

## Adding to the Confusion

“A Critique of the ‘Exchanged Life,’” by Robert A. Pyne and Matthew L. Blackmon. *Bibliotheca Sacra* 163 (April-June 2006): 131-157.

The varied approach to Christian spirituality broadly termed “Exchanged Life theology” has found acceptance among many evangelical Christians who are seeking a key to overcoming the sway and effects of sin by living victoriously as new creatures in Christ. Having its roots in the formative experience of nineteenth-century missionary J. Hudson Taylor, in which he found victory in his Christian life through the discovery of Christ living in him, Exchanged Life proponents promise liberation to struggling Christians who are not living in the transformative reality produced in them through regeneration. In “A Critique of the ‘Exchanged Life’” (hereafter “Critique”), Robert A. Pyne, Professor of Theological Studies at Dallas Theological Seminary, and Matthew L. Blackmon, a Ph.D. candidate in Theological Studies at the same institution, offer the first summary and critique of the basic principles of Exchanged Life theology as enunciated by its modern proponents, whom the authors acknowledge may be advocating ideas different from those introduced by J. Hudson Taylor. While Exchanged Life teaching offers glimmers of hope for a victorious Christian experience, a critique is warranted; the critique posited by Pyne and Blackmon, however, does little to correct the fallacies in Exchanged Life teaching but only adds to the confusion engendered by them.

Pyne and Blackmon strike an admirably open and sensitive posture toward believers who “have found both satisfaction and encouragement through Exchanged Life theology,” stating that the article “is not meant to diminish that experience or dishonor the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives” (131). Directing their attention primarily toward those Christians whom they fear may be unnecessarily frustrated in their experience of Christ by errors in Exchanged Life teaching, the authors proffer their conviction that “Christian spirituality should be more God-centered, more realistic, more hopeful, more liberating, and more delightful than that which Exchanged Life theology describes” (131). These sentiments, aimed at encouraging a “fruitful and continuing conversation” maintained in a spirit of proper Christian fellowship (131), set the tone for what is a respectfully submitted but finally flawed critique that ultimately

performs a disservice to the very Christian community which it is seeking to rescue from error. “Critique” fails to rectify the inaccuracies in Exchanged Life theology by denying the tripartite nature of man, failing to recognize the organic aspect of regeneration, and by overlooking the fact that the reality of the Christian life is one of grafting rather than exchange.

Worthy of note is the authors’ concession that “the ‘Exchanged Life’ label is claimed by a number of persons and ministries whose teaching evidences significant diversity,” and that “not all of these individuals or ministries would affirm the Exchanged Life precisely as summarized” in their article (133). With this caveat in mind, “Critique” attempts to flesh out some of the more essential ideas that the majority of Exchanged Life proponents share and to expose the errors therein. To accomplish this task, “Critique” summarizes the basic elements of Exchanged Life theology in five sections. Despite the significant diversity evidenced in the Exchanged Life camp (and well documented by the copious footnotes accompanying the article) and the caveat in “Critique” that “Exchanged Life theology defies strict definition” (132), Pyne and Blackmon do an admirable job of presenting the basic tenets.

In “A New Reality,” the first of the five sections in “Critique,” the authors introduce the first tenet propounded by Exchanged Life advocates—evocative of 2 Corinthians 5:17 and Ezekiel 36:26—that “at conversion an individual becomes a fundamentally new creature” (134). Holding to the view that believers in Christ experience a union with Him so intrinsic that His experiences of death, burial, resurrection, and ascension become theirs, Exchanged Life teachers advance the notion that the old life of believers in Christ, having been crucified through His death on the cross, has not been “*changed*, but *exchanged* for that which is *altogether new*” by virtue of a thoroughgoing regeneration (134, quoting Miles Stanford). This exchange produces in the believers “an inherent, substantial, and personal transformation,” making them “thoroughly renovated saints” (135, quoting Dwight Edwards). God has “created a new person” (134, quoting Steve McVey), and now “the very life of God is the core of [a believer’s] new reality” (135, quoting Tony Evans). This “new reality” possessed by believers is variously designated “‘a new identity,’ a ‘new nature,’ a ‘new spirit,’ or a ‘new heart’” (134). In order to overcome sin and temptation and successfully live the Christian life, a

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Christian must now simply understand his new identity and perceive himself as a new creation.

According to Exchanged Life theology, the Christian, having been created anew, is “made *inherently righteous at conversion*” (137). In refutation of this point, the authors appeal to Martin Luther and to the traditional Protestant understanding of justification set forth by him that believers “do not *become* righteous in justification, but are *declared* righteous” (136), having the righteousness of Christ imputed to them through belief in Him. Conceding in their footnotes that they “know of no Exchanged Life proponent who would knowingly deny the Protestant understanding of justification” (137), Pyne and Blackmon are quick to warn that “Exchanged Life advocates go far beyond the traditional Reformed perspective on justification” (137). Their concern is this: If believers—“thoroughly renovated saints”—have become inherently righteous at conversion, then how is it that they “often struggle with doubts, fears, and temptations,” “entertain perverse thoughts,” and “sin willfully” (138)? In order to reconcile this discrepancy, “Critique” argues that “Exchanged Life theology teaches that one’s real self, the true or essential self, is distinct from these experiences” (138), and that this separation of person and experience is possible because only the deepest part of man, his deepest self, has been wholly transformed.

The effort to reconcile the goal of victorious living with the reality of sin leads directly to the central teaching of Exchanged Life theology, which Pyne and Blackmon present in the second section entitled “A Trichotomous Understanding of Human Nature.” The authors present the paradigm of human ontology set forth by Charles Solomon that man is composed of three distinct components: spirit, soul, and body. Citing 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12 as evidence of the tripartite nature of man, Solomon also identifies intuition, conscience, and communion as components of the spirit and identifies mind, will, and emotions as components of the soul. According to “Critique,” Exchanged Life proponents justify their stance that believers are made wholly new at conversion but continue to struggle with sin because they have not received a new body or a new soul but only a new spirit. The unholy “thoughts, emotions, and choices” generated by the soul are not a part of the believer’s new and true identity (140), because the new identity, the new self, for Exchanged Life advocates, is the spirit.

In the third section, “A New Identity,” the authors quote extensively from McVey to elucidate what Exchanged Life

advocates mean when speaking of the believers’ post-conversion “new identity” in Christ. Briefly, a believer’s old nature (also termed the old man, sin nature, first Adam, and fallen man), understood to be his pre-conversion spirit, is replaced (or exchanged) with a new nature, a new *spirit*, thereby giving him a new identity in Christ. Having been created anew through this exchange, the believer is “a brand new person,” “totally righteous,” and “now holy” (142, quoting McVey). The person and, therefore, the identity have changed, yet the degree of the change and the source of the newly created Christian’s continuing struggle with sin and its consequences are matters of debate within the Exchanged Life camp.

The fourth section titled “Continuing Struggles with Sin” begins with an acknowledgement of the significant disagreement that exists among Exchanged Life advocates regarding the nature of man in his post-conversion state. While some advocates assert that believers have two natures after their conversion—“one new and holy and the other old and sinful”—others insist that “the old nature no longer exists and that believers have only a new nature” (135). Regardless of which side one takes on this issue, the more relevant point for Pyne and Blackmon is that “Exchanged Life proponents consistently argue that a believer’s sinful inclinations are foreign to his or her true self” (144), which for the authors betrays a dangerous absence of personal

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accountability for sin. Because a believer’s spirit has been changed at conversion and his body will be changed in the future, the “present struggle toward change” finds “its locus primarily in the soul” (145), which is not the believer’s true self. Essentially, a believer under the influence of Exchanged Life theology can claim that when he sins, it is not the real he who is sinning, thus devaluing personal culpability for sin. Pyne and Blackmon put it nicely when they write that under this strain of thought “even confession carries an element of blame” (152). For Exchanged Life writer Dwight Edwards, “the great issue in Christian living is not how to get ourselves fixed but *how to get our new nature released*” (145). This release, according to the authors’ assessment of Exchanged Life teaching, is “through the cultivation of new thoughts and behaviors” (145), thus implying that sin can be overcome by mental assent and self-improvement. Whether Exchanged Life advocates favor a two-natured understanding of man or endorse the idea that man’s “old nature” has been eradicated, the prevailing teaching is that the believer’s struggle with sin resides not with this new identity, this “new nature” which needs to be released, but in his soul, that part of his being that is not his “true self” (144).

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In the final section, “Appropriating Christ’s Life,” the authors conclude their summary of the basic principles of Exchanged Life theology with a consideration of how Exchanged Life advocates promote victorious Christian living. Drawing on the work of Richard Hall, “Critique” points out that believers are encouraged to embrace the fact of the exchanged life by faith and to continually surrender to God. Upon suffering personal failures in efforts to overcome sin, a believer “is broken of self-will...[and] begins to live out of his true identity and begins to find victory over the power of his propensity to sin” (147). Understanding his true identity, he then can begin “to rely on the resources of the indwelling Christ” and to “increasingly walk by the Spirit, doing what is right without a struggle” (148), living a life no longer according to law but according to what he is by nature—a new creation.

### A Misguided Critique of the Three Parts of Man

The primary target in “Critique” is a trichotomous understanding of man because, absent this understanding, “Critique” considers that it is impossible to reconcile claims of victory with the reality of sin, thus depriving Exchanged Life theology of its distinctive message (150). By denying the tripartite nature of man, “Critique” believes that it has exposed a fatal flaw in Exchanged Life theology. Terming the model “A Faulty Anthropology,” the authors contend that any thought of distinction between the soul and the spirit of man is “biblically and scientifically suspect” (149). Pyne and Blackmon write,

The Bible uses a number of terms (e.g., heart, soul, spirit, mind, gut) to describe the inner thoughts and emotions of humans...Most significantly the words have slightly different shades of meaning, as in modern usage, but they do not denote distinct parts of an individual. For example “soul” and “spirit” should not be regarded as separate entities. The importance of this point cannot be overstated. If humans do not have distinct immaterial parts, then one cannot distinguish between good and bad parts. One cannot distinguish between enlightened parts and confused parts. *One cannot say that some part has been made wholly new when there are no parts.*

Whatever else may be said about the change believers have experienced at conversion, it cannot be described as the complete renovation, replacement, or regeneration of some constituent immaterial part of the individual. Again there are no such parts. (149-150)

This argument would indeed be fatal if only the Bible itself was not so clear in revealing that the “anthropology” of man is indeed tripartite in nature. Two particular verses, referred to in Solomon’s paradigm, are instructive here. First Thessalonians 5:23 gives us the clearest statement regarding the tripartite nature of man. Paul,

with his masterfully economic use of language, clearly delineates the parts of man in his benediction upon the Thessalonian believers that their “spirit and soul and body” would be preserved “complete,” even sanctified “wholly” by the God of peace. Of particular interest here is the purposeful inclusion of the conjunction *and* (*kai*, Gk.) between the three nouns that identify the components of man’s being—spirit *and* soul *and* body. Distinction between the parts is not merely implied by the conjunctions; it is forthrightly pronounced. According to this verse, it is in these three parts that man is whole and complete, it is in these three parts that man must be preserved and sanctified, and it is in these three parts that man will appear before the Lord at His coming. Further, Hebrews 4:12 indicates that the soul and the spirit can be *divided* by the living and operative word of God—an irrefutable revelation that the parts are distinct. Following Paul’s analogy in the same verse, a simple inference is made: As the marrow of a man is contained within his joints, so the spirit of a man is contained within his soul. To gloss over and ultimately deny the ontological presuppositions conveyed in these verses is not only misguided; it is irresponsible. In the light of these two witnesses alone, a dichotomous view of the nature of man is simply untenable. The biblical revelation of the tripartite nature of man poses a challenge to those who would deny it and to those who would misuse it to gloss over our accountability for sin. There is a need for a balanced understanding of the human spirit as an organ distinct from the soul and of its role in God’s salvation, which includes an organic regeneration as well as a grafted living, rather than an exchanged living, following regeneration.

### The Human Spirit

An understanding of the important role of the human spirit in God’s complete salvation of man can be grasped by simply appealing to a sampling of the explicit declarations of the Bible. The breath of life breathed by God into man’s nostrils is the spirit of man (Gen. 2:7; Job 32:8), the lamp of Jehovah (Prov. 20:27). It is distinct from the soul, which came into being through the combining of God’s breath with man’s body of dust (Gen. 2:7; 1 Cor. 15:45), and it is ranked in importance with the heavens and the earth (Zech. 12:1; Isa. 42:5). It is in our spirit that we are regenerated by God (John 3:6), being begotten of Him to become His children by virtue of having received His life (1:12-13), and it is with our spirit that the Spirit witnesses to this fact (Rom. 8:16). It is in our spirit that we are joined to the Lord to become one spirit with Him (1 Cor. 6:17). It is in our spirit that the Lord and the grace of the Lord reside (2 Tim. 4:22; Gal. 6:18). It is in our spirit that we receive revelation from God (Eph. 1:17; 3:5; Rev. 1:10; 4:2; 17:3; 21:10), know the things of man (1 Cor. 2:11), and receive and discern the things of the Spirit of God (vv. 14-15). We must take heed to our spirit and serve God in

our spirit (Mal. 2:15; Rom. 1:9; 7:6; 12:11), praying at every time in spirit (Eph. 6:18), and being filled by the Spirit in our spirit (5:18). We worship God in our spirit (John 4:24), and in this spirit we walk in an organic union with the Lord to fulfill His purpose, which is to have a dwelling place, a holy temple, in man; this dwelling place is in our spirit (Rom. 8:4; Eph. 2:21-22), the place of God's rest (Isa. 66:1-2).

### The Regenerated Human Spirit Involving Grafting Rather Than Exchange

Regeneration involves the actual impartation of God's divine life into man's human spirit, as Exchanged Life teaching rightly recognizes. However, it errs in explaining the nature of this dynamic, organic transaction, viewing it as the exchange of an inferior life for a superior one rather than viewing it according to the scriptural revelation of the grafting of two lives and natures—the human with the divine (Rom. 11:17-24). "Critique" not only fails to recognize this shortage in Exchanged Life theology; it degrades the truth of the Bible by asserting that "the new birth should be understood relationally, not ontologically" (150). It explains that "just as spiritual death consists primarily of alienation from God (Eph. 2:1, 12-13), regeneration is an individual's entrance into an everlasting relationship with God through the presence of the life-giving Spirit (John 17:3; Eph. 2:17-19)" (150). With these claims, "Critique" undermines its own purpose to correct the errors in Exchanged Life theology and to offer a more reliable, fulfilling, and "God-centered" proposal for victorious Christian living (131), for without a proper understanding of regeneration, of the grafted life, and of their implications for the full salvation of man, the believer has no way to advance in that salvation.

Regeneration produces in the believers an organic union with Christ, a union that both the Lord Jesus and the apostle Paul identified by the illustration of grafting. Christ presented Himself as a vine (John 15:1) in whom the believers as branches must abide for the purpose of bearing fruit to the glory of the Father (vv. 4-5, 8). In Romans 11 Paul likens the Gentiles to branches of a wild olive tree who were grafted into Christ, the cultivated olive tree, to partake of the root of its fatness (vv. 17, 24). For grafting to take place, the branch of the wild olive tree must be cut off, and a cut must be made in the cultivated olive tree to receive the new branch. The life of the wild branch is joined to the life of the cultivated tree, and the two lives are mingled together as one. The branch abides

in the tree and absorbs its life-juice to live in and grow with the cultivated tree. The branch and the tree not only co-exist with one another; they coinhere in one another. In order for believers to be grafted into Christ, Christ was "cut" on the cross (John 19:34; Zech. 3:9), and we were cut off from Adam and put into Christ through baptism to be joined to Him as one spirit (Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:27; 1 Cor. 6:17). In this organic union, the divine and human lives are mingled as one and grow together (Col. 2:19). It is in this grafting that all the experiences of Christ—including His death, resurrection, and ascension—become the believers' history. This alone is the basis for a proper and victorious living.

Perhaps the verse most commonly employed by Exchanged Life advocates to support the idea of exchange is Galatians 2:20: "I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me." Here Paul clearly says that it is no

longer he who lives, yet later in the verse he says, "I live." There is no thought of exchange here. The "I" that has been crucified here is the old man of Romans 6:6. The old "I" that has been crucified had nothing of God in it, but this old "I," whose sin-corrupted part was terminated on the cross, was then resurrected, with the addition of God's life

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through regeneration, to become a new "I." On the one hand, the sin-corrupted element of Paul's human nature was terminated through Christ's crucifixion; on the other hand, Paul was living in resurrection, not by himself but as one into whom God as life had been imparted. For Paul, to live was Christ (Phil. 1:21), and in his experience it was Christ who lived in *him*. Christ lived, but He lived in Paul. In short, Paul was living a grafted life, enjoying the rich, divine life of Christ, the true vine, and growing together with Him (Rom. 6:5). Grafting shows that two parties have one life and one living, whereas exchange erroneously implies that one party—the believer—goes out, and another party—God—comes in to fill the void. Both Exchanged Life theology, with its insistence on an exchange of lives, and "Critique," with its assertion that regeneration is merely a relational change, have missed the mark of God's organic salvation.

### God's Organic Salvation

In endeavoring to correct the fallacy in Exchanged Life theology that a believer is exchanged at conversion, Pyne and Blackmon rightly state that "God's new creation work

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has begun (2 Cor. 5:17), but believers are not yet wholly new” (153). The scope of the consideration in “Critique,” however, is regrettably limited. Returning to its central and valid concern that a struggling believer can be further frustrated if he accepts the Exchanged Life conviction that he is altogether righteous and yet continues to struggle with sin, “Critique” reiterates the thought advanced by Luther that a believer is at the same time righteous and yet a sinner, finding in this statement a comforting reassurance that a believer should not set his hopes too high in relation to overcoming sin. By holding to a relational view of regeneration and a purely objective view of justification, whereby the righteousness of Christ is merely credited to the believer’s account by a merciful and distant God, “Critique” misses the larger and more profoundly weighty matter revealed by Paul in Romans 5:10—that “if we, being enemies, were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more we will be saved in His life, having been reconciled.” While redemption is judicial, God’s complete salvation is primarily organic.

God’s organic salvation, which He carries out in man by the application of His own divine life realized in man’s experience as the life-giving Spirit, begins with the regeneration of the spirit (John 3:6; Titus 3:5) and continues with dispositional sanctification (Rom. 6:19, 22), the renewing of the mind (12:2), transformation of the soul (2 Cor. 3:18), conformation to the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29), and the glorification of the body (v. 30; Phil. 3:21). By this process the tripartite man partakes of God’s life and nature for His expression and, indeed, becomes wholly new. It is also by this process that man becomes the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21), having been thoroughly saturated with the Christ who is Himself the righteousness of God (1 Cor. 1:30). To miss the truth of God’s organic salvation and the issue of its efficacy is to miss the consummation of God’s salvation in which He reproduces Himself in man, whom He created in His image and for His glory (Gen. 1:26; Heb. 2:10).

### Conclusion

We appreciate Pyne and Blackmon’s concern for their fellow believers. By exposing the tendency in Exchanged Life theology toward separating the believer’s experience of sin from his true identity, the authors point toward a more biblically oriented view of personal accountability for sin and the need for a corresponding humility before God. They write, “If the believer is now righteous, with no need for further transformation, there is no more need for grace. On the other hand a stronger view of sin, one which recognizes sin’s continuing presence in the deepest affections of the believer and its expression in self-interest, leads to humble confession and an ongoing dependence on the grace of God in Christ” (153). Further, they take issue with Exchanged Life theology’s “extremely individualistic

approach to sanctification that does not do justice to the New Testament’s corporate language regarding the new humanity of believers” (155), stating further that true Christian spirituality is not focused on the individual but “can only be practiced in the context of a community” (155). It should be noted that the authors’ concern about individualistic spiritual pursuit is not undermined by the biblical revelation of the tripartite nature of man, because the enlivened, regenerated human spirit has a corporate component to it (see the Glossa article in this issue). These points, however, are not enough to make up for the severe defects that characterize “Critique.” Those looking for a “more encouraging, more helpful, and more deeply refreshing” alternative to Exchanged Life theology would do well to look elsewhere (156). Ironically, in laboring to offer a remedy to Exchanged Life theology, which purports to hold the secret to a victorious Christian spirituality, Pyne and Blackmon insist that “the search for any such secret is misguided” (149). We disagree. The secret to true Christian spirituality is to live the grafted life by experiencing and enjoying the life-giving Spirit in our regenerated human spirit, and cooperating with Him in His work to transform our soul and eventually our body “from glory to glory” (2 Cor. 3:18) until we, the corporate Body of Christ, “arrive...at a full-grown man” (Eph. 4:13), “filled unto all the fullness of God” (3:19).

by Tony Espinosa

## Christian Life in Legal and Intellectual Union with Christ

“In Christ,” by John W. Robbins. *The Trinity Review* 235 (September 2004): 1-4.

John W. Robbins, a founder and president of the Trinity Foundation, addresses in his article “In Christ” (hereafter, InC) a contemporary manifestation of an age-old theological debate over the significance of the apostle Paul’s hallmark phrase *in Christ*. According to Robbins, a current misinterpretation of this phrase involves the notion of the subjective union between Christ and His believers that oppugns the traditional *ordo salutis* of Reformed theology. As an exemplar of misrepresentation, InC critiques the view of the believer’s existential and experiential union with Christ, as presented in *Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul’s Soteriology* (hereafter, *Resurrection*) by Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., Professor of Systematic Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, and then calls for a return to the traditional Reformed view of the believers’ union with Christ as being only legal and intellectual union. InC offers only an objective soteriology that

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emphasizes the judicial aspect of God's salvation to the exclusion of an organic aspect. InC advocates the learning of biblical doctrines in an intellectual union with Christ and eschews the notion of the believers' incorporation into the resurrected Christ through an organic union with Him. As a result, InC can only encourage the believers to pursue objective, doctrinal knowledge of Christ by studying theology rather than to learn Christ as the reality is in Jesus by living in the organic union with Him (Eph. 4:20-21).

InC is composed of two sections. In the first section Robbins presents his understanding of Gaffin's teaching of existential union with Christ, labels it theologically aberrant, and criticizes its attack on Reformed theology. The article cites several paragraphs from Gaffin's *Resurrection*, taking issue with his critique of the Reformed *ordo salutis*, his notion of the redemption of Christ, and his elevation of the importance of an experiential union with Christ. Robbins asserts that Gaffin's endorsement of an existential union with Christ not only lends support to Catholic sacramentarianism, a Catholic doctrine "hardly distinguishable from the beliefs of savages" (2), but also represents an assault on the Reformed doctrine of a forensic justification in which righteousness is imputed to the believer externally but is not imparted to him to reside within him by virtue of his subjective union with Christ.

Depicting Gaffin's notion of existential and experiential union with Christ as "nebulous and unintelligible" (2), Robbins espouses a doctrine of legal and intellectual union with Christ. Robbins concludes the first section of InC by charging Gaffin with "fabricating an entirely un-Biblical soteriology" and "indoctrinating future pastors in this heterodox nonsense" (3).

In the second section, Robbins cites Gordon Clark's discussion of the phrase *in Christ* in Paul's Epistles, interspersing them with his own comments. Clark contends that in many verses of Paul's Epistles—such as Ephesians 1:6-7 and 2:13—it is more intelligible to interpret the Greek preposition *en*, when it modifies Christ, as referring to agency rather than to location. "The large majority of puzzling passages become clear," Clark asserts, when *en* is translated as "by" rather than "in" (3). This assertion is based upon Clark's premise that the expression *in Christ* gives rise to a mystical and vacuous notion of the believers' spiritual incorporation into Christ, whereas the expression *by Christ* more clearly elucidates the notion that Christ is only the agent of our redemption.

Many points in InC stand in need of rigorous critique. First, the article fails to provide either an objective portrayal of Gaffin's theology or a reasoned argument grounded in the Scriptures; instead, it resorts to loose ridicule and appeals to prejudice. Without any satisfactory biblical exegesis, the article presents the *ordo salutis* as a self-evident biblical truth, states that the *ordo salutis* is "the distinct and perfectly intelligible order of salvation," and belittles the existential union with Christ as not only "un-Biblical" (2) but also "nebulous and unintelligible" (1). The article's repeated use of words such as *nebulous* and *unintelligible* is ironic in view of its own inability to lucidly and forthrightly present Gaffin's abstruse argument or to offer a cogent counterargument built upon logic and substantive biblical commentary. InC's use of the word *intelligible* seems to indicate conformity to Reformed preconceptions and thought-world rather than capable of being apprehended by a fair-minded person.

Employing the logical fallacy of guilt by association, the article links Gaffin's notion of the experiential union with that of mystics and the Neo-orthodox. InC speaks of "a glowing mystical aura surrounding Gaffin's 'existential, experiential union with Christ'" and asserts that mystics "have waxed poetical, even pornographic, about union with God/Christ. Gaffin spares us the pornography" (2). Doubtless with an eye to Gaffin, the article deplores that "contemporary theologians, including some who claim to be Reformed, are returning to this Antichristian mysticism" (2). This is disconcerting because nowhere in *Resurrection* does Gaffin either appeal to mystics, Christian or non-Christian, as a theological authority or acknowledge to the slightest degree an indebtedness to them. Moreover, the article argues that "the Neo-orthodox, with their doctrine of the believer's encounter, union, and co-temporaneity with Christ in his death and resurrection, are still another example of this revival of mysticism in Reformed garb" (2). InC does not demonstrate the purported underlying similarities between Gaffin's notion of the union with Christ and the "Antichristian" notions held by the mystics and the Neo-orthodox<sup>1</sup> through a scrupulous comparative analysis; rather, the article loosely associates the former with the latter in an effort to call the integrity of Gaffin's theology into question.

The article also does a disservice to its readers by distorting Gaffin's soteriology in *Resurrection*. The most blatant instance is InC's misrepresentation of Gaffin's concept of the redemption of Christ. InC selects the

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following sentence from Gaffin's *Resurrection*: "What characterizes the redemption of Christ [note well] holds true for the redemption of the believer" (2, including Robbins's editorial emphasis). Based on the above-mentioned quotation, the article contends that "Gaffin's nebulous and unintelligible notion of existential and experiential incorporation into Christ gives rise to his peculiar doctrine that Christ is himself redeemed" (2). In InC's characterization of Gaffin's soteriology, "existentially incorporated sinners share in Christ's own redemption"; "they are redeemed because Christ is redeemed" (2). Gaffin's concept of the redemption of Christ, as presented in InC, seems to imply a heretical, even blasphemous notion that Christ needed to be redeemed because He had sin by inherent ownership and also committed sins, which offended God's righteousness. Yet a careful inspection of Gaffin's concept of the redemption of Christ as expressed in *Resurrection* bears no resemblance to InC's characterization. Gaffin employs the term *redemption* as it pertains to resurrection. In speaking of redemption, as it relates to resurrection, Gaffin employs the term *redemption* not in a specific sense, referring to Jesus' death as the payment of ransom (Rom. 3:24f.; 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Gal. 3:13; 4:5; Eph. 1:7; 1 Tim. 2:6; Titus 2:14) but in its broader sense, referring to the consummation of salvation or deliverance (Rom. 8:23; 1 Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:14; 4:30) (*Resurrection* 114-116). While acknowledging the biblical view of the efficacy of Christ's substitutionary death as an atonement in which the Righteous died on behalf of the unrighteous (1 Pet. 3:18), Gaffin in *Resurrection* contends that since His death was that of the last Adam—"Him who did not know sin He made sin on our behalf" (2 Cor. 5:21)—He needed to be delivered from the state of death He endured for a time, which was "the nadir of his exposure to the wrath of the Father" (116). "Resurrection as the redemption of Christ," Gaffin asserts, is "nothing if not his deliverance from the power and curse of death which was in force until the moment of being raised" (116). Gaffin contends that resurrection involves more than "an unveiling of the efficacy of the cross" (115); resurrection is "the salvation of Jesus as the last Adam" and "the point of *his* transition from wrath to grace" (116). That Christ's resurrection was the redemption, or the salvation, of the last Adam from the dominion of death is corroborated by Paul's words in Romans 6:9: "Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more; death lords it over Him no more." Based upon this notion of the resurrection as the redemption of the last Adam, Gaffin suggests that the redemption of Christ holds true for the redemption of the believer because of the solidarity between Christ and the believer. In other words, by virtue of the ontological union between Christ and the believer, the latter may appropriate the salvation from the dominion of death that the former experienced in His resurrection (8:23). Gaffin's view of redemption in its consummate expression is not heretical; rather, it is simply a forceful restatement

of the promises contained in 1 Corinthians 15. When juxtaposing Gaffin's clear presentation of the concept of the resurrection as the redemption of Christ with InC's misrepresentation of this concept, one cannot but wonder whether the misrepresentation stems from an inability to grasp Gaffin's theology because of inflexible bias or, worse yet, a deliberate distortion of Gaffin's theology.

### **InC's Forensic Justification versus the Bible's Organic Justification**

A more fundamental error in InC is its denial of the believer's mystical union with Christ. This notion, the article asserts, is an assault on the "Biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone" because it makes salvation dependent "not on the objective, extrinsic perfect righteousness of Christ imputed (not infused) to those who believe the Gospel, but on some sort of subjective, existential, experiential 'union with Christ'" (2). Salvation then, InC dreads, becomes "a result of infused righteousness (rather than imputed righteousness) and subjective (rather than objective) obedience" (2). The article's claim that justification is "a distinct and purely forensic act" (2) is sourced in a bedrock concept of traditional Reformed theology: Justifying faith is alien to the believers because God's justification of the believers is based solely upon Christ's vicarious death on their behalf, not upon anything possessed or performed by the believers. In *Biblical Theology and the Westminster Standards* (hereafter *Biblical Theology*), Gaffin addresses this concern shared by Reformed theologians. On the one hand, Gaffin affirms that Christ's righteousness is the sole ground for justification and that "justifying righteousness is perfect and complete, apart from anything the believer does, in what Christ has done, once for all, in his finished work"; "in that sense, to speak of 'alien righteousness' is surely defensible" (sec. V). On the other hand, Gaffin asserts that the expression *alien righteousness* can "easily leave the impression of an isolated imputative act, without a clear relationship to Christ" (sec. V). Gaffin then appeals to Calvin, one of the fathers of Reformed theology, asserting that in Calvin's discussion of justification, including imputation, "he always, explicitly or implicitly, relates it to union with Christ" (sec. V). Gaffin then quotes Calvin:

Therefore, that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our heart—in short, that mystical union—are accorded by us the highest degree of importance, so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body—in short, because he deigns to make us one with him. For this reason, we glory that we have fellowship of righteousness with him. (sec. V)

This statement clearly associates imputation with a mystical union with Christ. In this light, Gaffin contends that the very righteousness imputed to us “is, in an absolutely crucial sense, anything but ‘alien’” (sec. V). Gaffin suggests that we understand imputation as a facet of what Calvin terms our “fellowship of righteousness” with Christ, that is, as an integral aspect of our mystical union with the crucified, resurrected, and exalted Christ (sec. V). In this regard Gaffin may be more respectful of the Reformed teachings than InC.

It is crucial to note that God’s justification of the believers is not based upon any justifiable quality within their sin-constituted being or upon any good work performed by them in an effort to please Him. Rather, God justifies us based only upon the person of Christ, the righteous One (Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14), and upon His righteous work—keeping the law in His human living and fulfilling the righteous demands of the law through His substitutionary death on the cross (Matt. 5:17; 1 Pet. 3:18; Gal. 3:13). InC rightly points out that our justification is founded upon an objective and judicial basis: the righteous act of Jesus Christ the Righteous—His redemptive death (Rom. 5:18; 1 John 2:1). Yet the article errs in insisting that justifying righteousness is extrinsic to us. This error springs from InC’s failure to see that in order to receive the benefits of Christ’s righteous work, we must believe into

Christ by God-given faith, thus entering into a life union with Him; by this life union Christ, the righteous One, is imparted into us to become our righteousness—a righteousness which is Christ Himself within us (John 3:15-16, 18). We are justified not only based upon the judicial redemption of Christ—His righteous work—but also in the organic union with Christ, the righteous One (Gal. 2:17; Acts 13:38-39). Paul thus declares in 1 Corinthians 1:30, “Of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became wisdom to us from God: both righteousness and sanctification and redemption.” According to the context of 1 Corinthians, we are in the Christ who in resurrection became the life-giving Spirit and is now joined to us to become one spirit, making us the members of His Body (15:45; 6:15-17; 12:12-14). Hence, the expression *in Christ Jesus* refers to our spiritual, organic union with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, an intimate union of life in which our human spirit is mingled with the life-giving Spirit as one spirit (Rom. 8:16). Further, the expression *Christ Jesus, who became...to us from God...righteousness* suggests less a purely forensic view of justification with extrinsic justifying righteousness than an organic view of justification with indwelling justifying

righteousness—Christ Himself becoming righteousness to us through God’s transmitting Christ into us. Faith, which is generated within us by the appearing of the God of glory through the preaching of the gospel, creates an organic union in which we are in Christ and Christ is in us (Rom. 3:22; Heb. 12:2; 11:8; Acts 7:2; 1 John 4:15). By being put into Christ and having Christ imparted into us, we are, as Calvin notes, engrafted into Christ, the righteous One, and joyfully own Him as “Jehovah our righteousness” (Jer. 23:6); in this organic union, we are justified by God because He sees not only Christ clothing us as “the robe of righteousness” (Gal. 3:27; Phil. 3:9; Isa. 61:10) but also the righteous Christ dwelling in us (Rom. 8:10; 2 Cor. 13:5).

Denying this organic notion of justification, InC postulates that the “notion of existential and experiential incorporation into Christ is foreign to Scripture” (2). However, the entire Scripture—the Old Testament in types, figures, and shadows and the New Testament in plain words, parables, and signs—consistently reveals the desire of God’s heart for spiritual, organic, and subjective union with the believers in Christ. In creation God made man as a vessel in His image and according to His kind in order that man may partake of Him as the tree of life to express Him (Gen. 1:26; 2:7; Rom. 9:21, 23); in incarnation God in Christ became flesh to be a God-man, divinity organically

*The expression in Christ Jesus refers to our spiritual, organic union with the resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit, an intimate union of life in which our human spirit is mingled with the life-giving Spirit as one spirit.*

united with humanity, God manifested in the flesh (John 1:1, 14; Matt. 1:20; 1 Tim. 3:16); in resurrection Christ, the God-man, became the life-giving Spirit to impart Himself as life into man for the producing of His organic Body (1 Cor. 15:45; Rom. 8:6, 10-11; 12:5). Failing to see this revelation and insisting on a purely “forensic view of soteriology” (2), the article posits that “*law, covenant, sin, righteousness, guilt, condemnation, justification, pardon, and adoption* are all legal terms” (2). InC overlooks a host of terms in the Scriptures which suggest the organic character of God’s own being, His salvific work, and His redeemed elect: Father and Son, grafting and partaking of the root of the fatness, vine and branches, Firstborn and brothers, Head and Body (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 11:17; John 15:1-2, 5; Rom. 8:29; Col. 2:19). In fact, every aspect of our relationship with God—even our very existence as believers—hinges on our incorporation into Christ through a union in life. Understood apart from this union, crucial aspects of our relationship with God in Christ revealed in the New Testament are stripped of their reality and vitality and are relegated to the realm of metaphor. John records the Lord’s declaration that we are the branches of Christ, the true (not a metaphorical) vine,

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because we have been grafted into Him in a life union, thus sharing with Him the divine life essence and receiving the continuous flow of His life into our being. John proclaims that “we should be called children of God; and we are,” not by a mere legal adoption but by an actual divine birth, whereby we are begotten of God, possessing His divine life and His divine seed (1 John 3:1-2, 9). Because Christ shares with us both the begetting Father and the divine life and nature, He, as the firstborn Son of God, is not ashamed to call us brothers (Acts 13:33; Heb. 1:5; 2:10-11). Paul declares that “we who are many are one Body in Christ” (Rom. 12:5). Although we are separate and detached in our individualistic and independent Adamic life, we are the one Body of Christ by virtue of our organic union with Him; in the organic union we are joined in life both to Christ as the Head and to the members of His Body. To Paul, the Body of Christ is not an apposite figure of speech for an assembly of believers who compose the church; the Body of Christ is a marvelous spiritual reality—a divine-human organism that is produced and sustained by our corporate organic union with Christ. In view of this organic aspect of salvation, Christ is not merely our legal representative, our substitute, whose suffering and death on the cross are imputed to us, thereby freeing us “from the penalty of death for our sins,” as suggested by InC (3); much more, He is our life—He is the life-giving Spirit who dispenses Himself as life into us, making us the branches of Christ as the true vine, the brothers of Christ as God’s firstborn Son, and the members of the mystical Body of Christ (Col. 3:4). As much as we love Christ as our vicarious sacrifice who accomplished God’s judicial redemption on the cross, we must treasure Him as the life-giving Spirit in our spirit who carries out God’s organic salvation within us (Rom. 5:10).

To underscore the pivotal role of the existential union with Christ in God’s salvation, Gaffin in *Biblical Theology* argues that Calvin’s notion of the application of salvation is the believer’s union with Christ forged by Spirit-worked faith, a faith that puts on Christ (Gal. 3:27). On our side, in Calvin’s view, faith is the bond of the union; on God’s side, “the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually unites us to himself” (sec. III). Gaffin finds this notion of the spiritual organic union simple, profound, and comprehensive, for it keeps the focus squarely on the crucified and resurrected Christ without losing sight of the various benefits and effects of salvation in all their multiplicity; it also recognizes that benefits and effects have their place only within the union with Christ, as they are its specific outworkings. Gaffin uses this quotation from Calvin which highlights the significance of spiritual union with Christ in our appropriation of the benefits of His work: “First, we must understand that as long as Christ remains outside of us, and we are separated from him, all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of the human race remains useless and of no value to us” (sec. III).

Calvin’s emphasis on the existential union with Christ accords with Paul’s unswerving focus on Christ. What dominates Paul’s writings is not his preoccupation with assigning priorities (causal, logical, or temporal) to distinct saving acts of Christ; rather, Paul’s Epistles principally unveil his endeavor to reveal Christ as the Spirit progressively imparted into the believers’ being as their life for their full salvation in order to make them the members of the Body of Christ. Justification, regeneration, sanctification, and glorification are not, as in the traditional *ordo salutis*, merely links in the golden chain of salvation; more significantly, as T. Austin-Sparks points out, they are the spokes of a wheel that radiate from the hub of our life union with Christ (6), for they are the organic consequences of our union with Christ Jesus, who is Jehovah our Savior and *salvation* (Matt. 1:21). We were justified in the organic union with Christ, by which God reckoned Christ as our righteousness; we were regenerated when the resurrected Christ as the Spirit of life was mingled with our spirit; we are being sanctified and transformed as this organic union spreads into our soul; and we will be glorified when this union pervades our mortal body (Rom. 8:2, 6, 10-11, 23, 29-30). Regrettably, InC insists on an *ordo salutis*, which focuses upon a sequence of acts of salvation, rather than upon our union with Christ by which we participate in God’s complete salvation. In so doing, the article may have the effect of frustrating the believers’ experience of God’s full salvation by damaging the development of the organic union within them.

### InC’s Intellectual Union versus Paul’s Organic Union

Rejecting a mystical union and, consequently, a spiritual and organic union with Christ, InC claims that our union with Him is principally legal and intellectual (3). To buttress this claim, InC cites Gordon Clark’s commentary on Colossians 1:28. Clark translates the verse as follows: “that we may present every man perfect in Christ” (4). Clark contends that the phrase *perfect in Christ* refers to perfection in knowledge of Christ, for to be perfect in likeness to Christ is principally to have the mind of Christ (4). He asserts that “to be mature is to have an extensive *knowledge* of Christ” (4). Clark explains that the means that God gave Paul “to attain God’s and Paul’s purpose” was “the preaching of Pauline theology” (4). He then concludes, “maturity is a knowledge and belief in those holy doctrines” (4).

Paul, however, prayed for the believers that Christ would make His home not merely in their minds but in their hearts, that is, that Christ Himself would enter, occupy, and settle down in their hearts (Eph. 3:17). The heart encompasses their entire inner being, including not only the mind but also the emotion, will, and conscience (Matt. 9:4; John 16:22; Acts 11:23; Heb. 4:12; 10:22). So thoroughly was Paul’s heart permeated with Christ that he

declared to the Corinthians that he forgave a brother “in the person of Christ,” that “the truthfulness of Christ” was in him, that he entreated them through “the meekness and gentleness of Christ,” and that he blessed them with his “love in Christ Jesus” (2 Cor. 2:10; 11:10; 10:1; 1 Cor. 16:24). In Philippians Paul ardently spoke of his intimate union with Christ in His inward parts: “God is my witness how I long after you all in the inward parts of Christ Jesus” (1:8). Contrary to InC’s notion that our union with Christ is primarily objective and intellectual, this verse reveals that Paul’s yearning after the believers issued forth from his subjective and organic union with the church-loving Christ (Eph. 5:25) in the tender inward parts of Christ.

InC interprets Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 2:16 concerning the mind of Christ as referring to our thinking and believing “the same propositions Christ thinks, the propositions he has revealed in his Word” (2). This severs Paul’s statement in verse 16 from its immediate context. In 1 Corinthians 2 Paul contrasts a soulish man—a natural man who mainly lives by his soul, ignores his spirit, and is thus unable to know the things of the Spirit of God—with a spiritual man—one who denies his soul, lives by his spirit, and is thus able to discern the things of the Spirit of God (vv. 9-16). For Paul, having the mind of Christ issues out of our spiritual union with the resurrected Christ. This union involves the spirit of man, which knows the things of man, mingled with the Spirit of God, who knows the things of God (6:17). Through the mingled spirit saturating our mind, renewing our mind, and becoming the spirit of our mind, we have the mind of Christ, by which we may understand the things of God (Eph. 4:23). InC denies our spiritual union with Christ and thus cannot recognize the critical role of the mingled spirit in knowing the things of God; thus, it can only mislead the believers into endeavoring to “think exactly the same thoughts” as God, altogether apart from the Spirit of God in their spirit (2). The Spirit of God in our spirit, however, is the unique means ordained by God to reveal His deep and hidden things (1 Cor. 2:9-10, 15). In promoting an intellectual union with Christ to the exclusion of any spiritual union, InC reduces the Christian life to a mental exercise of trying to think the thoughts and propositions of Christ with the natural mind; such a futile pursuit will not gain genuine knowledge of God and result in self-recriminations to the “unsuccessful” or lead to being puffed up for those “successful” practitioners of this method.

InC’s association of the believers’ maturity with having a

vast knowledge of Christ contradicts the apostle Paul’s understanding of the believers’ growth as the increase of the stature of Christ within them. The latter is revealed perhaps most clearly in Galatians 4:19: “My children, with whom I travail again in birth until Christ is formed in you.” Using words full of organic implications such as *travail* and *birth*, Paul indicates that although Christ had been born into the Galatians through regeneration, he was nevertheless toiling again until Christ might be formed in them by growing in them unto maturity. In keeping with this thought, Paul in Colossians 2:19 speaks of the Body of Christ growing “with the growth of God,” showing that the growth of the Body rests upon the increase of God’s element in the members of the Body rather than upon the accumulation of doctrinal knowledge. In 1 Corinthians Paul belittles the increase of knowledge as an end in itself (13:2). Apart from love as the expression of God as life, knowledge only puffs up (8:1). Although Paul commends the Corinthian believers for being enriched in knowledge concerning Christ, he nevertheless speaks to them as to fleshy men and infants in Christ, for they are able

to receive only milk, which is for babes, not solid food, which is for the full-grown (1:4-5; 3:1-3; cf. 1 Pet. 2:2; Heb. 5:12-13). Because InC encourages the believers to accrue scriptural knowledge and dissuades them from pursuing the increase of Christ as life within, it unwittingly induces the believers to remain in spiritual infancy.

*In promoting an intellectual union with Christ, InC reduces the Christian life to a mental exercise of trying to think the thoughts and propositions of Christ with the natural mind.*

Ultimately, the article errs in confusing objective doctrinal knowledge about Christ with the subjective experiential knowledge of Christ. To be sure, we must read and study the Word of God with a renewed mind in order to receive the revelation of Christ from the Father, for all Scripture testifies concerning Him (John 5:39). Yet we should not confuse our knowledge concerning the Christ revealed in the Bible with our subjective knowing of the Christ living in us. For this reason, Paul tells us that he not only counted all things to be loss on account of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ’s supreme preciousness, but he also paid the price of suffering the loss of all things to gain and know Christ Himself in order to have the experiential knowledge of Him (Phil. 3:8-10). Christ must not be merely an object of our intellectual inquiry, a doctrine we appreciate by searching the Scriptures and studying theology; He must be the goal of our spiritual pursuit, a person whom we seek to know not only through the divine revelation concerning Him in the Word but also through a subjective interaction with Him in a spiritual organic union (vv. 12-14; 1 John 2:27; 5:20).

Overall, InC is marked more by its supercilious tone and ad hominem attacks on its opponents than by an incisive analysis of their views and a reasoned counterargument. The article critiques the notion of the existential union with Christ through the prism of a version of Reformed theology that insists on a purely objective view of salvation. Although the article correctly points to the righteous act of Christ on the cross as the judicial basis of our justification, it nevertheless denies the divine revelation that faith involves an organic union with Christ, the righteous One, in which He becomes our justifying righteousness within us. By promoting only an intellectual union, the article reduces the Christian life to an intellectual quest to know Christ in doctrine by studying points of theology. In so doing, InC incites the believers to covet theological knowledge about Christ rather than to hunger for Christ as a subjective reality organically joined to them as the life-giving Spirit in their spirit.

by David Yoon

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>It is noteworthy that in *Biblical Theology and the Westminster Standards*, Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., clearly distances himself from the way Karl Barth, a founder of Neo-orthodoxy, completely rejects the notion of *ordo salutis* in a broader sense of the expression, that is, the ongoing application of salvation (without having established a particular sequence of various saving acts) in distinction from its once-for-all accomplishment.

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## Jesus Replacing the Temple

*The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John*, by Alan R. Kerr. London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002.

Alan Kerr's book *The Temple of Jesus' Body: The Temple Theme in the Gospel of John* (hereafter *Temple*), a revision of his doctoral dissertation at the University of Otago in New Zealand, investigates the notion that in the Gospel of John the Jerusalem temple is replaced by Jesus. The book is divided into ten chapters. The

introduction deals with other treatises that find significance in the thought of Jesus' body replacing the temple in the Gospel of John, the Johannine authorship, the dating, and the purpose and audience of the Gospel.

After establishing that the Gospel of John was written after the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70, *Temple* investigates in chapter 2 Jewish responses to the destruction of the temple. These responses range from focusing on Torah piety or mysticism to following an activist eschatology (such as the use of arms in the Bar Kochba revolt in A.D. 135). In contrast to these responses John presents Jesus as the fulfillment and replacement of the temple and its associated rituals.

Chapter 3 of *Temple* focuses on John 2:13-22, the crucial passage of the temple replacement theme. It firstly deals with the cleansing of the temple by Jesus and then Jesus' response to the sign-seeking Jews: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (v. 19). While the Jews thought that He was referring to the physical temple, which took forty-six years to build, John clarifies that He was speaking of the temple of His body which would be raised on the third day, the day of His resurrection (vv. 20-21). According to *Temple*, verse 21 provides a rationale to explore other temple allusions in the Gospel of John.

Chapter 4 in *Temple* looks at the allusions to the temple in the prologue of John. Kerr sees great significance in the verb ἐσκήνωσεν (tabernacled) in 1:14, which indicates that the tabernacle or Tent of Meeting/temple as the place of God's presence in the Old Testament has been replaced by the incarnate Word, Jesus Christ, who manifests God's glory (2:11). He considers that the phrase *full of grace and truth* is equivalent to the Hebrew expression *rab hesed we'emet* (abundant in lovingkindness and truth), which is used in Exodus 34:6 as a description of God in the context of His speaking to Moses in the Tent of Meeting and on the mountain.

In chapter 5 *Temple* looks at John 1:51, which alludes to Jacob's dream at Bethel in Genesis 28:12-19, and concludes that there is not an allusion to the temple in this verse. This conclusion may, in part, reflect *Temple's* limited focus on Jesus' physical body to the detriment of considerations about His enlargement, the Body of Christ, which consummates in the New Jerusalem. The New Jerusalem, the consummate temple (Rev. 21:22), which comes down out of heaven from God (vv. 2, 10), connecting heaven to earth, surely deserves more consideration as the fulfillment of Jacob's ladder.

Chapter 6 of *Temple* deals with a new center of worship as revealed in John 4:16-24. Kerr makes an interesting analogy between the woman at the well and betrothal scenes

where a husband meets his future wife at a well, a frequent motif in the Old Testament (e.g., Jacob, Moses). While Nicodemus (in John 3) represents the Jews, the Samaritan woman represents the (predominantly Gentile) church as Christ's bride. *Temple's* main point, however, is the new place of worship, neither Mount Gerizim nor Jerusalem, but in Spirit (Christ). It quotes Moule, "The Spirit is Christified; Christ is Spiritualized," to show that the Spirit can be understood as Christ (193). *Temple* demonstrates from the Gospel of John that a special place is not necessary for worship: "The man born blind worships outside the synagogue; Thomas worships in an unspecified place; and Mary worships in a house in Bethany" (203). *Temple* concludes, "Worship in Spirit and truth is worship centred in Jesus. In this sense Jesus replaces the Temple" (204). While this understanding of the phrase *in spirit* has some merit, it is better to view the place as our human spirit, which is indwelt and mingled with Christ as the Spirit (who is the reality of the offerings). The temple in the church age consists of all the believers as the church collectively (Eph. 2:21-22; cf. 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 2 Cor. 6:16). They render the true worship to the Father through the genuine exercise of their human spirit and the enjoyment of Christ as the reality of all the Old Testament offerings.

Chapter 7 of *Temple* deals with the temple festivals: the Passover, Tabernacles, Dedication, and the Sabbath, which are the context for much of the Gospel of John. Kerr states that Jesus is the fulfillment of at least three of these festivals. Through His death on the cross He becomes the Passover Lamb, thus fulfilling the Passover. He fulfills the Feast of Tabernacles as the true tabernacle with water flowing out of His innermost being. Kerr considers Jesus rather than the believer as the antecedent of the pronoun *his* in the phrase *out of his innermost being* in verse 38. This reading has some merit, focusing on Jesus as the source of the living water rather than the believer (a constituent of the Temple) as a channel of the living water (cf. 4:14). To make it work, however, there would need to be a change in punctuation in 7:37-38 from the traditional "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes into Me, as the Scripture said, out of his innermost being shall flow rivers of living water" to "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink, he who believes into Me, as the Scripture said. Out of His innermost being shall flow rivers of living water." *Temple* regards verse 38 as an allusion to Ezekiel 47:1—where water flows out of the temple on Mount Zion, the navel of the earth—which is fulfilled in John 19:34—where blood and water flowed from Jesus'

pierced side. Jesus is also seen as the true light shining to illuminate the temple and the city. Kerr also points to Jesus as the true temple (2:21) dedicated or consecrated by the Father (10:36), the fulfillment of the Feast of Dedication.

Chapter 8 looks at the Father's house and possible connections to the temple in John 13 and 14. In John 13 Kerr connects foot-washing to the ritual cleansing of the priests before entering the temple. In John 14 he connects the many abodes in the Father's house with the rooms or compartments in the temple. He considers them as dwelling places for the believers and quotes Gundry, who sees them as "a reciprocal relationship: as believers have abiding places in Christ, so Jesus and the Father have an abiding place in each believer" (301). He considers the place that Jesus is going to prepare, through His death, resurrection, and ascension, as the eschatological temple.

Chapter 9 considers possible allusions to the high priest and temple in John 17. The Lord Jesus is the High Priest, and His prayer is in the name the Father gave Him (YHWH, or I AM), which is for the preservation of the disciples, for the unity of the disciples, and to sanctify Himself by sacrificing himself. In the final chapter Kerr summarizes the main points of his discussion in the foregoing chapters.

*Temple rarely goes beyond looking at Jesus individually as the fulfillment of the temple to consider the church—the corporate Christ, the enlargement of the temple—as the fulfillment of this type.*

*Temple* brings to bear many insightful points regarding Jesus as the fulfillment of the temple. At times, in the interest of furthering the thesis, the arguments are a little tenuous, but on the whole the thesis that Jesus has replaced the temple destroyed in A.D. 70 and fulfills the type of the temple is convincing. *Temple's* main shortcoming is that it rarely goes beyond looking at Jesus individually as the fulfillment of the temple to consider the church—the corporate Christ, the enlargement of the temple—as the fulfillment of this type. While *Temple* readily explores numerous extra-biblical sources, such as second temple and rabbinic literature and the church fathers, to inform the thesis, it restricts itself mostly to the Gospel of John among the New Testament books. If *Temple* had ventured out further into other Johannine writings, such as Revelation, and even Paul's Epistles, in which the corporate Christ as the enlarged temple is also revealed, then its thesis would have been stronger and even more convincing.

by Roger Good