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Review of Rainbow's "The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification"

Kent Yinger

George Fox University, kyinger@georgefox.edu

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PAUL A. RAINBOW, *The Way of Salvation: The Role of Christian Obedience in Justification* (Paternoster Biblical Monographs; Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005). Pp. xxi + 329. Paper \$29.99.

Rainbow, professor of NT at North American Baptist Seminary, seeks to correct an inherent weakness in Reformation soteriology—the tendency toward antinomianism in churches committed to justification *sola fide*. The Reformers' failure to explain why justification and sanctification could never be separated leads easily to a view of obedience as optional. R. has no intention of jettisoning forensic justification, but will argue for double justification—by faith alone at the initiation of Christian existence, and according to deeds at the final judgment. The Reformers erred in excluding “evangelical obedience” (“produced by divine grace in . . . the redeemed”) from the justification connected with the last judgment. “Deeds are proximately conditional in their own right for the culminating event” (p. xvi). He admits that this *duplex iustitia* would have been anathema to Luther and Calvin, but urges Protestants to move toward some form of Augustinian (not Pelagian) synergism (pp. 210–11).

In two introductory chapters, R. surveys recent debate over justification—including the New Perspective on Paul (of which the author is largely critical)—and sixteenth-century disputes. Since the author's own view is not far from that of the failed Regensburg Colloquy (of 1541), he includes the full text of that agreement as an appendix (pp. 268–70).

The bulk of the volume lays out R.'s biblical case (chaps. 3–16). This includes careful comparison of James and Paul and examination (usually brief) of a large number of rel-

evant Pauline passages (from all thirteen traditionally accepted Pauline letters). Space permits mention of only two important conclusions. First, “works of law” and “good works” are distinct categories in Paul (chap. 5). The former were correctly excluded from justification by the Reformers, but the latter were wrongly excluded. Although the nature of the book precludes it, one wishes here for more interaction with the extensive debate over “works of the law.”

Second, on “justification,” R. upholds the almost exclusively forensic sense (pp. 100-107). He notes, however, that this sense is applied not only to the inauguration of individual salvation, but in eighteen texts to a not-yet-accomplished future expectation (e.g., Gal 5:5; Rom 8:33; 1 Cor 4:4). He finds “no warrant” for the typical Protestant exclusion of final judgment according to good works from the doctrine of justification (p. 174). “What will weigh with the judge in [the final judgment] is our faith operative in deeds of love wrought through God’s Spirit (Gal. 5:5-6)” (p. 187). Thus, ultimately, “justification may be defined as God’s eschatological verdict that a person has acted in compliance with the terms of a covenant, and deserves to be rewarded with eternal life” (p. 204). Attention to the influential work of Hermann Cremer on the relational foundation of language concerning righteousness would have helped here (see pp. 102-3 n. 18).

In chaps. 17-20, R. deals with theological and historical questions. The discussion of historical forerunners is brief but illuminating, pointing especially to Martin Bucer, and including (the later) Melancthon, Richard Hooker, and John Wesley. Three indexes wrap up this well-edited book. (The only error noted was a missing “in,” p. 12, line 3.)

Rainbow’s primary partners in debate are in the Protestant-evangelical wing. This puts him in an unusual position. He wishes to move toward greater rapprochement with participatory categories of justification and away from the Reformation’s insistence on justification *sola fide*; yet he does not wish to be aligned with the New Perspective on Paul, which moves in the same direction. Perhaps it is the sign of a good book that there will be something in it for everyone to dislike. Those looking for thorough interaction with recent debate over Pauline theology will be disappointed, since this was not the author’s aim (preface). Thus, the book represents not so much an advance of scholarship on Pauline soteriology as a well-argued and up-to-date re-presentation of Augustinian synergism. Its greatest value will lie more in the realm of theology than biblical studies. In a postscript the author suggests that Catholics must reconsider Trent, while Protestants must cease putting Luther and Calvin on a pedestal, and that the Regensburg Colloquy provides a way forward. This book will stimulate Protestant-Catholic ecumenical dialogue and discussion among scholars of Pauline soteriology as well as among students of the doctrine of justification. It would provide excellent supplementary reading for college or seminary classes touching on either of these fields.

Kent L. Yinger, George Fox Evangelical Seminary, Portland, OR 97223