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Editor's Notes

In this issue Prof. David J. Engelsma contributes part two of his extensive and very important study of the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Engelsma argues convincingly that the events recorded in these chapters, "...happened, in and with time. They happened as recorded."

Prof. Russell J. Dykstra continues his fine study of Thomas Bradwardine, whom he regards as the "Forgotten Medieval Augustinian."

Undersigned continues his exposition of Paul's Letter to Titus. These expositions, the reader may recall, were first presented in the weekly chapel services at the seminary.

Again we offer a number of book reviews on a variety of subjects. These are intended to guide the busy pastors to worthwhile books.

Robert D. Decker

Setting in Order the Things That Are Wanting

An Exposition of Paul's Epistle to Titus, 3

Robert D. Decker

In the previous issue we offered an exposition of verses five through seven of the first chapter of Titus. We continue our exposition beginning at verse eight. Verses eight and nine read as follows¹: “But given to hospitality, loving goodness,² sober, just, holy, temperate. Holding fast the faithful (reliable, trustworthy) Word which is according to doctrine in order that he might be able both to exhort,³ by means of his sound teaching, and to refute the ones who speak against it.”

Verse 8

Having described what the bishop or elder must not be in verses 6 and 7, the apostle in verses 8 and 9 describes what the bishop must be. This is the force of the conjunction, “but,” with which verse 8 begins. This is the sharp contrast between the negative and the positive. In verses 8 and 9 the apostle lists the gifts the bishop must have from the Lord. He concludes the section by stating the purpose for these gifts. They enable the bishop both to exhort the people of God and to refute the gainsayers.

1. The translation is mine, RDD.

2. Thayer's translation. A.T. Robertson translates “a lover of good,” *Word Pictures of the New Testament*.

3. In his commentary on the New Testament, William Hendriksen translates this “encourage.”

The bishop must be “given to hospitality,” i.e., hospitable, generous to guests. The same expression is found in I Peter 4:9, where Scripture exhorts the saints to “use hospitality one to another without grudging.” This verse and verses 10 through 11 of I Peter 4 are a further explanation of the exhortation of verse 8, which is, “And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.” This means that hospitality is an expression of the love of God which the saints must have to one another.

We find the same word used in Romans 12:13, “Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality.” The context in this passage is similar to that of I Peter 4. Scripture exhorts the members of the one body of Christ to use their gifts for the benefit of their fellow saints. Lying at the heart of that exhortation is the imperative of verses 9 and 10, “Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.” The idea is that the saints of God are to be given to hospitality as an expression of God’s love for one another.

This is especially necessary for the bishop. He must be given to hospitality out of the love of God for those whom he oversees. The elder must be unselfishly humble. He must deny himself as he cares for his fellow saints. Always the elder must seek the welfare, i.e., the salvation, of the members of the church. The elder is generous to the people of God when by means of bringing them the Word of God he governs them. When he comforts them in their sorrows, when he encourages them in their sicknesses, when he helps them through their trials, when he instructs them, admonishes and disciplines them when they wander in sinful ways, when he feeds the hungry, clothes the naked, gives drink to the thirsty – in all these ways the bishop manifests the generosity of Christ’s love for the flock. Thus must the elder deny himself as he seeks the welfare of God’s people and the glory of God’s name. One who desires the office of a bishop must be given to hospitality.

Further, the bishop must be a “lover of good.”⁴ “The good” or “goodness” is that which is the fruit of faith, performed according to the

4. A.T. Robertson’s translation, cf. note 2 above. William Hendriksen translates it, “loving goodness, virtuous, ready to do what is beneficial to others,” cf. his Commentary.

law of God, and done to the glory of God.⁵ Goodness is that which is in harmony with God's law, and Jesus taught us that God's law is this, to love God and the neighbor. Hence, when William Hendriksen translates this as "ready to do what is beneficial to others," he has it exactly right. God in His love always seeks our welfare. We love God and manifest that love to the neighbor exactly in the way of being ready to do what is beneficial to them. And, seeking the eternal welfare of the saints, the bishop will of necessity be caring for the saints with a view to God's glory.

If a man does not love goodness, he must not seek the office of a bishop. He is not qualified for the office of Christ.

The bishop must also be sober. This is the opposite of drunkenness. Since we have already explained this concept in our exposition of verse seven, we may be brief. That the bishop must be sober simply means he must be in control of his faculties so that he has his spiritual senses about him. If he lacks this, the bishop cannot take care of God's people. Only when he is sober is he able to oversee, rule, admonish, teach, comfort, and encourage God's people.

The bishop must be just. If "blameless," as used in verses 6 and 7, means "one who cannot be called to account, unrepovable, unaccused," and it does mean this, then "just" is the positive expression of the same qualification. To be just is to be right or righteous. The elder must be judged to be in compliance with the commandments of God's law. This is really a legal idea. Before the law of God, as judged by the criterion of God's law, the bishop must not be guilty, but righteous.

The bishop must be holy, i.e., undefiled by sin, free from all wickedness. He must be pure and pious, "observing religiously every moral obligation." The bishop must be a pious worshiper of God. This must be true of him in the formal sense. Certainly the bishop must attend faithfully and participate obediently in the worship services of the church. This is crucial! The elder needs to be a faithful preacher of the Word of God with all that this means and implies. If he be a ruling elder, the bishop must oversee the preacher and the preaching and teaching of the Word. He must watch for the souls of God's people.

But also in his entire life must the elder be separate from sin and consecrated to the Lord's service. Thus he is holy.

5. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. & A. 91.

The elder must be temperate. The literal meaning of the Greek is “having power over.” The bishop must have power over himself so that he is able to curb, restrain, and control himself. In plain words he must not lose his temper and be given to angry outbursts. Nor ought the bishop be given to a sort of silly humor. He must not be boisterous, loud, constantly making fun of the serious matters of the Christian life and doctrine. If the bishop be not temperate, it will not be long before the people of God lose respect for him and confidence in him as a servant of the Lord.

According to this portion of sacred Scripture the elder in God’s church must be characterized by these gifts and qualifications. He must be blameless, a one-wife husband with believing children, not in the state of being accused of a dissolute life, or unruly. It is necessary that the bishop be blameless as the steward of God. Rather than being self willed, prone to anger, a drunkard, a striker, covetous of base gain, the bishop must be given to hospitality, loving good, sober, just, holy, temperate.

All of these gifts, to one degree or another, must characterize the man who desires the office of the bishop in the church. One man may have one or more of these gifts in greater measure than another, but all bishops must have these gifts! No one who lacks these may serve as an elder in the church.

In this connection we should not let it escape us that these are gifts from our gracious God. God blesses those whom he calls to the sacred office of elder with these gifts/qualifications. But we should also not fail to understand that these gifts from our gracious God can be and must be prayerfully developed. If a man desires the office of a bishop he must be gifted and he must prayerfully cultivate those gifts for the good of the church and the glory of God.

Verse 9

This verse marks the conclusion to the section which begins with verse 5 and wherein the inspired apostle speaks of the qualifications or gifts which a man must have if he is to serve as an elder in the church.

The elder must be “holding fast the faithful word which is according to the doctrine.” This, John Calvin calls “the chief gift in a bishop.”⁶ This faithful word is, literally, the trustworthy or reliable Word. And it

6. Cf. his Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles.

is the reliable Word because it is the Word of God Himself, the God-breathed Word. It is the Word which holy men from God spoke as moved by the Holy Spirit (II Pet. 1:20-21). Because that Word is inspired, it is infallible. And, because it is the inspired, infallible Word, it is the only, absolute rule for the faith and life of the Christian. It bears God's authority. Before that Word of God all must bow in humble submission!

But there is more! That that Word is reliable or trustworthy means it is the only word on which we may depend. It is absolutely true. All that it teaches and promises will surely come to pass. It is the only word which will never fail.

But note well, it is the reliable, trustworthy Word which is according to doctrine. This means that this Word is in harmony with sound doctrine. The trustworthy Word reveals the teaching or doctrine which alone can edify God's church! It is the only word from which we may learn the great doctrines of God, man, Christ, salvation, the church, and the last things. That doctrine is the only sure foundation for a life of sanctification, thankful obedience to the will of God as summed in His Law.

To that reliable, trustworthy Word the bishop must hold fast. In the middle voice as it occurs here this verb "hold fast" means "to hold one's self face to face with, and in this way to cleave, cling tenaciously to, the trustworthy Word!"⁷ The faithful minister/elder must hold himself face to face with the reliable, trustworthy Word. He must cling to it.

This is an extremely important imperative for the ministers and elders of God's church. If the bishop is to hold fast to the teachings of the reliable, trustworthy Word, he obviously must know those teachings thoroughly. He must learn them in such a way that he has a clear and solid grasp of the doctrine of the reliable Word of God. And, knowing that reliable Word, he must cling tenaciously to it. He must faithfully maintain and defend that trustworthy Word. The minister and elder must never allow it to be torn from them. He must not be as an unlearned, immature child tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine, as this same apostle wrote to the Ephesians in chapter four of that Epistle.

In a word, those who would serve in office in Christ's church must not only know the reliable Word which is in harmony with the doctrine or teaching, he must believe it and be convinced of it with all his heart!

7. The verb is *antexoo*.

How all of this applies to our work here in the seminary is not at all difficult to determine. Here the professors must teach the scholars the fundamentals of the doctrine of the reliable, trustworthy Word of God. They must teach the students how the church all through the ages developed her understanding of the doctrine of the Word; how the church taught it, maintained and defended it, and confessed it against the heresies of the false teachers. Here the professors are called to teach future ministers how to expound that reliable Word and thus glean from it the sound doctrine of Scripture. The professors must teach the students how to preach and teach the trustworthy Word of God.

And the students must receive all this instruction. But the learning does not end with graduation from the seminary! As the students presently, God willing, begin their ministerial careers, they must make all this teaching their own. Through faithful labor they are privileged to spend a lifetime growing, developing in the knowledge of the doctrines of the reliable Word. That trustworthy Word they must believe and defend until their last breath!

The last clause of verse nine states the purpose of holding oneself face to face with the reliable Word, "in order that he might be able both to exhort or encourage⁸ others by means of his sound teaching and to refute the ones who speak against it."

The minister who holds fast the truth of the reliable Word is able to take good care of the church of Christ. By means of his sound teaching he is able to exhort, correct, admonish and thus encourage the faithful members of the church. By means of his sound teaching he is also able to refute the ones who speak against the truth of the reliable Word. Those who contradict and oppose the gospel; those who refuse to submit to the trustworthy Word of God, need to be exposed, refuted, and, assuming that they refuse to repent, put out of the church. If they are allowed to remain, they will corrupt the church.

Let it be clearly understood, the only way to keep the church of Christ pure is by edifying and encouraging the faithful and their children and by refuting the ungodly enemies of the truth. Both the edifying of the faithful and the refutation of the opponents are accomplished by the sound doctrine of the reliable Word.

One must simply be impressed by the great emphasis Scripture puts

8. The verb is *parakalein*.

on the necessity of sound doctrine, not only here in Titus one, but in a host of other passages as well. Let us seize the opportunity which is put before us here in the seminary. Let us embrace with believing hearts and minds the sound doctrine of the trustworthy Word of God as that doctrine is summed in the Reformed confessions and by the grace of God taught in our Protestant Reformed Churches. Let us hold it fast. Let us preach it faithfully. Let us who are called to teach prospective ministers delve deeply into the trustworthy Word in order to maintain and defend it and impart it to those pursuing the gospel ministry.

In this way and only in this way will God be pleased to keep our churches faithful in doctrine and in life and in the ministry He calls those churches to perform.

That prince among expositors, John Calvin, puts it powerfully when he comments on verse 9,

Holding fast the faithful word. This is the chief gift in a bishop, who is elected principally for the sake of teaching; for the church cannot be governed in any other way than by the word.... He wishes that a bishop should hold it fast, so as not only to be well instructed in it, but to be constant in maintaining it. There are some fickle persons who easily suffer themselves to be carried away to various kinds of doctrine.... And, indeed, nothing is more dangerous than that fickleness...when a pastor does not steadfastly adhere to that doctrine of which he ought to be the unshaken defender. In short, in a pastor there is demanded not only learning, but such zeal for pure doctrine as never to depart from it.... The pastor ought to have two voices: one, for gathering the sheep; and another, for warding off and driving away wolves and thieves. The Scripture supplies him with the means of doing both; for he who is deeply skilled in it will be able both to govern those who are teachable, and to refute the enemies of the truth.... This is remarkable applause bestowed on the word of God, when it is pronounced to be sufficient, not only for governing the teachable, but for subduing the obstinacy of enemies. And, indeed, the power of truth revealed by the Lord is such that it easily vanquishes all falsehoods. Let the Popish bishops now go and boast of being the successors of the apostles, seeing that the greater part of them are so ignorant of all doctrine, as to reckon ignorance to be no small part of their dignity.⁹

9. John Calvin, *Commentary on the Pastoral Epistles*.

Genesis 1-11: Myth or History? (2)

David J. Engelsma

Part one of the polemical article that is continued here examined and condemned the heresy that the opening chapters of the Bible are non-historical, that is, mythical. This heresy prevails now in evangelical, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches, seminaries, colleges, publishing houses, and Christian schools. The first installment concluded with these words: "The child of God must have history in Genesis 1-11. Christianity must have history there, history that is clearly and reliably set down by divine inspiration." Part one appeared in the November, 2000 issue of this journal.

History

The foundation of the entire Scripture (such was Luther's description of Genesis 1-11) is history. The events recorded there *happened*, in and with time. They happened *as is recorded*. Only if they happened *as Scripture records them as happening* are the events historical. The subtle mythologians, aware of how much is at stake here, assure us that they maintain the "historicity" of the events in Genesis 1-11. What they mean is that the myths found on the opening pages of Scripture have a certain rootage in things that did really happen in the dim and distant past. What these things may have been, how they actually happened, and in what way they are related to the mythical representations of them in Genesis 1-11, however, no one knows.

The highly reputed evangelical Henri Blocher is representative. In his exposition of the opening chapters of the Bible, with regard particularly to the account of the fall in Genesis 3, Blocher strongly affirms the importance of "'the historicity of the content' of Genesis 3." Such is the importance of the historicity of Genesis 3, according to Blocher, that "along with ethical monotheism and the doctrine of sin . . . nothing less than the gospel is at stake." The unwary Christian and the trusting church

suppose that Blocher is teaching that Genesis 3 is history. They are deceived. Blocher denies the reality of the two trees, the reality of a speaking serpent, and the reality of the creation of a woman—Eve—from a rib of a man—Adam. Blocher subtly distinguishes between “a historical account of the fall” (which, according to him, Genesis 3 is *not*) and “the account of a historical fall” (which, according to him, it *is*). Although Genesis 3 is “the account of a historical fall,” the chapter is not historical. It is mythical.¹

Genesis 3 is historical inasmuch as, and only inasmuch as, it is not only the account of a historical fall but also a historical account of the fall. In Genesis 1-11 the Holy Spirit describes events as they happened. Genesis 1-11 is reality.

But the reality of Genesis 1-11 is far more than that the events merely took place. They took place as acts of the triune, living God, which He did before His own face, according to His counsel. His purpose with them was to give Jesus Christ the preeminence in all things (Col. 1:13-20). *This* is the historicity of Genesis 1-11. *This* is its reality, its truth. And all this history was written down by Moses, who wrote not one word of his own private interpretation or by his own will, but who wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost (II Pet. 1:20, 21).

Genesis 1:1-2:3 is not excluded from the inspired account of historical events. As a historical Genesis 1-11 is fundamental to the rest of Scripture, a historical Genesis 1:1-2:3 is fundamental to the rest of Genesis 1-11. And the content of Genesis 1:1-2:3 is the “days”—six days of divine creation, each consisting of one evening and one morning, and one day of divine rest. If the days of Genesis 1 and 2, their order, and the speech and acts of God on the days are not historical, that is, if the events of Genesis 1 and 2 did not happen as Genesis 1 and 2 record them as happening, nothing in Genesis 1-11 is historical. The issue in the controversy, “Genesis 1-11: Myth or History?” is the historicity of

1. Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, tr. David G. Preston (Leicester, England: InterVarsity Press, 1984), pp. 156-170. As evidence that the explanation of the opening chapters of Genesis as non-historical necessarily involves the denial of the fundamental Christian doctrine of original sin, Blocher’s next book did this very thing: it denied original sin both as regards original guilt and as regards inherited corruption from our first parents. See Henri Blocher, *Original Sin: Illuminating the Riddle* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999).

Genesis 1:1-2:3, that is, real days of one evening and one morning, in the order given, with God's doing on each of them what the passage says He did.

Because Genesis 1-11 is history, the passage has meaning for mankind, especially the believing church. What a superstructure of meaning is reared up on, and supported by, the foundation of the history of Genesis 1-11. Genesis 1-11 sets forth the origin of all things: the universe, including time and space; man; marriage and the family; the basic ordering of man's life in a week of six days of work and one day of rest; sin; the curse and death, not only for the human race, but also for the brute creation; the gospel and the Savior who is promised by the gospel; the antithesis between godly and ungodly; and the nations.

The origin of Israel is also to be found in the first eleven chapters of Genesis. Israel's origin in Scripture is not in Genesis 12 in the call of Abram. Rather, it occurs in Genesis 9:26 in the blessing of Shem.

All of this solid reality of origins fades into a mist of fantasy if Genesis 1-11 is mythical.

Not only is Genesis 1-11 the all-important account of the origin of all things, but this passage is also the foundation of all Christian doctrines and ethics. It is the foundation of all the great doctrines of the faith: creation, fall, and redemption; man as the image of God; original sin and total depravity; atonement and, thus, the satisfying of the justice of a righteous God; and salvation by a substitute—a federal head, just as Adam was a federal head.

Upon Genesis 1-11 depends also the doctrine of an eschatological destruction of the world, out of which will come a new world of righteousness. The one historical evidence that the believer can appeal to against the scoffers who challenge his hope of an end of the world at Christ's coming is the flood (II Pet. 3:1-7).

If Genesis 1-11 is not history, all these doctrines are lost.

The figurative interpretations in evangelical and Reformed churches of the opening chapters of Genesis are presently serving the theory of theistic evolution. If theistic evolution is the real explanation of the origin of our world, death has been in the world from the very beginning as a natural part of the process of evolution, and man has been morally weak and sinful from his appearance from the primates. Since theistic evolution is the means that God used to create the world and man, God Himself is responsible for death in the world and for man's sinfulness.

There is then no such thing as original sin, particularly original guilt that is imputed to every child of a real Adam, who, being sinless, disobeyed a command about a piece of fruit. And if there is no original sin, indeed no sin at all, there is not, and need not be, a Redeemer, who delivers by becoming sin for sinners.

Just as all doctrine is lost, if Genesis 1-11 is a myth, so also are lost all the ethical teachings of the Christian religion. Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of the Christian life. It is the foundation of the calling to love, fear, obey, and serve God our Creator and Savior. This is the primary duty of our life. And this is the primary cause of the attack on the doctrines of creation and the fall by the theory of evolution, which attack is accommodated by reducing the opening chapters of the Bible to myth. Darwinian evolution is not physical science, not even mistaken physical science. It is spiritual revolution against the sovereign Creator, before whom men and women must bow and to whom they are responsible.

Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of the calling to love the neighbor, for the passage teaches that the neighbor is created and put next to us by God.

It is the foundation of the calling ordinarily to marry and then to live faithfully with the one woman or the one man for life. At the beginning of the twenty-first century in depraved Western society, it is necessary to specify that Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of the calling to marry someone *of the opposite sex*.

The opening chapters of Genesis are the foundation of the order in the home that consists of the willing headship of the husband and father and of the equally willing submission of the wife and mother.

Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of work—six days of work, as it is the foundation of the rest of the weekly Sabbath.

Third, the importance of Genesis 1-11 as historical truth is this, that on the historicity of Genesis 1-11 depends our knowledge of God. Upon Genesis 1-11 depends our knowledge of God as Creator, as covenant Friend, as Judge, and as Savior. “In the beginning, God!” To transform Genesis 1-11 into myth is to make atheists out of us. This is what has actually happened in churches where Genesis 1-11 came to be regarded as mythical. Before a church succumbs to the thinking that Genesis 1-11 is myth, believers in this church should do themselves and their children a favor and examine the churches that have already yielded to the mythologists—the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands

(*Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland: GKN*), the Presbyterian Church (USA), and others. They are full of people who no longer believe in the Christian God and are ready, therefore, to worship the idols.

Charles Darwin himself is an example. Doubt about the historicity of the opening chapters of the Bible made an atheist out of him. Warfield gives the chilling account of Darwin's religious development in his essay on the *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*.

As he [Darwin] wrought out his theory of evolution, he gave up his Christian faith—nay, ... his doctrine of evolution directly expelled his Christian belief. How it operated in so doing is not difficult dimly to trace. He was thoroughly persuaded (like Mr. Huxley) that, in its plain meaning, Genesis teaches creation by immediate, separate, and sudden fiats of God for each several species. And as he more and more convinced himself that species, on the contrary, originated according to natural law, and through a long course of gradual modification, he felt ever more and more that Genesis "must go." But Genesis is an integral part of the Old Testament, and with the truth and authority of the Old Testament the truth and authority of Christianity itself is inseparably bound up. Thus, the doctrine of evolution once heartily adopted by him gradually undermined his faith, until he cast off the whole of Christianity as an unproved delusion.... Here is the root of the whole matter. His doctrine of evolution had antiquated for him the Old Testament record; but Christianity is too intimately connected with the Old Testament to stand as divine if the Old Testament be fabulous.²

The secular thinker John Herman Randall, Jr., has warned the church that the truth of a Creator God is ruled out by evolutionary science:

2. Benjamin B. Warfield, "Charles Darwin's Religious Life: A Sketch in Spiritual Biography," in *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), pp. 549, 550. Warfield knew. This makes all the more inexcusable Warfield's grievous compromise of the Christian doctrine of creation in the interests of accommodating Darwinian evolution and, with this, his mythologizing of Genesis 1 and 2. This article on Darwin's religious life is included in the recent volume of selected writings by Warfield on evolutionary science, *Evolution, Science, and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000). The editors, Mark A. Noll and David N. Livingstone, intend that the book defend and promote theistic evolution and a "non-literal interpretation of the early Genesis narratives" among evangelicals, Reformed, and Presbyterians.

The very form of nineteenth-century evolutionary science has made that idea [namely, an “external Creator”] all but impossible and substituted for it the notion of a God as immanent, as a soul or spirit dwelling within the universe and developing it through long ages.³

If Genesis 1-11 is myth, atheism is warranted. On the day that I am convinced that Genesis 1-11 is mere myth, because God Himself convinces me through evolutionary science (I write nonsense), on that day I will renounce Christianity and Christianity’s God. And if at the end of the day I must stand before God to give account of my apostasy, I will defend my renunciation of Christianity with a defense that He Himself will not be able to gainsay. “You yourself,” I will say, “made the Christian faith and the knowledge of yourself depend upon Genesis 1-11, but this worthless ‘Scripture’ was only a myth. I put no stock in myth, and no self-respecting God, worthy of my time and worship, should have put any stock in it either.”

But this is foolish talk. Genesis 1-11 is history. And the true church has always proclaimed it as history

The reason why the true church and the genuine believer have always received Genesis 1-11 as history is not extra-biblical evidences that prove, or are thought to prove, the historicity of the biblical record. Extra-biblical evidences for the truth of creation as taught in Genesis 1 and 2 mean as little to the church as someone’s finding a piece of wood on Mt. Ararat would mean for the church’s belief of the biblical account of the flood. The church’s faith concerning Genesis 1-11 does not rest at all on anything outside Genesis 1-11 and outside the rest of Scripture. Just for this reason, nothing, absolutely nothing, can shake the church’s faith concerning the historicity of Genesis 1-11.

I have to smile when the evangelical and Reformed mythologists pile up their impressive findings and authorities, to convince us that Genesis 1-11 is myth, or primeval history, or literary genre, or some other euphemism meaning unhistorical. The mythologists do not understand. If an angel from heaven appeared to tell us that Genesis 1-11 is myth, not only would we not believe him, but we would also curse him as a devil and deceiver (Gal. 1:8, 9).

3. John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Making of the Modern Mind: A Survey of the Intellectual Background of the Present Age* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Riverside Press, 1940), p. 276.

Believers receive Genesis 1-11 as historical because Genesis 1-11, the Word of God, claims to be historical. Read it! Believers receive Genesis 1-11 as historical because it is the testimony of Jesus Christ and the apostles that the Old Testament passage is history. Hebrews 11:3 testifies to the historicity of the account of creation. Matthew 19:3ff. testifies to the historicity of the entire account of Adam and Eve. Romans 5:12ff. testifies to the historicity of the record of the fall. I Peter 3:20 testifies to the historicity of the Genesis flood. Acts 17:26 testifies to the historicity of the account of Babel. And believers receive Genesis 1-11 as historical because the Holy Spirit witnesses in their heart that the testimony of God the Holy Spirit on the pages of Holy Scripture is true, whereas every man is a liar.

But how can anyone maintain that Genesis 1-11 is history, it will be asked, in the face of the contradiction of this by general revelation, by "Science," and by virtually all the scholars within the churches as without.

First, the Reformed believer permits nothing to set aside, or overrule, the teaching of Scripture. Is not the great Reformation-principle just this: "Scripture alone"? With specific reference to God's revelation of Himself in creation and history, general revelation does not control Scripture. Rather, the believer receives and interprets general revelation in the light of Scripture. The notion that the revelation of Scripture on origins in Genesis 1-11 is quite obscure so that it must be enhanced and corrected by the brighter light of general revelation is folly on the very face of it. As regards origins, Scripture is perfectly clear. It could not be clearer. In comparison with general revelation, as regards the truth of creation, God "makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word" (Belgic Confession, Art. 2).

In addition, the content of general revelation regarding creation is limited. General revelation makes known only that God made the world. It testifies to the Creator (Rom. 1:18ff.). Scripture reveals far more. Scripture reveals *how* the Creator brought the universe into existence.

Second, the Reformed believer is not awed by "Science." As regards genuine science—the investigation into and knowledge of some aspect of creation in submission to the Word of God—the Reformed faith is no enemy of science; nor is science an enemy of the Reformed faith. There is even a good case to be made, that the Christian faith, especially through the Protestant Reformation, gave birth to modern science. But

the Reformed believer is well aware, or should be, that “Science,” that is, autonomous man’s sovereign reason and research, is one of modern man’s favorite gods. In maintaining the authority of God’s Word in Genesis 1-11 and in confessing the wonder of biblical creation, the Reformed believer is obeying the first commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before me, specifically the god, “Science.”

Besides, the Reformed believer does not confuse modern evolutionary scientific theory with science. Modern evolutionary scientific theory is sheer nonsense. It is unproved, unprovable foolishness. The theory was proposed, not because it was proved, but because unbelieving scientists found the alternative—creation—repugnant. The philosopher, Fichte, expressed the real reason for the adoption of evolution as the explanation of origins. Creation, he said, is the basic error of all thinking and of all religion, because creation confronts man with a sovereign God.⁴

Darwin himself freely admitted the lack of evidence for the notion that is basic to his evolutionary theory, namely, the development of one species from another by “intermediate links.” In *The Origin of Species*, he wrote:

Why then is not every geological formation and every stratum full of such intermediate links? Geology assuredly does not reveal any such finely-graduated organic chain; and this, perhaps, is the most obvious and serious objection which can be urged against the theory.⁵

In his ecstatic welcome of Darwinian evolution, the Anglican clergyman, Charles Kingsley, managed to combine all of these errors—honoring general revelation above Scripture, worshiping “Science,” and confusing the latest theory of a scientist with science. “Science is the

4. See Paul K. Jewett, *God, Creation, & Revelation: A Neo-Evangelical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), p. 439.

5. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (New York and Toronto: The New American Library, 1958), p. 287.

Voice of God—her facts, His words—to which we must each and all reply, ‘Speak Lord, for Thy servant heareth.’ ”⁶

Third, science cannot possibly get at the events recorded in Genesis 1-11, to analyze, judge, and confirm them. Creation itself was a wonder. As a wonder it is as little accessible to the scientist’s tools of investigation as is the resurrection of Jesus. The wonder is known only by faith, which humbly and thankfully receives God’s Word about the wonder.

In addition, between God’s work of creation, as described in Genesis 1 and 2, and present-day science lie two barriers that scientific effort cannot penetrate: the fall with the attending curse on all creation and the flood which destroyed the world that then was, bringing about an entirely new form of the world (Gen. 3:17, 18; II Pet. 3:6). No scientific instrument can reach back beyond the flood. The world before the flood cannot even be known by any scientific theory, since scientific theories work on the basis of the principle of uniformitarianism. But as the apostle declares in II Peter 3:1-7, it is not true that “all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” In the flood—the real, historical flood of Genesis 6-8, not the pitiful, mythical puddle of a local flood in the region of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers⁷—the watery “world that then was . . . perished”; out of the flood came the present fiery world. The only knowledge that anyone has, or can have, of the world before the flood is that given by God Himself in Genesis.

Fourth, the opinions of the scholars, particularly the theologians, that Genesis 1-11 is myth, mean nothing to the Reformed Christian. At the Reformation, virtually all the scholars opposed the Reformation and its gospel. Learning and scholarship were the enemy. For the most part, it is the same today. This is not a reflection on learning and scholarship, but on the vainglorious, treacherous, cowardly men and women who use

6. Cited in David Lack, *Evolutionary Theory and Christian Belief: The Unresolved Conflict* (London: Methuen, 1957), p. 68.

7. For the denial of the historicity of the account of the flood in Genesis 6-9, see Davis A. Young, *The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church’s Response to Extrabiblical Evidence* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995). The book indicates how deep into Genesis 1-11 the myth has penetrated in confessionally Reformed churches and colleges today.

these good gifts of God to criticize His Word, deny His wonderful works, and wreak havoc on His church.

Recently, A. M. Lindeboom has written a book on the spiritual destruction of the once glorious Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN). These churches have fallen away from Christ. They believe nothing of the gospel. They practice every corruption, no matter how vile. This awful—and rapid—apostasy began with an arrogant intellectualism that challenged the authority of Scripture. The challenge began at the opening chapters of Genesis. The reason? “The doctrine of evolution, which is taught in schools and universities everywhere in the world as an established fact.” The title of Lindeboom’s book is *De theologen gingen voorop—The Theologians Led the Way*.⁸

Fifth, the believer who reads Genesis 1-11 as history cannot be moved by ridicule. There is such ridicule. Nor does it come only from “liberal” quarters. “Do you still believe such absurdities as creation in six real days, God’s forming a man out of real dust by His own hand, God’s forming a woman out of a real rib of the man, and a speaking serpent?” “Fundamentalist!”

This cannot move the believer, because by the grace of God he has already believed a far more impossible impossibility and a much more ridiculous absurdity: the incarnation of God by a virgin birth, in order to redeem sinners by a cross. What is creation in six real days, forming a woman from a rib, and a speaking serpent in comparison with this? The

8. A. M. Lindeboom, *De theologen gingen voorop: Eenvoudig Verhaal van de Ontmanteling van de Gereformeerde Kerken* (Kampen: Kok, 1987). The quotation is from page 20, which is part of the chapter titled, “In the Grasp of Modern Science.” The titles of the opening chapters of the book and their sequence tell the tale: “The Arising of Intellectualism”; “In the Grasp of Modern Science”; “Criticism of Scripture Begins” [with Genesis 1]; “Criticism of Scripture Continues”; “Concerted Advance” [upon all of Genesis 1-11]. The next chapter has the title, “The Son of God.” It details the attack of the Dutch theologians in the GKN upon the Godhead, work, death, resurrection, and second coming of Jesus Christ. “*De theologen gingen voorop*”! On the spiritual condition of the GKN, in addition to Lindeboom’s book, see the GKN theologian H. M. Kuitert, *Do You Understand What You Read? On Understanding and Interpreting the Bible*, tr. Lewis B. Smedes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) and *I Have My Doubts: How to Become a Christian without being a Fundamentalist*, tr. John Bowden (London: SCM Press, 1993).

Christian glories in the absurdities of the faith. If he does not, with Tertullian, quite believe *because* the truth is absurd, the absurdity of the truth certainly poses no problem to his faith. Does not the Word itself tell him that God's wisdom is foolishness to the ungodly world and to the mind of the natural man (I Cor. 1:18-31; 2:14)? With Abraham and Mary, the Christian believes the impossible, because his God—the God of Christianity—does the impossible.

This brings us to the heart of the issue, "Genesis 1-11: Myth or History?" namely, Jesus Christ.

Christ

Out of a mythical Genesis 1-11 comes a mythical Christ. This is necessarily so. First, the thinking that sets Genesis aside as a human word must also set aside the gospels as a human word. Second, if there never was a historical fall from the sinless height of a historical creation of a historical Adam, there is no need for a historical Jesus. Third, the Bible itself makes Jesus analogous to, and dependent upon, Adam (Rom. 5:12ff.). No Adam, no Christ! Fourth, Jesus Christ comes out of the womb of the promise of Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." But to whom did Jehovah God speak the words in which this promise—this "mother-promise"—is found? To the speaking serpent! Deny the historicity of Genesis 3, deny the historicity of the speaking serpent, and you annihilate the promise whence Jesus the Christ has come. No speaking serpent, no Savior!

A mythical Genesis 1-11 means a mythical Christ. But a mythical Christ did not die for our sins. A mythical Christ cannot forgive us our very real sins. A mythical Christ will not go with us through the valley of the shadow of death. A mythical Christ will not raise our body from the grave. Only the historical Christ did and will do these things.

The historical Christ makes a historical Genesis 1-11 the foundation of Himself and His work. His coming is by promise made to Adam and Eve in a garden in Eden in view of their disobedience to God's command concerning the tree of knowledge of good and evil. He came to redeem men and women originally made by God in God's own image from the sin and death of the fall. As Adam's disobedience, so Christ's obedience (Rom. 5:12ff.). As Adam's plunging all into death, so Christ's making alive (I Cor. 15:21, 22).

The historicity of Genesis 1-11 is the foundation of Jesus Christ in another way. Christ was God's goal, or purpose, in creating the world, as well as in God's providential government of the course of the creation thereafter.

By him [Christ] were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven (Col. 1:16-20).

Creation was for Christ. Every event in Genesis 1-11 happened for the sake of Christ. The end that the beginning of Genesis 1:1 and all that follows in Genesis 1-11 look to is the new world of Revelation 21 and 22, redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and renewed by His Spirit. Upon the historicity of Genesis 1-11 depends the reality of the coming Day of Christ, our hope.

Compromise

There may be no compromise with the denial of the historicity of Genesis 1-11. But the evolutionary theory of origins necessarily involves the dismissal of the opening chapters as non-historical. Among many others, David Lack, himself an ardent proponent of Darwinian evolution, has stated this bluntly:

While Darwinism was widely supposed to contradict the accuracy of the Bible, what it actually challenges is the literal rendering of the first three chapters of Genesis, and if these are properly to be regarded as allegorical, no conflict need arise.⁹

9. Lack, *Evolutionary Theory*, p. 34. Lack, of course, is urging Christians to give up the view that these chapters are "literally true" for the view required by evolutionary science, namely, that they are "allegorical." Lack is honest.

There may be no compromise, therefore, with the evolutionary theory of origins. None.

Benjamin B. Warfield's surrender of the historicity of the biblical account of creation to Darwinian evolutionary theory was shameful. Warfield made epochs of the days of Genesis 1, allowed for what today is known as the theistic evolution of all the forms and species other than man, and found acceptable the biological development of man from the apes *as regards the body*. So far would Warfield go with Darwin. Only the soul of man could not have derived from the beasts. This, God had to slip into brutish Adam as a kind of aboriginal *deus ex machina*.

If under the directing hand of God a human body is formed at a leap by propagation from brutish parents, it would be quite consonant with the fitness of things that it should be provided by His creative energy with a truly human soul.¹⁰

As regards the biblical account of the creation of Eve, which cannot be harmonized with theistic evolutionary theory and which is virtually impervious to exegetical manipulation, Warfield, though he recognized the difficulty, suggested that the creation of Eve from a rib of Adam could somehow be explained away so as to allow for the evolutionary development also of the body of the woman.

I am free to say, for myself, that I do not think that there is any general statement in the Bible or any part of the account of creation, either as given in Genesis 1 and 2 or elsewhere alluded to, that need be opposed to evolution. The sole passage which appears to bar the way is the very detailed account of the creation of Eve. It is possible that this may be held to be a miracle (as Dr. Woodrow holds), or else that the narrative may be held to be partial and taken like the very partial descriptions of the formation of the individual in Job and the Psalms; that is, it teaches only the general fact that Eve came of Adam's flesh and bone.¹¹

10. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Critical Reviews* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), p. 138. Warfield is reviewing James Orr's *God's Image in Man*.

11. Benjamin B. Warfield, "Evolution or Development," in *Evolution, Scripture, and Science: Selected Writings*, ed. Mark A. Noll & David N. Livingstone (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), p. 130.

At the end of his consideration of the life of Charles Darwin, self-confessed unbeliever and enemy of the Christian faith, Warfield could write: "We stand at the deathbed of a man whom, in common with all the world, we most deeply honor."¹²

Warfield refused to oppose the evolutionary theory of origins with its concomitant reduction of the opening chapters of Genesis to myth. Instead, he approved it. Thus, Warfield contributed greatly to the destruction of his Presbyterian Church as a Christian body. Warfield's error is now doing grave damage to conservative evangelical, Reformed, and Presbyterian churches on a wide front. In almost all the conservative churches and seminaries, the theologians are appealing to the great Princetonian in defense of their own acceptance of evolution and rejection of the historicity of Genesis 1 and 2.¹³

This appeal to Warfield is not without its value. It indicates how far those who make the appeal have gone in their own thinking and how far they are willing to have their churches go. Usually, these theologians are quite reticent about their own views, contenting themselves with striking out against the "fundamentalism" and "anti-intellectualism" of those who insist on a literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2 as history. By appealing to Warfield, these men show, at the very least, that they are open to epochs of millions of years, theistic evolution as the explanation of all the forms and species other than man, the biological descent of man from the beasts as regards his body, and even "Adam's" begetting of "Eve's" body from a primate. How such thinking answers the question, "Genesis 1-11: Myth or History?" is plain to all.

What explains the vulnerability of Warfield and other otherwise orthodox men of his day to the pressures of evolutionary scientific theory? The explanation is fourfold. First, the assault on the doctrine of creation and on the inspiration of Genesis 1-11 by the enemy of the Christian faith and its God in these last days is powerful and crafty.

Second, Warfield was mistaken in his thinking about general revelation. He supposed that general revelation and Scripture are two

12. Warfield, *Studies in Theology*, p. 580.

13. Instances of this widespread appeal include David N. Livingstone, *Darwin's Forgotten Defenders: The Encounter between Evangelical Theology and Evolutionary Thought* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) and Noll & Livingstone, editors, *Evolution, Scripture, and Science*.

equal authorities for Christians. Indeed, in practice Scripture must give way to general revelation. Warfield then naively identified the latest scientific theory with general revelation. Worse still, Warfield thought that God's revelation of Himself in creation to unbelievers, for example, Charles Darwin, resulted in right knowledge of God as Creator, so that the Christian church is required to yield to Darwin's proclamation of the truth of God. Darwin is virtually a herald of God in the world! Warfield confused general revelation with natural theology.¹⁴

Third, Warfield was not sufficiently impressed with the total depravity of the mind, or reason, of the ungodly. This is also a fundamental error in Warfield's apologetics. Ungodly scientists, for example, Charles Darwin and Thomas ("Dr. Beelzebub") Huxley, do not think neutrally, much less favorably, about God and His Word on the basis of raw data. They theorize in enmity against God and His Word. Their scientific theories are the weapons of their warfare against the church.

Fourth, Warfield's attitude toward the culture of the world of the ungodly, especially the culture of the universities, learning, and science, was not antithetical. It was not the attitude of spiritual separation and warfare. Relations between the Presbyterian Church and its colleges, on the one hand, and the surrounding culture, on the other hand, were friendly. The world would bless the church through its learning, and the church would Christianize the world with its theology. No doubt, the theory of common grace helped to frame this attitude.¹⁵

14. Rom. 1:18ff. teaches that the ungodly, including ungodly scientists (probably ungodly scientists *especially*), immediately hold under the knowledge of God that they have from creation, changing the truth of God, for instance, the truth of God as Creator, into a lie. This is all that they can do as totally depraved sinners. God's sole purpose with general revelation for the ungodly is to render them without excuse. David Livingstone traces the surprising readiness of evangelicals to accept evolution to "the longstanding Puritan assurance that God had revealed himself both in the book of Scripture and in the book of Nature" (*Darwin's Forgotten Defenders*, p. 169).

15. In his book, *Darwin on Trial*, Phillip E. Johnson notes that the early supporters of Darwin's theory of evolution "included not just persons we would think of as religious liberals, but conservative Evangelicals such as Princeton Theological Seminary Professor Benjamin Warfield." Johnson offers two

Whatever the reasons, by his concessions and compromise, Warfield sold out the historicity of Genesis 1-11.

There may be no compromise with Darwinian, or any other, evolutionary theory of origins. History has abundantly proved the truth of Darwin's own confidence, that the slightest concession to his theory invariably will result in complete surrender.

It early became a maxim with Darwin that those who went a little way toward his doctrine would eventually go much farther, and that those who went a great way, would eventually become converts.¹⁶

On the contrary, faithful churches, with their seminaries, must nail their colors to the mast on this issue. The Protestant Reformed Churches require all candidates for the ministry to believe from the heart and to confess the historicity of Genesis 1-11, particularly the historicity of Genesis 1 and 2, that is, the seven days of creation and rest. The ministerial candidates must promise that they will not tolerate but oppose every form of the lie of the mythical nature of the opening chapters of the Bible. All members of the churches are required to believe the historicity of Genesis 1-11.

“Suffer the Little Children”

To us, the issue, “Genesis 1-11: Myth or History?” is not intellectual and academic.

In the Protestant Reformed Churches, the covenant children begin their catechism instruction at the age of five or six. These are the questions and answers that they learn in the first lessons of the first book:

- “Who is your Creator? God.”
- “Did God create all things? Yes, in the beginning God

reasons for this support: “(1) religious intellectuals were determined not to repeat the scandal of the Galileo persecution; and (2) with the aid of a little self-deception, Darwinism could be interpreted as ‘creation wholesale’ by a progress-minded Deity acting through rationally accessible secondary causes.” See Phillip E. Johnson, *Darwin on Trial* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1991), p. 188.

16. William Irvine, *Apes, Angels, & Victorians: The Story of Darwin, Huxley, and Evolution* (New York: Time, 1963), p. 174.

created the heavens and the earth.”

■ “How do we know about this creation? God tells us about it in His Word, the Bible.”

■ “Who are our first parents? Adam and Eve.”

■ “How did Satan come to Eve? He used the serpent to talk to Eve.”

■ “What did God promise? A Savior, to save us from our sin.”

We want these little children to go to heaven. If they come to doubt all these answers as myth, they will go to hell as unbelievers. Whoever is responsible—parent, preacher, school-teacher, theologian, or synod—it were better for them that a millstone were hanged about their neck and that they were drowned in the depth of the sea.

These little ones, who cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, must believe a historical Genesis 1-11.

And the theologians are called, and privileged, to lead the way. ●

Thomas Bradwardine: Forgotten Medieval Augustinian (2)

Russell J. Dykstra

Bradwardine's Theology

The cornerstone of Bradwardine's theology is, without question, the truth that God is sovereign. Oberman notes that Bradwardine returns "in the discussion of every problem to his dominant theological idea: the Sovereignty of God."¹

Bradwardine builds his argument for God's sovereignty on two axioms, which serve as a basis for every statement about God that follows. The two axioms are these:

1. God is the highest good, "in comparison with whom nothing is better or more perfect."²
2. "There cannot be an endless hierarchy in things, but ... in the chain of causes there is a first cause."³ Bradwardine writes, "God makes all things, and moves all things. In every formation, in every motion, there must be some ... immovable mover; else the process would be endless."⁴

1. Heiko Oberman, *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine: A Fourteenth Century Augustinian*, Utrecht: Drukkerijen Uitgevers-Maatschappij v/h Kemink & Zoon N.V., 1957, p. 9.

2. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 1, p. 1, quoted in *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine*, H. A. Oberman, p. 50. Note the similarity to Anselm's proof for the existence of God, yet with this difference that where Anselm used "*cognito*" Bradwardine has "*esse*."

3. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 50. This is Oberman's summary of Bradwardine's second axiom.

4. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 5, p. 175, quoted in Augustus Toplady, *The Complete Works of Augustus Toplady*, (Harrisonburg: Sprinkle Publications, 1987), p. 107.

This God, being the first cause, always existed and, being perfect, is immutable. God “cannot change for the better because he is already perfectly good. Neither can he change for the worse, because he is necessarily perfect, and therefore cannot cease to be so.”⁵

Based on these truths, Bradwardine proceeds to set forth forty corollaries against the same number of heresies previously condemned by the church. This serves two purposes. First, Bradwardine proves that he is orthodox and a faithful theologian of the church. Secondly, he shows that all these heresies contradict these basic truths about God. The implication is that all heresies will deny these central truths.

Bradwardine maintains not only the greatness of God, but also that God is far greater than the creature. Leff comments (critically) that “theologically, on the contrary, the whole spirit and purpose of *De causa Dei* is only too concerned with emphasizing the infinite chasm between God and his creatures.”⁶ Bradwardine insists on the incomprehensibility of God’s being and works, but, contrary to Ockham, he denies that God is thus arbitrary.

Bradwardine rejects the teaching that the actions of God are “contingent,” but rather defends the proposition that His actions are “necessary.” However, this necessity arises from within God Himself. Oberman explains: “God is unchangeable love and this love gives direction to His will, and thus the idea of God’s will as without norm has been rejected.”⁷

God’s absolute sovereignty derives from His being the Creator of all things. Writes Bradwardine, “Thus Thou truly art my God.... Nothing else is necessary in an absolute way or exists by itself; yea, by itself nothing exists, but out of Thee, through Thee and to Thee, for in no other way can anything exist.”⁸ God not only created all, He continues to govern and sustain all.

5. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 1, p. 5, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 107.

6. Gordon Leff, *Bradwardine and the Pelagians: A Study of his 'De Causa Dei' and its Opponents*, Cambridge: University Press, 1957, p. 52.

7. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 53.

8. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 14, p. 211, quoted in *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine*, H. A. Oberman, p. 55.

Since God is sovereign, His will “is universally efficacious and invincible, and necessitates as a cause.”⁹ Bradwardine insists that nothing can defeat or make void God’s will. He argues that the frustration or vanquishing of God’s will could only arise from the created wills of either men or angels. However, that necessarily means that “the will of the creature must be superior ... to the will of the creator: which can by no means be allowed.”¹⁰

Many a theologian pays lip service to the sovereignty of God, yet most flinch when it comes to God’s control over the actions of men, especially their sins. Distinctions are made between God willing sin and God permitting sin. Faced with this question, Bradwardine does not retreat from the conviction that God is sovereign in all and over all. He insists that even when God only permits (*voluntas permittens*) sin, God is in some way yet actively willing. He draws the conclusion, “Therefore God does not merely permit but actually wills to be done all that is done.”¹¹ He maintains that, somehow, all things good and evil fit into the counsel of God. As to the actions of the creatures, if God does not will it, the action will not be performed.

Yet Bradwardine goes farther than this. He insists that no creature can act apart from God, not only because God must will the action, but also that God must give the power to the creature to act. God authors, man does, Bradwardine maintained.¹² This applies to all the actions of men, both good and evil deeds. Bradwardine certainly understood that the manner in which God works is entirely different in the good and the evil deed. Nonetheless, God is involved in the action as a coeffector.

9. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 10, p. 195, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 109.

10. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 10, p. 195, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 109.

11. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 33, p. 290, quoted in *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine*, H. A. Oberman, p. 128. The quotation is my translation of the Latin – *Ergo Deus nedum permittit sed actualiter vult fieri omne factum*.

12. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I. Chapters. 4, 26, 27, quoted in Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 132, where the Latin is: *Deo autore homo facit*.

Does God then become responsible for evil? Bradwardine rejects that notion, but even then is careful not to detract in any way from God's sovereign control. He insisted that "all things that happen, happen of necessity."¹³ However, Bradwardine does not use the word "necessity" as an antonym for "freedom" but rather as the opposite of "contingency," for he will not allow any contingency in God. Bradwardine called upon a distinction made by Augustine between *necessitas invita* and *voluntaria*, that is, a necessity upon man that is involuntary versus a necessity that is in some way voluntary. The first idea, Bradwardine rejects; the second, he asserts. Oberman's evaluation is that "this conception of necessity can become the basis of a doctrine of coefficientcy according to which God works supremely, but in such a way that the freedom of will is maintained."¹⁴

Yet the objection was raised against Bradwardine that since God wills sin, God is responsible for it. However, Bradwardine teaches that God wills sin, not in the sense that God wants sin as an anarchist wants lawlessness to cover the land. Rather God wants sin to be, even as God wants natural disasters to occur. The sin committed by man is not the end or goal of God when God wills that sin will occur. Sin is rather the means God uses to accomplish another goal, and that, a good one.

Bradwardine presents a number of arguments to prove that God uses sin for a good purpose. First of all, this belongs to the perfection of God's sovereignty. That is, "God's sovereignty is much more perfect when it extends over the good *and* the evil than over the good."¹⁵ Secondly, Romans 8:28 teaches that God uses all things for good to the elect. This "all things" would necessarily include sin. Thirdly, Bradwardine teaches that sin, by way of contrast, accentuates the beauty of the good in this life. In this connection, he refers to the beauty of the star, which beauty appears only in the darkness of night. Fourthly, God wills sin as a punishment for previous sins.¹⁶

13. *Omnia quae eveniunt de necessitate eveniunt*. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 27, p. 704 ff., quoted in Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 76.

14. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 76.

15. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 131.

16. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 131-132.

Gordon Leff is highly critical of Bradwardine's doctrine of God's sovereignty. He writes:

By means of His will, Bradwardine eliminates any autonomous activity on the part of God's creatures; the divine and the created become merged; the barrier between the natural and the supernatural is overlaid by the sheer physical presence of divine power amidst His creatures. Duns Scotus, through this theory of God's will as knowledge, drew a more exalted picture of man as a consequence. Bradwardine, on the other hand, uses this concept to depress the merits and powers of His creatures: God's presence everywhere, far from exalting them, is a measure of their dependence upon Him. They have nothing in their own right; God alone is their *raison d'etre*.¹⁷

In *The Cause of God*, not only does Bradwardine explicitly reject determinism, he refutes it. Nonetheless, Leff maintains that Bradwardine's theology is essentially determinism. He is convinced that Bradwardine leaves man with no freedom. Again, Leff writes:

God has a triple relation to His creatures, as their cause (efficient, formal and final), as their conservator, and as the senior co-actor in all that they do. Bradwardine has by these tenets fashioned so strong an instrument of divine power that its application leaves no room for the slightest freedom in the actions of his creatures. God's activity, by the principle of divine participation, has been extended into the whole of creation.¹⁸

Leff virtually ridicules Bradwardine's efforts to solve the tension between God's sovereignty over sin and man's freedom as a thinking and willing creature who is responsible for his own sins. He concludes:

Bradwardine seems finally to be caught in his own system. The delicate balance established between sin and God's will is too precarious to maintain. As the work proceeds, sin comes more and more within the area of God's will, so that in these latter references God is *causa actus peccati*. The route to this position is hesitant and (almost) illicit. From the first, the

17. Leff, *Pelagians*, pp. 46-47.

18. Leff, *Pelagians*, p. 52.

conflicting tenets allow of no satisfactory explanation; and Bradwardine turns now to one door, now to another, like a man who has become imprisoned in his own house. We miss the incisive progress from position to position; and the final words of Chapter 34 seem almost a relieved admission that he has tried his best and that he can say no more: "I would prefer on so important a question to hear the great rather than, as one so small, reply."¹⁹

It is telling that while Leff sees this conclusion very nearly as an admission of failure, Oberman views it as evidence of Bradwardine's humility. Oberman correctly concludes that Bradwardine "has succeeded in not making God the author of evil, in spite of pressing the divine operation in the deep of sin very far. It should, however, be admitted that he does not make it easy for critics to believe in his orthodoxy."²⁰

This significant issue, namely, God's sovereignty over sin and man's culpability for his sins, is a question with which theologians have struggled for centuries. It is impossible to arrive at a complete solution with all the details fixed. At some point the believer must admit that he cannot penetrate farther into the mystery. Such an admission is not due to a failure in the theological system. Rather it is due to the fact that man cannot comprehend the ways of God. He can set forth the truth of the Bible that God is sovereign over all; that God cannot sin; that man is guilty for his sins. The theologian may go as far as he can to give a rational explanation to these truths. However, at some point he is forced to stop and admit that he can go no farther, as did Bradwardine.

In this respect, Bradwardine is not different from Augustine. Augustine did not face the question in the same form. His concern was the sovereign right and power of God to change one sinner and not another. How was it that God worked in a man the will to believe, and yet did not override the freedom of man? Augustine answers, "Now, should any man be for constraining us to examine into this profound mystery, why this person is so persuaded as to yield, and that person is not, there are only two things occurring to me, which I should like to advance as my answer: 'O the depth of the riches!' and 'Is there unrighteousness with

19. Leff, *Pelagians*, pp. 64-65.

20. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 133.

God?" And then Augustine concludes with what his English disciple may well have been consciously imitating, "If the man is displeased with such an answer, he must seek more learned disputants; but let him beware lest he find presumptuous ones."²¹

Bradwardine obviously did not shrink back from maintaining the absolute sovereignty of God over all, including the sins of men.

This insistence on God's sovereignty Bradwardine maintains in the doctrines of salvation, starting with a vigorous defense of sovereign, absolute, double predestination. He grieves that "those pestiferous Pelagians deny predestination."²² In a prayer included in the *Cause of God*, Bradwardine describes the folly of the Pelagians.

Yet I know, O Lord, I know, and it is not without grief that I tell Thee, that there are certain proud Pelagians, who prefer to trust in man, and so in themselves. For they say that if God can elect or damn a man nobody has any certainty. But, they add, we can have certainty if predestination and damnation depends on our free will, and we alone are free masters of our deeds without God; then we shall prosper and only then can we trust and hope.

O, vain children of men...²³

The issue Bradwardine faces is twofold. First, what is the relation of predestination to foreknowledge? And secondly, what is the relation of predestination to works? The answer of the Pelagians of Bradwardine's day to the first question is the same given by the Semi-Pelagians of the fifth century – namely, that predestination is based on God's foreknowledge. God elected based on His foreknowledge of the faith and works that men do. That brings in the second question, and the answer of Bradwardine's opponents is that predestination is based on the works that men do.

21. Augustine, "On the Spirit and the Letter" Chap. 60, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, vol. V. Philip Schaff, ed. (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1991), p. 111.

22. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book III, Chap. 1, p. 637, quoted in *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine*, H. A. Oberman, p. 29.

23. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book II, Chap. 34, p. 360, quoted in *Archbishop Thomas Bradwardine*, H. A. Oberman, p. 122.

Hence one of the first tasks Bradwardine faces is to define the foreknowledge of God and to determine the extent of it. Not unexpectedly, Bradwardine maintains that the knowledge of God is both absolute and determinative. He writes, "It is certain, that God has a knowledge of all things present, of things past, and of things to come: which knowledge is supremely actual, particular, distinct, and infallible."²⁴ God's knowledge is not dependent on the creature, nor does God obtain His knowledge of all things as men do. God is omniscient and knows His creatures eternally. Bradwardine teaches that if God be dependent for His knowledge on His creatures, then God is neither the highest nor the first.²⁵ But, he insists, "God himself is the first and the last, the beginning and the end."²⁶ In fact, he avers that "the knowledge of God is a cause of the thing known and not *vice versa*."²⁷ Bradwardine agrees with Augustine that "God knew all his creatures both corporeal and incorporeal, not because they exist; but they therefore exist, because he knew them," adding this significant address to God: "No incident can possibly arise which thou didst not expect and foresee, who knowest all things: and every created nature is what it is, in consequence of thy knowing it as such."²⁸ Obviously, the reason why God has this knowledge is simply because God is sovereign and what God wills eternally is what happens.

This is significant for the question of the relationship of foreknowledge and predestination. For Bradwardine, they are one and the same. God's foreknowing the people He would bring to heaven is due to the fact that God wills it, and will accomplish it.

Fully in harmony with that, Bradwardine rejects the notion that

24. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 6, p. 181, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, pp. 107-108.

25. Toplady, *Works*, p. 108, based on Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 15, pp. 214, 215.

26. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 15, p. 217, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 108.

27. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 15, p. 215, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 108.

28. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 15, pp. 217, 218, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, pp. 108, 109.

predestination is in any way based on the works of men. On the contrary, Bradwardine maintains that predestination is the cause of the grace that men receive. Oberman notes that this is the “the main motif of his doctrine of predestination: predestination does not happen on account of human works, but on account of the gracious will of God.”²⁹

Leff indicates that Bradwardine faces all the arguments in that regard.

Bradwardine rejects in turn Cassian’s solution that God gives grace to some without preceding merit and to others only if they have merited it; the semi-Pelagian plea of making merit the ground for grace; the theory that men can prepare themselves for grace and that then God will freely award them grace; and finally that consent by man to God’s grace is the cause of his conferring grace.³⁰

Since Bradwardine has firmly established that God is sovereign, also as creator and redeemer, he does not need much additional evidence to reject the notion that man merits election. He points out that if God saved not graciously but based on some cause outside of himself, that would mean that God’s foreknowledge was not certain, but that is impossible.³¹ Bradwardine also uses Ephesians 1 to demonstrate that election is all of grace, for there would be no praise and thanksgiving to God for election if it were based on man’s works.

Bradwardine defines predestination as “God’s prevolition, or predetermination of his will, respecting what shall come to pass.”³² He does not limit that predetermination of God to the final state of men. He includes all that the future holds. Bradwardine teaches that there are two aspects of this predestination. The first includes all that God has determined for the man’s life on earth, including grace, merits, and wiping out of sins in the present. Everything God determined eternally for the elect

29. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 115.

30. Leff, *Pelagians*, pp. 69-70.

31. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 115, citing Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 35, p. 310.

32. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 14, p. 421, quoted in Toplady, *Works*, p. 112.

He brings to pass. The second aspect of predestination has to do with the future life, and includes glory and reward. The two fit together in that the life of each elect person is intended to bring him to glory and the specific reward God had determined for him.

Bradwardine maintains that predestination is of two kinds (*gemina*), that is, election *and* reprobation. Here Bradwardine faces fiercer battles. As is true today, so also in the fourteenth century, many fancied themselves follows of Augustine because they maintained a doctrine of election of one form or another. Reprobation is another matter. If it be allowed as a doctrine at all, surely (so the enemies of reprobation declare) it must be maintained that reprobation is based on the evil works of men. God rejects the guilty. If it be unfair and cruel to harm someone without provocation or just cause, does not reprobation ascribe to God injustice and cruelty? Would a just God reprobate and predestine anyone "to eternal fire unless it were done on the account of preceding guilt"?³³

Bradwardine, however, did not compromise on this cardinal truth of sovereign, unconditional, double predestination. He writes plainly, "All those to be saved or damned ... he willed from eternity to be saved or damned, ... and this by no means by a conditional or indeterminate will, but by his absolute and determinate will."³⁴ In order to demonstrate that God is just, Bradwardine carefully distinguishes, on the one hand, the reason for reprobation, namely, God's sovereign, unconditional decree, and, on the other hand, the basis for the reprobate being punished. He writes, "God ... punished no one apart from his own temporally preceding and eternally lasting fault (*culpa*); however, God did not

33. Bradwardine, *De Causa Dei*, trans. by Paul L. Nyhus in *Forerunners of the Reformation; The Shape of Late Medieval Thought Illustrated by Key Documents*, Heiko August Oberman (ed.), New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966, p.151, summarizing one of the arguments of his day against predestination.

34. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, chap. 23, p. 240, Quoted in Donald W. Sinnema, *The Issue of Reprobation at the Synod of Dort (1618-19) in Light of the History of this Document*, Doctoral Thesis in Historical Theology; submitted to the faculty of Theology, University of St. Michael's College (Toronto School of Theology), Toronto, 1985, pp. 31-32.

eternally reprobate anyone on account of fault, as a cause antecedently moving the divine will, but on account of certain final causes.”³⁵

Let the enemies of the truth marshal their arguments (and they did). Bradwardine is ready. They point out that John 1 states, “He gave them power to become the sons of God” and conclude that, since it is by predestination and grace that men become sons of God, “this lies within their own free power and occurs in no other way than by merits acceptable to God.”³⁶ This text, he replies, teaches the opposite. The text obviously says that those referred to in John “did not make themselves sons of God. God does this.”³⁷ He then proceeds to quote church fathers and philosophers to refute their claim, making heaviest use of Augustine.

Another argument claims that on the basis of the Psalm 69, “Let them [the sinners] be blotted out of the book of the living; let them not be enrolled among the righteous,” it is plain that the works of men merit their being reprobated. Bradwardine notes first how impossible is that interpretation.

If this is understood with superficial literalness, we must concede that predestination and reprobation are subject to change; it would imply that someone who was previously elected and not reprobated is now reprobated and not elected. If someone can at any time be erased from the book of the living, this contradicts everything which previously has been shown.³⁸

Then Bradwardine presents the proper interpretation, presenting Augustine’s supporting exposition – “Brethren, let us not take this to mean that God would have enrolled someone in the book of life and then erased him out of the book....”³⁹

35. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 47, p. 441, Quoted in Sinnema, *Reprobation*, p. 32.

36. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 151.

37. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 154.

38. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 158.

39. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 158.

Quoting the fathers – ancient and medieval – and expounding the Scriptures, Bradwardine boldly sets forth the truth. Interestingly, he teaches that God has a deeper purpose in reprobation than the mere destruction of the reprobate, namely that they serve the good of the elect. Oberman summarizes the profit for the elect:

1. For the profit of the elect, as in them God's power is revealed.
2. To keep the elect on the path of the law: with fear and trembling they will work out their salvation.
3. So that now the elect also learn to be thankful for the particular grace granted to them.⁴⁰

Bradwardine insists that “because [God] chooses to predestine and create one of His creatures for the service of another creature,” that removes from God the charge of being cruel or unjust. Adding, “This is particularly true, since He punishes no man with eternal damnation unless such a man deserves it, that is to say, unless through his sins he deservedly and justly requires eternal punishment.”⁴¹

And yet, that is not the final word. Bradwardine is quick to point out that the purpose of predestination is exactly the exaltation of God's name. God created and predestined both elect and reprobate “for His own service, praise and glory.”⁴²

Bradwardine ends where he began – God is sovereign. He writes that,

since God is omnipotent, completely free Lord of His whole creation, whose will alone is the most righteous law for all creation—if He should eternally punish the innocent, particularly since He does it for the perfection of the universe, for the profit of others, and for the honor of God Himself, who would presume to dispute with Him, to contradict Him, or ask, “Why do you do this?” I firmly believe, no one! “Has the potter no

40. Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 115.

41. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 163.

42. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 163.

right over the clay to make of the same lump one vessel for honor and another for menial use?"⁴³

Anyone who maintains sovereign predestination will inevitably face the charge that this doctrine eliminates the need for preaching the gospel to all. Bradwardine heads off the charge. He insists that "God instructs all to come to Christ, not so that all will come, but because otherwise no one would come."⁴⁴ In fact, he asserts that "God operates in the heart of man with that call...not that they hear the gospel in vain, but thus the hearer is converted and believes."⁴⁵

... to be continued ●

43. Bradwardine, *Cause*, in *Key Documents*, p. 164.

44. *Omnes Deus docet venire ad Christum, non quia omnes veniunt, sed quia nemo aliter venit.* Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 35, p. 310, quoted in Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 116.

45. *Dues operatur in cordibus hominum vocatione illa ... non ut inaniter audiant Evangelium, sed eo audito convertantur et credant.*" Bradwardine, *Cause*, Book I, Chap. 38, p. 319, quoted in Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 148.

46. Bradwardine, *Cause*, Preface p. 1, quoted in Oberman, *Archbishop Bradwardine*, p. 28.

Book Reviews

For Thy Truth's Sake: A Doctrinal History of the Protestant Reformed Churches, by Herman Hanko. Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 2000. 541 pp. \$39.95 (hardcover). [Reviewed by Thomas C. Miersma.]

In connection with the seventy-fifth anniversary of the denomination, the 1997 Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches requested Professor Herman Hanko to write a doctrinal history of the PRC. This book is the result of that request. The emphasis in that request was on the doctrinal development within the PRC in its history, and that is also the focus of the book.

This focus shapes the book in several ways. The book is not a denominational history. Rather, the history is treated briefly and consistently from the viewpoint of the doctrinal issues involved. Professor Hanko addresses the various controversies through which the churches have passed, but with a view to understanding the doctrinal issues which arose and the development of doctrine which took place. This does not mean that the book is not useful also as a starting point to learn of that history. The

interested student seeking to locate more detailed historical material will find the book is well footnoted and documented. The book focuses, however, on the doctrinal distinctives of the PRC.

That such a book should be considered or written at all is itself significant. No church or denomination stands still in the truth of God's Word. There is either growth or decline, either spiritual development in the truth or spiritual drift from the truth in the life of the church. Addressing such an issue as the doctrinal history of a denomination calls for a certain measure of spiritual reflection on where the Lord has led. At the same time, it is also an occasion to set forth what are the doctrinal distinctives and unique doctrinal development which gives the reason for existence as churches.

In harmony with this expressed purpose, the book is not intended as a general treatment of Reformed doctrine but to set forth the doctrinal distinctives of the PRC as they have developed over the seventy-five years of our history. To accomplish this, Professor Hanko has organized the material along the lines of both its historical development and the doctrinal con-

cepts involved. In doing so it is the doctrinal concepts which have the preeminent position. The effect of this is that he often traces the doctrine through its later historical development in the churches to the present and then returns to the history. As Herman Hoeksema was the central theologian of the churches throughout most of that history, this book also, in many respects, traces his theological development and thought in various areas. While such an approach disrupts the historical flow of the book somewhat, it serves to set forth the doctrinal concepts with greater clarity.

The book is divided into five parts. The first section treats the roots of the denomination in both the Netherlands and North America and the doctrinal issues which were behind that history. In the second section Professor Hanko treats the origin of the churches and the doctrinal issues which formed the early concern of the churches. In treating this material, he presents the battle for particular grace over against common grace and the well-meant offer. He also addresses the issue of the autonomy of the local church, which has formed an important part of the history of the PRC.

The third section, both the most extensive and in many ways the most significant element of the

book, treats issues which are often overlooked, but which are distinctive to the Protestant Reformed Churches. In it Professor Hanko deals with the positive development in the truth which has taken place along the lines of particular grace. The material included in this section is scattered throughout our writings, and Professor Hanko has done the churches a great service in bringing it together into one place. In this section he discusses miracles and God's providence, revelation, the doctrine of Scripture, the antithesis, our confessional approach to doctrine, the organic idea, and the organic development of sin.

The PRC have a distinctive world and life view founded on their view of the covenant and rooted in their commitment to sovereign particular grace. That viewpoint cannot be fully apprehended, however, merely by treating their view of the covenant. It must be put in the context of the organic idea as it embraces the doctrine of the covenant, the doctrine of the antithesis, and the development of sin. The doctrines of providence, revelation, and Scripture also shape that world and life view. At the heart of it is the organic idea. Professor Hanko reflects on both the difficulty of this concept and its importance. He writes, "The importance of the term 'organic' in

PR theology cannot be denied. Nevertheless the difficulty of describing precisely what PR theologians meant by this term is great” (p. 233). He then points out that its frequent use often assumes a “knowledge and understanding of the term on the part of readers” (p. 233). He also mentions that it is used in many different connections and in different ways in our churches. In this he is correct. The organic idea in the PRC stands over against the false individualism and mechanical conceptions which fragment God’s works and His grace and which pervade much of modern Reformed thought. Professor Hanko, having noted its importance, then proceeds to explain the concept and meaning of the term.

Speaking as one who grew up outside the PRC, and with roots in the split in 1953, I can say that the organic idea, as it pervades the whole of PRC theology, impressed me when I first came across it as one of the most striking concepts in PR thinking. In a world of Reformed thought rooted in two-track theology, with its lack of unity and doctrinal fragmentation of grace, the organic idea is distinctive to the PRC. Speaking as a missionary for the PRC, I can also say that it is one of the most difficult concepts to grasp, exactly because of its pervasive character in all PR writings.

It is also one of the most important. The organic idea is rooted in the unity of God, of His decrees and purpose, and the unity of His particular grace and work in Christ. For one coming from outside the PRC, it is both an illuminating truth and one that involves, in very real terms, looking at doctrine in a new way, from the viewpoint of its essential living unity. The treatment of this subject alone makes Professor Hanko’s book an extremely valuable one. This does not mean he exhausts the subject, but he does an excellent job of outlining the basic idea of the concept and showing its application to various areas of PR thinking and providing references for further study.

The fourth section of the book addresses the doctrine of the covenant, which is absolutely crucial in the life of our churches. In a sense this fourth section is the application of the principles developed in the third section. Professor Hanko treats the doctrine of the covenant as it was understood at the time of the beginning of the Protestant Reformed Churches, as doctrine developed in their history, and as it underlay the split in the denomination in the 1950s. The role of our contacts with Dr. Klaas Schilder, the “Declaration of Principles,” and the subsequent controversy in 1953 are discussed in this section. He carefully lays out

the doctrine itself in its various relationships. The idea of the covenant, its relation to election, and its bearing on the children of believers are all discussed. Moreover, Professor Hanko manages to treat this important and sometimes difficult subject in a way which makes it readily accessible to the layman as well as the theologian. Appropriately, the Protestant Reformed view of divorce and remarriage is also treated in this section.

The fifth section, entitled "concluding considerations," treats various areas of additional development along the lines of the loci of dogmatics. This is a brief section but points the reader to areas for further profitable study.

Overall the book is written in such a way that, although it treats sometimes difficult concepts and doctrinal issues, these subjects are made clear and understandable. Professor Hanko has accomplished no easy task of writing a book about difficult issues and making them simple, without oversimplifying them. This makes the book valuable for young people as well as adults, that our children might know the heritage God has given us. It makes the book valuable also as an introduction to the Protestant Reformed Churches, to those seeking to understand what the Protestant Reformed Churches are doctrinally, and how they differ from other

Reformed churches. This, combined with the overall treatment of the doctrinal development of the PRC, makes this book a very valuable tool on the mission field. It is also a resource for anyone who wishes to understand the doctrinal distinctives of the PRC. Finally, the book is a good starting point for further study and research, as well as a useful reference work on the issues treated. I wish I had had this book twenty-five years ago, when I was combing PRC writings to find what was unique about the PRC, and in my own struggle for understanding when I first came back to the PRC. Professor Hanko has managed to bring together a wide diversity of material from PR writings into one place, for which, otherwise, one must search widely and then try to piece the material together.

Professor Hanko is to be commended for the accomplishment of a very difficult task and undertaking. He has given the Protestant Reformed Churches a valuable summary of their rich doctrinal heritage. This is a book which should be in every Protestant Reformed household and read in families, also by older young people. The truths set forth in it are very really ones for which our spiritual forefathers fought and suffered. ■

Charismatic Confusion, by William Goode. Trelawnyd, North Wales: K & M Books, Publisher, 2000. Pp. 400. \$30.00US which includes postage. [Reviewed by Herman C. Hanko.]

William Goode was an early nineteenth century theologian in the Church of England. He wrote this book in its original form as a response to, what the editor calls, the Irvingite delusion, which was a forerunner of the modern Pentecostal and Charismatic Movement. The sub-title of the book explains its contents: "The Modern Claims to the Possession of the Extraordinary Gifts of the Spirit Stated and Examined." K & M Books has given us a reprint of the second edition of Goode's book, which contains an appendix in which Irving's doctrinal errors are pointed out, chiefly his error of denying the sinlessness of our Lord's human nature. In this appendix Goode shows that this vicious error of Irving, who was so closely associated with the entire Charismatic movement, is destructive of the entire Christian faith.

William Goode has written a book which is surprisingly relevant to our modern times when the charismatic movement has made its inroads into most denominations throughout the world. It is, there-

fore, a valuable book to have, to read, to study, and to use in the church's ongoing apologetic against the charismatic movement.

The book contains a brief biography of William Goode, and a history of the Irvingite Movement. Although Irving is considered the father of all Pentecostalism, the book reminds us that we ought to remember that his views were condemned by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, and that he is branded for all time as a heretic.

The material of the book, however, is given over to a description of the movement which Irving founded. It gives careful descriptions of what is meant by speaking in tongues, ecstasies, prophecies, and miracles. These claims of the Charismatics are carefully refuted. They are shown to be contrary to Scriptural teaching. The arguments that the evidences of the Holy Spirit ceased soon after the apostolic age is made in a convincing way. It is demonstrated that Pentecostal teaching is closely associated with extra-biblical revelation. The book also demonstrates how the entire charismatic movement has been plagued by false doctrine.

On the other hand, these phenomena, such as tongue-speaking, are explained as being partly psychological phenomena, and the pos-

sibility is opened that these phenomena are, at least partly, Satanic.

Probably the greatest value of the book is its historical material. Goode traces history carefully as he points out that the phenomena of the charismatic movement began in the early church and reappeared over and over again throughout the ages. In every instance, however, these movements stood outside the orthodox church of Christ and were condemned by the decisions of the church and the writings of orthodox theologians. From early Montanism, through medieval mysticism, on into Reformation and post-Reformation Anabaptism, the church has stood solidly opposed to every form of it. All the data which the author has collected are bolstered with copious quotes from contemporary sources. This material alone makes the book worth the price.

What is particularly interesting is that the similarity between the charismatic movement and revivalism is brought out by the book. The bizarre behavior and ecstasies of those under the influence of the Holy Spirit at the time of revival are little different from the same strange phenomena in the charismatic movement.

This similarity is especially brought out in the third appendix in which the author charges Martyn

Lloyd-Jones with opening the door to Pentecostalism with his own emphasis on and longing for revival.

The appendices are excellent additions to the book. The first appendix was added by William Goode himself in the second edition of his book. It is an important description of the error of Mr. Irving in teaching that Christ took on a sinful nature.

The last three appendices were added by Nick Needham, who also wrote the introduction to William Goode, and by Alan Howe. These are also interesting and valuable. The first of these appendices traces the modern charismatic movement from its roots in the holiness movement of Methodism and its roots in the doctrine of divine healing to the Azusa St. "outpouring of the Spirit," which is supposed to be the real beginning of modern Pentecostalism. The path this movement took is followed to the Latter Rain Movement and the Toronto Blessing, more recent manifestations of the same thing. It is filled with valuable information. The second appendix of these last three gives brief biographies of many men who opposed the charismatic movement, along with some of their arguments. And the third of these last appendices describes the spread

of the movement, the role of Martyn Lloyd-Jones in this spread, and its relation to revivalism.

All in all, K & M Books has given us a valuable addition to the literature on the Charismatic movement.

It is hoped that many of our readers will buy the book. It can be

obtained from:

K&M Books
Plas Wyn
Trelawnyd LL18 6DT
North Wales
e-mail address:
<MRKimmitt@aol.com>



Marriage the Mystery of Christ and the Church, by David Engelsma, Grandville, Michigan, The Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1998. 239 pages, \$24.95 (hardcover). [Reviewed by Arie denHartog.]

This book is the second edition of a previously published one by the same title. We are thankful for the effort which Professor Engelsma put forth to publish this second edition. This edition is a major expansion of the first one. Its expansion is mainly a part two section on the history of the church regarding its position on marriage and divorce and remarriage. We will comment on each of the two sections of this excellent book.

The first section of this book is essentially the same as the first edition. The chapters of this section are printed copies of the sermons Engelsma preached during his years of being pastor of the South Holland Protestant Reformed

Church in South Holland, Illinois. I have personally used this book as a pastor for pre-marriage counseling many times in connection with marriage ceremonies I have been asked to perform. Over the years this has given me deep appreciation for Engelsma's book. The chief point of excellence of this book is that it is based on careful and incisive biblical exegesis. Such exegesis gives any sermon its real power and decisive authority. This is reflected in the book. Over the years I have, by the grace of God, learned more and more the truth that there is no better marriage counseling manual than the Scriptures. The Bible has much to say about marriage because of the great importance of marriage in God's purpose and for His church. The reason why Engelsma's book is so helpful is because it clearly, forcefully, and decisively states what God's Word says concerning marriage. This book is not a discussion of humanistic psychology on mar-

riage. It is not even a book of human wisdom with the addition of teaching of Scripture interspersed. Engelsma does not dwell on the results of surveys taken to come to certain conclusions about how we should live in marriage. The church does not need that. God's people do not need that. To begin marriage truly in the Lord, God's people need the plain, simple, and sound teaching of the Word of God for their marriages.

Engelsma writes as a pastor. His book is a collection of sermons. There is a great advantage to this. The author does not present abstract teaching. He speaks as a pastor to the heart and life of the people of God, members of the church. Engelsma then gives biblical counsel concerning the tremendously important subjects relating to marriage.

The main contention of the book is the author's firm conviction that according to the Word of God marriage is a lifelong, unbreakable bond of love and faithfulness between husband and wife. This bond was established by God Himself and therefore cannot be broken by man. God alone can dissolve this bond by death. It is this beautiful and wonderful aspect of marriage that according to Scripture especially makes Christian marriage a reflection of the faithful covenant love of Christ for His church.

The inescapable and necessary consequence of this position is that adultery is a grievous sin not only against one's marriage partner but also against God. Putting away one's partner is forbidden by the Word of God except in the case of fornication. Separation between husband and wife is allowed by God in the case of fornication on the part of one of the partners in marriage. But fornication, though a grievous and evil act of man against the covenant of marriage, does not dissolve the marriage covenant made essentially by God Himself. Only God can and does break the bond of marriage through the death of one of the partners.

A further consequence of this position is that all remarriage of divorced persons is forbidden by the Word of God. Remarriage of the guilty party in the case of fornication is clearly adultery. It involves the guilty party in a life of continual adultery with a man or woman with whom the party is not married in the eyes of God, in spite of the fact that he or she might have gone through a ceremony sanctioned by the law of the land. The church must call those in such a life to repentance, for this is the only way of forgiveness and receiving the mercy of God. This is true for this sin, as it is for all sin.

Engelsma shows by his typical incisive exegesis of the ex-

tremely crucial passage found in Matthew 19, that it is the teaching of God's Word that also the innocent party, when there is "divorce" because of adultery, is forbidden by the Word of God to marry again. The reason why the innocent party is forbidden by the Word of God to marry again is clearly because in the sight of God the original marriage is still intact.

This latter teaching of the Word of God is a hard teaching. The Lord Himself recognized that. The disciples to whom the Lord explained this truth of God found it to be a hard teaching. Every minister of the Word of God who is solemnly obligated to maintain the teaching of the Word of God on marriage will at times in his ministry learn how very hard this teaching is, especially when he deals pastorally with truly innocent parties in the tragedy of the break up of a marriage. This tragedy is made even far more grievous when one of the partners in marriage is unfaithful to his or her partner through the vile and treacherous sin of fornication and adultery.

The first comment that must be made in regard to the hardness of this teaching is this, that it is the clear and simple truth of the Word of God. The second comment is that as difficult as this teaching may be, especially to those who

suffer as innocent parties as a result of the evil treachery of sin in marriage when there is a divorce, this is nevertheless the good Word of God for marriage. It is the good Word of God for marriage because it was given to guard, protect, and preserve the marriages of God's people from the untold suffering and anguish that results from the corruption of marriage by the evil of men. There is mercy from God for those who faithfully maintain His Word in a very difficult circumstance in life.

Finally, in this regard, it is the contention of Engelsma in this book, and we wholeheartedly agree, that marriage is a beautiful reflection of the love and faithfulness of Christ for His church exactly on the point that marriage is according to God's ordination a lifelong, unbreakable bond of faithfulness and love between husband and wife. We thank Professor Engelsma for his extensive, bold, and courageous efforts in defending the teaching of the Word of God also in the publication of the second edition of his book.

The teaching of the Word of God on marriage is contradicted, opposed, and even hated in our modern-day world, not only by the so called outside world, but also by much of the modern-day church. Our age is one of lawlessness on

marriage. Our age is one of abounding adultery and immoral lust, and shameless debauchery. Engelsma has a whole chapter in this book about this tragic reality of our times. Many churches are more and more becoming silent on the condemnation of adultery and the condemnation of divorce. This is so obvious that no one can deny it. The consequences of the refusal of the church to uphold the Word of God concerning marriage are so great that it is no exaggeration to say that this evil is one of the chief factors that has led to the ruin of many churches and of many homes and families.

As one surveys the history of the church, one comes across much compromise on the teaching of God's Word on marriage, sometimes even by otherwise stalwarts of the faith. The Reformed churches, tracing their history, do not have a tradition that was always faithful to maintain the Word of God on marriage. Engelsma demonstrates this in the second section of the new edition of this book. The second section of the book is an excellent survey of the teaching of the church in history in explaining and defending God's Word concerning marriage. Many interesting points are made in this section from church history that are well worth reading about in this book.

Several conclusions are made

from this historical survey. Though many indeed compromised God's Word on the subject of marriage in the history of the church, nevertheless, from the time of the early church fathers, God has raised up faithful witnesses to His Word in His church through all ages. The author of this book has great appreciation for the testimony of church history, something which is entirely proper for a Reformed believer. Even given this appreciation however, the final stand of the church must be on the infallible and unchanging authority of the Word of God. The historical survey given in this book shows how compromise on the teaching of the Word of God on marriage has again and again led to lawlessness in the church world regarding marriage. This lawlessness has led to the great tragedy of the prevalence of divorce in the church and even of the silence of the church on the gross sin of adultery.

Our prayer is that this book may be of help to many pastors and people of God to uphold the important truth of the Word of God regarding marriage so that there might be still be many marriages in the church of the Lord that truly reflect the beauty of the Lord's love and faithfulness to His church. ■

Southern Presbyterian Leaders 1683 - 1911, by Henry Alexander White. Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2000. Pp. 476. \$26.99 (cloth). [Reviewed by David J. Engelsma.]

This reprint of a book originally published in 1911 provides sketches of the life and labor of many ministers and theologians of the Southern Presbyterian Church from its founding to about 1900. One chapter near the end of the book briefly describes the church work of ruling elders Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson, Daniel Harvey Hill, and Thomas R. R. Cobb.

Especially one who is not himself from this tradition will come to appreciate the Southern Presbyterian Church in the time of its soundness and vigor and to honor the work of the Spirit in that church. The southern church was graced with gifted, hard-working ministers, selfless missionaries both at home and abroad, great theologians, and towering intellects. Included, of course, were Alexander, Thornwell, Dabney, Breckinridge, and Girardeau. But there were many other good and great men of God, e.g., John Leighton Wilson, who toiled for some 18 years as a missionary in Africa and who then guided the Presbyterians in the

South through the hard times of Reconstruction. To Wilson's personal godliness, Robert Dabney gave eloquent testimony: "Every one was certain of the purity of his aims. Always modest and conciliatory, yet he was perfectly candid and manly. He practiced no arts nor policies, but relied solely upon the appeals of facts and reasoning to the consciences of his brethren" (pp. 407, 408).

Among these men of the South were the founders of the great colleges and seminaries in the South. The sketches give an account of the founding of these institutions of learning. They usually began small and poor. They invariably began on the foundation of the Word of God. At his inauguration as the first president of Davidson College in North Carolina, Robert Hall Morrison declared:

Religious instruction is not only important, but *indispensable* in education. Religious instruction should be held where God has placed it as *paramount* to everything else. The Bible must be supreme in seats of learning, if their moral atmosphere is to be kept pure. Learning should be imbued with the spirit of heaven to give it moral power.... Education without moral principle only gives men intelligence

to do evil. Let any system of education prevail which renounces God and disowns the Bible and how long would magistrates be honored, parents obeyed, truth spoken, property safe or life secure? (p. 269)

Along the way, the reader learns of the age-old and never-ending struggle in southern Presbyterianism to keep Arminianism out of the southern church. The code name for the party that propounded that heresy was "New School." The orthodox were called "Old School." The author describes the theology of the New School as a "modified Calvinism." He adds, significantly: "They neglected the Westminster Confession by not requiring young ministers at their ordination to accept it" (pp. 228, 229). When in 1837 the united Presbyterian Church in the United States expelled four entire New School synods, four southern ministers, one northern minister, and two elders made up the committee that advised the General Assembly to condemn the New School errors and cut off the offending synods. In the end, the southern church failed to maintain its condemnation of Arminianism. In 1864, the Southern Presbyterian Church welcomed back the New School Presbyterians of the South. Robert L. Dabney took a leading role in the reunion, which raises ques-

tions about the firmness of Dabney's stand against Arminianism.

The Civil War looms large in the book. The southern view of the war and the issues in that war prevails. Benjamin Morgan Palmer thought that the "religion and patriotism [of the South] demanded resistance to the wild fanaticism of the abolitionists who were seeking to make a wreck of the best civilization on the earth—that of the Southern States" (p. 369). The position of the southern church on slavery was that, although it is an effect of sin in the world, slavery is not inherently sinful, since Scripture does not condemn and forbid it, but rather regulates it. The book makes plain that the ministers of the southern church exerted themselves mightily and admirably to evangelize the slaves and educate them in the Word of God.

These sketches say almost nothing about the theology of the southern leaders. This lack is supplied by such a book as Morton H. Smith's *Studies in Southern Presbyterian Theology*.

A reviewer of *Southern Presbyterian Leaders* would be remiss if he did not include in his review the following anecdote from the life of James Henley Thornwell.

One Sunday morning ... after he had been preaching for an hour and a half, he stopped suddenly,

looked at his watch and made an apology by saying that he had not been conscious of taking so much time. "Go on! Go on!"

This was the exclamation heard from every part of the house. He continued to preach, therefore, an hour longer (p. 313). ■

The Holy Spirit: Works & Gifts, by Donald G. Bloesch. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000. 415 pp. \$24.99 (cloth) [Reviewed by David J. Engelsma.]

The bulk of this fifth volume of Donald Bloesch's projected seven-volume systematic theology is devoted to a historical study of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit in the church. This is also the book's main value for the Reformed reader. Much of the book is a wide-ranging account of the views of the Spirit held by the church and her theologians in the past and in the present. As with the preceding volumes, the reader will benefit from Bloesch's erudition. Bloesch knows the theological territory. He writes with precision and clarity.

The first three chapters are introductory, setting the stage with a consideration of the doctrine of the Spirit in contemporary discussion and with an overview of biblical teaching on the Spirit. Then follow six chapters in which

Bloesch examines the doctrine of the early church, the Reformation, post-Reformation movements, the cults, Pentecostalism, and contemporary theologians. Of special interest to this reviewer are the treatments of the mystics, the Reformation, and such post-Reformation movements as Puritanism and pietism.

Regarding Puritanism and Pietism, Bloesch makes the significant observation that these movements were inclined to "find the source of our certainty in the faith experience rather than in God's promises in holy Scripture (as with Luther and Calvin)." This would explain why churches that are strongly influenced by Puritanism and Pietism are plagued by doubt. Still more ominous is Bloesch's analysis of Pietism: "A more serious problem with Pietism was its synergistic theology in which we cooperate with preventive or preparatory grace in coming to a saving knowledge of God in Christ" (p. 32).

The last two chapters are Bloesch's own theology of the Holy Spirit and His work.

Bloesch intends to develop an evangelical theology. Indeed, he claims to be a Reformed theologian. This accounts for statements, now and again, that have the ring of Reformation orthodoxy. But the evangelical theology of Donald Bloesch is wide open to traditions and teachings that are opposed to the gospel of salvation by grace alone as recovered by the Reformation. Bloesch's theology incorporates the doctrines of virtually all branches of Christendom: Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, Arminianism, liberalism, and the charismatic movement. Bloesch cannot, or will not, say no. The *ne plus ultra* of this openness to everything religious must be Bloesch's statement that "theologically Mormonism is close to being a cult" (p. 156).

Two instances of Bloesch's inveterate synthesizing of opposites, to the ruin of biblical Protestant and Reformed truth, will serve to illumine the entire project. Both instances are high on Bloesch's agenda in the book. The first is the combining of Calvinism and Arminianism. The book is dedicated to the memory of Wesley and Whitefield. Calvinists need to learn from Arminianism, and Arminians

can learn from aspects of Calvinism (p. 339). It is not Calvinism, however, that has Bloesch's heart. Bloesch teaches a prevenient grace in humans that causes them to seek for Christ and salvation, although they may never find Christ by a saving faith (p. 63). Calvin's glorious confession, that "our salvation is not only helped forward by God, but also ... it is begun, continued and perfected by him, without any contribution of our own," Bloesch condemns as the Reformer's lapse "into divine determinism" (p. 330).

The Calvinist theology of salvation by the sovereign grace of God and the Arminian theology of salvation by the sovereign will of man are two radically different theologies. Every theology that results from the attempt to combine the two, be the attempt never so heroic, will be only a slightly disguised Arminianism.

The second instance of Bloesch's synthesizing theology is his warm embrace of the charismatic movement. He announces at the beginning that "this book should be viewed as an effort to build bridges between the various traditions of Christian faith, particularly between Reformed theology and the Pentecostal movement" (p. 15). He concedes the Pentecostal premise, that the spectacular gifts

continue in the church (p. 294).

The fundamental explanation of Bloesch's remarkable ability to embrace opposites is his neo-orthodox doctrine of Scripture. As has been pointed out in the reviews in this journal of his earlier works, Bloesch rejects the biblical, Reformed doctrine that Scripture is an inspired book. For Bloesch, Scripture as such ("the text") is not "the infallible norm." Theologian Bloesch feels himself free to critique Scripture ("the text") "in the light of God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ." "God's self-revelation in Jesus Christ" is not Scripture. It is Donald Bloesch's understanding of spiritual things. This understanding is not even formed by Scripture alone. It is arrived at "through various means, especially Scripture and the preaching of the gospel" (pp. 41, 46).

When he comes to set forth his own doctrine of the Spirit, beginning with the Spirit in the Trinity, Bloesch advocates the modalistic heresy. He follows his mentor, Karl Barth, here. The importance of the issue warrants a lengthy quotation.

The Trinity does not constitute a society of individuals bound together in an inseparable unity but a tripersonal interaction within the life of God. *Hypostasis* especially in the West-

ern Church indicates an agency of relationship rather than an individual center of consciousness.... I prefer to see one God in three events rather than three persons in one nature (though I have no qualms in accepting the latter when rightly interpreted). God remains God, but he is God in a different way in each event. There is one subject but three modalities of action. There is one overarching consciousness but three foci of consciousness. God exists as one self but with three identities. The unity of God is differentiated though not individualized. I hold to one divine being in three modes of existence, not three beings who interact in a social unity. What we have in the Trinity is not separate selves that function in an indissoluble unity but an all-encompassing consciousness in three modes of relationship.... The Trinity is not one God in three roles (this would be the economic Trinity only) nor three Gods in one inseparable unity (this would be tritheism) but one God in three subsistences or life histories.... The relations between the members of the Trinity are relations within God, not external to him in any of his modes of being (pp. 269, 270). ■

Eusebius: The Church History (A New Translation with Commentary), Paul L. Maier. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1999. 412 pages. \$22.88 (hardcover). [Reviewed by Russell Dykstra.]

The Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius is well known to every informed student of church history. Eusebius was a fourth century churchman who took up the monumental task of compiling documents and relating the facts of the first three centuries of the New Testament church. He rightly deserves the title "father of church history." His work is significant as the closest source to early church history. Fragments of many documents have been preserved only in his *Ecclesiastical History*.

For these reasons, Eusebius' work has endured through the ages. Written originally in Greek, numerous English translations have been printed over the years. The latest is this *New Translation with Commentary* by Paul L. Maier, issued by Kregel Publications. Maier gives several reasons for producing another translation, the most important of which is "to make Eusebius clearer and more readable" (18). He pursued that noble goal "by breaking up [Eusebius'] long sentences into digestible segments, eliminating excess verbiage

where it serves no purpose..., reducing parallel phraseology where it is clearly useless, and dropping ... repetitive phrases that add nothing to the record"(18). Maier provides illustrative comparisons, of which one is here included. The first translation is from the *Loeb Classical Library* translation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926), the second is Maier's.

Now while Origen was plying his accustomed tasks at Caesarea, many came to him, not only of the natives, but also numbers of foreign pupils who had left their own countries.

While Origen was teaching at Caesarea, many students, both local and from many foreign countries, studied under him.

Another stated purpose of the new translation is to "correct occasional errors in previous versions"(19). Thirdly, Maier desired to add "documentary photographs of the sites" that Eusebius described as well as maps and charts to assist the reader in interpreting the history. Maier is true to his intent. Charts, maps, and (especially) pictures are copious in this new edition.

Overall, Maier has done a fine work. The final product is readable, very colorful, and appealing

to the eye. The pictures assist the reader who seeks a good feel for the era and the settings. The charts and maps are good additions to the book. The commentary at the end of each of the ten books is informative and honest, as are the footnotes (much to be preferred to end notes!).

Maier is also fair to Eusebius. Take, for instance, the question of accuracy. Certainly from the time of the Renaissance on, historians have noted that Eusebius was not always accurate. Calvin criticized Eusebius because, while he gathered and recorded much useful material, he did not always exercise good judgment in his selection. Calvin labeled some of the collected information "gross absurdities." (See "The Argument" in Calvin's Commentary on the Harmony of the Gospels.) Modern scholars can be even more critical of the work of Eusebius. Nonetheless, Maier is fair, and points out reasons why Eusebius wrote as he did, without excusing or covering up for Eusebius' mistakes.

The only area where this reviewer is uncomfortable is in Maier's substantial editing of Eusebius' work. Maier freely admits that he has done this. He insists that no information has been edited out. I agree with him – he has retained the facts of history. Yet one is left with the nagging

question, Is this substantially reduced and modified document any longer *Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History*? The *New Translation* reads more like a modern-day history, as Maier wants it to read. It is compressed, breathless, descriptive, almost driving. By contrast, Eusebius' writing was paced, patient, leading, and sometimes meandering narration.

Above, a couple examples provided by Maier demonstrate the kind of editing he did. One sentence excerpts do not give one an accurate feel for the editing done. Two selections are provided below so that the readers can make their own comparison.

New Translation of the section on the Gospel according to John.

Now let me indicate the undisputed writings of this apostle. His Gospel, read by all the churches under heaven, must be recognized first of all. That the early Fathers assigned it to the fourth place after the other three is understandable. Christ's inspired apostles had completely purified their lives and cultivated every virtue yet were only simple men in speech. Bold in the power of the Savior, they had neither the ability nor the desire to present the Master's teachings with rhetorical skills but relied only on the Spirit of

God working through them. Thus they proclaimed the kingdom of heaven to all the world and gave little thought to writing books. Paul, for example, who outdid all others in argumentation and intellect, wrote only very short epistles and yet had countless ineffable things to say, caught up as he was in the vision of the third heaven and hearing unutterable words [II Cor. 12:2] (113).

An older translation (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1966)

Let us now also show the undisputed writings of the same apostle. And of these his gospel, so well known in the churches throughout the world, must first of all be acknowledged as genuine. That it is, however, with good reason, placed the fourth in order by the ancients, may be made evident in the following manner. Those inspired and truly pious men, the apostles of our Saviour, as they were most pure in their life, and adorned with every kind of virtue in their minds, but common in their language, relying upon the divine and wonderful energy granted them, they neither knew how, nor attempted to propound the doctrines of their master, with the art and refinement of composition. But employing only the demonstration of the divine

Spirit, working with them, and the wonder-working power of Christ, displayed through them, they proclaimed the knowledge of the kingdom of heaven throughout the world. They bestowed but little care upon the study of style, and this they did, because they were aided by a Church Order-operation greater than that of men. Paul, indeed, who was the most able of all in the preparations of style, and who was most powerful in sentiments, committed nothing more to writing than a few very short epistles. And this too, although he had innumerable mysterious matters that he might have communicated, as he had attained even to the view of the third heavens, had been taken up to the very paradise of God, and had been honoured to hear the unutterable words there.

The selections at once demonstrate Maier's point that his text is plainer and clearer, and yet accurate, and also the point that this does not read like Eusebius. Maier's text is, as he put it, what Eusebius' history would have been if he had had a good modern editor.

Be that as it may, we recommend this new translation to everyone interested in church history. ■

Truth for All Time: A Brief Outline of the Christian Faith, by John Calvin. Translated by Stuart Olyott. The Banner of Truth Trust, 1998. 77 pp. + xi. Paper, \$5.99. [Reviewed by Russell Dykstra.]

Truth for All Time is a new translation of a work by John Calvin originally published in French in 1537. This is not the first English translation of this work of Calvin. Paul T. Fuhrmann's translation (*Instruction in Faith*) was first published in 1949 and is still available from Westminster John Knox Press. The same work by Calvin appeared in Latin in 1538, and an English translation of that Latin edition was made by Ford Lewis Battles. A copy of his translation appears in I. John Hesselink's *Calvin's First Catechism: A Commentary* (Westminster John Knox Press:1997).

Of these three translations, this latest by Olyott is definitely intended to be the more popular rendition for general readership. More on the translation later.

Calvin's purpose for writing this little work is obvious – instructing the people in the basic doctrines of the Bible. It is evident from the verses that preface and conclude the work (as, for example, Isaiah 5:13, "Therefore my people are gone into captivity because they have no knowledge," and Psalm 119:9, "Wherewithal shall the

young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word.")

The historical context of the work makes it plain that instruction was Calvin's aim. It was in 1536 that William Farel constrained Calvin to remain in Geneva to help with the work of reforming the Swiss city. Once he was convicted by God to take on this work, Calvin pursued it vigorously. It is well known that Geneva was a godless city in which the effects of the Reformation were scarce indeed. Early in 1537, the ministers proposed to the city council that a confession of faith and a catechism were needed to instruct the populous (in particular the children) in the Reformed faith. This little book of instruction was intended to fulfill both needs.

In this confession, Calvin treated thirty-three topics. The explanation is not presented in a question and answer format – Calvin would produce such a catechism in 1542. Rather the instruction is laid out in paragraph form. The treatment of each topic is concise – most of the sections are less than a page long. That Calvin was able to treat cardinal doctrines with such brevity is a testimony to his pronounced abilities, his self discipline, as well as his grasp of the truth.

The topics are wide ranging.

Generally, they follow the topics as Calvin laid them out in his first *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in the first edition a year earlier (1536). The first topics describe true religion and the necessary knowledge of God. Next Calvin discusses man as created and as fallen with his will in bondage, dead in sin. Calvin treats the law next as the means by which God gives the knowledge of sin "to all those whom he pleases to re-establish as heirs to eternal life." The next sections deal with salvation, includes instruction on faith, predestination (double), justification, repentance, and good works, followed by an exposition of the Apostles' Creed. The confession subsequently gives instruction on prayer (four sections), on sacraments (four sections), and concludes with four practical issues that were very touchy in Geneva in that day, namely the calling and authority of ministers of the word, human tradition, excommunication, and civil rulers.

The document has much value from the point of view of historical theology. It summarizes Calvin's understanding of the truth at an early time of his life. Even a cursory reading of the book reveals that already at the young age of twenty-eight, Calvin maintained the cardinal doctrines for which he and Calvinism are known, as for

instance, Calvin's emphasis on the glory and majesty of God. Even from the creation, "we learn ... that our God, who is the only God, and who is eternal, is the spring and fountain of all life, righteousness, wisdom, strength, goodness and mercy.... And so it is that all praise should rightly return to him"(5; unless otherwise noted, all references to page numbers are those of *Truth for All Time*).

In this early catechism, Calvin maintains the doctrines of sovereign grace. Man is dead in sin, so that "man has a very strong and continuing hatred of the whole of God's righteousness" and "in addition, he is devoted to every kind of evil"(7). Salvation is in Christ alone, by faith in Him; and the explanation for why some believe and others do not is to be found in the "secret of God's counsel"(26). This counsel includes both election and reprobation. "[F]or the seed of God's Word takes root and bears fruit only in those whom the Lord, by his eternal election, has predestined to be his children and heirs of the heavenly kingdom"(26). "To all others (who by the same counsel of God are rejected before the foundation of the world) the clear and evident preaching of truth can be nothing but an odor of death unto death"(38, quoted from Fuhrmann's translation, *Instruction in Faith*). Salva-

tion is all of God, who gives faith.

It is noteworthy that the author of this catechism for the instruction of the woefully ignorant people of Geneva considered even the doctrine of election and reprobation essential. Calvin forbids that anyone should seek to know the “*reason* why the Lord treats some mercifully and exercises the rigour of his judgment towards others” (26, my emphasis, RJD). Nonetheless, the *fact* of sovereign double predestination is not only to be taught, but also reckoned the explanation for why some believe and others do not.

The young Calvin is courageous in his faithfulness to the truth. In the face of known opposition in Geneva, he insists that the church has the right to excommunicate from the company of God’s people all those who live in open and unrepentant sin. “This discipline is indispensable among believers” (73).

Calvin is also pastoral as he reassures those who would struggle with the assurance of their eternal salvation. He writes:

On the other hand, let us not seek (like so many) to penetrate as far as heaven and to inquire what God, from his eternity, has decided to do with us – and all this with a view to confirming the certainly of our salvation.

Such a quest can serve only to stir up miserable anguish and upset in us. Rather, let us be content with the testimony by which he has sufficiently and amply assured us of this certainty. It is in Christ that all those who have been preordained to life have been elected, and this took place even before the foundations of the world had been laid. Similarly, it is in Christ that the pledge of our election is presented to us, if we receive and embrace him by faith.

For what is it that we are looking for in election, if it is not that we might be partakers of eternal life? And we have this life in Christ, he who was Life from the beginning, and who is set before us as Life, so that all who believe in him should not perish but enjoy eternal life (John 3:16).

In possessing Christ by faith, we also possess eternal life in him. This being so, we have no reason to enquire any further concerning the eternal counsel of God. For Christ is not only a mirror by which the will of God is presented to us, but he is a pledge by which it is sealed to us and endorsed (27-28).

The catechism’s instruction on the Sabbath is typical of Calvin, being weak in one respect, namely that it does not anywhere so much

as mention that Sunday is the God-given Sabbath for the new dispensation. It only defends that there must be a Sabbath in order for the believers to gather for official worship(15-17).

The little work of Calvin is of much value, and is worthy of being reprinted. On the whole, this translation seems to be a good one, easily read. Two criticisms must be offered, however.

The first concerns the renditions of the final four articles of the Creed – “I believe *in* the holy and universal church, and *in* the communion of saints, etc.” (my emphasis, RJD). As Fuhrmann noted in footnotes to those articles, Calvin (already in the 1536 *Institutes*) had drawn attention to the fact that the believer confesses his faith in God, but that “in” is inappropriate with respect to the church, the communion of saints, and the rest.

Secondly, while the present translation appears to be faithful to the original document and to the thought of Calvin, at one point this seems not to be true. It is in the section on predestination, specifically the sentence on reprobation quoted above from Fuhrmann’s translation. Olyott translates the sentence as follows: “To all others who (by the same counsel of God, before the foundation

of the world) are rejected, the clear and plain preaching of the truth can be nothing but an odor of death which leads to death” (26). Recall Fuhrmann’s translation: “To all others (who by the same counsel of God are rejected before the foundation of the world) the clear and evident preaching of truth can be nothing but an odor of death unto death” (38) This is a serious difference, for Olyott’s translation takes the rejection out of eternity and even out of the counsel. It could be interpreted to mean that *according to* the counsel of God, some men are rejected *in time*, perhaps because they refused to believe. According to Fuhrmann’s translation (and that of Battles, p. 17 in Hesselink) Calvin places God’s rejection of the wicked in the counsel of God and in eternity.

In spite of those criticisms, the little work is highly recommended. The book accomplishes its purpose – as a brief catechism and confession of faith, it is worthy of being read and studied – *Truth for All Time*. We heartily concur with Olyott’s remark (vii) that it is “a small but priceless jewel.” ■

The Dictionary of Historical Theology. Ed. Trevor A. Hart. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000. xx + 599 pages. \$50 (hardcover). [Reviewed by David J. Engelsma.]

Why another dictionary of theology? This one fills a gap. It lists and briefly explains the men and movements in the church that have been significant for the history of theology. It is a dictionary of the Christian tradition from the early church to the present. The subjects are important for the development of theology, whether good or bad.

The benefit of the big book is the concise descriptions of important theologians, theologies, and theological movements by competent scholars. Carl R. Trueman's article on Heinrich Bullinger takes up the question, whether Bullinger's covenant doctrine differed from the unilateral covenant conception of Calvin. Willem J. Van Asselt writes the entry on Johannes Cocceius.

Richard A. Muller has what is likely the longest article—some 20 pages—on “Reformed Confessions and Catechisms.” In his succinct, but not superficial, exposition of the Canons of Dordt, Muller contends that the Arminians and Calvinists “alike agreed that Christ bore the weight of all sin.” Muller thinks that the debate at Dordt over

the atonement concerned “the application of the *satisfactio Christi*.” He points to Canons, II/3, 4, 6, and the first part of 8. But Canons, II/2 teaches that Christ “was made sin and became a curse *for us* and *in our stead*, that He might make satisfaction to divine justice *on our behalf*” (emphasis added). And the second part of Canons, II/8 states that “Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, . . . effectually redeem[ed] out of every people, tribe, nation, and language all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation. . . .” These expressions in the Canons do not refer to application. They describe the death of Christ as such. Christ's death did not only satisfy for sin. It satisfied in the stead of sinners—elect sinners, in distinction from reprobate sinners.

Such a dictionary also has its defects. It betrays the doctrinal weaknesses, errors, and heresies of certain of its contributors. The article on Montanism downplays the heretical nature of that movement in the early church. The author of the article on Pelagianism praises John Cassian and his fellow semi-Pelagians for moderating extreme Augustinianism. Some danger! It would be better to call them “semi-Augustinians” than “semi-Pelagians.” Little did Augustine know! And what must be

thought of a sketch of the life and theology of Philip Melancthon that does not so much as mention his introduction of the doctrine of free will into the Lutheran church?

The article on feminist theology, although somewhat restrained, perhaps in view of the dictionary's intended audience, is blasphemous.

Nevertheless, the dictionary is useful. Whoever would read it from beginning ("Abelard, Peter") to end ("Wobbermin, Georg") would get a pretty good course in the history of dogma.

Each article concludes with a valuable list of books on the topic for further reading. ■

Green Eye of the Storm, by John Rendle Short. Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1998. Pp. ii-294. \$19.99 (paper). [Reviewed by Herman C. Hanko.]

This well-known author from Australia has defended the creation narrative in Genesis 1 by describing the "controversy between science and Christianity" in the lives of Arthur Rendle Short (1880-1953), Philip Henry Gosse (1810-1888), George John Romanes (1848-1894), and the author. The lives of these four men roughly correspond to the development of evolutionary thought from 1750 to the present.

Philip Henry Gosse

Philip Gosse was a self-taught biologist who acquired a reputation for extensive knowledge in the field of biology. He was personally acquainted with Charles

Darwin, had talked with him about his views, but was somewhat troubled by Darwin's harsh views of genetic mutations, transference of mutations to offspring, and survival of the fittest. He attempted to soften the effect of Darwin's views by writing a book with the strange title *Omphalos*, which is the Latin word for navel. In this book he also took issue with Lyle's theory of uniformitarianism which was, in his judgment, the foundation of all evolutionary theory.

While Gosse attempted to defend creation from science, he did, toward the end of his life, make his final court of appeal the Scriptures.

After his death, his son Edmund wrote a cruel biography which ruined his father's reputation.

George John Romanes

George Romanes was born into wealth, went mostly unedu-

cated, but later in life turned to science. He was heavily influenced by Darwinism and also met Darwin personally. He was, in fact, so intimate with Darwin that he was Darwin's anointed successor.

Romanes, after Darwin's death, was converted from Darwinism over a very long period of time, being troubled mainly by Darwin's atheism.

In connection with the life story of Romanes, the author makes an interesting observation concerning the explanation of Darwin's influence on "a wide variety of disciplines and professions in all countries and on all cultures from 1859 to the present."

Not because of the scientific excellence of his theory. It has had to be revised more than once. The reason, I suggest, is because the theory destroyed the trustworthiness of the Scriptures, and especially the very foundation of the gospel in the first chapters of Genesis. And above all because Darwinism abolished the need for God and the Christian verities. Thus certainty was swept away. Nothing on the earth or in the sky could be guaranteed any more; everything was in a melting pot. Reality was nowhere to be found.

Arthur Rendle Short

Arthur Short was the father

of the author, an Assembly of God minister and a medical doctor. He accepted Lyle's uniformitarianism, Darwin's evolutionism, and Scripture and became a theistic evolutionist. He was heavily influenced by the notion that Christ was a great moral teacher.

In the course of time, Arthur Short came to see that the real battle was between evolutionism (in whatever form it came) and the infallibility of Scripture. Sad to say, he never resolved the problem in his own mind and heart.

John Rendle Short

In this concluding section John Short gives us the details of his own struggle. He was an evolutionist in his student days, but entered a long and bitter struggle as he gradually turned from evolutionistic theory to the creationism of Scripture. This struggle he describes in detail in this book.

Several aspects of this emergence as a creationist are interesting and enlightening. John Short suggests that the radical changes in culture from pre-World War II days to the present are due to almost universal acceptance of evolutionism.

In the biography of his father, John Short expresses his own opinion that any form of evolutionism (including, presumably, the Framework Hypothesis) is only

another form of higher criticism. He castigates the Hodges and Warfield for making concessions to the doctrine of evolutionism.

For the author, the obstacles of theistic evolutionists were always especially three in number: 1) God's pronouncement of "good" on all that He had made — a pronouncement totally incompatible with a creation "red in tooth and claw" and in which was death; 2) man's fall and death upon the human race and the creation; 3) the creation of Eve. The author came to the conclusion that a commitment to theistic evolutionism would not enable him to accept as literal these three teachings of Genesis 1 and 2.

The book makes for some fascinating reading, even though it is not entirely clear why the three men whose biographies are included should have such an honored place in his book.

If one criticism could be leveled against the book, it is that the author does not emphasize with sufficient force that the Scriptures are so completely our rule of faith, also in the matter of creation, that the doctrine of creation does not (and, ultimately cannot) depend upon scientific evidence or the ability to answer scientifically all the notions of scientists, it rests on faith alone. The battle between us who believe in the truth of God's

Word in Genesis 1 and 2 and those who have adopted some form of evolutionism, particularly theistic evolutionism, is a spiritual battle between faith and unbelief, and must never be construed as a battle over the scientific evidence supporting the one position or the other. The same is true of the Framework Hypothesis.

Yet, in an important footnote the author shows us his willingness to take his stand on Scripture. He quotes with approval the author Dr. Werner Gitt in a book entitled, *Did God Use Evolution?*

The basic principle of creation is that any understanding of the original creation can only be obtained through a biblical "temper of mind" [from a biblical viewpoint, the author]. Biblical revelation is the key to understanding the world. The Bible is the basic, irreplaceable source of information. It is a fact of creation that we may not extrapolate the currently valid natural laws into the six days of creation (a major concession to Lyle's uniformitarianism, but a crucial concession which any theistic evolutionist has to make, HH). Our present experiences do not allow us to really evaluate something that has just been created. Example: All adults were children. But Adam could not have been created as a baby, he was a grown man. He never

was a child, and it does not make sense to extrapolate a number of years into his life, just because our present experiences require that every adult should have been a child. Similarly all the stars were immediately visible in spite of immense distances. Trees were not made as seedlings; they were fully grown and complete. Neither did birds hatch from

their eggs and eventually grow up. The old question of "which was first — the hen or the egg?" has a clear and unambiguous biblical answer.

To that, any child of God committed to the doctrine of Scriptural infallibility will answer with a resounding, Amen. ■

The Battle of Beginnings: Why Neither Side Is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate, by Del Ratzsch. Intervarsity Press, 1996. 248 pp., paper (\$14.99). [Reviewed by Herman C. Hanko.]

The author of this book is of the opinion that the problem in the creation-evolution debate is the inability of both sides to think clearly, deal honestly with the data before them, and argue in a logical and concise way, whether that be in defending a position or criticizing the opposite position.

Del Ratzsch is professor of philosophy at Calvin College and concentrates on the philosophy of science. He has certainly done his homework. He quotes extensively from many outstanding creationist authors and from the leading figures in evolutionary thought, beginning with Darwin. He finds a

great deal lacking in the presentations which each side offers.

The author spends time at the outset describing the history of the debate in order to zero in on misunderstandings of each other's positions, misrepresentations, and fallacies in argument. He then proceeds to summarize the chief arguments of creationists, the weaknesses in these arguments, and the answers to them which are offered by evolutionists. He does the same with the evolutionistic position, trying to deal with both sides in an even-handed manner. The book is interesting from this point of view, and it contains a lot of information about the position of both sides in the debate. The book also points out critical lapses in the "proof" which each side offers, which enhances the value of the book and helps one weigh the validity of each position.

Interestingly, though not surprisingly, the author shows how neither creationists nor evolutionists have any sympathy for the position of theistic evolution. Both consider that position to be wholly untenable, although the author himself is not so ready to condemn it out of hand.

Ratzsch's stated purpose is not to take a position of his own. Indeed, he admits that he is not sure what position is correct. His interests lie in a different direction. The author is of the opinion that if only each side in the debate will deal with the other side honestly and forthrightly, and if each side will only clean up its own arguments and make the good ones logically sound while discarding the bad ones, the two opposing camps could come closer together and perhaps the intense warfare between them would end in a friendly handshaking and mutual appreciation for the opposite position.

I suppose that it is possible for this to happen. I consider this a possibility, not for Ratzsch's reasons, but because both sides of the debate are arguing their cases on wrong grounds. They argue, and Ratzsch approves, on the basis of scientific evidence learned by means of the scientific method. Both make their case on the basis of the findings of science. Both are

sure that an honest dealing with the evidence of the creation will prove their point. It won't. It never has. It does not now. It never will.

The author himself suggests some ideas along these lines. He considers at length, e.g., whether creationism (and evolutionism also, for that matter) is a religion. He demonstrates that when creationists, in the interest of getting creationism accepted in the public schools, shifted their emphasis from scriptural givens to science within a six-day framework, they made things very difficult for themselves. Science can be science only when it deals exclusively with nature and natural data. Further, when dealing with evolutionism, the author devotes considerable time and effort to demonstrate that scientists can never be purely objective in their quest for knowledge; nor is scientific data ever able to lead to explanations which are certain. Nothing can ever be proved definitely.

But herein lies the problem. It is strange that so few are willing to see it. The creationists and evolutionists alike seem intent on avoiding the real issues involved. If the believer is to make any sense at all out of the whole problem he has got to make his beginning with the words found in Hebrews 11:3: "By faith we understand that the

worlds were framed by the word of God....” It is important and striking that the text uses “understand” and not “believe.” How the worlds were formed can only be *understood* by faith.

Furthermore, the text tells us that faith is the means whereby we are able to understand the origin of the creation. The faith referred to is emphatically saving faith. That is, this faith of which Hebrews speaks is the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (v. 1). Faith is, according to this verse, the subjective conviction that God’s promises are absolutely certain and can never fail.

This needs emphasis because “faith” is often defined as being a firm belief in that which cannot be proved. So, it is said, the creationist cannot prove creation, but he believes it. So also the evolutionist. He cannot prove evolutionism or the basic assumptions on which it rests, but he believes it and accepts it to be true. Such a definition of faith makes a mockery of this gift of God to His people.

Neither the doctrine of creation nor the theory of evolutionism can be proved from an investigation of the creation. It is simply impossible. The reason for this impossibility is that no knowledge of the truth can be gleaned from a study of the creation.

This statement needs some explanation.

In the first place, it is possible, of course, to learn certain things from the creation. God has created the universe as an organic whole in which all things are related, intertwined, and interdependent. Our knowledge of things is always and only by means of the relationships in which they stand to everything else. We never can know *anything* at all as it stands by itself independent of anything else. We were taught, correctly, in elementary logic in college that knowledge of a thing *qua* thing is impossible. And, because everything is known through relationships, so the more the relationships in which a given object stands to everything else, the better we know the thing. We may have a cursory knowledge of a rose bush. When we understand the relationships in which it stands to the soil, the atmosphere, the sun, the world of flowers, the whole of plant life, and the living creatures in their entirety, we learn what the rose bush is. Such knowledge is, in a limited way, possible for regenerate and unregenerate. Regeneration is not required to know that a rose bush grows only in the soil.

Further, Paul tells us in Romans 1:18ff. that the creation makes known two things to all men. It makes known that there is another

relationship in which all things stand: it is the relation in which it stands to God. The creation so clearly defines that relationship to God that men are informed that God is the only true God, the Creator of all, and that, consequently, He must be served and worshiped.

This knowledge of the wicked is not saving. It is not sufficient to construct a natural theology. It is not a kind of pre-salvation preparation for the gospel, and thus an indication of common grace. It has no positive benefits at all, in and of itself. Men can acquire from the creation no knowledge of anything of benefit to them.

Why is this? The answer lies in the fact that man is wicked. He is totally depraved. He is blind to spiritual things, and deaf to the Word of God. He is as dense spiritually as a block of wood, and as stupid as an animal which walks with its nose on the earth. This is spiritually true.

It is even worse than that, according to Paul in Romans 1. Man hates God and opposes Him. Man suppresses the truth in unrighteousness. Man, professing himself to be wise, becomes a fool. He thinks, when he is as blind as a stone wall, that his eyesight is better than 20/20. And in his blindness, thinking he sees, he constructs idols. If God is shown in creation

to be the Creator, man will do all he can to destroy this truth.

God's purpose, clearly stated by Paul in Romans 1, in giving man a creation which speaks of God's glory and greatness, is not to inform man of some knowledge of Himself which indicates God's favor towards man. God's purpose is simply and solely that man may be without excuse in the judgment day. He will never be able to plead ignorance.

It is not as if the creation does not reveal that God created it. It is not, to make the statement as strong as possible, that creation does not reveal that God formed it in six days of twenty-four hours. It reveals that without any doubt at all. The problem lies not in the creation. It lies in man, in man's wickedness and rebellion.

There is only one way to change that for any man. That is the way of Jesus Christ and faith in Him. That work is the work of God in the hearts of His people.

This is an interesting point and one worthy of our consideration.

When the rich man in hell asked Abraham to send Lazarus to earth to warn the rich man's brothers of the hell which awaited them for their covetous lives, Abraham informed him that this was not necessary: they had Moses and the prophets. Let them hear them.

But this did not satisfy the rich man. He raised a subtle criticism of the Scriptures (Moses and the prophets) and of God Himself. He brushed aside Abraham's remark as an inadequate presentation of things. The brothers needed a miracle, a ghost, a phantom, some specter back from the grave, something unusual. Then, the rich man says, they will believe.

Abraham lays down a principle for all time in his response. "If they will not believe Moses and the prophets, they will not be persuaded though one rise from the dead." That holds true absolutely and for all knowledge of the truth.

The Scriptures are given by God to teach us that the one relationship in the whole creation which it is necessary to know and understand is the relationship between God and the creation. If one sees that, one has a true understanding of all the relationships which exist between the different creatures in God's world.

The unbeliever who rejects the Scriptures and Scriptures' God is like a man who looks at an automobile. He studies it, takes it apart, discovers how every part is related to every other part, understands a great deal about it. But he has no idea of what it is, what is its purpose, why it was made, how each part serves the purpose for which

it was made, and how it can be used. It is to him a heap of junk — an intricate heap, an amazingly interrelated heap of diverse parts, but a useless pile for all that. So the unbeliever looks at the creation as a conglomerate of creatures, somehow related, but serving no higher purpose or greater design than to satisfy his own carnal lusts and pleasures. He really, in almost unbelievable stupidity, thinks that the creation is there for his benefit and enjoyment, to do with it what he feels like doing — and everything he feels like doing is wicked.

But Scripture explains what we cannot see in creation because of our blindness. Scripture, says Calvin, puts eyeglasses on our nose.

The evolutionist is like a man who explores a large castle in Europe to learn how it was formed. He finds in the vestibule just beyond the entrance a book, written by the builder of the castle, in which book the builder tells in all its details how he built the castle. But this "wise" man, glances at the book and heaves it through the window into the moat. Then, just as our astronauts, when they went to the moon to collect rocks to help them learn how the universe was formed, he now goes to the upper room in the highest tower, scrapes together a pile of dust, takes it to his labora-

tory, and studies it to learn how the castle was built.

What do we know from the Scriptures?

We know what *God* formed when He created the heavens and the earth. That is, we know how the entire creation is a complex cosmos created as a divine masterpiece. We know *how* God created all things, i.e., by the Word of His mouth. We know *why* God created all things. That is, we know not only that He created them for His glory, but that He created them as the stage on which He, the sovereign Lord, would enact the great drama of the ages, the drama of sin and grace in Christ. We know all these things. By faith we believe them. By faith we understand them.

There it is. Will ghosts give us what we cannot learn from Moses and the prophets? Will scientific discoveries, technological marvels, careful geological enterprises tell us the same things the Scriptures reveal? Do not get me wrong. I am not disparaging science. The more we understand the relationships between the creatures of this creation, the greater is our understanding of an appreciation for the one great and all-important relationship in which all things stand to God.

The child of God, to paraphrase Psalm 119, with his Bible open before him, understands more

than all his teachers, and more than all the wise men in their laboratories and observatories. The child of God may not know quantum mechanics, but he understands the things of God's world far more accurately than the man with a Ph.D in physics.

The creation tells us that God created the world in six days of twenty-four hours. No question can be raised against that proposition. But blind people, looking at the creation, cannot see it. Let God put spectacles on his nose; then he can see. Those spectacles are the Scriptures and faith in them.

Even "Christian" scientists want to separate creation from the faith of the believer found in Scripture. Already in the early 50s my science teacher in college told us that it really did not matter what we believed concerning the age of the world, for it was a question irrelevant to our faith. And other "Reformed" scientists speak of being a scientist in the laboratory and a believer in church. That sort of dichotomy is impossible and intolerable. Faith is the deepest principle of our whole life. Faith in the Scriptures, faith in the Christ of the Scriptures, and faith in all that the Scriptures teach, including creation in six days.

We may not enter the debate between creationists and evolution-

ists concerning origins. We may not enter that debate especially if the debate is going to be over the interpretation of scientific data. Then we, like the author of this book, will never know the truth of the matter. All we may say is this: they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And, if they will not hear Moses and the prophets, nothing, nothing at all, will

persuade them, not even Gabriel from heaven.

Faith is what will explain to us the basic truths of the creation; and within the framework of faith alone we can and must do our scientific studies. *Credo ut intelligam*, said Augustine: I believe in order that I may know. By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God.... ■

Global Missiology for the 21st Century: The Iguassu Dialogue, edited by William D. Taylor. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic (A Division of Baker Book House Co.), 2000. Pp. xi - 564. \$34.99. (paper). [Reviewed by Robert D. Decker.]

This book, a collection of essays on a wide variety of missions issues, is the fruit of the Iguassu Missiological Consultation, held in Brazil in October 1999. The Consultation was convened by leaders of the World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission (WEF) because they "...perceived the need to pause at this historical hinge of both century and millennium to examine our missiological foundations, commitments, and practices. That event and this book initiated an ongoing process that

purposes to release further serious and practical global missiology at the service of the borderless church" (p. 1).

The impressive list of contributors includes many of the "big names" familiar to evangelicals in the Western churches (Taylor, Escobar, Bonk, Hiebert, Roxburgh, e.g.). One needs to be impressed too by the large number of contributors and leaders coming from the two-thirds world. The essays for the most part are well documented from recognized sources and each contains the contributor's bibliography. The book is enhanced by a good index.

All who are interested in or involved in world/foreign missions (missionaries, missiologists, members of denominational mission boards) ought to read this book, if for no other reason than to be up to

date on what's being said about this important aspect of the work of Christ's church.

The essays are introduced by Taylor's essay, "From Iguassu to the reflective practitioners of the global family of Christ." This is followed by "The Iguassu Affirmation," which contains nine "Declarations" and fourteen "Commitments" (pp. 16-21). In the Preamble the 160 mission practitioners, missiologists, and church leaders declare that they have convened to:

1. Reflect together on the challenges and opportunities facing world missions at the dawn of the new millennium.
2. Review the different streams of 20th century Evangelical missiology and practice, especially since the 1974 Lausanne Congress.
3. Continue developing and applying a relevant biblical missiology which reflects the cultural diversity of God's people.

With some of the declarations we would agree, e.g., "1. Jesus Christ is Lord of the church and Lord of the universe" (pp. 17-18). "2. The Lord Jesus Christ is the unique revelation of God and the only Savior of the world ['world' in the sense of John 3:16, RDD]"

(p. 18). With others we would have serious disagreement, e.g., "8. God works in a variety of Christian traditions and organizations.... For too long believers, divided over issues of church organization, order and doctrine—such as the gifts and ministry of the Holy Spirit—have failed to recognize each other's work. We affirm, bless, and pray for authentic Christian witness wherever it is found" (pp. 18-19).

With some of the "Commitments" we would agree, e.g., there is an excellent statement on the "Trinitarian foundation of mission" (p. 19). We were pleased to find in the Commitment regarding "Pluralism" the authors stating, "Religious pluralism challenges us to hold firmly to the uniqueness of Jesus Christ as Savior..." (pp. 19-20). With other of the Commitments we would have serious disagreements.

As is true of all anthologies, some of the essays are better than others, and a few are of little or no use at all to a missionary or teacher of missions committed to the Reformed truth of Scripture. Let the reader then use the book with discretion. He will benefit from what is good and ignore what is not.

Chapter 12, contributed by Alan Roxburgh, is a must read. The title of this chapter is "Re-

thinking trinitarian missiology.”
Writes Roxburgh,

As much as anywhere else, the church on the north American continent is in desperate need of a new missional framework, and it must become anchored deeply in a trinitarian theology if it is to be redeemed from its cultural reductionisms. The embracing of technique, success, and functional models of growth has blinded us to our captivity to modern culture. The North American church has too often designed a reductionistic gospel customized for expressive individualists desiring spiritual life *a la carte* (see Guder, 2000). In the words of Harold Bloom (1992), Christianity in America is far more gnostic than anything else.... Mission is the people of God giving witness to the reality of God through the church as the sign, foretaste, and presence of the kingdom. Mission must, therefore, be preoccupied with the nature of the One to whom it witnesses. We must speak of, announce, and witness to the God who is revealed as Father, Son, and Spirit. This revelation is only known in and through Jesus Christ. The mission of Jesus, the gospel of Jesus Christ, is the mission of the trinitarian God who is at the heart of Jesus’ revelation. Therefore, a trinitarian framework

must inform our missiology. This is the distinctive nature of Christian proclamation. This trinitarian basis of missiology is not an abstract doctrine, but the essence of the gospel’s witness and power. In a globalized, post-modern context, we urgently need to recover the Trinity as the central interpretive framework for missiology (p. 180).

After tracing the early church’s understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity (especially through the Ecumenical Councils and Creeds of Nicea [A.D. 325] and Chalcedon [A.D. 451]) Roxburgh concludes, “What the early fathers accomplished was to articulate a new basis for knowing and interpreting the meaning of the world. The Trinity was this new basis, and it had profound implications for the communication of the gospel. This is precisely the challenge with which a missiology for a new millennium is confronted today” (p. 182).

Roxburgh concludes his essay with this prayer, “May God grant us the joy of seeing some of its (trinitarian missiology’s, RDD) implications worked out in the true-life situations of our broken world. And all of this is to the glorious praise of our God. Maranatha!” (p. 188).

The nature of the book is such

that one need not read it cover to cover. The reader can select those essays which interest him and glean from the collection what may be helpful to him in his work on behalf of missions. ■

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