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Miscellanea

“This Is My Body”

ROBERT GEORGE HOERBER

“This is My body” is the English translation of the Greek, τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου, which occurs in Matthew 26:26, Mark 14:22, and Luke 22:19. St. Paul records a variation of the statement in 1 Corinthians 11:24: τοῦτό μου ἐστιν τὸ σῶμα τὸ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν. The importance of this text in Lutheran, Reformed, and Roman Catholic theology is obvious. Its interpretation, therefore, must be based on sound grammatical principles. One point of grammar in the sentence which has caused much concern to theologians in their interpretation is the gender of τοῦτο. Carlstadt, for example, proposed that Christ must have pointed to Himself when He declared: “This is My body.”¹ He perhaps could not understand how τοῦτο, being neuter, could refer to bread (ἄρτος), which is masculine.

Although Carlstadt's suggestion is ridiculous, the grammatical point involved has apparently vexed also Lutheran theologians. *The Conservative Reformation and Its Theology*, by Charles P. Krauth,² contains the following statements: “Those who have entered the lists against the doctrine of our Church [i. e., Lutheran] usually insist that ‘this’ qualifies ‘bread’ understood, that is, the pronoun *touto*, which is neuter, qualifies the noun, which is masculine. Determined to be fettered by no laws of language, they abrogate the rule — that a pronoun shall agree with the noun it qualifies in gender (p. 609). . . . The Church [i. e., Lutheran] does not consider the neuter pronoun as qualifying the masculine noun (p. 610). . . . Now, ‘touto’ does not agree in gender with ‘artos,’ and ‘artos’ may, therefore, not be supplied (p. 668). . . . Not one instance can be found from Genesis to Malachi, in the Septuagint, or from Matthew to Revelation, in the New Testament, in which such a conjunction must be made as that of *touto neuter* with *artos masculine*, in order to reach the full sense of a passage (p. 669). . . . The accepted view of the *Lutheran* theologians is

¹ Cf. Luther, Vol. XX: pp. 221—222 (St. Louis Edition, 1890); J. T. Mueller, *Christian Dogmatics*, p. 514.

² Philadelphia: The United Lutheran Publication House, 1871. Cf. *The Lutheran Commentary*, edited by Henry Eyster Jacobs (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1895), Vol. II, pp. 319—320. *The Interpretation of St. Matthew's Gospel*, R. C. H. Lenski (Columbus, Ohio: The Wartburg Press, 1943), pp. 1025—1026. *Popular Commentary of the Bible — The New Testament*, P. E. Kretzmann (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1921), Vol. I, p. 146. *An American Commentary on the New Testament: Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew*, John A. Broadus (Philadelphia: The American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), p. 529. *The Greek Testament*, Henry Alford (London, 1863), Vol. 1, p. 266. *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: The Gospel According to Matthew*, Lange-Schaff (New York: Charles Scribner, 1866), p. 470. Cf. Krauth, *op. cit.*, pp. 672—673.

that *touto* cannot refer grammatically to *artos*. This is especially illustrated among those we have examined by Gerhard, Quenstedt, Calovius, Carpzov, Oliarius, Scherzer, Bengel, and the best of our earlier and later commentators (p. 671)."

The dogmatic character of Krauth's statements is amusing, for the point of grammar is rather simple and has numerous illustrations throughout classical literature. In brief, the demonstrative pronouns are frequently attracted in gender to the predicate nominative both in Latin and Greek. Since so many of our theologians are exposed to the dogmatic and confused treatment of Krauth, it should be of value to treat this point in more detail by giving copious examples from classical literature.

While reading Vergil's *Aeneid* in leisure moments, we noticed in the first six books several examples of the attraction of the demonstrative pronoun to the predicate nominative.

Urbs antiqua fuit (Tyrii tenuere coloni),
Carthago, Italiam contra Tiberinaque longe
ostia, dives opum, studiisque asperrima belli,
quam Iuno fertur terris magis omnibus unam
posthabita coluisse Samo: hic illius arma,
hic currus fuit; hoc regnum dea gentibus esse,
si qua Fata sinant, iam tum tenditque fovetque.

I, 12—18

Hoc refers to *urbs*, but is attracted into the gender of the predicate noun *regnum*.

Trunca manu pinus regit et vestigia firmat;
lanigeræ comitantur oves; ea sola voluptas
solamenque mali.

III, 659—661

Oves is the antecedent of *ea*; *ea* derives its gender and number from the predicate noun *voluptas* (*est*).

Hinc Drepani me portus et inlaetabilis ora
accipit. Hic, pelagi tot tempestatibus actus,
heu genitorem, omnis curæ casusque levamen,
amitto Anchisen; hic me, pater optime, fessum
deseris, heu tantis nequiquam erepte periculis!
Nec vates Helenus, cum multa horrenda moneret,
hos mihi prædixit luctus, non dira Celaeno.
Hic labor extremus, longarum hæc meta viarum;
hinc me digressum vestris deus appulit oris.

III, 707—715

Hic and *hæc* are attracted into the gender and number of *labor* and *meta*, respectively, although they refer to the death of Anchises.

His ego nigrantem commixta grandine nimum,
dum trepidant alæ saltusque indagine cingunt,
desuper infundam, et tonitru caelum omne ciebo.
Diffugient comites, et nocte tegentur opaca;
speluncam Dido dux et Troianus eandem
devenient. Adero, et, tua si mihi certa voluntas,
conubio iungam stabili propriamque dicabo;
hic Hymenæus erit.

IV, 120—127

Hic agrees in gender with the predicate nominative *Hymenaeus*; its antecedent is the description in lines 120—126.

Sed nunc Italiam magnam Gryneus Apollo,
 Italiam Lyciae iussere capessere sortes;
hic amor, *haec* patria est.

IV, 345—347

Although *hic* and *haec* both refer to Italy, they are attracted into the gender of their respective predicate nominatives.

Heu! Furiis incensa feror! Nunc augur Apollo,
 nunc Lyciae sortes, nunc et Iove missus ab ipso
 interpres divum fert horrida iussa per auras.
 Scilicet is superis labor est, *ea* cura quietos
 sollicitat.

IV, 376—380

Is and *ea* agree in gender with *labor* and *cura*, respectively, although both refer to the thought of *Nunc augur . . . auras*.

Talibus orabat dictis, arasque tenebat,
 cum sic orsa loqui vates: Sate sanguine divum,
 Tros Anchisiade, facilis decensus Averno
 (noctis atque dies patet atri ianua Ditis);
 sed revocare gradum superasque evadere ad auras,
hoc opus, *hic* labor est.

VI, 124—129

Both *hoc* and *hic* sum up the preceding line; they agree in gender with *opus* and *labor*, respectively.

Hi tibi Nomentum, et Gabios, urbemque Fidenam,
 hi Collatinas imponent montibus arcis,
 Pometios, Castrumque Inui, Bolamque, Coramque:
haec tum nomina erunt, nunc sunt sine nomine terrae.

VI, 773—776

Haec is attracted into the gender of *nomina*, the predicate nominative, although its antecedents are the towns mentioned in the previous three lines.

An example of attraction occurs also with a relative pronoun in Vergil's *Aeneid*, VI, 608—614:

Hic, quibus invisi fratres, dum vita manebat,
 pulsatusve parens, et fraus innexa clienti,
 aut qui divitiis soli incubuere repertis
 nec partem posuere suis, *quae* maxima turba est,
 quique ob adulterium caesi, quique arma secuti
 impia nec veriti dominorum fallere dextras,
 inclusi poenam exspectant.

Quae agrees in gender with its predicate nominative, although its antecedent is masculine in gender.

In order that no one may suppose that attraction in gender to the predicate nominative is limited to Latin poetry, we shall list a few illustrations from Latin prose before taking up examples

in Greek. Caesar begins the fourth book of his *Commentarii De Bello Gallico* thus:

*Ea quae secuta est hieme, qui fuit annus Cn. Pompeio
M. Crasso consulibus . . .*

The relative pronoun *qui* is attracted in gender to its predicate nominative (*annus*), although its antecedent (*hieme*) is feminine.

The *Germania* of Tacitus contains numerous examples of the same principle.

*. . . et in proximo pignora, unde feminarum ululatus
audiri, unde vagitus infantium. Hi cuique sanctissimi
testes, hi maximi laudatores . . .* Chap. 7

*Tum in ipso concilio vel principum aliquis vel pater
vel propinqui scuto frameaque iuvenem ornant: haec
apud illos toga, hic primus iuventae honos; ante hoc
domus pars videntur, mox rei publicae.* Chap. 13

*Haec dignitas, hae vires, magno semper et electorum
iuvenum globo circumdari, in pace decus, in bello
praesidium.* Chap. 13

*Nec solum in sua gente cuique, sed apud finitimas
quoque civitates id nomen, ea gloria est, si numero
ac virtute comitatus emineat . . .* Chap. 13

*Intersunt parentes aut propinqui ac munera probant,
munera non ad delicias muliebres quaesita nec quibus
nova nupta comatur, sed boves et frenatum equum et
scutum cum framea gladioque. In haec munera uxor
accipitur atque in vicem ipsa armorum aliquid viro
affert: hoc maximum vinculum, haec arcana sacra,
hos coniugales deos arbitrantur.* Chap. 18

*Plurimis Chattorum hic placet habitus, iamque canent
insignes et hostibus simul suisque monstrati. Omnium
penes hos initia pugnarum; haec prima semper acies . . .* Chap. 31

*Tencteri super solitum bellorum decus equestris
disciplinae arte praecellunt; nec maior apud Chattos
peditum laus quam Tencteris equitum. Sic instituere
maiores: posterius imitantur. Hi lusus infantium,
haec iuvenem aemulatio: perseverant senes.* Chap. 32

*Iuxta Hermunduros Naristi ac deinde Marcomani et
Quadi agunt. Praecipua Marcomanorum gloria viresque,
atque ipsa etiam sedes pulsus olim Boiis virtute
parta. Nec Naristi Quadive degenerant. Eaque Ger-
maniae velut frons est, quatenus Danuvio peragitur.* Chap. 42

Chap. 42

The following two illustrations of attraction in gender to the predicate nominative are from Livy:

Ianiculum quoque adiectum, non inopia loci, sed
ne quando ea arx hostium esset. I, 33

Inter consules ita copiae divisae: Sempronio datae
legiones duae—ea quaterna milia erant peditum
et treceni equites . . . XXI, 17³

In Greek literature likewise "the demonstrative pronoun is commonly attracted into the gender of the predicate."⁴ Frequent illustrations occur in classical Greek.

ἐκείνος δ' ἐστὶν ἔλεγχος μέγιστος . . . Lysias XVI, 6

νομίζοντες καὶ τῆς πόλεως ταύτην ἱκανωτάτην εἶναι σωτηρίαν
καὶ τῶν ἐχθρῶν μεγίστην τιμωρίαν. Lysias XXV, 23

ταύτην γὰρ τέχνην ἔχει. Lysias 1, 16

αὕτη ἐστὶν ἀνδρὸς ἀρετή, ἱκανὸν εἶναι τὰ τῆς πόλεως
πράττειν . . . Plato, *Meno*, 71 e

οὔτοι δὴ Ἀθηναῖοί γε, ὦ Εὐθύφρων, δίκην αὐτὴν καλοῦσιν,
ἀλλὰ γραφήν. Plato, *Euthyphro*, 2 a

ὡς ταύτης οὔσης φύσεως ψυχῆς (τὸ αὐτὸ ἑαυτὸ κινεῖν) . . .
Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245 e

εἰ δὲ μή, καὶ παρὰ τῶν προγεγενημένων μανθάνετε· αὕτη γὰρ
ἀρίστη διδασκαλία. Xenophon, *Cyr.*, VIII, 7, 24

κίνησις γὰρ αὕτη μεγίστη . . . ἐγένετο. Thucydides I, 1, 2

Ἡροδότου Ἀλικαρνησέος ἱστορίας ἀπόδεξις ἦδε . . .
Herodotus I, 1

ἀκτὴ μὲν ἦδε . . . Λήμνου. Sophocles, *Ph.*, 1—2

αἰδῶς μὲν νῦν ἦδε . . . Ἴλιον εἰσαναβῆναι . . .
Homer, *Iliad*, XVII, 336—337

In the light of this evidence it is clear that C. P. Krauth momentarily forgot a point of grammar of the classical languages when he wrote the statements cited above on the gender of τοῦτο in the text, "This is My body." Nor had he read the New Testament in Greek with a sufficiently discerning eye. For then he could not have declared so dogmatically: "Not one instance can be

³ Cf. Cicero, *Tusc.*, I, 23, 53—54.

⁴ *Syntax of Classical Greek*, B. L. Gildersleeve (American Book Company: Part I, 1900; Part II, 1911), p. 58.

found from Genesis to Malachi, in the Septuagint, or from Matthew to Revelation, in the New Testament, in which such a conjunction must be made as that of *touto neuter* with *artos masculine*, in order to reach the full sense of a passage."⁵ "Such a conjunction" is easily explained and even expected on the basis of the grammatical rule that demonstrative pronouns are commonly attracted into the gender of the predicate nominative; and this rule obtains also in the New Testament. Several examples are the following:

τὸ δὲ εἰς τὰς ἀκάνθας πεσόν, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἱ ἀκούσαντες . . .

Luke 8:14

τὸ δὲ ἐν τῇ καλῇ γῆ, οὗτοί εἰσιν οἵτινες ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ ἀκούσαντες . . .

Luke 8:15

πάντα οὖν ὅσα ἐὰν θέλητε ἵνα ποιῶσιν ὑμῖν οἱ ἄνθρωποι, οὕτως καὶ ὑμεῖς ποιεῖτε αὐτοῖς· οὕτως γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ νόμος καὶ οἱ προφῆται.

Matthew 7:12

καὶ αὕτη αὐτοῖς ἡ παρ' ἐμοῦ διαθήκη, ὅταν ἀφέλωμαι τὰς ἁμαρτίας αὐτῶν.

Romans 11:27

ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ἐκείναις ἐξῆλθεν δόγμα παρὰ Καίσαρος, Λυγούστου ἀπογράφεσθαι πᾶσαν τὴν οἰκουμένην. αὕτη ἀπογραφή πρώτη ἐγένετο ἡγεμονεύοντος τῆς Συρίας Κυρηναίου.

Luke 2:1-2

αὕτη γὰρ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν . . .

1 John 5:3

αὕτη ἔστιν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅτι μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

1 John 5:9

καὶ αὕτη ἔστιν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῖν . . .

1 John 5:11

καὶ αὕτη ἔστιν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐὰν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν. 1 John 5:14⁶

It is, therefore, to put it mildly, disconcerting to read that "the accepted view of the *Lutheran* theologians is that *touto* cannot refer grammatically to *artos*. This is especially illustrated among those we have examined by Gerhard, Quenstedt, Calovius, Carpzov, Oliarius, Scherzer, Bengel, and the best of our earlier and later commentators."⁷ The preceding evidence clearly demonstrates that *τὸ*, although neuter, can refer grammatically to *ἄρτος*, in view of the gender of *σῶμα*, the predicate nominative.

Attraction of the demonstrative pronoun, however, to the

⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 669.

⁶ Cf. Luke 8:11; 22:53; John 1:19; 1 Corinthians 9:3; Matthew 22:38; John 2:11.

⁷ Krauth, *op. cit.*, p. 671.

gender of the predicate nominative does not always occur in Latin, classical Greek, and the New Testament.⁸ In such cases the construction according to sense rather than the grammatical gender may prevail, or the demonstrative may retain the gender of its antecedent and not become assimilated to the predicate nominative in gender. The question, then, arises whether there is any difference in meaning between those instances in which the demonstrative pronoun assimilates itself to the predicate nominative and those in which it retains agreement with its antecedent. The difference appears to be one of slight emphasis. Attraction to the predicate nominative may stress to a degree the predicate nominative, while agreement with the antecedent (rather than assimilation to the predicate nominative) would place the emphasis on the antecedent.

The accent of τοῦτό ἐστιν is worthy of note, distinguishing it from the phrase τοῦτ' ἐστιν. The latter is the equivalent of "that is," "id est" and "hoc est." It appears in the New Testament without any regard for number, case, and gender of either the antecedent or the predicate nominative.⁹ The accent on the penult of the verb stresses the idea of existence.

The article in the predicate shows that the sentence expresses a convertible proposition — the subject and predicate are identical and interchangeable.¹⁰ The presence of the article, therefore, is natural in the text; for τὸ σῶμά μου is the only way of expressing "My body." The absence of the article would imply "a body of mine."

Summary

The statement τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ σῶμά μου is correctly translated: "This is My body." The gender of the demonstrative pronoun is natural, being attracted into the gender of the predicate nominative, τὸ σῶμά μου; the reference may very well be to ἄνθρωπος although it is masculine. The only grammatical implication in the attraction of the demonstrative pronoun to the gender of the predicate nominative is that the predicate nominative may have a slight stress instead of the antecedent. That is, the emphasis may be "This is My body" rather than "This is My body." The accent of the verb argues against the translation "This is My body." The presence of the article in the predicate reveals that "This is a body of Mine" would also be an incorrect rendering of Christ's declaration.

Fulton, Missouri

⁸ Vergil, *Aeneid*, III, 173; *Lysias* III, 28; Plato, *Gorgias*, 478 c, 492 c, 492 e; Plato, *Phaedrus*, 245 c; Xenophon, *Cyropaedia*, I, 3, 10; Acts 8:10; 9:15; 2 Peter 2:17; Revelation 11:4; 1 Peter 2:19-20; Philippians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 6:11; 10:6.

⁹ Cf. 1 Peter 3:20; Romans 7:18; Mark 7:2; Acts 19:4; Hebrews 13:15; 9:11; 11:16; 7:5; 2:14; Philemon 12; Matthew 27:46.

¹⁰ Gildersleeve, *op. cit.*, pp. 324-328. *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research*, A. T. Robertson (Harper and Brothers, 1931), pp. 767-769. *Greek Grammar*, W. W. Goodwin and C. B. Gulick (Ginn and Company, 1930), paragraph 954.

Gal. 3:17 Once More

In the CONCORDIA THEOLOGICAL MONTHLY issue of February of this year I gave a survey with some criticisms of an article written by the Rev. A. V. Neve, a member of the United Evangelical Lutheran Church (Danish) for the *Lutheran Outlook* of December, 1948. In that article the author opposes the view "that there were no inaccuracies in the original manuscripts" of the Scriptures. In listing what he calls "obvious inaccuracies in the Bible" he has a remark about Gal. 3:17. This is what he says: "In Gal. 3:17 Paul writes that the Law was given 430 years after the covenant of promise was made to Abraham. 430 years is the time of the Israelites' sojourn in Egypt. Jacob was 130 years old when he went to Egypt and Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born, which makes 620 years." In my brief remarks about his article I had endeavored to show that this passage could well be explained without the assumption that the holy writer erred. My comments were: "As to the promise given to Abraham, we may well conceive that what Paul has in mind is the last time that God gave the promise to the patriarchs in Canaan, at the time when Jacob was leaving Canaan with his family, going down to Egypt. It should be noted that in Gal. 3:17 Abraham is not mentioned, merely the giving of the promise is spoken of." In the *Outlook* for March the Rev. E. V. Neve publishes a rejoinder and directs particular attention to what I had said about Gal. 3:17. This is what he says: "I call your attention to the fact that Abraham is mentioned in Gal. 3:16. It is a wild stretch of the imagination to say that Paul meant Jacob in the next verse. Such exegesis violates every rule of sound exegesis and hermeneutics and it borders on the ridiculous when attempts are made to have Christ authenticate the Biblical discrepancies."

My intention is to look at the passage once more and to do it *sine ira et studio*. Gal. 3:17 is a difficult passage, and our spending some time over it is certainly justified. To begin with, let me state that my position is that the Scriptures have come to us in human language and that the holy writers follow the laws of human thought and speech which are in vogue among us; if they did not do this, we could not understand them. This implies that I have no right to make them say something which the words evidently do not signify. But it implies, too, that I have no right to refuse the holy writers the freedom of expression, of easy and popular utterance and presentation which we claim as a prerogative for ourselves when we take to writing and speaking.

Now let me turn to Gal. 3:17. Paul is engaged in arguing the case of faith in Jesus Christ versus the view of the Judaizers that to be saved the Jewish Ceremonial Law had to be kept. He in Gal. 3:6 ff. had referred to the faith of Abraham. Now he reverts to the old patriarch. In v. 15 he lays down the general principle: When a covenant is made, duly acknowledged, and ratified,

no one has a right to annul it or to make additions; that is true even when we speak of merely human covenants. The implication is that it is all the more true when we are dealing with the promise of God. Now let us remember, says the Apostle in v. 16, as it were, God made a covenant with Abraham and his Seed, He gave sacred promises. Parenthetically he states that the sacred narrative advisedly uses the singular "Seed" and not the plural, the singular signifying Christ. Was that covenant bound to stand? Was it amended? It might be thought that the Law of Moses was an amendment to the covenant between God and Abraham. That view, says Paul in v. 17, is untenable. The promise was duly given and ratified, the Law has nothing to do with it, the Law is an altogether distinct matter, and that such is the case is very plain when one considers that it was given 430 years later. Hence it is absolutely impossible to consider the Law as a part of the covenant. We have to agree with the Apostle, his argument is absolutely convincing. The covenant made by God with Abraham and his Seed was a Gospel, not a Law covenant. Let all poor sinners rejoice over that truth.

We are now concerned with the assertion of Paul that the Law, evidently the Mosaic Law, was given 430 years later than the promises. It is that chronological note which troubles. If one follows the Hebrew text and figures from the time that Abraham received the promise, when he was seventy-five years old (Gen. 12:4), to the Exodus, the number of years is 645. This is a fact which Paul must have known very well, because he had carefully studied the Hebrew Scriptures. Still he says the interval was 430 years. There are some scholars who think that Paul is following the Septuagint, which in Ex. 12:40 says that the time which Israel spent in Egypt *and in the land of Canaan* was 430 years. If the reading should be correct, the time from the giving of the promise and the promulgation of the Mosaic Law would be 430 years. Since Paul was acquainted not only with the Hebrew Bible, but with the Septuagint, too, one can understand why many scholars hold that Paul has this Septuagint passage in mind when he writes Gal. 3:17. That reading implies that the sojourn of Israel in Egypt lasted 215 years, the same number of years that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had lived in Canaan (Abraham lived in Canaan 25 years before the birth of Isaac, Isaac was 60 years old when Jacob was born, Jacob was 130 when he left Canaan). But acceptance of the view that Paul follows the Septuagint raises difficulties. In Gen. 15:13 God says to Abraham: "Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them 400 years." The same words are quoted by Stephen, Acts 7:6. In other words, according to Gen. 15:13 the sojourn of Israel in Egypt lasted 400 years. That would agree with the statement that Israel was in Egypt 430 years, the latter being the accurate number of years, while 400 is a round figure. But to assume that the

sojourn lasted only 215 years would hardly be consonant with the statement that it had a duration of 400 years. Besides, the time of 215 years seems rather too brief for the growth of Israel into the strong nation which it was at the Exodus (cf. Ex. 12:37). For that reason, apart from other considerations, it seems preferable to me not to regard the Septuagint text for Ex. 12:40 as authentic, but to stay with the Hebrew text. It is true that from the first time that God gave the promise to Abraham to the giving of the Law, the span of time amounts to 645 years. But must we necessarily think of the first time when God gave the promise to Abraham? Is it really out of the question to think of the promises to the patriarchs as a unit and to assume that Paul in our text is thinking of them as a whole? The time of the patriarchs was definitely the era of the promises. God's gracious assurances with respect to the future of Israel were given not only to Abraham, but to Isaac and Jacob too. During 215 years these promises were uttered and repeated. Can anything valid be opposed to the view that Paul might be thinking of this era and that when thinking of the interval between the giving of the promise and the issuing of the Law, he computes the number of years not from the beginning of the era of the promises, but from the conclusion, especially since the Scriptures themselves have definitely stated the number of years involved? The question is, What is the *terminus a quo*? Grotius said that the journey of Jacob to Egypt was the point at which the reckoning has to commence. Olshausen advocates the same view. Hofmann agrees, saying that the *terminus a quo* is the time at which the promises were always rehearsed, that is, by the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Hauck and Lange take the same view. When we are dealing with events which form a series, a statement having to do with the amount of time that has elapsed since that series of events occurred may point to the beginning of the series or to the end of it. How many years after the Revolutionary War was Washington elected President? Quite likely you would figure from the end of the war, 1783. But would you be very critical of a friend who made 1776 the starting point, the *terminus a quo*? Let us put down this sentence: x years after Columbus, De Soto discovered the Mississippi River in 1541. What value will you give to x ? Many of my readers will at once think of 1492 and subtract that number from 1541. Others, a little more cautious, would say that the *terminus a quo* probably should be the fourth, or last, voyage of Columbus to America, which was undertaken in 1502. Others again would say that according to their view the year of the death of Columbus, 1506, is the one that one would have to think of in this connection. Is there any one of us who would say that only one of the three values given x would be permissible in this case and that whoever took a different position was violating the language of the statement?

Lenski, interestingly enough, voices the thought that Paul

mentions 430 years as a low figure, which he could have made higher; he presents an understatement, which, under the circumstances, had to be all the more effective. No one can deny that the Law came 430 years later; it could easily be proved that more years had elapsed, because the years spent by the patriarchs in Canaan could have been added. — Similarly one could say: Whether the Hebrew or the Septuagint text for the passage is right, the time between the giving of the promises and the promulgation of the Law was at least 430 years — a number which had to set at rest any notion that the Law might be considered a mere addition to the covenant of promises.

This discussion has become somewhat lengthy, but I hold that it is very evident that in fairness no one can accuse Paul of an inaccuracy when he says that the Law was given 430 years after the promises.

W. ARNDT

