew, with more than double the number of Old Testament quotations of any of the other Gospels.²⁸ Fulfillment is an especially prominent theme in the infancy

28. Craig L. Blomberg, Matthew, NAC 22 (Nashville: Broadman, 1992), 30.

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narrative (Mt 1:18–2:23), which contains five of the ten (or eleven) "formula quotations" distinctive to Matthew.²⁹ Without being insistent here on one particular way of subdividing this narrative, the passage does lend itself to being considered in five sections, each marked by one of the quotations: Matthew 1:18–25, 2:1–6, 2:7–15, 2:16–18, 2:19–23. In the four units in Matthew 2, the quotation provides the conclusion. In Matthew 2:7–15, the quotation of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15 is pivotal. It not only concludes the account of the divine measures taken in the face of Herod's murderous duplicity but also sets the direction for the narration to the end of the chapter.³⁰

A good number of past and current commentators and other interpreters, probably a majority presently, recognizes here an instance of some form of typology, a way of handling Old Testament texts present elsewhere in Matthew and throughout the rest of the New Testament (notably Hebrews).³¹ The validity of this typological use, however, has long been a matter of considerable debate. On that question, the redemptive-historical and canonical view of this chapter holds that Matthew's use is true to the sense of Hosea 11:1, in terms of its both divine and human authorship.

Some supporting reflections can be facilitated by reference to a couple of other treatments of this passage. A brief consideration of Calvin's view will show that the difficulties often perceived in this text and other New Testament uses of the Old have clear "premodern" roots and do not stem basically from our post-Enlightenment situatedness or "modern" expectations shaped by historical-critical or full-blown grammatical-historical methods.

Calvin discusses Matthew's use of Hosea in both his *Harmony of the Evan*gelists (1555) and his Hosea commentary (1557), interestingly at greater length

31. With Goppelt, "Only historical facts—persons, actions, events, and institutions—are material for typological interpretation," and "only if they are considered to be divinely ordained representations or types of future realities that will be greater and even more complete" (Leonhard Goppelt, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982], 17–18); cf. France, *Matthew*, 11: "OT people, events, or institutions which may serve as models for understanding the continuity of God's purpose as now supremely focused in the coming of Christ."

^{29.} On Matthew's use of these quotations, see R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 10–14; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, WBC 33A (Dallas: Word, 1993), liv–lvii.

^{30.} On the historical reliability of the narrative in chapter 2, assumed here, see R. T. France, "Scripture, Tradition and History in the Infancy Narratives of Matthew," in *Gospel Perspectives: Studies of History and Tradition in the Four Gospels*, ed. R. T. France and David Wenham (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1981), 2:239–66, esp. 260–61; on the historicity of Mt 2:13–23, see Hagner, *Matthew*, 35.

in the latter.³² Matthew makes more than "only a comparison"³³ but draws "this analogy,"³⁴ where the exodus is one among Old Testament events and persons that are "types of Christ."³⁵ By arguing that this analogy involves Matthew doing "nothing inconsistent,"³⁶ Calvin distances himself from the view of some³⁷

that the intention of the prophet was different from what is here stated, and have supposed the meaning to be, that the Jews act foolishly in opposing and endeavoring to oppress the Son of God, because the Father hath called him out of Egypt. In this way, they grievously pervert the words of the prophet, the design of which is, to establish a charge of ingratitude against the Jews.³⁸

He adds, "Beyond all question, the passage ought not to be restricted to the person of Christ: and yet it is not tortured by Matthew, but skillfully applied to the matter in hand."³⁹ While Matthew "accommodates this passage" to Christ,

they who have not been well versed in Scripture have confidently applied to Christ this place [Hosea 11:1]; yet the context is opposed to this. Hence it has happened, that scoffers have attempted to disturb the whole religion of Christ, as though the Evangelist had misapplied the declaration of the Prophet.⁴⁰

Whether Matthew's typological understanding, as Calvin views it, is consistent with Hosea or has misapplied him may be addressed in light of a fairly recent interchange on this issue.⁴¹ John Sailhamer is insistent that "Matthew

^{32.} John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke,* trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 1:156–58; Calvin, *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, vol. 1, *Hosea*, trans. John Owen (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979), 386–88.

^{33.} Calvin, Hosea, 387.

^{34.} Calvin, Matthew, 157.

^{35.} Calvin, Hosea, 388.

^{36.} Ibid., 388.

^{37.} He does not identify them.

^{38.} Calvin, Matthew, 156.

^{39.} Ibid., 157.

^{40.} Calvin, Hosea, 386-87.

^{41.} John H. Sailhamer, "Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15," *WTJ* 63 (2001): 87–96; Dan McCartney and Peter Enns, "Matthew and Hosea: A Response to John Sailhamer," *WTJ* 63 (2001): 97–105. Enns has subsequently expressed his view in *Inspirations and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 132–34, 153, and in his con-

did not resort to typology^{"42} but instead cites the literal sense of Hosea as intended by its human author, based, in turn, on the literal sense of the Pentateuch. In response, Dan McCartney and Peter Enns emphatically reject this view. They hold that Matthew, following current Second Temple interpretive methods, adopts a christological or typological reading of Hosea. However, they are at best unclear how the literal sense intended by Hosea (the human author) is compatible with Matthew's reading.⁴³

The view consonant with the redemptive-historical approach of this chapter lies between these two. On the one hand, Sailhamer overstates Hosea's own grasp of the messianic future in view in what he wrote and is wrong in rejecting Matthew's use as an instance of typology. (Much of the exegesis of Hosea he offers in fact serves a typological reading.) On the other hand, a typological reading of the Old Testament, like Matthew's, is only as sound as it is continuous and concordant with the sense intended by the human author.⁴⁴

This is true for at least three reasons. First, as we have seen, 1 Peter 1:10–11 says so. Or, to take another, Matthean example, when Jesus, speaking of himself and his ministry, says, "Truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and did not see it, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear it" (Mt 13:17 Esv; cf. Lk 10:24), are we to conclude that he meant to exclude Hosea?⁴⁵

Second, and with an importance I cannot begin to address adequately

44. McCartney and Enns stress the importance of distinguishing between method and goal in the New Testament use of the Old ("Matthew and Hosea," 99–100), certainly a valid distinction. But the goal (finding Christ in the Old Testament) hardly justifies using just any means. A method that ignores or is at odds with the meaning intended by the human author, regardless of accepted Second Temple hermeneutical conventions, has to be judged invalid.

45. At issue here, if it needs to be said, is *not* that, in the light of the fulfillment in Christ, the New Testament writers (and many readers) undoubtedly have a deeper, fuller and richer understanding of the Old Testament authors they cite than those authors (and their contemporary and subsequent readers) had. Enns, however, envisioning Matthew going back in time and telling Hosea about Jesus and his death and resurrection, maintains, "I am not sure if Hosea would have known what to make of it" (*Inspiration and Incarnation*, 153; *Three Views of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 201). A thoroughgoing disjunction or lack of any continuity in understanding between the two seems to be the point of this scenario.

tribution to *Three Views of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, ed. Kenneth Berding and Jonathan Lunde (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 198–202, 206, 208, 210; cf. 161, 163–64.

^{42.} Sailhamer, "Hosea 11:1 and Matthew 2:15," 96.

^{43.} Subsequently, Enns is clear, even emphatic, about the discontinuity he sees between the human authorial meaning of Hosea and Matthew. As something of a bottom line to his view, he states: "And so Hosea's words, which in their original historical context (the intention of the human author, Hosea) did not speak of Jesus of Nazareth, now do" (*Inspiration and Incarnation*, 153), a statement repeated in *Three Views of the New Testament Use of the Old Testament*, 202, without the parenthesis but, as far as I can see, still saying the same thing (see note 46 below).

here, if there is not continuity or basic agreement in intention between God as the primary author and the human authors of the Old Testament in what they wrote, then the Bible, as a whole and in its parts, textually considered, is basically incoherent and any meaningful notion of its divine authorship excluded.

Third, and related to the preceding point, if this basic congruence is lacking, then it is also difficult to see how the unity of biblical religion—salvation by old-covenant faith in God's promises in continuity with new-covenant faith based on their fulfillment in Christ—can be maintained—as Hebrews 11:1–12:2, for one, does.

How then should we understand the particular instance of Hosea 11:1 in Matthew 2:15? In answer, the following sketch, necessarily brief, builds on more extensive discussions of others.⁴⁶ Craig Keener writes, "When Matthew quotes Hosea, he knows Hosea's context."⁴⁷ To this key consideration, which there is no good reason to question, we may surely add, "When Hosea wrote Hosea, he knew Hosea's context." It is thoroughly gratuitous to hold that Matthew takes out of context and gives a future reference to a statement Hosea makes about the past and no less groundless to hold that Hosea made that statement with no thought of the future.⁴⁸

There are multiple references to Egypt in Hosea.⁴⁹ Together these constitute an unmistakable pattern with central theological, that is, redemptive-historical, significance. A number of these references, like Hosea 11:1, have the exodus in view as a past event (Hos 2:15; 12:9, 13; 13:4), while others speak of an impending return to Egypt (Hos 7:16; 8:13; 9:3, 6). Further, the former references do not merely point to an isolated occurrence in distant antiquity, however memorable, but to what throughout the Old Testament is the

46. See esp. John Murray, "The Unity of the Old and New Testaments," in *Collected Writings of John Murray* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1976), 1:25–26; G. K. Beale, "Did Jesus and the Apostles Teach the Right Doctrine from the Wrong Texts?" *Themelios* 32, no. 1 (October 2006): 21–23.

47. Craig S. Keener, Matthew, IVPNTC 1 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 70.

48. Dale C. Allison Jr., *The New Moses: A Matthean Typology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 140–41: "It is one thing to assert that Matthew's hermeneutical methods were far from ours, quite another to imply that he could not comprehend the plain sense of a Hebrew sentence. Surely, it is reasonable, at least, initially to assume that he knew what Hosea intended to say." This comes close to saying that along with his typological approach (however one assesses it), Matthew also possessed incipient grammatical-historical sensibilities.

49. The following reflections hold for the canonical form of Hosea, seen here as having a single author, the eighth-century-B.C. preexilic prophet identified in Hosea 1:1, perhaps with a few subsequent additions (e.g., some of the references to Judah); see, e.g., Raymond B. Dillard and Tremper Longman III, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 354–55.

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preeminent event of salvation, the nation-constituting event of deliverance, which has contemporary significance.⁵⁰ In Hosea this enduring relevance is clearest in Hosea 13:4, "But I am the Lord your God from the land of Egypt; you know no God but me, and besides me there is no savior" (Esv). The exodus is the archetypal evidence that the Lord God is the savior of his people.

At the same time the future references just noted link Egypt with Assyria as a place of exile (Hos 9:3; 10:6; 11:5, 11), an association compounded by Israel/Ephraim's currently ongoing disobedient political maneuvering with both Assyria and Egypt (Hos 5:13; 7:11; 8:9; 12:1). These associations along with the other references to Egypt point to what some fairly see as Hosea's Egypt typology. One of its functions, plain enough in the context of the document as a whole, is to highlight that Assyrian exile—Israel's punishment for persisting apostasy and hardened rebellion—amounts to a reversal of the exodus. Impending exile in Egypt-Assyria will be like having to go back to the ancient Egyptian "house of slaves" (Ex 20:2).

The subunit comprising Hosea 11:1–11 opens by recalling Israel's primeval exodus-redemption as "my [God's] son" (cf. Ex 4:22). The verses immediately following (Hos 11:2–4), "the design of which," as Calvin says, "is to establish a charge of ingratitude against the Jews,"⁵¹ lead to the grim prospect of exile as the consequence of this persisting disregard of God's gracious "call" and constant care (Hos 11:5–7). Yet that dark reality will not be God's final dealings with his unrepentant son (Hos 11:8–11). "In wrath [he will] remember mercy" (Hab 3:2; cf. Is 60:2). Israel will return from exile in Egypt-Assyria (Hos 11:11). The exile-reversal of the exodus will itself be reversed. This climactic promise of future exodus-deliverance fills Israel's horizon with prophetic hope in the face of the presently unresolved consequences of its sinful rebellion.

By quoting Hosea 11:1, Matthew taps directly into the whole of Hosea 11:1–11, which is marked by its realized-future Egypt typology with related allusions and associations within the overall context of Hosea. Significantly, as frequently noted, instead of the Septuagint with "his children" (plural), he cites (or correctly translates) the Hebrew with the singular, "my son." This singular, collective here for Israel as God's chosen son-nation is linked to references elsewhere to a royal individual, to a chosen son set apart from the rest of the nation yet in solidarity with it (e.g., Ps 2:2, 6–7, 12; 80:15, 17; 89:26–27).⁵²

^{50.} See, e.g., the survey of Rikki E. Watts, "Exodus," in *New Dictionary of Biblical Theology*, ed. T. Desmond Alexander and Brian S. Rosner (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 478–84.

^{51.} Calvin, Matthew, 156.

^{52.} Plausibly in the background here, for either Hosea or Matthew or both, are Balaam's otherwise identical dual oracular utterances, one plural, one singular, to God "bringing [Jacob] out of

The intrinsic, integral tie between these two senses is plain in prophetic literature from the same preexilic period as Hosea (or from the same section of the canon), namely, the prominence of references to the servant of the Lord in Isaiah. Collectively, Israel, called out as the Lord's firstborn son (Ex 4:22), is to be his servant. However, what Israel has failed to be, the one who is set apart as the Lord's anointed servant will be in its stead (e.g., Is 42:1–4; 49:1–13). This messianic servant, as sin-bearer (Is 52:13–53:12), will do for the servant-nation what they cannot do for themselves because they are a nation of sinners, and the outcome will be salvation for sinners not only in Israel but also in all nations (e.g., Is 49:6). From a revelation-historical and canonical perspective the prophetic outlooks of Isaiah and Hosea inform each other. The promised exodus-salvation of the sinful son-servant nation in view in Hosea 11:11, for which return from Assyrian exile was and could be only a pointer, will be accomplished by the messianic servant-son.

Matthew's use of Hosea, far from being a grammatical-historically indefensible or inexplicable textual grab, lays hold of the single Old Testament passage, including the intention of its human author, that perhaps better than any other serves what Matthew chooses to highlight about Jesus of Nazareth. Hosea's typology of slavery/exile-exodus, both realized and future, has been fulfilled in Christ. Jesus in his person and activity fulfills Israel's prophetic, forward-looking history by recapitulating its central thread through his identity as God's Messiah-Son and his messianic task "to fulfill all righteousness" confirmed by his submission to John's water baptism, a sign of his solidarity with the repentant as their sin-bearer (Mt 3:13–17). Jesus goes to Egypt, the primeval place of God's people's enslavement and the perennial sign of the need for deliverance caused by human sin, so that he may be called out from there to an exodus ordeal of wilderness testing, leading to salvation for sinners, not only in Israel but also in all nations. The immediate duress of the desert events of Matthew 4:1-11 sets the tone for the subsequent course of Jesus' entire ministry. The testing of his messianic faithfulness that culminates in his death and resurrection secures eschatological deliverance form sin and its consequences.53

One need not flatten out the differences between the Old and New Testaments nor lose sight of clearer and fuller understanding after the cross and resurrection in order to recognize in the text of Hosea an incipient and

<sup>Egypt" ("them," Num 23:22; "him," Num 24:8); cf. Hagner, Matthew, 37; France, Matthew, 80 n 17.
53. "The beginning of the Decalogue ('I am the Lord, your God, who has led you out of Egypt, the house of slavery') comes to stand on a firm foundation when God the Father led our King Jesus out of Egypt" (Jakob van Bruggen, Matteüs: Het evangelie voor Israël [Kampen: Kok, 1994], 54).</sup>

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seminal grasp, however otherwise shadowy and inchoate, of the messianic plant whose eventual full flowering in Christ Matthew documents and explicates. What Jesus said of Abraham is also true of Hosea in his time and place—commensurate with and certainly not at odds with grammatical-historical reflections—he "rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad" (Jn 8:56 NASB).

CONCLUSION

Comments in two areas may serve to provide a closing perspective on the hermeneutical outlook of this essay.

First, while the language and explicit concept of "salvation history" is relatively recent, the significance of the redemptive-historical view sketched in this chapter is not its novelty or distance from all earlier forms of exegesis. The factor of continuity needs to be appreciated. A credible case can be made that already in the second century, the confrontation with Gnosticism indelibly impressed upon the church the controlling biblical insight of a redemptive-historical approach: salvation resides ultimately not in who God is or even in what he has said but in what he has *done* in history, once for all, in Christ. Virtually from its beginning on and more or less consistently, especially beginning with the Reformation, the approach of the church to the Bible has been incipiently redemptive-historical or biblical-theological.

Second, on the much-debated issue of the relationship between biblical theology (biblical interpretation) and systematic theology (dogmatics), the redemptive-historical approach of this chapter entails a noncompetitive, mutually dependent relationship in which biblical theology is the indispensable servant of systematic theology. The former serves the latter on the understanding that systematic theology aims for a presentation of the overall teaching of the Bible as God's Word under appropriate topics. To that end, redemptive-historical interpretation is indispensable because sound exegesis is the lifeblood of systematic theology, and it is essential for sound exegesis to pay careful attention to the redemptive-historical subject matter of Scripture and to the revelation-historical context of the various biblical documents.⁵⁴

This reciprocal relationship may be aptly compared to literary analysis of a great epic drama. Biblical theology is concerned with the redemptive-historical

^{54.} At any one point in actual practice the relationship between biblical theology and systematic theology is of course reciprocal. As systematic theology builds on biblical theology, so biblical theology inevitably is influenced, at least implicitly, by some operating form of systematic theology and assessment of the Bible as a whole.

plot as it unfolds scene by scene. With an eye to that entire plot, systematic theology considers the roles of the primary actors, God and humanity. It notes in particular the constants that mark their characters and the dynamics of their ongoing activities and interactions. A focus on this reciprocal relationship within a redemptive-historical approach minimizes the tendency, often present in systematic theology, toward unwarranted speculation and "dehistoricizing" in its formulations, and yet maintains the importance of systematic theology for biblical interpretation.

THE REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL RESPONSE**

I value the other essays for the stimulus and challenge of each to my own thinking about biblical interpretation. My response will consist first in some brief comments on the other contributors' treatments of our test passage, Matthew 2:7–15 (except for Merold Westphal's, whose comments in keeping with his philosophical view are minimal). I will then make some broader observations about the hermeneutical positions presented in the essays of the other contributors.

MATTHEW 2:7-15

The variety in approaches to this passage among the five views certainly provides ample evidence that all interpretation is partial and perspectival. Readers will likely be struck with how differently, in the space at our disposal, each of us has chosen to treat these verses.

Although the detailed conclusions reached by the other contributors differ notably from each other, I find them frequently instructive and compatible at a number of points with the redemptive-historical view I represent. Keeping that generalization in mind, I limit myself to noting some points where I have reservations or think some clarification would be helpful.

The historical-critical/grammatical view. Craig Blomberg's historicalcritical/grammatical approach does not intend to include theological analysis but does intend to provide the indispensable foundation for it (28–29). Nonetheless, in at least one place he is on essentially theological terrain. In rightly noting the distinctive prominence that Matthew gives to the fulfillment of prophecy and typology in Matthew 1:18–2:23, he adds that this approach "might not seem as persuasive to us today as a straightforward prediction-fulfillment scheme," though it "should have had significant impact on a faithful

^{**} For the comments that follow in this section, particularly where I am critical of the views of the other contributors, I encourage consulting the book for the full statement of their views.

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first-century Jew," who would have found it "very astute" (46). That generalization prompts questions. Why would this approach be less persuasive today? Should it be? Why was it astute and its impact significant for Matthew's original readers but not today? Matthew's approach, again as Blomberg rightly notes, was rooted in the conviction that "God's providence worked through recurring patterns in history, especially with respect to creative and redemptive events" (46). Was that a valid conviction? Is it, with the typology it gave rise to, still valid today? Historical analysis and theological assessment are hardly separable.

The literary/postmodern view. Scott Spencer's narrative reflections on the magi brings to light a number of suggestive contrasts and juxtapositions. Some, however, seem strained. For instance, the magi may not have been "exotic dignitaries," but to characterize them "more as quixotic, wandering star chasers," while colorful, goes beyond what the text warrants, even with the ancient-world background he provides (65). Similarly the stress on their foolishness, particularly implicating them as Herod's unwitting accomplices, seems overdrawn (65-67).

What could have been brought out more clearly (by the other contributors as well, including myself) is that the magi are the initial indication of what is surely a central theme in Matthew, namely, that "the king of the Jews" they seek is divinely destined to be the king of all nations. Their Gentile faith and worship—echoed subsequently, for instance, by the Roman centurion and the Canaanite woman, both of whose faith Jesus remarks on in contrast to Israel's unbelief (Matt. 8:10; 15:22–28)—anticipates the time when "many will come from east and west and recline at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 8:11–12; cf. Matt. 21:43: the new "people producing its [kingdom] fruits").

Before Jesus' death and resurrection, the Twelve as well as Jesus himself confine their ministries to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 10:6; 15:24). Afterward, the situation alters dramatically. This previous limitation is now lifted. They are to make disciples not only of one but of all nations, of Gentiles as well as Jews. This shift occurs because the king of the Jews—now resurrected and invested with power over the entire creation—is king of all nations (Matt. 28:18–20). The magi glimpsed this universal kingship, however indistinctly, from the outset at Jesus' birth.

With its complex interweaving of outlooks both backward and forward, communal and individual, and involving both captivity and deliverance, Hosea 11 can leave one, as Spencer says, "a little dizzy" (62). However, Spencer's statement that in Matthew's use of Hosea "the dizziness all but knocks us out cold" is puzzling. This is especially puzzling when compared to some of Spencer's other statements. For example, he helpfully observes that "out

of Egypt" in Matthew 2:15, which many commentators view as misplaced, "may not be so clumsy after all from a typological intertextual and narrative cotextual perspective" (63).

The canonical view. Robert Wall considers our passage in terms of three "probes." My reservations are not so much about what he says under each of these headings (in that regard my questions are minor and much that he says is helpful) but rather with what he intends structurally by distinguishing probe 2 ("with other Scripture") and probe 3 ("by the rule of faith"). However, that reservation is better spelled out and addressed below.

BROADER REFLECTIONS

I now move on, first, to address some criticisms of the redemptive-historical view and, second, to consider the hermeneutical approach of each of the other contributors in light of the issue of divine authorship, with some related observations about the historical-critical method.

Craig Blomberg on the redemptive-historical view. Craig Blomberg distinguishes his view from each of the others, sight unseen. In brief response to his comments on "the redemptive-historical method," the view that I hold is not a method in the strict sense, marked by a fixed set of specific procedures. It is better characterized more loosely as a large-scale orientation or overall outlook on the revelation-historical content of the Bible. As such, it depends on the proper implementation of various interpretive methods and procedures among those that Blomberg advocates and details, procedures customarily included under the designation "grammatical-historical."

Certainly the overall outlook of the redemptive-historical view is only valid when it is supported by the careful exegesis of a specific passage and is true to the distinctive contributions of each of the biblical documents. Yet this view holds that such responsible, detailed exegesis can only take place within the back-and-forth attention from specific passages or units of text (however factored) to the whole of Scripture. That whole, in turn, is to be read in light of the particular text. (This ongoing reciprocal movement is an aspect of the hermeneutical circle or, as I prefer to view it, the hermeneutical spiral.)

Among Blomberg's reservations about the redemptive-historical method is the tendency he finds to "read New Testament meanings back into Old Testament texts" (40). This is no doubt a danger. However, there is a difference between reading the New Testament *into* the Old and reading the Old Testament *in light of* the New. The former is wrong; the latter is not only legitimate but also requisite. Readers of this volume can judge, for instance, whether that distinction has been properly maintained in my handling of Matthew's use of Hosea.

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Blomberg also maintains that the redemptive-historical method is among those that "too often appeal uncritically to the principle of Scripture interpreting Scripture" (41). Even one such uncritical appeal is "too often"; the redemptive-historical approach properly implemented avoids such appeals when utilizing this indispensable hermeneutical principle.

Divine authorship. All five views are oriented toward considering the biblical documents as historically conditioned and culturally situated. All clearly recognize that they are to be understood in terms of their human authorship. What is not so clear, however, is how the other contributors regard the Bible's divine authorship (or inspiration, to use the classical term), in other words, how each contributor views the Bible as God's word. It seems appropriate in a symposium like this to raise this issue because it brings us into the area of hermeneutical foundations, namely, the underlying commitments inevitably present and controlling for any view of interpretation.

On this issue, there are differences between my view and the views of the other contributors, which raise matters that I believe need clarifying. My own view of divine authorship (to be taken along with some brief comments in my position essay (98, 107–8), which is rooted in the self-witness of the Bible, will for the most part simply have to be asserted without being elaborated or defended. Nor will I be able to develop my comments on the other views in any full way. No doubt there is need for further consideration of these matters, for which there are no facile answers, but, given their overriding importance, there is value in drawing attention to them and indicating lines of resolution even if only in a preliminary way.

The literary/postmodern view. Scott Spencer makes no reference to divine authorship, and it is unclear what place, if any, inspiration might have within the author-text-reader triad he develops. To say anything more beyond taking note of this silence would be unwarranted speculation.

The historical-critical/grammatical view. In the interests of considering Blomberg's view on the issue of divine authorship, I begin with some observations about the historical-critical method. The use of the definite article is deliberate. Recently Anthony Thiselton has opined in the introductory chapter of a multiauthored volume that there is not "a single, uniform, 'historicalcritical method," and he continues, "In my judgment the term '*the* historicalcritical method' should be banned from all textbooks and students' essays."⁵⁵ In subsequent chapters of the volume in which Thiselton's essay appears, however,

^{55.} Anthony Thiselton, "Canon, Community and Theological Construction," in *Canon and Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Craig G. Bartholomew et al., Scripture and Hermeneutics 7 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2006), 4, italics original.

we find other authors doing precisely that, talking for instance about "the historical critical approach" (Brevard Childs, 52); "the historical-critical method" and "the findings of historical-critical inquiry" (Christopher Seitz, 102); and "the historical-critical paradigm" and "this basic historical-critical perspective" (Stephen Chapman, 167, 170).

Certainly, what is meant by historical-critical method has been and continues to be understood differently. Further, historical-critical method may be defined in different ways provided that the definition is made clear and functions consistently. Still, Thiselton's sharply expressed proposal notwithstanding, there is good reason why "the historical-critical method" deserves its widespread currency as best covering a broad spectrum of interpretive undertakings, despite all sorts of differences observable among them.

Craig Blomberg's appropriation and explanation of the method demonstrates both why this spectrum exists and why this definite article designation is appropriate. He intends a use of the historical-critical method that differs from its original conception and, famously, its subsequent articulation around the beginning of the twentieth century by Ernst Troeltsch (27). Specifically he advocates using the method but without adopting the "antisupernaturalist worldview" or "antisupernatural presuppositions" that accompany Troeltsch's principle of correlation as a defining aspect of the method (30).

However, as its most consistent and self-conscious practitioners have made clear, this antisupernaturalism, as well as Troeltsch's other two defining principles (criticism and analogy), stems from a more basic presupposition: the more deeply rooted, fundamental commitment to the autonomy of reason in the interpretation of all texts, including the Bible.⁵⁶ Whatever its precursors, the historical-critical method was birthed by the Enlightenment, with its resolute commitment to the autonomy of human reason.⁵⁷ For the

56. Many works could be cited here. Two have especially shaped my own understanding: Gerhard Ebeling's programmatic essay, "The Significance of the Critical Historical Method for Church and Theology in Protestantism," in *Word and Faith*, trans. James W. Leitch (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1963), 17–61, and Van Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), in which on the role of autonomy see esp. chaps. 1–3. The title of the original of Ebeling's essay is "Die Bedeutung der historischen-kritischen Methode. . ." "Historischen-kritischen" would be better translated "historical-critical" (rather than "critical historical"); see Gerhard Ebeling, *Wort und Glaube*, 3rd ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1967), 1. The essay first appeared in *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 47 (1950): 1–46.

57. This could hardly be made clearer and more pointed than by no more representative a figure than Immanuel Kant in his 1784 essay, "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?" beginning with its opening paragraph: humanity has emerged from its previous "minority" and now come of age is able to think for itself "*Sapere Aude* [dare to be wise]! Have courage to make use of your own understanding! is thus the motto of enlightenment" (Immanuel Kant, *Practical Philosophy*, in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant*,

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historical-critical method the authority of human reason is supreme; nothing is more basic and controlling for considering and assessing any text, particularly historical texts. No authority external to reason may be recognized as final or above it, whether of the church, the state, or Scripture. The perceived integrity of the method demands this. However the Bible's uniqueness or religious importance may otherwise be affirmed, historical criticism insists that it is to be treated like any other collection of documents from the past. No exception can be made for it before the final and all-determining bar of reason. For historical-critical thinking applied to the biblical documents, "historical" carries the demand to consider them in terms of their exclusively human and historically conditioned origin and character; "critical" refers to the rational autonomy by which they are to be assessed.⁵⁸

Essential, then, to the historical-critical method with its commitment to autonomy is *Sachkritik*, that is, criticism of content or subject matter, the requirement to judge whether what a text claims to be true or right is in fact true or right. Again, the integrity of the method demands such criticism. In the case of the Bible, even what it maintains to be true or right may not be accepted as such but is subject to critical reason, which decides whether or not it is true or right. I take it that Gerhard Ebeling is widely representative in expressing this pointedly: the historical-critical method "is—not just, say, where it oversteps its legitimate limits, but by its very nature—bound up with criticism of content [*Sachkritik*]."⁵⁹

For the redemptive-historical view that I represent in this volume, the Bible is not a proper object of the historical-critical method. Certainly a sound and penetrating understanding of Scripture ought to take account of its historical conditioning, of both the biblical documents and their subject matter, and do so in a careful, methodologically reflective and responsible fashion. However, the Bible is not properly assessed by human reason understood as autonomous, nor are its truth claims subject to *Sachkritik*. The divine

trans. Mary J. Gregor [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996], 17–22, italics original); accessible online at www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/kant.html.

^{58.} In Craig Bartholomew et al., eds., "Behind" the Text: History and Biblical Interpretation, Scripture and Hermeneutics 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), Alvin Plantinga provides a helpful survey treatment in his essay titled "Two (or More) Kinds of Scripture Scholarship," 19–57. In discussing the use of the historical-critical method, "Historical Biblical Criticism" (HBC), he distinguishes "Troeltschian" HBC from its other "non-Troeltschian" forms (e.g., 55). My comments above about rational autonomy apply across this distinction (as well, apparently, to his own understanding of the role of reason, 56).

^{59.} Ebeling, "Significance of the Critical Historical Method," 42–43 ("Die Bedeutung der historischen-kritischen Methode," 29); cf. 47 (German, 34), where he elaborates further on *Sachkritik* as "the really decisive and revolutionary thing about the critical historical method."

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authorship and consequent authority of Scripture, on the one hand, and the historical-critical method, with its commitment to autonomy, on the other, exclude each other.

According to its self-witness the Bible provides documents that more properly have God as their author than the fully engaged human authors and editors integrally involved in their production. Unlike any other texts, God is ultimately accountable not only for their content but also for their syntactic-semantic form and the plurality and specificity of the words used. The mind of Paul that his letters exhibit, for instance, is more ultimately the mind of God.⁶⁰ Thus to subject Scripture to *Sachkritik* is necessarily to place human reasoning and the human mind above the mind and reason of God. The use of the historical-critical method cannot but "place the interpreter above Scripture."⁶¹

With all the factors that need to be considered—the historical, cultural, and linguistic distance between our present and the times of the Bible's origin-its in-depth understanding is challenging enough without the added burden of the unnecessary and inappropriate demand for Sachkritik. There are difficulties in understanding the Bible and, without losing sight of the pervasive clarity of Scripture, at points these difficulties are considerable (cf. 2 Pet 3:16, "some things hard to understand"). But interpretation with a proper view of divine authorship is able to address them, confident that God is speaking through the text in the sense that the text is God himself speaking in a way that condescends to our creatureliness yet is commensurate with who he is as God, including his omniscience and truthfulness, and without that speaking being limited or rendered ineffective by the sinfulness and personal and cultural limitations of the human author involved.⁶² Divine authorship guarantees the unity of the Bible's teaching, its doctrinal coherence as a redemptive- and revelation-historical record, in its diverse human authorship and literary genres, and in its historically differentiated subject matter.

I find Blomberg unclear about the commitment to autonomy and the attendant *Sachkritik* of historical-critical thinking, and so likewise unclear about divine authorship. His overall conclusion does state that his historical-critical/grammatical approach "is critical in the sense of being analytical,

^{60.} See, e.g., Paul's overstatement for emphasis, "Not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God" (1 Thess. 2:13), which fairly applies not only to his (oral) preaching but also to his writings as an apostle (see, e.g., 2 Thess. 2:2, 15), in form as well as content.

^{61.} Contra Blomberg, 37.

^{62.} Accordingly, the Bible's infallibility and inerrancy (its entire truthfulness) is to be affirmed because of its divine authorship, not, as Blomberg appears to suggest, on the basis of the probable determinations of historical criticism (Blomberg, 37 n. 40).

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not in the sense of criticizing" (46). Yet earlier he says, "Such analysis can also lead to judgments about the reliability of the document being assessed" (39). Among other things, the approaches to the text of Scripture that he advocates "allow us to adjudicate. . .the probability of its historical trustworthiness" (37). In fact, his method, he says, "must have this 'critical' dimension to it that is, a dimension that is both analytical and evaluative, based on common ground shared with the skeptic" (37).

It is difficult not to conclude, particularly from this last statement—especially based on its immediate context—that this "common ground" is a shared commitment to the autonomy of reason. It seems clear, then, that the "chastened forms of historical criticism" (37) he approves of are chastened in the sense that they allow for the supernatural and the presence of transcendence in history, but not because they have abandoned the claim to rational autonomy. Autonomy, however chastened, tempered or otherwise attenuated, is still autonomy, and its allowance for the supernatural and for divine transcendence will be determined on its own terms and by its own criteria.⁶³

The canonical view. Robert Wall says that "divine inspiration" is among several terms to be "defined in functional rather than in dogmatic terms" (121). Why this disjunction? What does it mean and entail? These are questions prompted in the face of the classic text, 2 Timothy 3:16, where Scripture is said to be "profitable" (functional) because and as it has been "breathed out by God" (a dogmatically disposed affirmation).⁶⁴ Scripture indeed may be said to be "God-breathing," "living and active" (Heb. 4:12), in its functioning today as always. However, Scripture has this function only because it is "Godbreathed" and remains so by virtue of its origin. The dynamic is grounded in the static. The ever-fresh quality of Scripture is rooted in its fixed and abiding stability as God's Word.

I very much appreciate the concern of the canonical view to find and

63. As I judge it, these observations also apply to the "tempered" use of the historical-critical method advocated by Donald Hagner (in otherwise helpful articles), which Blomberg cites with approval in n. 5, as well as to the critical realism of N. T. Wright, also cited with approval in n. 41; see also Wright's *The New Testament and the People of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 31–46 (the term "critical" in critical realism is not unrelated to the different sense it has in "historical-critical").

64. *Theopneustos* is a passive verbal adjective ("God-breathed"); here it describes a permanent quality as a result of their origin, referring to documents that are "Scripture." Recently Craig D. Allert (*A High View of Scripture?* [Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007], 153–56) has argued that the specific meaning of this adjective is so indeterminable that it has little weight for deciding how we should view the biblical documents, especially their origin. That is hardly the case. Its meaning has been well established in the works of those such as B. B. Warfield, among others, whom Allert cites and attempts to refute (quite unsuccessfully in my view).

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maintain a role for the Bible as a whole in the life of the church today and to counter the fragmenting and disunifying consequences of so much historical-critical interpretation since the Enlightenment. It appears to me, however, that this approach lacks an adequate understanding of the divine authorship of Scripture essential for accomplishing what it intends.

As far as I can see the canonical position views the Spirit's activity in producing the biblical documents as being on the same level with and of the same order as his activity within the church in the formation and ongoing use of the canon. This view does not recognize or effectively denies the unique order of the Spirit's working in the origin of these documents and does not distinguish this from the order of his work in forming and utilizing the canon in the church. In contrast the redemptive-historical view holds that inspiration, with its "God-breathed" result, is not predicable of the church's use of Scripture or even of the process through which the church came to recognize the canon.⁶⁵

These observations are further borne out by what Wall says about the rule of faith in relation to Scripture, especially on pages 116 (including n. 11), 121, and 128–29. In his view this rule, elicited in the early church from Scripture, is not an analogy of Scripture but Scripture is analogical of it (n. 11). I cannot understand this other than that the rule of faith is to function in effect as a "canon above the canon," in which the locus of final authority shifts from Scripture to the church in its ongoing appropriation of Scripture in accordance with the rule. For the redemptive-historical approach the sound view of this relationship and the authority involved are provided by a classic distinction: the canon of Scripture is the sole and sufficient supreme "norming norm"; the church's creeds and confessions, including the rule of faith, while hermeneutically important, even necessary, for the church's well being, are "normed norms," subordinate to Scripture, as they derive from Scripture.

The philosophical/theological view. Merold Westphal affirms "God's role in producing the text such that God is the ultimate author of it" (86).

65. According to 2 Pet. 1:20–21, the Spirit's "bearing" or "carrying" the biblical authors in what they wrote ("prophecy of Scripture") is an originating order of his working ("not by human will"—ultimately the human author's will, though integrally engaged, does not come into consideration; cf. again, "not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God," 1 Thess. 2:13). This action of the Spirit goes well beyond providential control and oversight or the "leading" (e.g., Rom. 8:14) subsequently experienced in the church.

66. This distinction (*norma normans—norma normata*) functions, for instance, within Lutheran and Reformed orthodoxy from the late sixteenth century on; see, e.g., Richard A. Muller, *Post-Reformation Reformed Dogmatics: The Rise and Development of Reformed Orthodoxy, ca.* 1520 to ca. 1725, vol. 2, *Holy Scripture: The Cognitive Foundation of Theology* 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 106, 396.

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However, earlier he says that the hermeneutic he espouses "does not presuppose any particular theory of the inspiration of the Bible" (85). This is at best unclear. If God is said to be the Bible's ultimate author, does that not suggest incipiently a theory (doctrine) of inspiration capable of some further measure of reasoned articulation and clarification? I raise this question because I find the way Westphal speaks in various ways of God speaking through Scripture, of speaking "through the words of Scripture" (85, 87) problematic.

The problem is not with such language. Questions arise, however, from the way this language functions within Westphal's "double hermeneutic" that as much as anything appears to be at the heart of his philosophical/theological view. The task of this hermeneutic is defined by the two decidedly different questions it has to answer: "What *did* the human author say to the original audience?" and "What *is* God *saying* to us here and now through these words of Scripture?" (79). As Westphal notes, "The [second] question is no longer what Isaiah or Matthew or Paul were trying to say to their contemporaries, but what God is saying to us now through the words they wrote" (85).

The disjunction in view between these two questions, highlighted by the original italics, is evident, as are the potentially divergent answers they anticipate. The contrast lies in what the human author, not God, said *then* with what God, not the human author, is saying *now* through the human author. On this construction, it does not seem to be over-reading to say that what the text said/says and what God is presently saying through the text are not identical. The text, qua text, is not God's Word; the text as such is not God speaking but God speaks through the text.

Confirming this reading, as a consequence of this now-then disjunction between the human author and God, Westphal goes on to maintain a further disjunction. The answer to the first question above is "reproductive" (reproducing as faithfully as possible the original meaning of the text/the human author), while the answer to the second question (what God is saying through the text today) is to be "productive." Because interpretation depends on the interpreter's (ever-changing and varying) context, it is given a constitutive or creative role in determining the meaning of the contemporary speaking of God through the text. Interpretation is not only necessary for understanding God's speaking through the text; it is also necessary for constituting the meaning of that speaking.

However, one should note that the "God-breathed" of 2 Timothy 3:16 is an abiding, perduring predicate of *the text* of Scripture; it is not descriptive of an ongoing speaking activity of God "through the text," and with its interpreter contributing productively to its meaning. It is difficult to see how Westphal's double hermeneutic squares with this predicate or how his affirmation that

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God is the ultimate author of the text of Scripture reflects an adequate view of divine authorship and what it entails. Despite his disclaimer, noted above, Westphal, after all, appears to have a rather developed theory of inspiration and of what it means that the Bible is God's Word.

Westphal has aligned himself with the postmodern turn in philosophy as an important ally of Christian faith in refuting modernism's pretentious, Godlike claims to transcendent objectivity and universal validity of reason.⁶⁷ The final sentence of his essay reads, "Then theology can remain a matter of Word and Spirit and not of Word and Method" (88), a sentence that follows from his concluding accent on the importance of his philosophical hermeneutics for unmasking the mindset of modernity disposed toward methodological "arrogance. . .as if we were God" (88).

As far as I can see, however, despite postmodernism's stress that all human reasoning is less than absolute, fragmentary and situated, it shares with modernism the critical exercise of reason that stems from the Enlightenment's commitment to autonomy. As already noted above, autonomy, however circumscribed or apparently humble in its claims, is still autonomy. I surely agree with Westphal when he says that we are not God is "good news" (88). But postmodernism appears to differ from modernism only by being less overtly Godlike in its use of reason. I wonder if Westphal does not end up with an opposition between the Spirit and method in biblical interpretation, because for him there is an inherent tension between *any* exercise of human reason as such and the work of the Spirit.

In contrast, the redemptive-historical approach proceeds on the conviction that human reason, properly understood, is creaturely. *Creaturely* here is not merely a synonym for *finite* or *limited*, generally or abstractly considered, but includes its full biblical sense. The word describes human beings created in the image of God. Reason and language are gifts among those image-bearing capacities, reflective of their origin in God. They are given to be used in absolute, creaturely dependence on him and his self-revelation in the creation at large and in Scripture. To be sure, these capacities can be abused and, in fact, have been and continue to be misused sinfully—though image-bearing creatures, we are sinners. But reason and language are not inherent barriers to fully engaged fellowship with the triune God and others that need to be offset by the Spirit's work. By divine design, reason and language are to function for the purpose of personal fellowship in receptive dependence on the Spirit's

^{67.} This is a major emphasis in his writings, see Westphal, 73 n. 14. Nathan D. Shannon provides a thoughtful review article of *Whose Community? Which Interpretation?* in *WTJ* 72 (2010): 415–25.

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working—in a completely positive, nondialectical fashion—with Scripture in its entire truthfulness and supreme authority.

Our use of reason is inevitably context-embedded, and all our uses of language are situation-bound. That certainly ought to keep us aware that, whether as individuals or collectively, our understanding and perceptions are limited, partial and for now "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 12:12). Nevertheless, this does not preclude that they and their expressions can be true, even certain. Nor is this limited creaturely state of affairs necessarily a barrier to mutual understanding and authentic interpersonal relationships. Because language and reasoning are image-bearing capacities common to all human beings, they have the potential for constructive communication across differences in gender, ethnicity, language and culture, even as they are context-qualified, personally and communally situated, and culturally embedded. This is especially true for Scripture, God's Word for all image-bearers, and for its interpretation.

Methodology and doxology are not at odds, at least not necessarily. In interpreting Scripture, the Spirit's working is not limited to compensating for defects in our methods or shortcomings in our implementing them (though he does do that). Rather, sound hermeneutical method functions to facilitate true worship and praise. The arresting example set by Jesus in Luke 24 shows that when he "opened" existing Scripture to his hearers—with the rationally reflective, implicitly methodological aspects undoubtedly involved in doing that—their response was not somehow in spite of these aspects. Nor was it merely notional, but rather fully engaged, as their "hearts burned" within them (Luke 24:25–27, 32). Such a response ought to be the final aim of all methodology concerned with the interpretation and eventual proclamation of Scripture.

This prompts me also to say finally that sound methodology ministers certainty. An instance of this certainty is found in Luke 1:1–4, where the Evangelist indicates with some specificity the rational-reflective process he followed in examining eyewitness reports and other sources with the ultimate end that on the gospel matters under consideration his reader might have "certainty" (Luke 1:4). The all-absorbing hermeneutical turn that has taken place in theology over the last half-century or so has brought to light in an unprecedented fashion the complexities of language and the functioning of texts and their interpretation. Nevertheless, biblical interpretation has lost its way if, in considering this undeniable complexity, it fails to move beyond it to the singular simplicity of Scripture in its entirety: its pervasive and concordant focus on Jesus Christ as the full and final revelation of the triune God as Creator and Redeemer for the salvation of sinful human beings and the consummate restoration of his creation.

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"I wouldn't give a fig for the simplicity on this side of complexity, but I would give my right arm for the simplicity on the far side of complexity."⁶⁸ Whatever the individual limitations of those who adopt it and however it could be better articulated than I have in this volume, the redemptive-historical view is an approach that, without evading the complexities of biblical interpretation—whether in the text or on the part of the interpreter—does so in a way that takes us through them to their far side, to the manifold and unsearchably rich (Eph. 3:8, 10) Christ-centered simplicity of all of Scripture.

68. This unsourced quotation, attributed to Oliver Wendell Holmes, is apparently from Holmes Sr. (1809–1894), a physician, writer and poet, and father of Holmes Jr., the United States Supreme Court chief justice.

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