A Fresh Exposition of Adoption: I. An Outline

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> Perhaps more than any other influence, the impact of biblical theology on systematic theology has demanded a reorientation of soteriology towards the concept of sonship. The doctrine may therefore be on the verge of a long-awaited reinstatement to the position it occupied in Calvin's thought, one which pervades the whole ethos of the Christian life.
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> Sinclair B. Ferguson, 'The Reformed Doctrine of Sonship'[1]

This is projected to be the last of three two-part articles on adoption published in *SBET*.[2] Throughout, my purpose has been to highlight both the neglect and the importance of the doctrine by providing a fresh introduction to it – one grounded in an awareness of its theological history, a back-to-basics approach to the biblical language and its data (consistent with the Reformed principle of *ad fontes*),[3] and appreciative of Robert

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1 N. M. de S. Cameron and S. B. Ferguson (eds), *Pulpit and People: Essays in Honour of William Still on his 75th Birthday* (Edinburgh, 1986), p. 84.

2 These final articles are based on two of three addresses delivered at the John Bunyan Ministers' Conference (Pennsylvania, April 2004). They are published here in honour of Richard B. Gaffin Jr, Professor of Biblical and Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, to mark his seventieth birthday; in honour of Donald Macleod, Professor of Systematic Theology and Principal of the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh, to mark his sixty-fifth birthday; and in memory of John Murray, erstwhile Professor of Systematic Theology, Westminster Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, to mark the thirtieth anniversary of his passing.

3 See Tim Trumper, 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation. I: The Adoption Metaphor in Biblical Usage', *SBET* 14 (Autumn 1996), pp. 129-45; 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption: A Plea for Realisation. II: The Adoption Metaphor in Theological Usage', *SBET* 15 (Autumn 1997), pp. 98-115; 'The Theological History of Adoption I: An Account', *SBET* 20 (Spring 2002), pp. 4-28; 'The Theological History of Adoption II: A Rationale', *SBET* 20 (Autumn 2002), pp. 177-202.

Candlish's view that in the area of the Fatherhood of God and adoption 'there lies a rich field of precious ore yet to be surveyed and explored'. His point has been mine: 'theology has fresh work to do, and fresh treasures to bring out of the storehouse of the Divine Word'.[4] All that remains for us, in the last of these two-part articles, is to draw together the principles enunciated thus far in the series. To do so, I have outlined here a biblico-theological exposition of adoption, and in the second part will summarise its chief implications. I must begin, however, with a reminder as to why a fresh exposition is needed.

First, the exposition of adoption must reflect the actual language of the New Testament (NT), especially the uniqueness of Paul's term (*huiothesia*), from which the adoption model derives its name (Rom. 8:15-16, 22-23; 9:4; Gal. 4:4-5; Eph. 1:4-5).[5] In keeping with this, I have refused to draw on *extra*-Pauline NT texts, including John 1:12.

It has long been assumed that John's reference to those 'receiv[ing]' Christ (*hosoi de elabon auton*) gaining an authority (*exousia*) to become children of God,[6] speaks of adoption. I would argue, however, that the most we may draw from John 1:12 is a *metaphor* of adoption.[7] Yet, even if we assume we can, its location within the ambit of Johannine theology raises questions about its correlation to Paul's adoption *model*. It is a fallacy to presume that the *metaphorical* structures of Johannine and Pauline thought are identical or even compatible, even though we insist that the underlying concepts they convey contribute harmoniously to the

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4 Robert S. Candlish, *The Fatherhood of God being the first course of the Cunningham Lectures delivered before New College, Edinburgh, in March 1864* (5th ed. Edinburgh, 1869), p. 193.

5 I recognise the danger of building a theology on a specific biblical term. As Vern S. Poythress warns, a biblical term may become technical when used theologically. We must ensure, then, that its technical use retains its core biblical meaning (*Symphonic Theology: The Validity of Multiple Perspectives in Theology* [Grand Rapids, MI, 1987], pp. 74ff.).

6 Cf. Paul's reference to 'receiv[ing] the adoption as sons' (*ten huiothesian apolabomen* [Gal. 4:4-5]).

7 Since the publication of my articles on the metaphorical import of adoption in 1996/97, I have come to see the usefulness of Sallie McFague's distinction between a metaphor, which is a one-time analogy, and a model – a root, dominant or foundational metaphor capable of carrying greater theological content and, thus, more suited to pervasive and sustained usage (*Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia, 1982; London, 1983), p. 103; cf. McFague's volume *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age* (London, 1987), pp. 29-40.

oneness of the gospel. Furthermore, it is clear that the predominant soteric model in the Johannine corpus is the new birth (John 1:13; 1 John 2:29; 3:1; 5:1).

It is my contention, then, that Paul's adoption model should not be conflated or confused with the language of other NT authors, as has generally been the case to date in the work of systematicians. We must break with the established custom of reading adoption arbitrarily into the filial language of the NT, irrespective of the author in view or the specificity of the language under consideration. Paul's adoption model should be treated on its own terms, and this is what has been attempted in the exposition that follows.[8]

Secondly, by keeping within the confines of Pauline thought we may both discern and express without hindrance the apostle's redemptive-historical understanding of adoption. The admixture of the language of other NT authors could never allow this.[9] In any case, issues germane to the construction of an *ordo salutis* have typically taken precedence over the panoramic perspective of the *historia salutis*. A survey of the volumes of systematic theology dealing with adoption will reveal that the focus is often very much on its connections to regeneration, justification and sanctification.[10]

Once, however, the adoption model has been disentangled from those *extra*-Pauline models of the NT, we may prepare the way for the exposition of the doctrine by arranging the apostle's five references to *huiothesia* in their clear salvation-historical order; from Ephesians 1:5

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8 The reader will find that many points made in passing in this first article are taken up again in the second.

9 While Thornton Whaling notes that 'the Grounds of Adoption make up a great section of Biblical Theology', the manner in which he deduces this ignores the authorial diversity of the NT ('Adoption', *The Princeton Theological Review* 21 [1923], p. 226).

10 Systematicians tend to arrange their treatment of adoption *theologically* rather than *exegetically* or *historically*. For this reason their treatments tend to focus on the soteric and pneumatological implications of Gal. 4:4-5 and Rom. 8:12 ff. at the expense of the other 'huiothesian' texts (Rom. 8:22-23; 9:4 and Eph. 1:5, the latter often disregarded as deutero-Pauline). But when they unpack these implications, the systematicians resort to *extra*-Pauline references that have little or no relevance to adoption, as Paul understood it. Such treatments of adoption tend, then, to be theologically systematic but exegetically asystematic, in that they overlook the internal logic of Paul's (redemptive-historical) understanding, and blur it by their reliance on the statements of authors other than Paul.

(protology [predestination to adoption]) to Romans 8:23 (eschatology [the adoption *simpliciter*]). This order demonstrates the validity of Geerhardus Vos' principle of periodicity/historical progression[11] and the wide-ranging significance adoption has in Paul's theology:

Eph. 1:4-5 Rom. 9:4 Gal. 4:4-5 (Rom. 8:15-16) Rom. 8:22-23
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Protology Covenant Theology Soteriology (Pneumatology) Eschatology

No wonder Ridderbos believes adoption is 'an important concept'![12]

The seeds of this fresh approach are found in the theological history of adoption, notably the biblico-theological contributions of Irenaeus, the church's first biblical theologian; of John Calvin, a biblical dogmatician and theologian of adoption *par excellence*;[13] and Herman Ridderbos, who

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[11] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments,* reprint ed. (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1985), p. 16. 'When we consider... the passages where Paul expressly speaks of the sonship of believers and of their adoption as sons, it becomes clear at once that he is again thinking in redemptive-historical, eschatological categories.' (Herman N. Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology* [transl. J. R. de Witt; London, 1977], p. 198).

[12] Ibid., p. 197. Whereas biblical theologians recognise the importance of adoption for the history of the church, others tend to limit their recognition to her theology. The nineteenth-century Southern Presbyterian preacher, Benjamin Morgan Palmer, comes to mind: 'Probably no word in our science of theology more completely covers all parts of the system of grace than does this word, adoption.' (*The Threefold Fellowship and the Threefold Assurance: An Essay in Two Parts* [first published Richmond, VA, 1902; reprint ed. Harrisonburg, PA, 1980]), p. 39. Robert A. Peterson also comes to mind: adoption is 'an overarching way of viewing the Christian faith' ('Towards a Systematic Theology of Adoption', *Presbyterion* 27/2 [Fall 2001], p. 121). The full-scale recovery of adoption is dependent, I suggest, on the widespread recognition of the importance of adoption for both the history and theology of the church.

[13] Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption I', pp. 15-16, 18-20; 'An Historical Study of the Doctrine of Adoption in the Calvinistic Tradition' (Ph.D., University of Edinburgh, 2001), chs 1-4; Nigel Westhead, 'Adoption in the Thought of John Calvin' *SBET* 13 (Autumn 1995), pp. 102-15; of narrower scope is Howard Griffith's '"The First Title of the Spirit': Adoption in Calvin's Soteriology" *Evangelical Quarterly* 73:2 (2001), pp. 135-53. The description of Calvin as a biblical dogmatist alludes to the presence of both humanist and scholastic influences in his

is to the Dutch tradition of Reformed theology what Vos is to its Princetonian counterpart. Following Ridderbos' lead, I have sought to bring together Paul's scattered references to adoption so as to expound adoption comprehensively, although not exhaustively, and address, albeit in preliminary fashion, the historical, theological, metaphorical and conceptual issues the doctrine raises.[14]

This brings us, thirdly, to the vexed question of the origin of Paul's adoption model. The redemptive-historical approach to adoption renders implausible the view that the apostle's use of *huiothesia* echoes exclusively aspects of Greek or Roman adoption.[15] It reveals that while the term may be Hellenistic – one of the most common terms for adoption in the Graeco-Roman world, meaning 'the placing of a son' (a compound of the noun *huios* and the verb *tithemi,* 'to place') – Paul's usage of it strongly suggests he filled it with historical and theological content derived from the OT, the absence of *huiothesia*'s use in the Septuagint notwithstanding.[16] This does not mean to say that the apostle did not draw

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work and to his relevance for both biblical and systematic theology (Richard A. Muller, *The Unaccommodated Calvin: Studies in the Foundation of a Theological Tradition* (New York and Oxford, 2000), which he builds on in *After Calvin: Studies in the Development of a Theological Tradition* [Oxford, 2003], pp. 16, 30 passim).

[14] Irenaeus and Calvin, by contrast, left their comments strewn throughout their works.

[15] Traditionally the presence of *huiothesia* in epistles written either from Rome or to Rome was taken as undeniable evidence of the Roman origins of the model. Opinions nowadays are more diverse. For some samples see 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption II', p. 103 fn. How views shifted in favour of an Old Testament (OT) origin, see James I. Cook, 'The Concept of Adoption in the Theology of Paul' in *Saved by Hope: Essays in Honor of Richard C Oudersluys* (ed. James I. Cook; Grand Rapids, MI, 1978), pp. 134ff.

[16] Ridderbos, *Paul*, pp. 197-8; likewise, Cook, 'The Concept of Adoption', p. 137, and James Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God: An Exegetical Investigation into the Background of Huiothesia in the Pauline Corpus* [WUNT 2. Reihe 48; Tübingen, 1992] p. 61, and 'Adoption, Sonship', *Dictionary of Paul in His Letters*, ed. Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin (Downers Grove, IL and Leicester, England, 1993). Daniel J. Theron writes, 'there hardly seems to be any doubt that Paul's metaphor of adoption roots in the Jewish rather than in Graeco-Roman, or other traditions' ('"Adoption" in the Pauline Corpus', *The Evangelical Quarterly*, vol. 28 [1956], p. 14). Contrast David J. Williams' opinion in *Paul's Metaphors: Their Context and Character* (Peabody, MS, 1999), pp. 83-4 n.138.

at all from Graeco-Roman forms of adoption, but it does remind us of the significant difficulties there are in ascertaining the degree to which he was influenced by these variegated forms, and which elements of them may truly be said to have supplemented his predominant OT reading of *huiothesia*.[17]

All I can suggest here is that we first understand Paul's use of *huiothesia* in its biblical context. Only then may we begin to ascertain which, if any, aspects of the first-century practices of adoption coalesce with Paul's use of *huiothesia* and are demanded by it. By tackling the question in this manner, we may do justice to the circumstances out of which Paul wrote, and steer clear of foisting on the biblical text ideas arbitrarily extracted from Graeco-Roman forms of adoption. It is important to remember that for all Paul's awareness of the world he lived in, closest to his thought, and most determinative of it, was the history and faith of God's people. Any verifiable allusions he makes to Graeco-Roman forms of adoption relate, I suggest, to the doctrine's application. But what is of particular concern here is the basic narrative of redemptive history.

PREDESTINATION TO ADOPTION

> having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will... (Eph. 1:5).[18]

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[17] Discussion of the issue nowadays revolves around the work of James Scott. See his description of Greek and Roman forms of adoption (*Adoption as Sons of God*, pp. 3-13); cf. 'Adoptio' and 'Adoption, Greek' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. N. G. L. Hammond and H. H. Sculland, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970); or 'Adoption' in *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, ed. Simon Hornblower and Anthony Spawforth (Oxford and New York, 1996). While Scott has received support from the likes of James D. G. Dunn (*The Theology of Paul the Apostle* [Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK, 1998], p. 436), his views have been critiqued by John L. White (*The Apostle of God: Paul and the Promise of Abraham* [Peabody, MS, 1999], pp. 177ff.).

[18] Unless otherwise stated quotations from Scripture are taken from the New King James Version (Nashville, TN, 1983). In my view, treatments of adoption that omit to use the *Ephesians* reference to *huiothesia* are impoverished. As we know, *huiothesia* is a term Paul alone uses in the NT, and, as the following exposition shows, its use in Ephesians comports with the other four references (cf. 'The Metaphorical Import of Adoption II', pp. 102).

'Sonship', counsels Ridderbos, 'is not to be approached from the subjective experience of the new condition of salvation, but rather from the divine economy of salvation, as God foreordained it in his eternal love (Eph. 1:5), and realized it in principle in the election as his people.'[19] Stated simply, it originated in the mind of God the Father and is essential to protology. This Ephesians 1:4-5 makes clear.[20] These verses are a part of one of the most notable doxologies of the NT. Ephesians 1:3-14 constitutes, says R. W. Dale, 'a gold chain' of doctrine,[21] which demonstrates most richly the Trinitarian nature of the soteric blessings that come to God's people *from* the Father (vv. 4-6), *in* the Son (vv. 7-12), and *by* the Spirit (vv. 13-14) (v. 3). Immediately obvious is the fact that Paul's reference to adoption appears amid his focus on the Father. For the sake of convenience, we may unpack its meaning, as has been done in the doctrine's theological history, in terms of causality.[22]

First, Ephesians 1:4-5 speaks of the *efficient* cause of adoption: the grace of the Father. He adopted a people for himself for no other reason than 'the good pleasure of his will'.[23] Notwithstanding all the perfection and fullness of reciprocated love that passed eternally between the persons of the Godhead – such that God need never have loved outside of himself in order to remain love – God voluntarily condescended to extend his love to his 'offspring' (Acts 17:28), even though they had broken loose from

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[19] Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 198.

[20] Bernard Woudenberg, 'Eternal Adoption', *The Standard Bearer* (September 1, 1990), pp. 475-7; Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption II', pp. 189-90.

[21] Cited by John R. W. Stott in *The Message of Ephesians: God's New Society* (Leicester, England and Downers Grove, 1979), p. 32.

[22] Although the utilisation of Aristotelian devices such as causality is typically associated with Protestant orthodoxy (Muller, *After Calvin*, pp. 55, 35), we find relevant use of it in John Calvin's *Institutes* (3:22) and in his commentary on *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians* (transl. T. H. L. Parker, ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance; reprint ed. [Grand Rapids, MI, 1965], p. 126).

[23] Long ago, the Scottish pastor-theologian Thomas Boston exclaimed: 'Was it ever heard that there was an adoption where the party adopting was not childless? *Ans.* Gods [*sic*] ways are not man's ways. It is free grace only, and not need, that puts the heavenly Father to adopt any of his creatures. – yet there is a suitableness in it to the divine wisdom.' (*The Complete Works of the Late Rev. Thomas Boston*, Vol. 1, ed. Rev. Samuel M'Millan [London, 1854], p. 652).

him.[24] Ever since the Fall, men and women have been 'sons of disobedience', 'children of wrath', inhabitants of the household of the living dead, and slaves to the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:1-3).

In grace the Father named for himself a family (Eph. 3:15). He did so by predestining the adoption of each member from the devil's household into his own. This action constitutes adoption's *material* cause and helps explain why Ephesians 1:4-5 is the *locus classicus* of predestination. It was by, or literally through (*dia*), Christ (v. 5; cf. v. 7) that the Father eternally foresaw those he would adopt into his family.

By trusting in Christ's redeeming work on the cross, the sons of disobedience may become adopted sons of God. The faith of which this trust speaks is the *instrumental* cause of adoption.[25] It implies a negative liberty *from* the enslavement the sons of disobedience knew in the household of the living dead, and a positive liberty *to* enjoy, through union with Christ in his Sonship, an adoptive sonship in the household of the living lively. Upon transferral from the one household to the other, the adopted are accepted in the beloved and experience the warm embrace of the Father (*eis auton* v. 5). Henceforth, they anticipate with hopeful longing the grand family gathering planned for the end of the age (v. 10); the prospect of which reminds us, that, while the gospel begins with grace, its *final* cause is glory: our glory (see below), but ultimately our Father's (v. 6).[26]

THE PRIVILEGE OF ADOPTION

> to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises... (Rom. 9:4).

What was divinely planned in eternal ages past was realised in history through the unfolding of God's covenantal dealings with his chosen people. Care is needed in unpacking these, for nineteenth and early-twentieth century theologians of adoption became so embroiled with Adam's pre-Fall status in Eden (whether subject, son, or both) that they struggled to accord due attention to Paul's emphasis on the divine

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[24] This language is Calvin's (*The Acts of the Apostles 14-28,* transl. John W. Fraser, ed. David W. Torrance and Thomas F. Torrance [Edinburgh and London, 1966], p. 117).

[25] Whaling, 'Adoption', p. 227.

[26] Adoption is, says Whaling, 'the supreme illustration of grace, and the highest reach of glory for the redeemed' (ibid., p. 223).

enactment of redemption and adoption subsequent to the Fall.[27] Of uppermost importance to Paul was not what God's people were in Adam, but what they are in Christ. Thus, his mention of Israel's privilege of adoption serves not so much as an appendix to what happened in Eden, but as a precursor to the full revelation of divine redemption and adoption.

We begin with a little background information concerning Abraham. To him was given a divine promise that he would inherit the world (Rom. 4:13). This promise was eventually activated through Christ (Gal. 3:18, 29). Yet, contrary to Calvin, it did not constitute his adoption,[28] for the promise preceded Yahweh's official adoption of his people by some centuries. In the intervening period, Abraham's seed became so numerous, as had been foretold, that, upon redeeming Israel from Egypt, Yahweh inaugurated Israel as a nation. This inauguration coincided with Yahweh's adoption of Israel as his (corporate) son.[29] While it indicated a circumstantial change in Yahweh's relationship to his people, its substance remained unchanged; hence the continuance of its familial tenor (Exod. 4:22; Deut. 32:6; Hos. 11:1; Mal. 2:10).

The adoption of Israel is based on Romans 9:4, where Paul lists the six privileges Israel knew under the old covenant: the adoption (*he huiothesia*), the glory (*he doxa*), the covenants (*hai diathekai*), the giving of the law (*he nomothesia*), the temple service (*he latreia*) and the promises (*hai epangeliai*). A close look at the endings of the Greek terms reveals that they are divided into two groups of three.[30] The first of the first group (*he huiothesia*) corresponds to the first of the second group (*he nomothesia*), and so forth. Scott interprets this correlation to mean that Israel's adoption occurred at Sinai.

Yahweh's adoption of Israel would not have sounded strange to ancient Near Eastern ears. It was quite usual for father-son imagery to be employed in the drafting of covenants.[31] At the time of the exodus Near Eastern

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[27] The question of Adam's Edenic status leaves unchallenged the certain superiority of sonship in Christ. The latter entails no probation. For a summary of the nineteenth-century discussions of the issue see Trumper, 'An Historical Study', chs 8-9.

[28] Ibid., ch. 2.3.i; cf. White, *The Apostle of God*, p. xxv.

[29] Sometimes Israel is spoken of as Yahweh's daughter (Jer. 31:21b-22a); cf. the covenantal formula in 2 Cor. 6:18.

[30] Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, pp. 148-9.

[31] Quoting D. J. McCarthy, Richard D. Patterson writes, 'the father-son relationship... is essentially that of the covenant. And there is no doubt that covenants, even treaties, were thought of as establishing a kind of quasi-familial unity.' ('Parental Love as a Metaphor for Divine-Human

religions customarily regarded their gods as having consorts who bore them sons.[32] Yet, being without equal, Yahweh was without a consort and, therefore, without a son. Nonetheless, he sovereignly and graciously chose out insignificant Israel from all the people groups of the earth (Deut. 7:1, 7) and adopted him as his own. Yahweh became thereby the original single parent! Yet, lest Israel consider his adoptive sonship to compare unfavourably to the 'natural' sonship the surrounding people groups enjoyed in relation to their gods, Yahweh assured Israel that he possessed all the rights of primogeniture. He was truly as special to Yahweh as a firstborn son (Exod. 4:22; cf. Jer. 31:9). Succeeding centuries were to prove Yahweh's undying commitment to Israel, his son's multiple rebellions notwithstanding.

THE RECEPTION OF ADOPTION

> But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father!' (Gal. 4:4-6).

In Galatians 3:23-4:7 Paul unpacks the nature of Israel's sonship under the old covenant era. He does so to draw a contrast with the adoptive sonship of the 'Israel of God' (Gal. 6:16) in the new covenant era. As authentic as was Israel's sonship of old, it afforded Abraham's seed but a foretaste of the enriched familial experience God's sons know now that Christ has come. Writing in particular of the *locus classicus* of adoption (Gal. 4:4-6), Ridderbos describes adoptive sonship as 'the object of the great eschatological redemptive event and... the direct result of redemption'.[33] It

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Love', *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, Vol. 46 [June 2003], p. 212).

[32] Here I am indebted to Cook, 'The Concept of Adoption', p. 138; contrast C. J. H. Wright, *God's People in God's Land: Family, Land and Property in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI and Exeter, 1990), pp. 15-23. Cook's interpretation has the benefit of recognising Israel's context, and of explaining plausibly why Israel is said to have been born to Yahweh and yet also adopted by him. Could this explanation also shed light on Paul's use of *tekna* (from *tiktein* – to beget or to engender) amid his discussion of adoption (see below)?

[33] Ridderbos, *Paul*, p. 197; Theron, '"Adoption"', pp. 10-11. Ridderbos continues: 'Sonship is... a gift of the great time of redemption that has

is in effect the fulfilment of the Exodus typology of the old covenant and is therefore essential to soteriology.

When Israel entered into (corporate) sonship at Sinai, he did so as a child under age (*nepios*, 4:1). Thus, while he was heir to a great estate ('the world', Rom. 4:13), his earthly circumstances were more akin to servitude. The law with its multiple ceremonies kept custody of him, hemming him in with numerous rules and regulations (3:23). It was his tutor (literally, 'child-leader', *paidagogos*), his guardian or governor (*epitropous*), and his steward, administrator or manager (*oikonomous*) (4:2). The law's purpose was to train up Israel in readiness to receive his inheritance. Thus, it taught him of the holiness of his Father and of his own sinfulness. It also protected him from getting scorched by the inevitable outflow of the Father's holy character (Exod. 19:12-13; Deut. 4:10-12). In Paul's words, Israel had to learn 'the elements [or basic principles, *ta stoicheia tou kosmou*] of the world' (Gal. 4:3).[34] All the while, he yearned for the time he would come of age and enter freely into the blessings of the great estate promised him.[35]

Israel's maturation coincided with the one major hiatus in redemptive history: the epochal transition from the old to the new covenant. Says Paul, 'after faith has come we are no longer under a tutor' (3:25).[36] By dint of Christ's work, believing Jews may now enjoy 'the full rights of sons' (to use the NIV's translation of *huiothesia* [4:5]). Believing Gentiles – who previously were enslaved to their heathen gods (cf. 4:3 and 8) – may know these rights too. Thus, Paul introduces us to further circumstantial

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dawned with Christ. It is the fulfilment of promise that was given of old to the true people of God (Rom. 9:26; 2 Cor. 6:18)' (*Paul*, pp. 198-9).

34 For a list of the ancient meanings of *ta stoicheia* see Richard Longenecker's dependence on Gerhard Delling (*Galatians* [Word Biblical Commentary, vol. 41; Dallas, TX, 1990], p. 165-6).

35 'This', says Calvin, 'was the actual youth of the church [*ecclesiae adolescentia*] and next follows the age of manhood [*virilis aetas*] down to Christ's last coming, when all things shall be fully accomplished.' (*Commentary on the Prophecy of Isaiah*, Vol. 4, transl. William Pringle [Edinburgh, 1853], p. 136 [*CO* 15 (37): 270]).

36 On the various interpretations of Paul's deliberate choice of the first and second person pronouns throughout Gal. 3:23-4:7, see Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 164. In general, I believe Paul's use of the first person refers to all Christians in general, whether Jew or Gentile; although the Jew was to the fore in his mind, especially in his earlier uses of the pronoun (3:23ff.). Paul's use of the second person pronoun refers, by contrast, to his Gentile converts.

changes in the familial relationship between Yahweh and his people.[37] Three factors signal these changes: the advent, work and Spirit of Christ.[38]

In 4:4-6 Paul repeats twice the fact of Christ's birth. He does so to emphasize the true humanity of God's Son and, thereby, his unity with us in that humanity. Hence, Paul juxtaposes the clauses 'born of a woman, born under the law'. Clothed in the very (unfallen) flesh of those requiring redemption (Rom. 8:3; 2 Cor. 5:21), he stretched out to humanity, in Calvin's words, 'a hand of fraternal alliance' to forge 'a bond of brotherhood' more definite than what was formed through his *assumptio carnis*.[39]

While the incarnation rendered humanity redeemable, Christ's cross-work is what accomplished redemption (Gal. 3:13). This explains why, for all the intrinsic redemptive significance of the virgin conception, Paul focuses on what Christ achieved in the light of it. Living obediently under

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[37] In assuming and defending the substantive continuity of the covenants, covenant theologians have perhaps been slow to express adequately their circumstantial (as opposed to substantial) discontinuities. This may explain the emergent protest of new covenant theology, which claims that covenant theology flattens out the contours of redemptive history. (See, for example, Tom Wells' and Fred G. Zaspel's *New Covenant Theology: Description, Definition, Defense* [Frederick, MD, 2002]). The antidote to this criticism is not found in new covenant theology's denial of the church's existence in old covenant times – which substantive discontinuity bespeaks, I suggest, an incipient dispensationalism – but in covenant theology's less inhibited expression of the circumstantial discontinuities between the covenants. Such a response humbly acknowledges our need to balance afresh the continuities and discontinuities of the covenants, without conceding ground, unwarrantably, to our critics.

[38] Gal. 4:4-6 reveals that the gospel is a continuum running from incarnation through atonement to resurrection and Pentecost. The atonement ought not to be considered, therefore, as but a suffix of the incarnation, as Victorian liberals and the neo-orthodox have been wont to imply, nor the incarnation as but a prefix of the atonement, which is the impression later Calvinists have given. Herman Witsius hints at this when he speaks of the 'latitude to that fullness of time[ ] in which the New succeeded the Old Testament' (*The Economy of the Covenants Between God and Man: Comprehending a Complete Body of Divinity*, Vol. 1, reprint ed. [Kingsburg, CA], 1990, pp. 315-16).

[39] *The Gospel according to St John 1-10*, transl. T. H. L. Parker, ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance, reprint ed. (Edinburgh and London, 1979), p. 72 [*CO* 47 (75):62]; cf. Calvin's comment on 1 Tim. 2:5 cited in J. F. Jansen, *Calvin's Doctrine of the Work of Christ* (London, 1956), p. 103.

the law, he worked out a righteousness that could be imputed to his people in exchange for their sin.[40] Suffering unto death their punishment, he bought their deliverance/redemption (*exagorase*) from enslavement.[41] In his resurrection, he was declared (*horisthentos*) to be the Son of God with power (*kata pneuma*, Rom. 1:3-4). This declaration some scholars regard as his adoption (in fulfilment of the promise given David [2 Sam. 7:14])[42] and the prototype of his brethren's, which is obtained through union with Christ in his resurrection.[43] Thus, all weary slaves need 'do' for their sonship is receive it! (4:5)[44]

The receipt of adoption entails trust in Christ. This trust is possible because the Spirit inspires it. It is the means by which he unites the elect to Christ (cf. Gal. 3:26-27). As real as is this union, it is neither symbiotic (deifying the sons of God and humanising the Son)[45] nor

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[40] Although the notion of imputation is widely queried by scholars today (most recently by those of the new perspective on Paul), a close reading of N. T. Wright, for example, reveals a hesitance to jettison the idea entirely. See his telling comments in *What St Paul Really Said: Was Paul of Tarsus the Real Founder of Christianity?* (Grand Rapids, MI and Cincinnati, OH, 1997), p. 123; cf. John Piper's defence of imputed righteousness in *Counted Righteous in Christ: Should We Abandon the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness?* (Wheaton, IL, 2002).

[41] As claimed in a previous article, adoption is a second-order metaphor of the cross that completes redemption, a first-order metaphor ('The Metaphorical Import of Adoption II', pp. 109-10). In Samuel King's words, adoption is 'the end of Redemption' ('The Grace of Adoption', *The Union Seminary Magazine* 22 [Oct., Nov. 1910], p. 31).

[42] Scott, *Adoption as Sons of God*, pp. 223-44.

[43] Richard B. Gaffin Jr has argued that the resurrection event is of central importance to soteriology and ensures its christocentricity. It does so by coordinating in Christ the distinct facets of salvation to a degree the *ordo salutis* model has been unable to express (*Resurrection and Redemption: A Study in Paul's Soteriology*, second ed. [Phillipsburg, NJ, 1987], pp. 117-19).

[44] The contrast of the verbs *exagorase* and *apolabomen* highlights the difference between the divine orchestration of salvation and the human reception of it.

[45] For this reason the eastern language of deification (*theosis*), which was also used by Augustine in the west, sounds misleading to our ears. See my earlier comments (Trumper, 'The Theological History of Adoption I', pp. 15-17), and the dialogue between the new Finnish interpretation of Luther and Eastern Orthodoxy in *Union with Christ: The New Finnish Interpretation of*

ontological (admitting us entrance to the Godhead).[46] Yet it is not just a vague sense of affinity either. Having sent his Son into the world, the Father sends the Spirit of his Son into the hearts of Christ's brothers (Rom. 8:29). While they share with Christ an identity of relation to the Father, he remains forever the firstborn Son (*primus inter pares*).

Those possessing the Spirit enjoy a freedom unknown hitherto. At the outset of the new covenant era, the experience of this freedom was particularly poignant.[47] Those liberated could verbalise audibly for the first time in redemptive history their relationship to the Father. Prior to that, claims Calvin, believing Israelites had but an internal awareness of the divine Fatherhood. They could only speak of God as their Father by way of simile (e.g. Ps. 103:13). This explains why, at the dawn of the new covenant era, those receiving Christ's Spirit let out a 'cry of liberation' – '*Abba*, Father'! Luther captured its tenor by translating the cry, '*Abba*, lieber Vater [dear or loving Father]'. The cry is repeated every time a slave joins the second exodus and becomes thereby an adopted son. First heard on the lips of Christ (Mark 14:36),[48] when spoken by his siblings the cry marks a new freedom *from* an accursed life *to* one of sonship through union with the Son (cf. Gal. 4:6 and Rom. 8:15).

Second, the Spirit puts on the lips of the Father's sons the filial language of prayer (*Abba, ho pater*). In its redemptive-historical context

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Luther (ed. by Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson [Grand Rapids, MI and Cambridge, UK, 1998], passim).

46 As Longenecker writes, 'Paul with his high Christology could speak of being "in Christ" without softening or dissolving the fixed outlines of personality for either Christ or the Christian' (*Galatians*, p. 153).

47 Writes Witsius: 'God... has displayed his manifold, and even his unchangeable wisdom... in suiting himself to every age of the church: ... a stricter and pedagogical discipline was better suited to her more advanced childhood, but yet childhood very unruly and headstrong. And adult and manly age required an ingenuous and decent liberty. Our heavenly Father therefore does nothing inconsistent with his wisdom, when he removes the pedagogue, whom yet he had wisely given his son during his nonage; and treats him, when he is now grown up, in a more free and generous manner.' (*The Economy of the Covenants*, Vol. 2, p. 380).

48 '*Abba*... does not occur in Jesus' time in the language of prayer addressed to God. Of Jesus' standing out, in a historico-religious context, purely on the ground of his addressing God as *Abba*, there can be no question, *per se*' (Edward Schillebeeckx, *Jesus: An Experiment in Christology* [London, 1979], p. 260).

this language bespoke the coming of age of God's people.[49] That is why, to quote Ferguson, 'we cannot open the pages of the New Testament without realising that one of the things that makes it so "new", in every way, is that here men and women called God "Father"'.[50] In its spiritual context the language of *Abba* speaks, in Tom Smail's words, of 'a new word for a new relationship'.[51] Those using it are no longer slaves, they are sons.

Note how, in the use of *Abba*, the collectivised sonship of Israel is replaced by the individualized realisation of a filial relationship to the Father. Synthesising OT texts into new covenant formulae,[52] Paul speaks more readily in the plural of the sons (and daughters) of God. He thus implies that, whether *Abba* means 'Daddy' or not,[53] the relationship is most personal. No one demonstrated this more than did Christ in the loneliness of his Passion. Yet, the trauma of Gethsemane reminds us powerfully that the appropriating language of *Abba* bespeaks not dripping sentimentality – as if Daddy were a big softy to be manipulated at will – but the seriousness of filial love, devotion and obedience. It reminds us that while *Abba* is most loving and gracious, he is *Holy* Father who has personalised the providence we face, determining to love us without ever spoiling us, and calling us to defer to him in all matters of faith and conduct just as did Christ, our elder brother.[54]

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[49] 'In Jesus' time *Abba* was a familial term denoting one's earthly father; it had formerly been a kind of childish talk, but had been in use among adults for a long time past' (Schillebeeckx, *Jesus*, p. 259).

[50] Sinclair B. Ferguson, *Children of the Living God* (Edinburgh and Carlisle, PA, 1989), p. xi.

[51] Thomas A. Smail, *The Forgotten Father* (first published 1980. Reprint ed.; London *et al.*, 1990), p. 40.

[52] 2 Cor. 6:18 (cf. Rom. 9:26), which finds its OT origins in 2 Sam. 7:8, 14 and Isa. 43:6.

[53] This view, however, has become a matter of debate, notably in James Barr's refutation of Joachim Jeremias's case for the 'daddy' connotation of *Abba*. For a summary of the argument and the sources see Mary Rose D'Angelo, '*Abba* and "Father": Imperial Theology and the Jesus Traditions' *Journal of Biblical Literature* 3 (1992), pp. 614ff.

[54] Used among Jews, *Abba* bespoke paternal authority. Writes Schillebeeckx, 'the father is the one charged with authority, with *exousia*, complete authority, whom the children are in duty bound to obey and treat with piety. The father is also the one available to look after and protect his own, the family, to come to the rescue and to give advice and counsel. He is the focus of the entire family (paternal house), everything revolves around him and

Nonetheless, while the experience of sonship is more personalised in the new covenant era, together the sons of God form a community: the family or household of God (cf. Eph. 2:19). Family members are known by their possession of the Spirit of the Son. What is more, possession of the Spirit indicates the equality of family members irrespective of ethnic origins (Jewish and Gentile). Hence Paul's causal use of *hoti*, his use of the second person plural (*este*), and his reference to the prayer the Spirit puts on the lips of God's sons (4:6). Its combination of Aramaic (*Abba*) and Greek (*ho pater*) indicates that Christ has broken down the 'middle wall of division' (Eph. 2:11-22). Those 'far off have been made near by the blood of Christ', such that, through Christ, believing Gentiles and believing Jews now have access by one Spirit to the Father. Union with Christ produces, therefore, fraternal communion across racial barriers.

THE ASSURANCE OF ADOPTION

> For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, '*Abba*, Father' (Rom. 8:15).

Whereas in Galatians 4 the adopted have the Spirit because they are sons, in Romans 8 the apostle writes, inversely, that the adopted are sons because they have the Spirit (8:14). The Spirit of adoption ('sonship', NIV), as he is called, assures God's sons of their relationship to the Father.

First, the Spirit counteracts the encroachment of the fear-producing spirit of bondage (cf. Gal. 5:18). It is not the Father's will that his sons should live as slaves, as did our OT brothers during the infancy of the church. Jewish believers are no longer hemmed in by the ceremonial law's minutiae. They now have the Spirit, who grants them the freedom to perform the law, and Christ's example to show them what obedience looks like. Second, the Spirit helps them to enter into their filial relationship boldly. Having placed on their tongues, once-for-all, the filial language of prayer, the Spirit of the risen Christ (cf. Rom. 1:3-4) resides there ever after, remaining available to the sons of God as they learn how to cry with confidence to their Father (note the use of *krazo* in both Gal. 4:6 and Rom. 8:15). The Spirit witnesses supernaturally and personally with their spirits (*summarturei*) that they are authentic children of God (*tekna theou*, Rom.

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through his person forms a community. There is no contending with the father's authority in Judaism' (*Jesus*, p. 262).

8:16).[55] Yet this witness falls short of divine revelation. He witnesses *with* their spirits, not *to* them. He fulfils thereby the biblical requirement of a dual/multiple testimony for the establishment of a truth (cf. 2 Cor. 13:1; Deut. 17:6; 19:15). Paul may also have had in his mind contemporary practices of Roman adoption in which the adoptive act was performed publicly before witnesses.[56]

But why, having made so much of the maturation of the sons of God in the new covenant era, should Paul describe them in Romans 8 as *tekna* (cf. vv. 17, 21, 9:6 [cf. Phil. 2:13-14; Deut. 32:5])? Is not the term more characteristic of John? True, but it is said that a Roman adoption was, existentially, like a new birth.[57] The former slave was no longer just existing, but alive and in possession of all the rights of his new family: freedom from debt and a share in the inheritance – hence Paul's talk elsewhere of the Spirit as the downpayment/guarantee or pledge (*arrabon*) of the inheritance (Eph. 1:13, 14). Yet the divine inheritance is unique in that it does not, and cannot, require the death of the Father. Neither does he become decrepit or dependent on his children. There occurs no role reversal. His immortality knows no aging process. Thus, no matter how mature the sons of God become in these last days, they remain forever but *tekna* who never cease to depend on their heavenly Father.

THE CONSUMMATION OF ADOPTION

> For we know that the whole creation groans and labours with birth pangs together until now. And not only they, but we also who have the firstfruits

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[55] The Spirit's assurance is described metaphorically in Ephesians 1 as a seal or mark of authentic sonship (1:13). The allusion is to farming where a seal was an external mark of ownership. By contrast, the Holy Spirit is an internal seal indicating the Father's possession of his sons until 'the day of redemption' (Eph. 4:30). The eschatological orientation of the Spirit's assurance explains Ridderbos' description of the Spirit as 'the gift of the interim' (*Paul*, p. 200).

[56] Trevor J. Burke, 'Adoption and the Spirit in Romans 8', *Evangelical Quarterly* 70:4 (1998), p. 322.

[57] As Paul states matters in Ephesians 2:1-5, the transfer from the household of the living dead to the household of the living lively is dependent on being made alive. Yet, consistent with what was said at the outset, this idea of new birth must be understood within the ambit of Pauline theology before any comparisons or contrasts can be made with the Johannine model of new birth. Those interested in following up on this would do well to begin with Gaffin, *Resurrection and Redemption*, pp. 140ff.

> of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body (Rom. 8:22-23).

The final use of *huiothesia* looks beyond these last days to the end of the age when the present eschatological tension will be no more. At the climax of redemptive history the Father will consummate the adoption of his sons. Not only will their adoption be publicly ratified, they will experience in full, and with Christ, the blessings of their inheritance. This fifth use of *huiothesia* teaches us, perhaps more clearly than any other, the truth of Gaffin's words, that 'in both overall structure and internal development, dogmatics needs to make clearer that soteriology is eschatology'.[58]

In Romans 8:17-23 the adoption *simpliciter* is said, first, to coincide with glory. The pattern of Christ's life – suffering now, glory later – is repeated in the lives of his brethren. While there are minimal details supplied us in this passage concerning this glory, Paul makes four things clear: God's people shall be glorified together with Christ; the sufferings of the present time cannot compare in their miseries (not even in Nero's Rome) to the blessings of the coming glory; the glory will be revealed in the sons of God; and it will shine forth in their full, perfect and eternal liberty (vv. 17, 18, 21).

Secondly, the adoption *simpliciter* entails the revelation of the sons of God (v. 19). Even now creation is straining its neck to see who are the sons of God. The day of consummation will throw up some surprises. Some we assume are God's sons shall be seen to be sons of disobedience. Some we fear are children of wrath may in fact turn out to be God's children. The authentic children are those who, blessed with the Spirit (the firstfruits, v. 23), join with creation in groaning (as in the pains of labour, not the throes of death) for the revelation of God's sons. They do so, not because assurance is impossible in the present, but because their public unveiling hails their release from the futility of the present order of things. Thus, they hope with perseverance (vv. 24, 25).

Thirdly, the consummation of adoption entails the consummation of the liberation of God's sons (vv. 20, 21). Although the adopted are already free, that freedom they know but in their souls. As it may be undercut, it

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[58] Richard B. Gaffin Jr, 'The Vitality of Reformed Dogmatics' in *The Vitality of Reformed Theology: Proceedings of the International Theological Congress June 20-24th 1994, Noordwijkerhout, The Netherlands* (ed. J. M. Batteau, J. W. Maris, and K. Veling [Kampen, 1994], p. 31; cf., *Resurrection and Redemption*, p. 138; Theron, '"Adoption"', p. 13).

requires maintenance (Gal. 5:1). Only with the final deliverance of creation from the bondage of corruption shall God's sons be fully, perfectly, eternally, and psychosomatically free. Only then shall all traces of their former enslavement vanish and all hopes for the inheritance be realised.

Assured of the prospect of the consummation of adoption, we hope with a yearning that shall survive our deaths. As Westminster's Larger Catechism puts the matter so well, only at the resurrection will hope be satisfied:[59]

> The communion in glory with Christ, which the members of the invisible church enjoy immediately after death, is, in that their souls are then made perfect in holiness, and received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies, which even in death continue united to Christ, and rest in their graves as in their beds, till at the last day they be again united to their souls (Ans. 86).

Paul's doctrine of adoption reminds us, then, that the terminus of NT hope is not heaven in its ethereal intermediate state – which, for many, is where their hopes mistakenly lie – but in its final state: a redeemed creation filled with God's presence and purged of the corruption of the old order. Heaven in its final state is the domain wherein the Father's children exercise their consummate psychosomatic liberties (v. 21) in enjoyment of the inheritance they share with Christ, their elder brother and natural possessor of the rights of primogeniture. As the Father looks on, blessed to see all his children safely home and enjoying the inheritance, so they in turn glorify him for all he is and for all the love and mercy he has bestowed on them.

CONCLUSION

These main contours of Paul's adoption model help establish its uniqueness among the filial/familial models of the NT. They demonstrate its essential redemptive-historical structure, the coherence of the apostle's thought, and the richness of its content. Given I have provided but an outline of this fresh exposition, it is necessary to mention those issues neither addressed nor resolved above.

The first issue concerns Paul's understanding of the adoption of Israel. Taken on its own terms, the OT speaks overall of Yahweh's creation of

[59] On the resurrection see 1 Corinthians 15 – the NT's longest single treatment of the subject.

Israel. How, then, are we to respond to Wright's opinion that 'the adoption analogy is somewhat suspect, since the texts [Exod. 4:22; Hos. 11:1; Deut. 32:6; Jer. 31:9] speak rather of sonship by birth'?[60] Are we to believe that Paul's apostolic authority gave him the right to interpret afresh the origins of Israel, notwithstanding the actual wording of the OT record? Or was Paul merely developing hints found in OT texts such as Exodus 19:3? Questions such as these touch on the thorny issue of the NT's use of the OT.

For reasons of space I have omitted, secondly, mention of Scott's claim both that the adoption formula of 2 Samuel 7:14 underlies four of Paul's five uses of *huiothesia* (Gal. 4:5; Rom. 8:15, 23; Eph. 1:5), and that it was applied subsequently in Judaism to both the Davidic Messiah and, in new covenant theology (cf. Hos. 2:1; Rom. 9:26), to the eschatological people of God.

Third, there needs to be a fresh consideration of the question whether adoption is after all a legal metaphor. Certainly, the Graeco-Roman origin of the term *huiothesia* suggests a legal reference. But can this be sustained on a redemptive-historical reading of the model?[61] As we have seen, this reading suggests that, at its core, adoption speaks metaphorically of union with Christ. It is therefore relational in its purview,[62] but it is difficult to tell what the implications are for the traditionally-perceived legal character of the model.

Fourthly, I have mentioned nothing of baptism, the symbol of adoption. Galatians 3:27 is important in this regard. It is said to be either wholly or in part a confessional portion of the baptismal liturgy of the early church.[63] The matter warrants further study.

Fifthly, I have stopped short of working out the inter-connections between adoption and the other soteric themes in Paul. By acknowledging this, I hope to dissuade the reader from concluding that I have merely substituted a biblico-theological perspective for the later Calvinistic systematic-theological approach. My immediate concern has been to provide a reliable biblical basis on which to pose the theological

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60 Wright, *God's People in God's Land*, p. 16

61 Scott, 'Adoption, Sonship', *op. cit.*

62 Dennis E. Tamburello, *Union with Christ: John Calvin and the Mysticism of St Bernard* (Louisville, KY, 1994), pp. 8 and 90.

63 Longenecker, *Galatians*, p. 154; cf. Trevor Burke, 'Pauline Adoption: a Sociological Approach', *Evangelical Quarterly* 73:2 (2001), pp. 121 fn. 9, 127.

questions.[64] It is to be hoped that, one day, these will be answered. Once they are, we shall have to hand what John Kennedy long ago (1869) described as 'awanting'; namely, 'a clear definition of adoption, and a just description of its effects, on the relation between believers and God'.[65]

Despite these lacunae, I believe this fresh exposition furthers the case for the recovery of adoption. Not only does it draw attention to the doctrine, by building on the redemptive-historical perspective of its best exponents, it clarifies the doctrine's importance, and offers the reader a more accurate idea of its shape than do those treatments that are less exegetical/more systemic in their approach.

The tackling of these lacunae require the efforts of a greater number of theologians. While it is the duty of our tradition to recover what our forefathers lost, it is also surely our desire. After all, adoption is 'a topic full of comfort to the Christian heart, and one which opens up a grand field for religious thought and inquiry'.[66] Yet, in proceeding, we need to realise that 'figures of speech', to quote Francis Lyall, 'aim at comprehension, not at explication'.[67] We may grasp Paul's notion of adoption sufficiently to enable its use, without ever gaining necessarily a complete understanding of its every nuance and implication.

The resolution of these issues will inevitably take time. The continued pondering of them should not hinder us, however, from turning, meanwhile, to those implications our fresh exposition has for Westminster Calvinism. As we shall see next time, there is plenty we may discuss of their significance for the reshaping of Westminster Calvinism and the long overdue transformation of its feel. Such a discussion is crucial, for the integrity of our theology requires not only that it reflect the Bible's doctrine, but that it also resonate the Bible's atmosphere.

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[64] I concur with Gaffin 'that a redemptive-historical approach [does not] necessitate[ ] abandoning the so-called loci method of traditional dogmatics. After all, strictly speaking, that method simply calls for a topical presentation of doctrine, and it is difficult to see why the biblical materials preclude such an approach.' ('The Vitality of Reformed Dogmatics', pp. 28-9).

[65] Kennedy, *Man's Relations to God* (The James Begg Society, 1995), p. 71.

[66] Thomas Law, 'The Grace of Adoption', *Southern Presbyterian Review* (April 1879), p. 277.

[67] Francis Lyall, 'Metaphors, Legal and Theological', *SBET* 10 (Winter 1992), p. 97.