

## Our Theological Bumpity Bumpity

Written by Douglas Wilson

Tuesday, February 16, 2010 12:26 pm -

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The next *Tabletalk* article was written by a friend, RC Jr. I begin this way in the interests of full disclosure, and also because it is important to note that I happen to know he did not contribute this article in the interests of scoring anybody off, or for the sake of picking a fight. RC is not a Federal Vision guy, and never has been, and this article does not represent any change in his views. He believes that it is possible to be a fine and orthodox Christian while embracing the Federal Vision, but that it is not possible to be a "Reformed and confessional" Christian while embracing the Federal Vision. He thought this before he came into the CREC, and he has believed it during his time in the CREC. So on a personal level, things are just fine.

But there is still a significant confusion operating here, and because it has been published in *Tabletalk*

, and a lot of our guys are having to field questions because of it, I do need to say something about it.

This edition of *Tabletalk* was dedicated to answering N.T. Wright and, as I have noted, some of the articles have and some haven't. This article, entitled "Two Birds, One Stone," seeks to acknowledge the differences between the new perspective on Paul and the Federal Vision, while at the same time treating them together, in keeping with the theme of the magazine. They may be two birds, but one stone should get them.

The main issue that RC brings out for examination is the doctrine of perseverance. And the best way to respond to this is by saying, at the front end, that if the FV really did deny "the biblical doctrine of perseverance of the saints," then I am with RC -- which is to say, down the road. "One cannot deny perseverance, or affirm a system of thought that leaves little room for perseverance, and still claim to be Reformed or confessional." That is quite right. And because I am Reformed and confessional, I wouldn't remain with a group that taught (or allowed for) a denial of the classic Reformed doctrine of perseverance. If this is flipped around, we can look at it from another angle. From this angle we see that Douglas Wilson is not FV at all. Quite a relief, let me tell you.

The CREC, where I minister, certainly allows for FV and/or FV-friendly men. It also contains men who are not FV at all. It contains no one who denies, directly or by implication, the

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Reformed doctrine of perseverance.

RC goes on to say that one cannot claim to believe in perseverance if one affirms "God predestined that some would come to saving faith and then lose that saving faith." This is also true, but only if phrases like "saving faith" are being used univocally -- which the Bible doesn't always do. The fact that I am to make my calling and election sure is not a basis for saying that my election was ever unsure.

Every FV man I know affirms Westminsterian predestination, on scriptural grounds, and also denies that it should be confused or blended with the scriptural passages on apostasy. In short, we are forced, on exegetical grounds, to note the equivocal use in Scripture of some words, phrases or concepts. What we have done is affirm both uses as legitimate, each in their respective place and position.

It is quite striking that each of the articles responding to N.T. Wright responds to a particular quotation from his writings, and interacts with it. This article doesn't cite any particular FV writer, or the joint statement of the FV. On perseverance, the joint FV statement says this: "We affirm that those who have been justified by God's grace through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are saved to the uttermost and will spend eternity with Christ and his saints in glory forever." And, after these earthly days of our theological bumpity bumpity are over, so we shall.