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"vita vestra abscondita est cum Christo in Deo"

Colossians 3:3

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Introduction

Welcome to the digital version of the journal of Northwest Theological Seminary. As more and more information migrates to the immediate electronic media, *Kerux* joins the parade with this issue, as it also inaugurates a second quarter-century run. However, our readers may be assured that we are not lemmings nor copy-cats. We aspire to be more principled than the media frenzy which too often passes for the ‘information highway’. As we have explained previously, hard-copy costs were beginning to make it unreasonable to print and mail each issue. We value the gifts God in his grace has committed to our use. Our accountability for the stewardship of our financial resources required that we focus those resources on electronic publication as the most reasonable and cost effective alternative.

We plan to continue our thrice yearly publication schedule: May, September, December. All new issues (as well as the full number of back issues) are posted free of charge and may be downloaded at will from this site. We want to serve the church and thus provide these materials *gratis* for her edification.

The journal will continue to be indexed (Religion Index One) and abstracted (NTA). However, you will note we have been assigned a new ISSN by the Library of Congress. This number is unique to an electronic online publication.

In this issue, you will discover seventeen letters from Geerhardus Vos—most of which are addressed to B. B. Warfield. These newly found letters have been located via the finding aids of the online Princeton Theological Seminary Special Collections archives. We wish to express our thanks to Mr. Kenneth W. Henke, Reference Archivist, for his kindness in providing copies of these letters. They are published here with the permission of Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Princeton, New Jersey.

The letters in this issue supplement those published in yours truly’s compilation released in 2005, namely *The Letters of Geerhardus Vos* (hereafter *LGV*). As I did with those letters, what follows have been annotated in order to provide a more complete understanding of Vos’s remarks. We gain additional insights into the life of this biblical-theological genius, even as we detect more of his personal reticence—a characteristic which, in making him very much a private person, allowed him to ponder and plumb the depths of the riches of God the Father, in Christ Jesus his Son, through the internal witness of the Holy Spirit to his own soul. What legacy would we have from Vos had he been an ‘item’, a ‘popular’ figure for the crowds? We would have fluff and rubbish which so often is the legacy of such personalities—forgotten with their names when their names are no longer the buzz of the Christian frenetic media.

Vos continues to teach a remnant in each successive generation—those few who master his penetrating mind through digesting what he wrote. We find, in the pages of his *oeuvre*, a panoply of the vistas of divine and supernatural revelation—vistas in which the voice of God—yeah! the life of God—touches men and women and children in history from the protological Adam and his bride to the eschatological Adam and his Bride. This journal

and this seminary remain dedicated to deepening and enriching that eschatologically Christ-centered legacy. From the contents page of our future issues, you will find articles which attempt to do just that—benefit from Vos in order to advance even more deeply and richly than he, as we are drawn into the mind and life of the Triune God through his divinely inspired Word. And all the while we join the great “father of Reformed biblical theology” in fervent commitment to catholic, evangelical and Reformed orthodoxy.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

The NWTS Logo

With this digital edition of our journal, we have redesigned our cover so as to incorporate the attractive seminary logo. The logo was conceived by our Academic Dean, about 11 years ago, and was rendered by his son, out of the latter's professional graphic arts training and skill. This logo is not merely a compass-point, multi-directional piece of artwork. It is in fact a graphic and artistic attempt to convey our theological distinctives—to convey graphically and artistically the way in which we think about the Triune God and his inspired Word. Our logo portrays our *raison d'être* biblical-theologically or (what is the same) redemptive-historically.

The colors are emblematic of the region of God's majestic creation where he has called us to serve him—the Pacific Northwest, her evergreen forests, rolling verdant Palouse, white snow-capped peaks of the Olympic and Cascade mountain ranges. The beauty of our logo is a reflection of our Lord and Creator's stunning palette of color enveloping us here—especially when the sun drenches the forests, plains, lakes, rivers and mountains of this region. All of this has been captured by the artist, James T. Dennison, III. He has also completely redesigned the Kerux header so as to portray the kerygmatic or heraldic aspect of our proclamation of God's Word (the Greek word *kerux* found in the Scriptures means “herald” or “preacher”).

At the center of the logo's intersecting vertical and horizontal arrows are the Greek letters *chi rho* (XP). These are the first two letters, in Greek, of the name *Christos* (χριστός). The central point of all history is Christ Jesus, the ontological Son of the Triune God. The revelation of his gracious person and work comprises the key to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. The horizontal line of history, at every point where it is touched by the vertical intrusion of divine and supernatural revelation, speaks of the centrality of Christ as the living embodiment (incarnation) of that revelation. Whether by proto-eschatological (typological) anticipation (Old Testament) or semi-eschatological (provisional) realization (New Testament) or end-eschatological (eternal) consummation (Eschaton), all God-breathed Scripture displays the benefits of the eternal Son of the Father made manifest through the inscripturated Holy Spirit-inspired Word of God. The vertical arrow is a breaking-in of the eschatological into the temporal, since all revelation arises from the eschaton of the eschatological Trinity. Hence, every part of redemptive history from Genesis to Revelation is eschatologically oriented (down from above reflected from below to above) because the Word of God is eschatological (i.e., arises from an eschatological Being, namely God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit). And every part of redemptive history from Genesis to Revelation (retrospective and prospective horizontally) is Christological because the living Word of God (God the Son) is the focus and meaning of that history of redemption (cf. Luke 24:44-47).

Christ Jesus, the center of the Trinity (Matt. 28:19); the center of Creation (John 1:2; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2); the center of redemption by grace (Eph. 2:4-9); the center of the life of his Bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25, 32; Rev. 21:9); the center of the benediction of those who die in the Lord (Rev. 14:13); the center of eternity—the eschaton of everlasting life

(Rev. 5:4-14); the center of Heaven (from before time to the beginning of time to the midst of time to the end of time to no time).

From Creation to Consummation via Redemption—Christ Jesus (XP) the center. That is what uniquely and singularly defines Northwest Theological Seminary (NWTTS) at every point.

—James T. Dennison, Jr.

More Vos Letters

Annotated by James T. Dennison, Jr.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
Dec. 13th, [18]89

Dear Professor [Warfield],

This is the best I could do in the limited time, and I hope it will at least give some general idea of the work.¹ There are many other points on which I might have touched and I deliberated for a moment as to whether the notice should not be confined to the first half of the book. No doubt you will find my English faulty in more than one respect, for I had to write in great haste. Please correct what admits of correction without too much trouble on your part.

My time will probably permit me to prepare something for your *Review* during the course of 1890.² Dr. Steffens³, of the seminary of the Reformed Church at Holland, Mich., could perhaps assist me in preparing an annual or semiannual review of Dutch theological literature.⁴ After having seen him about this, if we can come to an arrangement, I shall let you know in time.

Will the new *Review* be published by the Scribners?⁵

Very truly yours,

G. Vos

¹Vos is referring to his Book Review of *Leesboek over de Gereformeerde geloofsleer*, by H. E. Gravemeijer. It would appear in the initial (January) number of the newly inaugurated *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 1 (1890): 146-149.

² Cf. Vos's bibliographical entries for 1890 in *LGV*, p. 90. In fact, he provided only this piece for the *Review* that year.

³ Nicholas M. Steffens (1839-1912), Professor at the theological seminary of the Reformed Church in America (now called Western Theological Seminary) in Holland, Michigan from 1884-1895 and 1903-1912. Cf. the letter of April 9, 1890, *LGV*, p. 138.

⁴ Never accomplished. Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck would make occasional contributions to the *Review*; cf. the remarks in *Kerux: The Journal of Northwest Theological Seminary* 25/3 (December 2010): 7.

⁵ The *Review* was published by Anson D. F. Rudolph & Co. of Philadelphia.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
February 3rd, 1890

Dear Prof. [Warfield],

I have written to Dr. K.¹ about the desired article and urged him to undertake the writing. As soon as I receive a reply, I shall let you know. Dr. Steffens has promised to do his share in preparing an annual or semi-annual review of Holl. Theological literature,² and I have tried to make arrangements with a friend in Holland who will keep me supplied with every publication of scientific importance.³ I have not heard from him yet, however and this was the reason that I did not write you more definitely. Should I receive something worthy of notice in due time, I might perhaps send you a short review of it for the April number, but all depends on the promptness of my correspondent. At any rate you can count on a notice for July.⁴ I enquired about the publication of the *Review* because the circular sent me had been lost and I did not know when or where it would appear.⁵

Very truly yours,

G. Vos

¹ Abraham Kuyper, who was asked to provide an article on either "Recent Theological Thought in Holland" or "Recent Dogmatic Works in Holland" for the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*; cf. the letter of Vos to Kuyper of Feb. 1, 1890 in *LGV*, 133-35, esp. 134.

² Nicholas M. Steffens; cf. the previous letter in this issue of Dec. 13, 1889, n. 3.

³ The "friend" was Herman Bavinck; cf. Vos's letter to him of Feb. 1, 1890 in *LGV*, 131-33, esp. 132.

⁴ For the context of this offer, see Vos's letters to Warfield of April 9, 1890, June 13, 1890 and July 2, 1890 in *LGV*, 138-40. The review in question was of Abraham Kuenen's *Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds: De profetische boeken des Ouden Verbonds*. It appeared in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 2 (1891): 139-40.

⁵ Cf. the previous letter in this issue of Dec. 13, 1889, n. 5.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
February 19th, [18]90

Dear Prof. [Warfield],

Wildboer's *Ontstaan van der Kanon* etc.¹ is of 1889 according to a review of it by Kuenen in *Theologisch Tijdschrift* of November 1889.² It is not in my possession and I am not very familiar with the questions involved. To write a review of Kuenen's *Prophets* would suit me better, if I could have the book for a couple of weeks.³ The last part which I received was published in 1887 and treats of the historical books of the OT.⁴ Is the second part in the library at Princeton and could you have it sent to me? If so, I shall try to have a notice ready by April 1st.⁵ I have not heard from Dr. K[uyper] yet.

Very truly yours,

G. Vos

¹ Gerritt Wildeboer (1855-1911), *Het ontstaan van de Kanon des Ouden Verbonds* (1889). English translation of the 2nd Dutch edition of 1891—*The Origin of the Canon of the Old Testament: An Historico-Critical Enquiry* (1895).

² Abraham Kuenen (1828-1891), *Theologisch Tijdschrift* 23/6 (November 1889): 644-47.

³ Cf. note 4 of the previous letter, Feb. 3, 1889.

⁴ *Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds: Thora en de historische boeken des Ouden Verbonds* (Deel 1, 1887).

⁵ The volume arrived in Grand Rapids sometime before April 9; cf. *LGV*, 138.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
October 14th, [18]90

Dear Professor [Warfield],

Dr. Kuyper has sent me an article destined for the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, and bearing the title "Calvinism and Revision."¹ It is impossible for me to state in a few words the contents of the paper, except that it tries to answer the following questions:

- 1.) Has a specific tendency which, like Calvinism, leads to a separate organization, a right to existence within the Christian Church?
- 2.) Which peculiar tendency does Calvinism represent?
- 3.) How has this tendency found its expression in the Symbols² of the Reformed Churches?
- 4.) Which are the conditions that, in case of a further development of Calvinism, the revision of the Symbols must comply with?

I am sorry to say that the paper is longer than you had contracted for. In the Holland language, it contains about 15,000 words, and covers 44 pages of the *Review* size. Dr. K. has had the type set in Holland, as his intention is to publish it in the original, after the appearance of the translation in the *Review*.

At your request, I had written how large a paper was desired and was somewhat surprised to see the limits overstepped to such an extent. You will understand, I hope, that I am not to blame for this.

Can you publish the paper as a whole, and shall I proceed accordingly with the translation? If so, when would you like to have the English?³

I saw in the *Review* advertiser Dr. Bavinck's name has been misspelled. It should read Bavinck.⁴

Hoping to hear from you in this matter at your earliest convenience, I remain

Yours very truly,

G. Vos

48 Spring Street

¹ Published as "Calvinism and Confessional Revision," (Translated by Geerhardus Vos). *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 2 (1891): 369-99.

² Refers to Confessions of Faith or Creeds; from ecclesiastical Latin *symbolum* ("creed" or "confession of faith"). Cf. *Symbolum Apostolorum*, i.e., the "Apostles' Creed."

³ For the balance of Vos's correspondence on this matter, see the letters dated Oct. 27, 1890 (to Kuyper), Jan. 31, 1891 (to Warfield), Feb. 12, 1891 (to Warfield), Feb. 21, 1891 (to Kuyper), Mar. 12, 1891 (to Warfield), July 30, 1891 (to Kuyper), *LGV*, 144-66 *passim*.

⁴ Herman Bavinck.

[January 4, 1892]¹

Dear Prof. [Warfield],

The translation of Dr. B.'s² paper was sent by me the day after Christmas. I trust you will find it at Princeton, and suppose you had left home already when it arrived. Owing to a cold which I contracted some weeks ago, I could not fulfill my promise of letting you have it Dec. 15th. Hope it has not been lost in the mail. Please send me a line that I may know whether everything is all-right.

Yours very truly,

G. Vos

¹ This note is also listed under the date Dec. 26, 1891 in the Warfield papers. However, the postmark from Grand Rapids is plainly dated Jan. 4.

² Herman Bavinck's, "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (1892): 209-28. As editor of the *Review*, Warfield had solicited Vos in 1890 to make contact with Abraham Kuyper and Herman Bavinck for material reflecting current Reformed thought in Holland. Cf. Vos to Bavinck (Feb. 1, 1890) and Vos to Kuyper (Feb. 1, 1890) in *LGV*, 131-35. The ensuing negotiations, concessions and frustrations are detailed in letters among the four in *LGV*, 139-69 *passim*.

Grand Rapids, Mich.
July 9th, [18]92

Dear Prof. Warfield,

You hereby receive the promised notice of Van Leeuwen's *Prolegomena of Biblical Theology*.¹

I have not forgotten what you wrote regarding the article on Kuenen.² If you have not found anybody else, I should like to undertake the task. The great difficulty is to obtain the sources here. Many important articles of K[uenen] appeared in the *Theologisch Tijdschrift*,³ and to this I have no access.

The subject of the covenant is resting for the present.⁴ I wrote a long time ago to Prof. Mitchell⁵ making use of your card, but have not as yet received a reply.

Our Synod has called Prof. Steffens⁶ to the fourth chair in the Seminary. I hope he will accept, though undoubtedly he is doing a good work for the Western section of the Reformed Church.

In the old country the two churches of the "Separate" and "Doleantie" have become united.⁷ The name is henceforth to be "Reformed Church of the Netherlands". There is great rejoicing. It is surely a hopeful sign that a country, in which eighty years ago the situation was well-nigh desperate, now contains seven hundred Calvinistic Churches presenting a united front to the enemy.

¹ Review of E. H. van Leeuwen, *Prolegomena van bijbelsche godgeleerdheid* in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 4 (1893): 143-45.

² Abraham Kuenen; cf. Vos's letter to Warfield of Mar. 18, 1892, *LGV*, 170-71.

³ Vos's letters to Herman Bavinck dated Feb. 1, 1890 and Mar. 4, 1890 (*LGV*, 131-33 and 136-37 respectively) indicate that he did, at one time, have access to and read this journal.

⁴ Vos comments on the doctrine of the covenant in several letters: Feb. 12, 1891 (to Warfield), Feb. 21, 1891 (to Kuyper), Mar. 12, 1891 (to Warfield), May 13, 1891 (to Bavinck), July 7, 1891 (to Warfield), Aug. 29, 1891 (to Warfield), Sept. 28, 1891 (to Warfield), July 3, 1893 (to Bavinck), Nov. 21, 1893 (to Bavinck), Feb. 1, 1894 (to Bavinck), Feb. 19, 1932 (to F. W. Grosheide), *LGV*, passim. To these epistolary remarks must be added his own penetrating rectoral address on the subject—*De Verbondsleer in de Gereformeerde theologie* (1891), translated by Richard B. Gaffin as "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (1980) 234-67.

⁵ Likely Alexander F. Mitchell who, with John Struthers, edited the *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly of Divines . . . (1644-49)* for publication in 1874.

⁶ Nicholas F. Steffens, Professor at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan from 1884-1895. Thus, he clearly declined the appointment to Grand Rapids.

⁷ By "Separate", Vos means the churches of the 1834 Afscheiding (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken) who had withdrawn from the state church in reaction to its deadening rationalism. "Doleantie" means "sorrowing" which defined Kuyper's withdrawal from the state church after the suspension of himself and his consistory in December 1885. When the Synod upheld the suspension, Kuyper gathered with his followers on Sunday, July 11, 1886 to form the first of the Doleantie congregations. The union of 1892 produced the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederlands (cf. *LGV*, 127 n. 11).

Our summer vacation has just commenced. You will probably receive one of our graduating students at Princeton next year.

After a little rest, I shall be preparing myself for the future.

I hope you are in good health and enjoying the time of vacation.

Yours sincerely,

G. Vos

Grand Rapids, Mich.
January 6th, 1893

Dear Professor Warfield,

Here are two notices, one of a book on Alexander Cromrie, a doctor's dissertation of the Free University, the other on Dr. Kuyper's latest speech.¹ It is possible that you received both books yourself and have written on them? If so, please lay my work aside.

Dr. K's speech is very interesting. Should you not have seen it, I shall be glad to let you have my copy. Comrie is the man whom he follows closely in his views on justification, regeneration and faith. The only point of difference is that Comrie did not teach the early regeneration of all infants from within the covenant. If you are interested in the book on Comrie and have not received it, I can send it along with the other.

With my article on Kuenen, I have not made much progress.² My health is much better than it used to be, but I must be very careful, not to overtax my strength. Apart from my regular work at school, I try to avoid doing more than is absolutely necessary.³

In Holland very little seems to appear at present. At least, I receive very little, though they promised to send me everything of importance. A couple of weeks ago the second part of Van Leeuwen's *Biblical Theology* came out containing the doctrine of God. As soon as possible, I shall review this.⁴

Dr. Bavinck has not sent me his remarks yet on the union of the two churches in Holland.⁵ He wrote about the pleasant interview he had with you at Princeton, and that you had given him ample time for preparing his account of the late events over there.⁶

There has been some talk in various quarters about effecting a similar union here between the (Dutch) Ref. and the Holl. Chr. Ref. Church.⁷ I am afraid people are not ripe for it. The remarks on Free-Masonry in *De Heraut* of some weeks ago, have stirred up that question again, and but little good can come of it.⁸

¹ Review of A. G. Honig, *Alexander Comrie* in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 331-34. Kuyper's speech (*De verflauwing der grenzen*) was reviewed by Vos in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 4 (1893): 330-32 (cf. *LGV*, 91).

² His review of Kuenen's *Historisch-critisch onderzoek naar het ontstaan en de verzameling van de boeken des Ouden Verbonds: De profetische boeken des Ouden Verbonds* had appeared in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 2 (1891): 139-40 (cf. also *LGV*, 136-40). This letter reflects further on matters found in a letter to Warfield dated Mar. 18, 1892 (cf. *LGV*, 170-71, esp. n. 2).

³ Vos's health was evidently fragile, as his letters frequently comment on his physical limitations; cf. *LGV*, 23, 117, 119, 125, 126, 178, 223, 224, 225 and the additional letters in this issue.

⁴ Apparently, never accomplished; cf. Vos's bibliography in *LGV*, 89-112.

⁵ Formation of the Gereformeerde Kerken Nederlands in 1892.

⁶ Refers to Bavinck's "The Future of Calvinism" (translated by Geerhardus Vos) in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 1-24.

⁷ Vos is referring to the Reformed Church in America (RCA) and the Christian Reformed Church (CRC).

⁸ For Vos's reflections on the "Lodge", see the Index to *LGV*, sub Freemasons, p. 264.

I look forward with pleasure to the time, when we shall come together.⁹ May the new year be blessed for you and all the brethren.

Yours very truly,

G. Vos

⁹ Vos was extended a call to teach at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1891, but declined the offer (see his letter to Warfield dated Mar. 18, 1892, *LGV*, 170). However, the call was renewed in the spring of 1893 (cf. his letter to Warfield dated Mar. 31, 1893 in this issue which gives the date of his reception of the renewed invitation as March 30). As he was eager to leave Grand Rapids, Vos acceded to the persistence of his former teachers and joined them as the first Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton in September 1893 (for the background, see *LGV*, 29-33).

48 Spring Street
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Jan. 30th [18]93

Dear Prof. Warfield,

Please forward the books referred to, and I shall try to let you have a brief notice of them by April 1st.¹

Very sincerely yours,

G. Vos

¹ These appear to be books by Herman Schultz (*Old Testament Theology*) and A. F. Kirkpatrick (*The Doctrine of the Prophets*) which were briefly reviewed by Vos for the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 132-33 and 138-39 respectively; cf. *LGV*, 91.

48 Spring Street
March 31, 1893

Dear Prof. Warfield,

Here are the two notices I promised you for April 1st. I tried to make them as brief as possible.¹

Dr. Bavinck's article on the union of the churches in Holland in its significance for the future of Calvinism has been in my possession for some time. It is quite a long paper, but I have promised to condense. Please state how many words you will make the maximum. Also about what time you will want it.²

I read with much pleasure part of your article on Inspiration in the *Review* which I received yesterday. Your statement of the case is admirable for its clearness and force. As soon as I can find time, I hope to read the remaining part.³

Yesterday I also received a renewal of the invitation by the Directors to come to Princeton.⁴ I am glad that my mind has been made up now, and that it will be unnecessary to go through the painful experience of last year again.⁵ Of course propriety makes it unavoidable that I shall wait some time before announcing my decision.⁶

Prof. Steffens told me recently that his students had been offered the *Review* at half price. Would it be possible to offer the same rates to our students here? Most of them are poor. I know that several of them would like very much to read the *Review*, and it would be good for them to become acquainted with its contents.

My health, though not worse than it has been for some time, is still rather frail.

Hoping you are well, with fraternal greetings to all,

¹ Cf. the previous letter of Jan. 30, 1893, n. 1.

² Herman Bavinck's "The Future of Calvinism" (translated by Geerhardus Vos) in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 1-24. For correspondence related to this article, see Vos to Bavinck: July 3, 1893, *LGV*, 174-76; Oct 20, 1893, *ibid.*, 178-80; Nov. 21, 1893, *ibid.*, 180-81; Feb. 1, 1894, *ibid.*, 182-83.

³ Warfield's, "The Real Problem of Inspiration." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 4 (1893): 177-221; reprinted in B. B. Warfield, *Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (1967) 169-226.

⁴ Cf. the letter to Warfield in this issue dated Jan. 6, 1893 and the bibliography cited there in n. 8.

⁵ The word "painful" here is telling and must be construed literally and metaphorically. Vos's "frail" health suffered as a result of the attacks upon his alleged supralapsarianism by L. J. Hulst, et al. A man with Vos's physical constitution would be devastated by such carping nonsense. Indeed, his whole soul as well as body would be sickened by such cheap shots and political grandstanding. If the suggestion is correct that Vos suffered from IBS ("Irritable Bowel Syndrome", *LGV*, 23), then emotional sensitivity would explain his frequent references to fatigue, weakness and the need for extended rest. Roaring Branch would be a tonic for his health, when those days came (1906, *LGV*, 45). Metaphorically, the issue was his filio piety (and his father's exploitation of it) and the pitiful performance of the students in Grand Rapids. Cf. *LGV*, 28-36.

⁶ Apparently, on April 15, 1893 (see the next letter to Warfield of that date). For more context, compare *LGV*, 33.

Yours very sincerely,

G. Vos

48 Spring Street
Grand Rapids
April 15 [18]93

Dear Prof. Warfield,

I found your letter on my table when returning home in the earlier part of this week. The delay in announcing my decision related of course to Grand Rapids, and did not mean that my own mind was wavering. I have just notified Dr. Bates of my acceptance and given him liberty to announce the same.¹

You will find enclosed a list with the names and addresses of 7 students who would like to avail themselves of the terms on which you kindly offered them the *Review*. All of them expressed the desire to have the subscription begin with the January number of the current year, i.e., to receive back-numbers for January and April. Is this possible?

I shall translate Dr. Bavinck's paper as soon as my work permits, and in condensing shall act according to your instructions.²

I enclose [a] draught on New-York for \$10.50.³

Yours very truly,

G. Vos

¹ Vos became the first Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary in September 1893.

² Herman Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 1-24.

³ Evidently payment for the 7 subscriptions mentioned above.

Monday morning
April 16, 1893

Dear Prof. Warfield,

In sending my letter of Saturday, I was careless enough to forget all about the draught referred to.¹ I now send [a] money-order for the same amount. Please excuse the mistake. I shall keep in mind what you wrote about associating one of my colleagues here as editor of the *Review*.² With greetings to all the brethren.

Yours sincerely,

G. Vos

¹ Referring to the previous letter of April 15, 1893 to Warfield.

² Warfield appears to have been seeking a broader editorial representation for the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.

Grand Rapids
July 1, 1893

My Dear Prof. Warfield,

Your note, transmitting the letter of your brother,¹ came as a surprise.² Of course I had not expected any such thing, and feel hardly competent as yet to bear the distinction. You may feel assured, however, that I shall try not in any way to discredit it, nor the institution that has conferred it.

To become acquainted with your brother will be a great privilege. I have written him in acknowledgement of the receipt of his communication.

Today I finished the translation of Dr. Bavinck's paper.³ You will see that it is not entirely free from repeating certain statements of both the Dr.'s own preceding article,⁴ and of Dr. K[uyper]'s on "Calvinism and Revision."⁵ But, the subject being given, this could perhaps hardly be avoided. If you think it better to omit certain parts also in order to reduce the article to its more natural length, you are at liberty to do so. Dr. B. has given me permission to condense and to make slight changes, and I can delegate this power to you, I suppose.

Our school has just closed.⁶ The last weeks were very exhausting, so that I long for a rest. My intention is to spend some weeks in a cool place on the shore of Lake Michigan.⁷ When coming to Princeton, I hope to be refreshed both in body and mind.⁸

Our graduating class consisted of four. To take my place, an uncle of mine (recently arrived from the old country on a call from one of the churches here) was elected provisionally for one year. I do not know whether he will accept.⁹ As it is, the school is

¹ Ethelbert D. Warfield (1861-1936), President of Lafayette College in Easton, Pennsylvania from 1891 to 1914.

² Vos was awarded the D.D. degree by Lafayette in 1893 (cf. *LGV*, 64). The college had been established by noted Presbyterian preacher and educator, George Junkin, in 1832. It still retained its Presbyterian identity when Warfield became President.

³ Herman Bavinck, "The Future of Calvinism." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 5 (1894): 1-24.

⁴ "Recent Dogmatic Thought in the Netherlands." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 3 (1892): 209-28.

⁵ "Calvinism and Confessional Revision." *Presbyterian and Reformed Review* 2 (1891): 369-99.

⁶ The Theologische School (now Calvin Theological Seminary) in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

⁷ Likely Ottawa Beach near Graafschap, Michigan—a resort community frequented by Vos, his wife (Catherine) and Vos's parents (cf. *LGV*, 194-95, n. 1).

⁸ Vos arrived in Princeton by the end of September 1893; cf. *LGV*, 33 and his letters of July 3, 1893 (*ibid.*, 174-77, esp. 175) and Oct. 20, 1893 (*ibid.*, 178-80, esp. 178).

⁹ "Uncle" Beuker (Hendricus) (1834-1900) had arrived in 1893 to pastor the Third Christian Reformed Church (Allen Avenue) in Muskegon, Michigan. He did not, in fact, accept the call to the seminary, choosing to pastor the Muskegon church for about a year. However, in 1894, he did accept the appointment to be Vos's replacement at the Theologische School and served in the chair of Systematic Theology until his death in 1900. Vos's father, Jan Hendrik Vos, pastor of the Spring Street CRC of Grand Rapids from 1881 to 1900, filled the one-year interim (1893-94) at the seminary—father replacing son! Cf. *LGV*, 14-18, 175-77.

but poorly equipped; there is hardly any library to speak of, and there are no funds to buy books either.

Dr. Kuyper is now printing his *Encyclopaedia*.¹⁰ Looking forward to a new field of labor, I could not undertake the translation. Dr. Huizenga¹¹ of New Platz, N. Y. will try to do the work. I am afraid it will prove a difficult and laborious task.

Prof. Steffens has gone to the Netherlands as a delegate of the Reformed Church to the Synod of the Reformed Churches there.¹²

My brother will come East with me next fall. He has accepted an Associate-Professorship in the Germanic Department of the Johns Hopkins University.¹³

I hope you are enjoying the best of health, and receiving the full benefit of your vacation. Can I have the proof-sheets when the article is being printed?

Yours sincerely,

G. Vos

¹⁰ Kuyper published *Encyclopaedie der heilige godgeleerdheid* in 1894. The English translation appeared in 1898 as *Principles of Sacred Theology*. The translator was John Hendrik de Vries (1859-1920); cf. *LGV*, 172-73.

¹¹ Abel Henry Huizenga (1859-1905) was pastor of the Reformed Church in America congregation of New Platz, New York from 1886 to 1894. It seems likely that his elevation to professor at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois from 1894 to 1896 may have removed him as well from being named the translator of Kuyper's work; cf. *LGV*, 177-78.

¹² Cf. Vos's comments on this matter in his letter to Herman Bavinck of July 3, 1893 (*LGV*, 174-77, esp. 175).

¹³ Bert John Vos (1867-1945) was Professor of German Languages and Literature at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland from 1893 to 1908; cf. *LGV*, 14, 116, 174, 177, 190.

48 Spring Street
Grand Rapids, Mich.
June 4, [18]94

Dear Dr. Warfield,

I return to you the proof of my address.¹ According to your request, I have read the whole material,² charge³ and titles included. All my suggestions are in pencil, and you are, of course free, to reject them or modify them as seems best to you. In the address itself, I found very little to correct after your revision. Please see whether in the sentence marked on sheet 6 the singular of the verb and the plural of the noun can go together. I do not know what to substitute for the word “paste” on sheet 17.⁴ How would it do to read: “the Deuteronomic and Levitical redaction to which they have been subjected in and after the exile”? If this approves itself to you, please make the change, or, if necessary, any other change you think best.

I do not believe it will be necessary to send me a second proof, unless you are too busy to look the sheets over yourself, when they are returned by the printer. If the delay is no objection and your time is occupied by more important things, do not fail to have it sent to me. I am ever so much obliged to you for your kind service in this matter.

I hope you spent a pleasant time in Kentucky⁵ and found Mrs. Warfield⁶ no worse on your return.

With kindest greetings,

Yours sincerely,

G. Vos

¹ Vos’s Inaugural address as Charles T. Haley Professor of Biblical Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary: “The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline.” It was delivered May 8, 1894, though Vos had been teaching at Princeton since September 1893. The address is reprinted in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation* (1980) 3-24; cf. *LGV*, 36-41.

² A pamphlet version published by Anson D. F. Randolph of New York in 1894 entitled *Inauguration of the Rev. Geerhardus Vos, Ph.D., D.D., as Professor of Biblical Theology*. The pamphlet includes a “Prefatory Note” (p. iii) listing the program for the occasion. Vos’s address covers pp. 1-40.

³ Delivered by Rev. Abraham Gosman (1819-1899), President of the Board of Directors (pp. vii-xv). Gosman was pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville, New Jersey from 1851-1895 and had been a member of the Board of Trustees/Board of Directors of the seminary since 1866.

⁴ Warfield apparently decided to retain the word “paste”; cf. *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation*, p. 22.

⁵ Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield was born Nov. 5, 1851 near Lexington, Kentucky. He died in 1921. One report had him collapsing in the front yard of the Vos home while on a walk; he was then carried to his own home where he expired.

⁶ Annie Pierce Kinkead Warfield (1852-1915) married Dr. Warfield in August 1876. She was an invalid all their married life, after being struck by lightning (according to some accounts) or traumatized by a terrifying thunderstorm (according to others) in the Harz Mountains of Germany during their honeymoon trip. Warfield was devoted to her, caring for her daily until her death (but with brief intermissions, as this letter attests).

Grand Rapids
June 29, 1894

Dear Dr. Warfield,

I received fifty copies of my inaugural address yesterday.¹ Many thanks to you for the reading of the second proof and for seeing the whole thing through. I am very much pleased with the neat appearance of the little book.

Everybody has been very busy here of late. The Synod of the Holl. Chr. Ref. Church has been in Session for two full weeks. Rev. Beuker (an uncle of mine who came from Holland a year ago) was elected Professor of Theology² and two instructors were appointed in the Literary Department.

In regard to a reunion with the Refd. Church,³ the signs do not appear any more favorable than before. There seems to be more inclination to join hands with the United Presbyterians⁴ on a cooperative basis. I am afraid that this would rather retard than promote the union of the two Holland Churches.

Speaking of union, I may just as well add that my own personal union to which I had been looking forward will in all probability be postponed till next Spring.⁵ After mature deliberation, we concluded that it would be better not to make any experiment with boarding or taking another house. We do not belong any more to that happy class of very young people who sweep aside all difficulties in the enthusiasm of their love. I hope that in the future you will give us some credit for this exhibition of patience and mature wisdom.

My brother was married the day before yesterday.⁶

I have been reading much, but writing little. Still I hope to come to Princeton with more lectures prepared than last year.

With kindest regards to Mrs. Warfield, I am

Sincerely yours,

G. Vos

¹ See the previous letter of June 4, 1894, esp. n. 1.

² Hendricus Beuker; cf. the letter of July 1, 1893, n. 9.

³ Reformed Church in America (RCA).

⁴ United Presbyterian Church of North America (1858-1958).

⁵ For the background of Vos's romance with Catherine Frances Smith of Grand Rapids, Michigan, see *LGV*, 41-43. In fact, the couple did decide to wed Sept. 7, 1894. Cf. also the following letter of Aug. 27, 1894.

⁶ Bert John Vos married René Moelker in Grand Rapids, Michigan on June 27, 1894.

P.S. I was very glad to have an opportunity for disposing of a copy of “De Verbondsleer”.⁷ I sent one to Prof. Marais⁸ according to your request.

G.V.

⁷ *De verbondsleer in de Gereformeerde theologie* (1891); cf. *LGV*, 28, 90.

⁸ Perhaps, Professor J. I. Marais (1848-1919), Head of the Theology Faculty at Victoria College in Stellenbosch, South Africa. There is a letter from “J. Marais” to B. B. Warfield dated Mar. 27, 1894 in the Benjamin Breckinridge Warfield Manuscript Collection at Princeton Theological Seminary (Box 32:39).

Grand Rapids, Mich.
August 27, 1894

Dear Dr. Warfield,

Last Saturday, I received the enclosed letter. I have been so liberal with the fifty copies sent me that there are not enough left to comply with the request out of my own supply.¹ I do not know whether the publishers have any additional copies, whether they can sell them to Mr. Lee, etc. As you arranged all about the printing, I thought the shortest way to answer the letter would be to refer it to you. Would you be so kind as to have the desired number of copies forwarded to Mr. Lee, if such a thing is possible? I should be much obliged to you.

I am looking forward to my return to Princeton. Fortunately, I can expect to bring my bride with me.² We have changed our mind once more. I am sure this will be the last time. The date of the wedding is to be September 7. Our intention is to go East immediately and to spend what remains of the vacation somewhere on the seashore not too far from Princeton.³

The chances of securing a house at this late hour will be small, I am afraid. If we can not find one, we shall try to make arrangements with Mrs. Aiken⁴ for staying there, which would be by far the most pleasant thing next to house keeping.

I have been summering on the shores of Lake Michigan⁵ and succeeded in doing some work for my N.T. course. My health should have profited more by my vacation, if the hotel fare had better agreed with me.⁶ I am afraid if I had to stay two months longer, I should become a confirmed dyspeptic. The summer at my parents' home has been a very busy one, so that my desire to do some work compelled me to seek seclusion elsewhere. I have now, however, returned to Grand Rapids, where I shall stay till the day of my marriage.

I hope you are enjoying the best of health, and have not withheld from yourself the "wee bit of vacation" of which you wrote.

Please remember me to Mrs. Warfield who, I hope, is much better.

Hoping to see you soon,

Yours sincerely,

¹ Referring to his inaugural address in pamphlet form; cf. the previous letters of June 4 and June 29, 1894.

² Catherine Frances Smith (1865-1937).

³ See the previous letter of June 29, 1894, n. 5 and *LGV*, 41-43.

⁴ Mrs. Charles A. Aiken, widow of Charles Augustus Aiken (1827-1892), former Professor of Christian Ethics and Apologetics at Princeton from 1871 to 1892. Vos refers to this housing arrangement in his letter to Herman Bavinck dated Dec. 22, 1894 (*LGV*, 187).

⁵ Ottawa Beach; cf. the letter of July 1, 1893, n. 7 and *LGV*, 195, n. 1.

⁶ Additional comments about his "health"; cf. the letter of Mar. 31, 1893, n. 5 and the references there.

G. Vos

THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
PRINCETON, N. J.¹

Sept. 23, 1898

TO THE COMMITTEE OF ARRANGEMENTS.

Dear Brethren:

The Faculty of the Theological Seminary of the Presbyterian Church at Princeton have instructed me, as their Corresponding Secretary,² to convey to you their thanks for your kind courtesy in inviting them to attend the installation of the Rev. Dr. John H. Gillespie³ as Professor of N. T. Greek and Exegesis in your Seminary. They have delegated Professors George T. Purves,⁴ John DeWitt⁵ and Chalmers Martin⁶ to represent them on this interesting occasion.

With best wishes for the exercises of the day and the continued welfare of our sister institution, I remain,

Yours fraternally,

GEERHARDUS VOS

¹ The text of this letter is printed in *Public Services at the Inauguration of the Rev. John H. Gillespie, D.D. as Thomas DeWitt Professor of Hellenistic Greek and New Testament Exegesis in the Theological Seminary of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America at New Brunswick, N.J. Tuesday, September Twenty-Seventh [1898]* (1899) 57-58. Benji Swinburnson first directed my attention to this document.

² Here, for the first time, we learn that Vos held this title.

³ John H. Gillespie (1858-1924), Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis at New Brunswick from 1898 to 1911.

⁴ George Tybout Purves (1852-1901), Professor of New Testament Literature and Exegesis at Princeton from 1892 to 1900.

⁵ John De Witt (1842-1923), Professor of Church History at Princeton from 1892 to 1912.

⁶ Chalmers Martin (1859-1934), Instructor in Old Testament at Princeton from 1892 to 1900.

My dear Prof. Berkhof,¹

I write to ascertain one or two things about the delivery of your Stone lectures here. Dr. Warfield, as chairman of the Committee, used to keep a memorandum of the lecturers invited for the successive years, and of the number of lectures agreed upon. He further corresponded with the prospective lecturers as to the dates, and for one cause or another, there was considerable shifting around, a later one being sometimes substituted for an earlier, or vice versa. The Committee wholly depended on him for these matters. Unfortunately, we have not been able to find his memorandum among the papers he left.² There is, however, a record of appointments approved in the Minutes of the Faculty. My recollection is that you were invited for a course of three lectures, and that it was agreed upon between Dr. Warfield and yourself, that you were to deliver these next session, i.e., either in the fall of 1921 or in the earlier part of 1922. The Faculty Minutes bear this out as to the date, but say nothing about the number of lectures. In order to prevent confusion, I should like to have a word from yourself as to how the arrangement stands. After receiving this, we can proceed to straighten subsequent matters out. The lecturer for the six lectures course next session is Dr. Boyd,³ whom you will remember as a lecturer at the seminary. He has an appointment with the American Bible Society as their special executive in the Near East, especially Egypt, and expects to leave for those parts next autumn. Consequently, his lectures have been [?set] for October, which is very early in the session, of course. It would not be advisable to have two courses in rapid succession, but apart from this, his early discharge of the task will leave you more time to choose from.

It will be a pleasure to have you come here, and I trust everything in the arrangements will be smooth and to your entire satisfaction.

With kindest regards,
Sincerely yours,
Geerhardus Vos

52 Mercer St
Princeton, N. J.
May 11, 1921

¹ Louis Berkhof (1873-1957) taught at the Theological School of the Christian Reformed Church (now Calvin Theological Seminary) in Grand Rapids, Michigan from 1906 to 1944. When he delivered the Stone Lectures in the Spring of 1922, he was listed as Professor of New Testament Exegetical Theology, a chair he held until 1926 when he became Professor of Systematic Theology. He also was appointed President of the Seminary in 1931. His Stone Lectures were entitled "The Kingdom of God in Modern Thought and Life". They were published posthumously in 1951 under the title *The Kingdom of God: The Development of the Idea of the Kingdom, especially since the 18th Century*.

² Warfield died Feb. 17, 1921.

³ James Oscar Boyd (1874-1947) delivered the Stone Lectures on Oct. 10-14, 1921. His topic was "The House of David." At the time, Boyd was pastor of the Church of the Redeemer (PCUSA) in Paterson, New Jersey. At Princeton Theological Seminary, he had served as an Instructor in Old Testament (1900-1907) and Assistant Professor of Oriental and Old Testament Literature (1907-1915). He would serve as Secretary of the Arabic-Levant Agency of the American Bible Society (1921-1929), then Secretary to the Levant Agency of the ABS (1926-1944).

The Hungarian Reformed *Confessio Catholica* (1562) on Covenant Condition

“The law makes promises on an impossible condition of doing because it binds fulfillment of the promises to our strength—if you will do it (Phil. 1, 2; Heb. 2, 3; 1 Thess. 5; John 6; Eph. 1, 2). The condition of the gospel (if you believe) is just as impossible for us as that of the law. For God, however, who by grace forms faith in us through the Holy Spirit for the sake of Christ, it is possible, since He who commands, who lays down the condition, likewise will effect it, and grace will work from both sides. The law, however, only commands, but does not act from both sides (Augustine, [Books] 3, 5, 7)” (as found in James T. Dennison, Jr., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation: 1552-1566* (2010) 2:471-72).

Moreland's Kingdom Triangle: A Review¹

Scott Sanborn

This book represents J.P. Moreland's attempt to promote Vineyard style Christianity. Founded by John Wimber, the Vineyard churches believe in the continuation of miracles, tongues and prophesy, but they believe that every Christian is baptized in the Holy Spirit. Thankfully, they do not believe (like Pentecostals and many Charismatics) that baptism with the Holy Spirit is a second blessing given to some Christians after conversion. At the same time, Dr. Moreland argues for the continuation of miracles and prophecy and even makes them one third of the kingdom triangle, or one of three legs on which life in the kingdom rests.

He is not alone in his assessment, as a large number of churches planted in the third world and increasing numbers in the U.S. seem to concur. Even noted Christian leaders have tuned in with Dr. Moreland, Gary Habermas (in a review of this book) being one example. How are we to assess these developments? Here we will give a brief review of the book, focusing primarily on our thesis that the less than adequate supernaturalism found in the Arminian view of salvation and Dispensational eschatology may account for why many have sought something supernatural elsewhere, namely in prophecy, signs and wonders. This review does not pretend to be a sociological analysis, but only seeks to consider this possibility from a theological point of view.

The three sides of Dr. Moreland's triangle are the life of the mind, moral and spiritual character development and prophecy, signs and wonders. Moreland presents some stimulating insights when he deals with the first two parts of the triangle. Many evangelicals will read these sections with agreement, opening them up to consider his conclusions in the last section. Thus, the introduction of this book with an intellectual defense of Christianity and spiritual formation serves a rhetorical purpose. As rhetoricians deal with ethos (establishing their credibility), logos (reasons for the argument) and pathos (passionate presentation), so follows Dr. Moreland. The reasons he gives in the first part of the book establish his credibility for readers as they consider the last leg of the triangle. At the same time, Dr. Moreland truly believes in these first two legs and discusses them not only to encourage Evangelicals but also to stimulate Charismatics and Pentecostals who often neglect them (not to mention Evangelicals who do the same). However, in spite of his encouraging insights here, we will argue that even the first two-thirds of the book shows the influence of his Arminianism.

Considering the life of the mind, Dr. Moreland critiques naturalism and postmodernism. His critique of naturalism is crisp and generally standard among Evangelicals. One of his more poignant critiques is that naturalism and postmodernism cannot do justice to the

¹J.P. Moreland, *Kingdom Triangle: Recover the Christian Mind, Renovate the Soul. Restore the Spirits Power*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007. 240pp. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-3102-7432-2. \$19.99.

dramatic nature of human beings. In order to aspire to goals that bring true happiness, there must be a universe with purpose. By undermining all true purpose, naturalism and postmodernism undermine genuine happiness. Thus, we might argue (following Moreland's insight) that the dramatic nature of redemptive history, culminating in Christ and the world to come, provides us with the only true happiness.

In his critique of postmodernism, Moreland has some helpful material. However, he fails to do justice to the unbeliever's suppression of natural revelation. In this respect, Dr. Moreland's presentation still shows signs of his Arminianism, with respect to knowledge.

For the Apostle Paul, the sinful heart is continuously suppressing natural revelation, setting up in its place a system of unbelief, a philosophy of life that is opposed to the knowledge of God. Paul makes this point when he states, "Even though they knew God...they became futile in their speculations" (Rom. 1:21). And "God gave them over to a depraved mind" (1:28). This sinful world-view from which unbelievers live is an expression of their rebellion against God. It represents the noetic effects of sin, that is, the effects of sin on the mind. This moral corruption cannot be undone except by the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit.

Dr. Moreland does not deal clearly with this in the book. If it is implied, it receives inadequate treatment. It seems that his Arminian view of the will does not lend it enough importance, and in our opinion cannot really do justice to it. Later we will see that Dr. Moreland's description of the Christian life has more similarities to Roman Catholicism than to the Protestant Reformation. Thus, we here ask 'does Dr. Moreland's approach to knowledge have closer affinities to Rome than to the Reformers?' And even worse, do we see here a movement toward Rationalism, at least in its broader meaning, as the exaltation of human reason and experience over divine revelation? After all, most of Dr. Moreland's later arguments for present day miracles are based on human experiences, to the neglect of a careful *biblical* examination of the arguments for Cessationism.² At the same time, if the reader sifts out these errors, he can still find in these pages insights for critiquing both naturalism and postmodernism.

Second, Dr. Moreland deals with spiritual formation, following in the footsteps of his mentor, Dallas Willard. Here we concur with Dr. Moreland's emphasis on developing Christian character and habits. The Christian life is not simply a set of individual acts of faith or works isolated from the development of Christian character. There is a true sanctification of the person in sanctification and not simply of her individual deeds. This emphasis can be found even among Protestant Reformers such as Peter Martyr Vermigli, who assigned Aristotle's *Ethics* as a textbook for his students. In spite of his paganism, Christians recognized that Aristotle was formally correct about the development of virtues. Many, from medieval theologians up through Protestant orthodoxy, have

² For the later, he mainly substitutes a poll of undifferentiated New Testament scholars, which could be of any stripe for all we know, liberal or conservative, Roman Catholic or Protestant, Pentecostal or Baptist, etc. Such a poll does not carry much weight in the present climate of biblical scholarship and is no substitute for a careful examination of the text. Our main point here is that the overwhelming number of examples from human experience overshadows the number of biblical texts examined.

developed these insights. However, these insights are not common among Evangelicals in the same way, whose focus tends to be on isolated acts of faith, obedience and techniques for living before God. This may partially arise from the two natures doctrine advocated by Dispensationalists.

At the same time, we believe that Dr. Moreland's approach to this subject does *not* adequately incorporate the insights of Protestant orthodoxy. That is, Dr. Moreland says little about the nature of grace, faith, and the promises of God in sanctification. Thus, we believe that his book is deficient in discussing both the sovereign work of God's Spirit and justification, and how each of these have a psychological effect on the Christian in growing into conformity to Christ.

First, as a promoter of an Arminian view of the freedom, Dr. Moreland has not yet grasped the full supernatural power of effectual calling. To the degree that the Arminian view of the will influences a person's life, he cannot lay hold of true biblical supernaturalism by faith. According to New Testament, God calls his people to faith in such a supernatural way that they are in fact drawn to him. All that the Father draws will be raised up at the last day (Jn. 6:44). Their natural resistance has no power over the supernatural wooing of Christ. His love is too powerful. When the Christian experiences the power of this love, he is brought to understand supernaturalism more fully. Before this, he implicitly thought that the natural man was more powerful (ultimately) than the supernatural God. At least, the supernatural God (whatever he could do) could not change him, or so he thought. Now he realizes (God having enlightened his mind to grasp effectual calling) that God is supernatural in all respects. And that changed his understanding of the supernatural across the board. God is more powerful than all things. That is supernaturalism!

The Arminian subordinates the supernatural power of God to the stony heart and will of man. God is subjected to man where it most counts—man's eternal relationship with God. To the degree that the Arminian is consistent with the thinking, it carries over into his thinking with respect to his Christian life. If God cannot move a finger to change my heart unless I first let him, then at no point in my Christian life can God first move to transform by heart unless I first let him. If God's supernatural power is subjected to my more powerful heart at the beginning of my relationship with God, then God's supernatural power by the Holy Spirit must be equally subjected to my first move at every stage of my Christian life. Thankfully, no true Christian is consistent with this Arminian perspective. But it weakens their supernaturalism. In its very essence, Arminianism is anti-supernatural. Nor does it offer its adherents a standard of true supernaturalism.

On the other hand, Augustinians believe that God works just as sovereignly in their sanctification as he does in their new birth. Their continual faith in Christ and love for him is completely dependent in all respects on the work of his Spirit. This should not lead them to despair because he says, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). It calls them to depend upon him for the faith and love that draws them to heaven. It is a higher standard of supernaturalism, being the food and drink of their

prayers. At least this is their standard, though they continually fall short of it. In it, they are called to pray, “Lord I do believe; help my unbelief” (Mk. 9:24). But Arminians, who do not believe that God’s Spirit is the beginning and end of their regeneration, cannot recognize the Spirit’s supreme supernatural work in their sanctification. As such, they do not have as high a standard for laying hold of him by faith at every moment, even in prayer and praise. Thus, we find the deficiency of this note in Dr. Moreland’s book. His melody is primarily that of duty and fails to be surrounded by the chords of grace.

Even though there are many fine Arminian Christians, they are at best confused about the nature of the supernatural. As a result, it can leave them less than satisfied with Christ’s supernatural gift of grace. If so, they may seek some other form of supernaturalism to satisfy them and build up their faith. And we believe the turn toward signs and wonders represents this for many, perhaps even Dr. Moreland himself.

Second, we turn to justification. At a later point in the book, Dr. Moreland notes that justification is the core of the gospel message. But he does not develop this claim in any way, especially in the section on spiritual formation. For the churches of the Reformation, trusting in the promises of God in Christ is their first consideration for approaching the throne of grace. Only because Christ has justified me and intercedes for me before the Father can I boldly approach the throne of grace. In Christ, God has loved me from eternity. Christ’s love is so great that he gave his life for me to guarantee that I would be with him for eternity. Is it not clear? God desires to have fellowship with me in his Son. For the Son of God is continuously interceding for me. And he desires to have me to enter into prayer with him before the throne of the Father. Before I pray, he prays. And I am called to pray in him. I am invited to intercede for his people and worship with them before the throne of God.

In focusing on faith in the work of Christ, this does not mean that the Reformed looked at faith as a mere individual act that had no relationship to the development of Christian character. No, Christians were called to grow in a continual life of faith. Nor does it mean that Christians must possess a strong sense of faith prior to carrying out their duties. No, they are called to their duties even in the midst of weak faith. Once again, they are called to lean on the promises of God, saying, “Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief”, and carry out their duties before God. Nonetheless, they are called back to the promises of God in Christ.

Dr. Moreland’s failure to lead Christians to lay hold of the promises of God in faith means he is leading them to develop a *character* that is *deficient in faith*. That may seem harsh since he formally acknowledges faith. However, if the focus of Christian character formation can progress without an emphasis on faith, then it must place its focus elsewhere. And this focus is duty, understood somewhat independently of faith. Clearly, the Reformed churches believed in Christian duties; they were champions of the law of God. However, they believed that these duties were the fruit of faith. Further, by affirming the priority of faith, the Reformed made way for the sinner who failed in his duties to God. In spite of your sins, lay hold of the promises of God. Then live out of the promises you possess in him. Christian contentment in Christ yields Christian obedience.

Being deficient in faith, Dr. Moreland's view of Christian formation is deficient in Christian contentment. That is, it is deficient in semi-realized eschatology. Semi-realized eschatology means we are made possessors of the riches of the kingdom of God now. Thus, we can say with Luther, "let goods and kindred go". In other words, the fact that we have been raised with Christ enlivens our faith. Since I now possess God, what is so great about this worldly thing? All earthly things are but reflections of the glory of him who created them. Therefore, he surpasses them all. And I have him. This lightens my burden in giving them up. Christian worship involves recognizing the superiority of God over this world. And so does Christian love, sometimes even calling us to give them up for the sake of others. Thus, love flows from faith in Christ and his promises, promises that we are always possessors of the heavenly riches in him. This is because the eternal kingdom of glory has broken in upon us (now semi-realized).

This failure to discuss the priority of grace and faith to Christian duties may explain why Dr. Moreland recommends the work of Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuit order) without qualification and above many other spiritual classics. Why recommend Ignatius, who commends human merit, before Augustine's *Confessions*? While Dr. Moreland elsewhere acknowledges the centrality of justification, he fails to expound its centrality, as the ever-present object of faith in spiritual formation. Thus, we are left with emphases that are short of the Reformers and too close to Rome. This may also be said of his Arminian approach to human knowledge discussed earlier. And it is true of his view of miracles, which we shall discuss next. During the Reformation, the Reformers argued that the age of miracles and prophecy ceased with the death of the apostles. The Roman Catholic Church, by contrast, argued that miracles continued. Further, they argued that the miracles God performed among them substantiated the Roman Catholic Church as the true church. Are we observing, in the way Dr. Moreland expounds each of his legs, a (perhaps unintentional) movement away from the Reformation and a movement toward Rome? Is this even true of his apologetics?

We have suggested that Arminianism is deficient in its understanding of the supernatural and leaves some people longing for other supernatural experiences. Here, as we focus more on the issue of the miraculous, we will begin by arguing that Dispensational eschatology also falls short of biblical supernaturalism. As a result, it may leave its adherents longing for some truly different form of supernaturalism, namely signs and wonders.

As an adherent of Dispensational eschatology, Dr. Moreland does not fully grasp the fact that the kingdom blessings of God surpass the blessings of the Old Testament theocracy. This may seem like an odd claim to some since Dispensationalists are known for rejecting what they consider to be a Judaizing view of the old covenant among the churches of the Reformation. Dispensationalism promotes freedom from the law. However, we believe that Dispensationalism, insofar as it promotes freedom from the law, does so in the wrong way at certain critical points. And this is especially the case in its view (continued among Progressive Dispensationalists) that the church is distinct from Israel. This affects their understanding of the very nature of the eschatological promises

of the Old Testament. That is, Dispensationalists believe that God continues to promise a future in this world where God will renew his promises to Israel and set up a this-worldly kingdom for them, as he did in the Old Testament. Generally, Dispensationalists have grounded their premillennialism in their understanding of the very nature of Old Testament prophesy, not simply in their understanding of Revelation 20. In other words, they have believed that the very nature of Old Testament eschatological projection is this-worldly.

This usually affects their entire understanding of eschatological fulfillment. Classically, Dispensationalists believed that the church was not the recipient of the eschatological promises given to Israel. Thus, their future life in heaven was not a consummation of those eschatological promises. Progressive Dispensationalists may accept the fact that the church is the fulfillment of the eschatological promises given to the Gentiles, but not those given to Israel. Thus, at least one aspect of eschatological fulfillment is this-worldly in its nature. Even if the Gentiles experience an eschatological fulfillment that transcends this world, Israel does not. Thus, at least for many Dispensationalists, Israel will live eternally in the New Earth, while the church lives in the New Heavens. In its very nature, eschatology is at best bifurcated between the earthly and that which transcends the earth. If the eschatology is so bifurcated, it cannot be transcendent in its essential nature. Dispensationalists do not believe that the eschatological transcends the earthly. As a result, they believe in the eternal continuation of a non-rational environment that operates according to *secondary causes* rather than direct *supernatural causes*. If this is the case, we must ask them—what is distinctively supernatural about the eschatological dimension? If that arena operates according to secondary causes just like our own (rather than direct supernatural causes), then what is uniquely supernatural about it?

In arguing that the New Heaven and New Earth transcend the present creation, we appeal to two texts, 1 Cor. 15: 46-49 and Heb. 12:27-28. 1 Cor. 15:47 claims that “the first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is from heaven”. In context, the arena from which man is made (the earthy) will be transcended by the heavenly (just as it was for Christ, v. 49). From this, we may at least argue that the future heavenly arena will transcend the prefallen earthly arena. Hebrews 12:27-28 makes it clear that we will receive a “kingdom that cannot be shaken”. This kingdom is not “as of created things” which can be shaken (v. 27). Therefore, it transcends the created universe. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the New Testament’s description of a New Heaven and a New Earth is the language of eschatological projection. That is, the Old Testament prophecies looked ahead to a New Jerusalem to come. Yet, according to the New Testament writers, its fulfillment transcended the earthly Jerusalem (e.g., Gal. 4:26-27). Therefore, there is every reason to believe (based on texts such as 1 Cor. 15:46-49 and Heb. 12:27-28) that the New Heaven and New Earth (2 Pet. 3: 13) will also transcend the present heavens and earth in their very nature. Only then will they rise to the level of the transcendent Jerusalem above.

Admittedly, there are various eschatological views that argue for a future restoration of the present creation. However, among Evangelical Christians, Dispensationalism advocates one of the most this-worldly approaches to the kingdom available. In this

respect, its view of the kingdom may be one of the least supernatural among Evangelicals. Instead of advocating a transcendent eschatology, it simply argues that the future world will be the present world without sin. This primarily suggests a moral change. As one's eschatology determines one's theology, this may explain why Dispensational preaching is primarily moralistic. As such the supernatural is underplayed.

Since the eschatological will be our fullest experience of the supernatural, our understanding of eschatology will affect our understanding of the supernatural. To the degree that Dispensationalism waters down the supernatural character of eschatology, it cannot rise to understand the full wonders of the supernatural. It is no wonder that so many Dispensationalists have their eyes set on the next this-worldly fulfillment of the prophetic promises, at least as they understand them. As a professor at Talbot, Dr. Moreland must sign a statement of faith claiming to believe in the premillennial return of Christ. And he must at least be sympathetic to Dispensationalism. There is reason to believe that this essentially moralistic, non-transcendent eschatology explains why many are looking for another form of supernaturalism elsewhere.

However, the type of supernaturalism promoted in the Vineyard does not rise to the standard offered us in the New Testament. The focus of Vineyard churches on signs and miracles can lead to spiritual depression. Christianity is distinctively supernatural. And thus, as Christians, our faith is invigorated when we focus on the supernatural work of God. If, however, we focus on a supernatural work of God that comes and goes, our faith will ebb and wane with it. So it is with signs and wonders. If a major focus of our Christian life is on signs and wonders, then we are focused on something that is here today and gone tomorrow. And while this may seem to strengthen our faith when the miracles come, our joy in the kingdom will be diminished when we do not see these miracles.

If on the other hand, we are possessors of the supernatural age to come now, then we have something to rejoice in constantly. Christ is raised into the supernatural abode of heaven. And he will never be taken from it. His life there does not ebb and wane. As those united to Christ, we have all these blessings constantly. And we are called to lay hold of these supernatural riches by faith even when we do not see them. Though the blessings of this visible world may ebb and wane, our essential participation in those blessings does not. God holds us in his bosom in Christ, loving us with great affection constantly. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8: 35). Christ is continuously expressing his desire to share his supernatural life with his people. And for this, he has given us his living word in Scripture.

The Vineyard's focus of faith on that which ebbs and wanes brings them back in some respects to the faith of Israel in the land, back to the Old Testament expression of faith. This can be seen when we recognize the nature of the kingdom of heaven. The fullness of its riches surpasses the riches of the Old Testament theocracy. Under the old covenant, even the faithful in Israel participated in the external curses of the law. Yet God promised that to the degree she was obedient, she would have her faith confirmed with the visible blessings of the land. To the degree that she did not possess those blessings, she did not

have this confirmation. Thus, to this extent she walked by sight. (Paul's contrast between walking by faith and not by sight follows his distinction between the old and new covenant, 2 Cor. 3-4). This is not to say that the faithful in Israel walked primarily by sight. No, Hebrews shows that they primarily walked by faith (Heb. 11:1-40; see especially in this respect vv. 32-34). Even the old covenant (as a covenant of redeeming grace) mediated the grace of Christ to them and called them to lay hold of him by faith.

However, at the same time, the old covenant secondarily called them to find further confirmation of their faith in the blessings of the land. To the degree that they did not have these blessings, there was some loss in the fruits of faith. So Jeremiah does not possess the fullness of joy in the kingdom of God when he writes Lamentations, lamenting over the loss of the earthly Jerusalem in which God's kingdom was partially manifested. However, now in the new covenant, we possess the fulfillment of the prophetic promises. The prophets promised a day in which God would bring his people into their inheritance and cause them to dwell there forever. In this inheritance, Jerusalem would never be destroyed again. And Paul says that we now possess this heavenly Jerusalem because Christ has now accomplished his work in history. He has brought the eschatological age promised by the prophets, bringing a Jerusalem above to us which can never be cursed or destroyed (Gal. 4:25-26). It is thoroughly supernatural. And thus Paul calls us to rejoice continuously. We have a greater hope and have no reason to lament with respect to our faith in the loss of any expression of the city of God. For all the blessings of that city are ours continuously without diminution.

Yes, that eschatological age is now only semi-realized. We still await the second coming of Christ and the New Heavens and New Earth. But the point is, it has arrived even though it has yet to be consummated. And it presents a relative contrast to the theocracy in which the faith of Israel was secondarily built up or diminished by the visible blessings of the land. Dr. Moreland brings us back to the theocracy insofar as he focuses our faith in something that ebbs and wanes at best.

Even more so, he focuses us on something that does not exist in its temporal manifestation because we have the reality of all the New Testament miracles constantly with us in the supernatural life we possess in the kingdom above. That is, every single one of the New Testament miracles was a manifestation of the supernatural power that Christ possesses in fullness in the heavenly places. Those heavenly blessings are ours spiritually now. Thus, we have the supernatural essence of all those miracles in a far more surpassing and transcendent way now—continuously.

As a result, they do not even exist in their previous, more rudimentary form. As they would present a distraction to us, leading us to focus on them rather than the far more superior blessings that we possess in heaven.

But you will say, if this is the case, why did these miracles exist in the New Testament period? If your argument is correct, they certainly would have distracted people from Christ and God would not have performed them. But this objection fails to fully recognize that those miracles worked to further reveal more about the glory of the risen

Christ. And thus, God always accompanied them with further revelation about the resurrected life of Christ. In this way, the miracles lead the New Testament church to Christ. But since the fullness of revelation about Christ has been completed, the church is not drawn to further revelation about him by a miracle. And if we are not drawn to further revelation about Christ, then we are drawn to the miracle as an end in itself. This was not the case for the New Testament church.

Of course, Dr. Moreland argues for the continuation of revelation with the continuation of miracles. However, you will notice that the continuing revelation that the Vineyard recommends is not new revelation about the glories of the exalted Christ that should eventually be collected for the benefit of the whole body of Christ throughout the ages (i.e., in a book). They are not arguing for a new Book of Vineyard, thank the Lord. But if they were consistent with the pattern of New Testament revelation, this is unfortunately the road they would go. However, if they are not arguing for this, then they are arguing for revelations given to individuals about their individual lives and what God might do in them. The focus of these revelations is, therefore, on aspects of spirituality that ebb and wane just like the miracles they promote.

These revelations are different from the revelations of the New Testament. For even when God gave revelations to the early church about unique things he would do among them (i.e., the prophesy of Agabus about the famine, the calling of Paul and his mission, and prophesy and tongues at Corinth), their significance was for the whole church. That is, these prophecies would affect the early church in such a way that they would have significance for the church throughout all ages. God confirmed this significance by including the essence of these revelations in the canon, to be read by future ages.

We cannot deal with all the arguments for Cessationism here. But we will consider one text, Heb. 1-2.³ In Hebrews 1:1-2, the writer states, “God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in his Son.” While Dr. Moreland claims that God reveals himself to his people in dreams (like he did in the Old Testament), Hebrews claims that these former ways of God revealing himself to his people have now ceased (see also *Westminster Confession of Faith* 1.1). His revelation in his Son culminates and completes all previous revelation. Then in Heb. 2:3-4, the writer speaks of the message spoken by the Lord Jesus, which “was confirmed to us by those who heard, God also bearing witness with them, both by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to his own will.” This writer did not see the Lord, but says that the word was confirmed to him by the apostles who heard it. If Heb. 1:1 states that all revelation is complete in his Son (and therefore does not continue), then the signs and wonders that were used to confirm the word (Heb. 2:3-4) have also ceased. Otherwise, they would attest to continuing revelation, which does not exist. Both the revelation and its attestation possess eschatological finality. Both are completed in Christ. If this revelation is to include revelation of Christ’s heavenly ministry, he must give it through instruments of revelation on earth, like the apostles. But once that revelation is complete and recorded for the whole church, the signs that accompany it must also cease.

³ Thanks to the editor of this Journal for the following insights on this text.

Much more could be said to answer potential replies to this argument and others, but this will suffice for now. We commend to our reader Geerhardus Vos's Inaugural Address, *The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline*. Vos shows how the miraculous acts of God in redemptive history culminate in Christ. All the revelation of Scripture is directly tied to this pattern of the miraculous so that miracle and revelation are inseparable from one another. When the one ceases the other must also cease. If we are not simply to rely on the propositional statements of Scripture, as Dr. Moreland argues, then arguments from the structure of Scripture also have weight. In other words, narrative arguments have force when they follow by necessary implication. And Vos has made a solid case of this nature. For a more detailed treatment, one may want to consult *Counterfeit Miracles* by B. B. Warfield.

Dr. Moreland is correct in critiquing modern naturalism and postmodernism for undermining the dramatic nature of human life. He has made some helpful critiques and encouragements to spiritual development. However, we believe that his overall approach suffers from a lack of true supernaturalism, a de-emphasis of the Protestant doctrines of grace and justification, and an alternative approach to the supernatural that is ultimately unsatisfying. In all these respects, the book does not focus our eyes on Christ, as Dr. Moreland would like it to. But Christ is not absent, and holds out the promises of grace, justification and eschatological life to his people even now from his heavenly throne.

Reviews

K:JNWTS 26/1 (May 2011): 41-43

Nerses of Lambron. Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John. Translation of the Armenian Text, Notes, and Introduction by Robert W. Thomson. Hebrew University Armenian Studies 9. Lueven: Peeters, 2007. Paper. 225 pp. ISBN: 978-90-429-1866-5. \$63.

Nerses' commentary, here translated from the Armenian language into English for the first time, is a twelfth-century adaptation of the Greek commentary on the Apocalypse of Andrew of Caesarea in Cappadocia composed in the early seventh century. Nerses picked and chose from Andrew what he wanted to include and exclude, often adding his own commentary. It is composed as a series of 24 homilies which extend from the very first to the very last verse of Revelation.

Nerses was born in 1153 A.D., the third of eight children of the prince of Lambron, a city about fifty kilometers north of Tarsus. He entered monastic life at an early age, was ordained in 1176 and subsequently appointed archbishop of Tarsus. Nerses composed this *Commentary on the Revelation of Saint John* in 1180. He died in 1198.

To the book of Revelation, this bishop applies the “now-not yet” principle of biblical prophecy, understanding some things as referring to historical events in the first century which will have their ultimate fulfillment in end-time events related to the persecution of the Antichrist and the Second Coming of Christ. He expounds on his interpretive approach in his comments on Rev. 6:14b-17:

The apostles questioned our Lord concerning the destruction of the temple and the end of the world, and as they were able to bear it he told them: first, the future events which we have seen in the days of Vespasian and Titus occurring to the Jews, slayers of God, as the Jew Josephus relates. The same commands of the Lord will again be fulfilled in the times of Antichrist, as the teachers demonstrated (86).

On Rev. 7:1-3, where the angel is commanded not to harm the earth, sea, and trees until the servants of God are sealed, he writes: “This also happened partially under Vespasian; for those who were ministers of Christ in Jerusalem fled from the Romans at the time of the destruction of the city... But it is fulfilled especially at the times of the Antichrist.” Nerses understands what happened under that emperor in the first century “as an image of the afflictions of Antichrist” (88). As for the 144,000, he explains that “this number was fulfilled bodily regarding the salvation of those who took refuge with the Lord from the rule of the Romans at the destruction of Jerusalem;” so “likewise the spiritual offspring of the holy apostles will be saved from Antichrist throughout the whole world” (88-89).

Following the opinion of many patristic writers, Nerses interprets the two witnesses of Rev. 11 as Enoch and Elijah, whom he says will return to rebuke “the deceit

of Antichrist” (101-10). On Rev. 12, he rejects the interpretation of the woman as Mary, the mother of Christ, and prefers that of Methodius, that the woman is a figure of the church (114-19). Her flight to the desert, he says, will be fulfilled literally during the three-and-a-half year reign of Antichrist when the faithful flee to the desert for refuge from his assault (127). Concerning the name associated with the number of the beast, namely 666, Nerses reiterates three proposals put forth by Hippolytus: Lampetis, Titan, and Benedictus (133).

Concerning the identity of Babylon in Rev. 17-18, Nerses says that he is aware that old Jerusalem was called a “harlot” and that old Rome was called “Babylon” by Peter in his epistle. But he believes that Babylon is best interpreted as “all the kingdoms of the world” (155). The seven kings of Rev. 17:9-10 are not Roman emperors, as Andrew thinks, but seven world kingdoms from the ancient Assyrians to the Byzantine empire of his time (153, 156-57). Revelation 19 he sees as a vision of the Second Coming of Christ.

On Rev. 20, Nerses holds that Satan was bound at the crucifixion of Christ and that the thousand years are not an exact number; rather they are figurative of the time “between the Incarnation of Christ up to the Antichrist” (172-73). On Rev. 20:4, the millennial reign is that of “the souls of the saints and of the martyred righteous” who “rose up to heaven with Christ” (174). Nerses interprets the New Jerusalem in Rev. 21:2 similarly (181).

In my opinion, Nerses’ application of the “now-not yet” principle of biblical prophecy to the visions of Revelation is commendable. Modern interpreters of Revelation who hold to preterist interpretations of Revelation 6 and 7 may find in Nerses’ commentary some correspondence with their own views about Vespasian and the 70 A.D. destruction of Jerusalem (as preterists have done with similar comments by Andrew of Caesarea). But the commentary makes no explicit reference about the date of the writing of the Apocalypse, nor under which emperor John was exiled. In addition, references to the emperors Nero, Vitellus, Galba, and Otho, who reigned in the 60s, are entirely absent from the commentary. However, the “hour of trial” in Rev. 3:10 Nerses interprets not as an end-time tribulation, but as that which happened shortly after the writing of the Apocalypse in the persecution of Christians by the Roman emperors.

I tend to take a more idealist approach in my interpretation of the two witnesses than Nerses, but his interpretation of the woman of Rev. 12 is probably correct, in contrast with the ever-popular Dispensationalist interpretation that the woman is a figure of the remnant of Israel during the tribulation, since, in their view, the church will have been raptured out of the tribulation. On the number of the beast, an interpretation which to me has much merit—that 666 is symbolic of the imperfection and wickedness of man in contrast with the perfection and holiness of God whose number is seven—is not mentioned. I agree with Nerses’ interpretation of Babylon as ultimately symbolic of all the kingdoms of this world whose rebellion God will surely judge. I also compliment Nerses’ interpretation of the millennial reign as the souls of the saints presently reigning

in heaven with Christ, a view that corresponds with several major contemporary amillennial commentators.

Those interested in the history of interpretation of Scripture, the book of Revelation, and eschatology will most likely find, as I have, that this translation of and introduction to Nerses' Apocalypse commentary is scholarly, informative, enlightening, and affordable.

—Frank X. Gumerlock

K:JNWTS 26/1 (May 2011): 43-44

James L. Resseguie, *The Revelation of John: A Narrative Commentary*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009. 288pp. Paper. ISBN: 978-0-8010-3213-4. \$16.95.

Over a two-year period, I recently finished preaching through the book of Revelation (<http://www.sgopc.org/sermons.html>). About half-way through the series, the editor of *Kerux* alerted me to the publication of a new commentary on Revelation by James L. Resseguie, emeritus professor of New Testament at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findley, Ohio. As I found this book to be very helpful, it is the intention of this review to specifically demonstrate how it assisted my sermon preparations.

Resseguie subtitles his book a *Narrative Commentary*. In the preface, he states that this means he approaches Revelation as an organic whole—“it has a unity with a beginning, middle and end” (11). With this approach in mind, he demonstrates throughout the commentary how each passage fits into the message of the book as a whole. In the introduction, he also gives a primer on narrative analysis describing John's use of metaphors, similes, verbal threads, chiasms, inclusios, two-step progressions and other rhetorical devices. Throughout the commentary, he points out the various ways in which these narrative devices are used.

How should you use this book for your study of Revelation? My recommendation is that each week, when you begin sermon preparation, it is best to start by reading about your Revelation pericope in William Hendrickson's classic *More Than Conquerors*. Hendrickson's book is not only Reformed, his recapitulation approach helps put each text within that framework. Second, you can find careful verse-by-verse analysis by using exegetical commentaries on Revelation such as G. K. Beale in the *New International Greek New Testament Series* and Grant Osborne in the *Baker Exegetical Commentary Series*. Following that you may then turn to Resseguie's book to find further narrative insights into the text—insights that go beyond what the other commentaries have. At times Resseguie even interacts with works of these other commentators and builds upon their insights by applying his narrative approach.

While this commentary is not a detailed exegetical work, I especially appreciated his “linear” approach to the book. While he agrees with the recapitulation approach of Hendrickson, he believes there is more to the book of Revelation than “hitting readers

over the head” with the redundant message of each of the seven visions (55). His linear method demonstrates that not only does each of the seven visions of Revelation have a similar message (recapitulation), but also that there is an intensification of that message as the book unfolds, thus leading to the final consummation at the end (linear). For example, in the vision of God on the throne in Rev. 4, we read that there were *flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder* (v. 5). Later, at the end of vision of the seven seals, we again read that there were *peals of thunder, rumblings, flashes of lightning*, but with an *earthquake* added to the mix (8:5). Also the vision of the seven trumpets is intensified with *heavy hail* added to the picture (11:19). And finally, culminating the vision of the seven bowls (16:1ff.), *huge hailstones* are falling from the sky (v. 21). Why the intensification at the end of each vision? What does it mean? Building on the insights of others, Resseguie, in my opinion, gives the best explanation of them all. But you will have to buy the book in order to test my opinion.

The only disappointing part of the book is the handling of Rev. 20. Resseguie demonstrates his premillennial views in his description of the future, literal, thousand-year millennium on earth after Christ’s return. Nevertheless, I very much appreciated the narrative insights of this commentary and overall found it very helpful to my sermon preparation. Standing alone, it is not enough for sermon preparation, but used along with other resources, it will enhance your studies and stimulate your thinking as you preach through the glorious last book of the Bible.

—Robert Van Kooten

K:NWTS 26/1 (May 2011): 44-45

Richard G. Kyle and Dale W. Johnson, *John Knox: An Introduction to His Life and Works*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2009. Paper. 208 pp. ISBN: 1-6060-8090-3. \$24.00.

It is nothing short of disappointing to read a history of the Scottish Reformation when the author only gives but a passing reference to perhaps the most pivotal figure, John Knox. Unfortunately, revisionist historians commit such an error. However, the recent historical work of Richard Kyle and Dale Johnson in *John Knox: An Introduction to His Life and Works* corrects such a historical bias (see especially 182-97). Kyle and Johnson persuasively show that Knox was indeed essential and indispensable to the Reformation in Scotland.

However, Kyle and Johnson do not take the typical approach by writing a biography of Knox. Rather, Kyle and Johnson approach Knox by allowing his own writings to tell his story. “This volume traces the life and thought of John Knox by examining his writings. A number of biographies tell the story of the famous Scottish reformer. But we have taken the reader in a different direction, offering an interpretation of his writings. We take a chronological approach to his writings, allowing them to speak for themselves. In doing so, Knox’s writings partially tell the story of his life and ideas” (ix). Such an approach is refreshing, allowing the reader to hear from Knox himself, within the context of his sixteenth century reform movement.

One of the strengths of Kyle and Johnson is their ability to balance their depiction of Knox's personality. It is commonly known that Knox could be difficult. "One side of Knox could be charismatic, hateful, forceful, courageous, and intimidating. To be sure, a cannon at Edinburgh Castle is aptly nicknamed John Knox" (19). However, Kyle and Johnson do not stop there but insightfully recognize that there was also another side to Knox.

"On Sunday, this 'great voiced, bearded man of God' could beat the pulpit. On Monday, however, he would sit with his parishioners and weep with them over their trials and temptations. While he castigated female rulers (usually Catholics), he could be warm and tender to other women. At times Knox had the courage of a lion. On the other occasions, he prudently protected his life, fleeing danger as the need arose. He promoted godly living—but not excessive Puritanism. He was less austere than supposed" (19).

It is tempting to view Knox's hatred of Rome, for example, as a sign of his harsh temper. However, Kyle and Johnson remind us that Knox must be read in his sixteenth century context.

Knox has "often been seen in 'either . . . or' terms—either as a hero or a villain." However, to "interpret his life in such exclusive categories is a mistake" and instead we need a "both . . . and" framework. "Depending on the context, he can be regarded as both compassionate and unforgiving, tolerant and uncompromising, etc. And these opposites are not easily reconciled" (20). Kyle and Johnson do not try to overlook or downplay the complexity and at times contradictory personality of Knox. However, what they do show is that Knox's temperament was motivated according to the context in which he found himself. So, for example, his hatred of Rome came from his belief that Rome was a house of idolatry, leading masses of people to hell by its false doctrine. Rome's persecution of Protestants did not help either. With life and death (both literally and spiritually) hanging in the balance, "Knox saw himself as a prophet proclaiming God's judgment" (20).

Kyle and Johnson have written a work that will be revisited again and again by theologians and historians alike. Knox is once again a reminder that Reformed theology did not end in Geneva but had an international influence, as seen in Scotland. Knox was central to such reform as he "recognized that the Reformation rested on a new theology" (21). This "new theology" was the heart of the Reformation and Kyle and Johnson make it clear that these Reformation ideas "drove Knox's actions."

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K:NWTS 26/1 (May 2011): 45-48

Frank Thielman, *Ephesians*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010. 520 pp. Cloth. ISBN: 978-0-8010-2683-6. \$44.99.

Thielman is Professor at Beeson Divinity School of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama and offers a fresh commentary on Paul's epistle. Happily, he endorses Pauline authorship of the letter (pp. 1-5), safely side-stepping the minefield of faddish liberal

fundamentalist pseudonymity. In defense of the apostolic authorship, Thielman cites the work of Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (2004). Our readers should also be aware of the more recent contribution of Wilder in which he extends the focus of the discussion to the Pastoral Epistles. Fashionable contemporary New Testament higher-critical fundamentalism dismisses the Pauline authorship of 1st and 2nd Timothy and Titus, even as they refuse Ephesians to the inspired apostle. Wilder rises to the defense of Pauline authorship for the former in “Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and the Pastoral Epistles,” A. J. Kosterberger and T. L. Wilder, eds., *Entrusted with the Gospel: Paul’s Theology in the Pastoral Epistles* (2010) 28-51. We may safely obviate the dilemma of pseudonymity for the servants of Christ—which is (!obviously!!), “thou shalt not bear false witness”; a precept written on the heart of the divinely commissioned apostle as a new covenant messenger of God (cf. Jer. 31:33; Heb. 8:10).

Any respectable commentary must navigate the wasps nest of opposition to the inclusion of “in Ephesus” in the text of the epistle’s initial verse. Thielman’s review of the textual transmission (and omission) discussion is a model of succinctness (11-16). And happily, once more, he concludes in favor of retaining the phrase.

The section on why Paul wrote the letter (19-28) contains several salient explorations of the cultural clash between Christianity and the (Roman) emperor cult. To this, he adds reflections on the confusion of Christianity with Judaism which are worth pondering. All of this arising from recent explorations of the socio-political ethos of the cities in which Paul ministered. That Paul’s gospel sparked a clash with pagan culture as well as Jewish culture (both of which were dominated by a religious ethos) is a given. And the union with Christ motif of Ephesians is an all-sufficient remedy and solace in such a context (as it remains in the neo-paganism of post-modern culture). Still, this reviewer demurs where Thielman makes too much of the separation between Jewish Christian and Gentile Christian bodies in Ephesus (28). Such a rigid separation appears to belie the new thing God has done by uniting Jew and Gentile in the one life of grace which is in Christ Jesus.

Sampling some litmus texts as a clue to the excellence of this commentary, we note that Thielman’s ordination as a PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) minister (he is, in fact, *Presbyterian* Professor of Divinity at Samford) is not happily contradicted by his exegesis of Eph. 1:5-7. The predestinarian strain of the apostle’s words are decidedly deterministic as “from before the foundation of the world” confirms. No wobbly Arminianism here, even as it is not found in the inspired apostle. I am not suggesting that Thielman’s ecclesiastical commitments have determined his exegesis; rather, his exegesis has directed him to a denomination which embraces the “system of doctrine” taught in the Westminster Standards—a system of doctrine which endorses the apostle’s doctrine of predestination and the determination of the divine decree from eternity. While this may be a *decretum horribile* to the modern and post-modern mind, it was not to the apostle, nor to the Holy Spirit who inspired the apostle, nor to the Augustinian-Reformed forebears who have bowed their reverent and over-awed minds and hearts before it. “To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”—to me! to me! (as Augustine poignantly

and humbly confessed), and that from before the foundation of the world. Praise his sovereign name, electing decree and effecting power!

On the controverted “redemption through his blood” (1:7), Thielman sides with Leon Morris and Herman Ridderbos for a satisfaction-of-debt (or payment-of-debt) paradigm. Still (is this a failure of nerve?), he wants to nuance the concept to a more “metaphorical” notion of deliverance or rescue and hence leaves a slight crack in the door for those bitterly opposed to a deity who demands precisely what he (Thielman) has exegetically endorsed, i.e., what I would label the penal satisfactory doctrine of the atonement.

Commendably, Thielman has not been Klineanized on merit-grace. His exegesis of Eph. 2:4-8 is refreshingly Protestant and Reformed—as judged by the canons of the primary documents of that revolutionary era (if a revolution that takes the Scripture alone as the canon of our faith may be called a revolution—perhaps, an “about time return to primary documents” is a better term for the 16th and 17th century evangelical and Reformed rebirth). His exegesis also displays Paul’s union with Christ language as undergirding this rich, free and unmerited grace. Paul, according to Thielman, allows of no merit for any reason in his declaration of grace alone. No sinner ever has anything to offer God (not even faith) so as to receive something in return (note 1 Cor. 4:7—“what do you have that you have not received?”). Applying this to sinners at Sinai, as Paul applies it to sinners generically, we recoil once more with the apostle from any Judaistic or pagan suggestion that a mere mortal from the fall of the first Adam to the return of the second Adam can earn or deserve or merit any reward or due blessing from the Triune God. Here is a ringing exegetical declaration of what Augustine, Luther and Calvin et al. declared as the heart of the Pauline gospel of *sola gratia*. To which we say a hearty Amen! God alone be praised!!

Thielman is aware of the indicative-imperative paradigm in assessing the Pauline ethic (303, though Victor Furnish is absent from his bibliography). Our only minor caveat here is that he does not comprehend the paradigm in eschatological relation. Geerhardus Vos as Herman Ridderbos (whom he knows) would help him further the drama of the New Testament ethic, i.e., live “now” (imperative) out of the “not yet” (indicative heaven-seated standing/position). Such is the semi-eschatological moral compass by which the New Testament believer navigates (cf. William Dennison, “Indicative and Imperative: The Basic Structure of Pauline Ethics.” *Calvin Theological Journal* 14 [April 1979]: 55-78).

Our author has not been aculturized by the fashionable contextual ‘orthodoxies’ of our politically correct era. His exegesis of husband-wife (as parent-child and master-slave) relationships is pristinely Pauline and traditional (Eph. 5:21ff., pp. 370ff.). No feminism here or liberal fundamentalist reductionism to “the modern context” in order that the “ancient text” may applied contextually to us. We are living in the same era as the apostle—the era of the life, death and resurrection of the ontological Son of God who is equal and subordinate to his Father without any diminution of his person or dignity. Thielman fearlessly uses the word “submitting” (as the apostle does) and discusses “subordinate” roles in relational paradigms. He notes the household codes and mutual

reciprocity displayed in the text of Paul's remarks on these multiple relational structures. We have no quibble with these perceptions. However, we miss the biblical-theological substratum of the Pauline paradigm, especially in husband-wife relations. The semi-eschatological reflection of Christ and his Bride in Christian marriages is a regeneration (after and still under the Fall) of the protological groom and bride paradigm. The protological Adam and his bride are reflected in the eschatological Adam and his Bride. What sin has alienated and disrupted (e.g., fallen women usurping authority over men in Eve-like fashion, as well as fallen men reducing women to objects of power and gratification) is now, in Christ, provisionally restored in the Christian husband who loves his wife as Christ loved the church; and the Christian wife lovingly submitting to her husband as the Bride of Christ submits lovingly to her Bridegroom. We move redemptive-historically from the protological marriage (Garden) to the semi-eschatological marriage (New Testament) to the consummately eschatological marriage (Heaven, Rev. 19:9). And that is why Paul can draw Christian couples into the "mystery" of a new creation—a new creation that provisionally reflects the marriage supper of the Lamb, even now. The challenge of marriages still infected with the remainder of sin lies in the realization of this "union-with-Christ-and-his-Bride" paradigm. In heaven, that challenge will be exceeded, even as temporal marriage itself will be surpassed when all the male and female saints of God will be married unto him through the Son by the perfect in-dwelling of the Spirit. And to that we may say, "Oh, that will be glory indeed"!!

—James T. Dennison, Jr.