

Foreword by
TREMPER LONGMAN III

Essential Writings of
Meredith G. Kline



Introduction by JONATHAN G. KLINE

With a biographical sketch by MEREDITH M. KLINE

Essential Writings of
Meredith G. Kline

BOOKS BY MEREDITH G. KLINE

*Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure
of Deuteronomy, Studies and Commentary*

*By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the
Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism*

The Structure of Biblical Authority

Images of the Spirit

*Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations
for a Covenantal Worldview*

*Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological
Reading of Zechariah's Night Visions*

*God, Heaven and Har Magedon: A
Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos*

Genesis: A New Commentary

Essential Writings of
Meredith G. Kline

 HENDRICKSON
PUBLISHERS

Essential Writings of Meredith G. Kline

© 2017 by Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC

P. O. Box 3473

Peabody, Massachusetts 01961-3473

www.hendrickson.com

ISBN 978-1-61970-853-2

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. www.zondervan.com. The “NIV” and “New International Version” are trademarks registered in the United States Patent and Trademark Office by Biblica, Inc.™

Scripture quotations marked RSV are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright © 1946, 1952, 1971 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing—August 2017

Cover texture ©iStock.com/Baretsky.

Jacket and case cover design by Karol Bailey.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

A catalog record for this title is available from the Library of Congress
Hendrickson Publishers Marketing, LLC ISBN 978-1-61970-853-2

Contents

| | |
|--|------|
| Foreword | vii |
| <i>Tremper Longman III</i> | |
| Acknowledgments | ix |
| Abbreviations | xiii |
| Meredith G. Kline: A Biographical Sketch | xvii |
| <i>Meredith M. Kline</i> | |
| Introduction | 1 |
| <i>Jonathan G. Kline</i> | |

Part One: Creation

| | |
|--|----|
| 1. Because It Had Not Rained | 9 |
| 2. Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony | 21 |

Part Two: Covenant, Law, and the State

| | |
|--|----|
| 3. Oracular Origin of the State | 49 |
| 4. Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1–4 | 63 |
| 5. The Two Tables of the Covenant | 79 |
| 6. <i>Lex Talionis</i> and the Human Fetus | 93 |

Part Three: Faith, the Gospel, and Justification

| | |
|--|-----|
| 7. Abram's Amen | 105 |
| 8. The Old Testament Origins of the Gospel Genre | 115 |
| 9. Double Trouble | 139 |

Part Four: Redemption

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| 10. The Feast of Cover-over | 151 |
| 11. Trial by Ordeal | 169 |
| 12. The Rider of the Red Horse | 183 |

Part Five: Resurrection and Consummation

| | |
|---|-----|
| 13. Death, Leviathan, and the Martyrs: Isaiah 24:1–27:1 | 217 |
| 14. The First Resurrection | 239 |
| 15. The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation | 249 |
| 16. Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium | 259 |

| | |
|--------------|-----|
| Bibliography | 279 |
|--------------|-----|

| | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| Index of Modern Authors | 285 |
|-------------------------|-----|

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Index of Ancient Sources | 287 |
|--------------------------|-----|

Foreword

When I learned that Hendrickson Publishers planned on publishing a collection of essays by my former professor Meredith G. Kline, I could not have been happier. Professor Kline has had and continues to have a tremendous influence on many biblical scholars, theologians, and church leaders, but the republication of these seminal studies will spread his work even further with a new generation of readers.

I, of course, read most of these articles when they first appeared, but reading them again reminded me just how much Professor Kline's thinking shaped my own approach to the biblical text. At the time I was an MDiv student at Westminster Theological Seminary (1974–1977), he was traveling down to teach occasional intensive courses from Boston, where he was professor at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I was privileged to take two such courses from him, but his thinking also reached me and my fellow students through our regular professors, including especially Raymond Dillard.

Professor Kline impressed upon us the importance of studying the Old Testament in its ancient Near Eastern context. Perhaps most significantly, he was among the first to draw out the importance of the connection between biblical covenant, so important particularly to the Reformed church community he was a part of, and ancient Hittite treaties (in the present collection, see in particular “The Two Tables of the Covenant”). Such study deepened and sharpened our understanding of biblical covenants. It also impressed on many in the next generation of his students how important it is to read the Old Testament, borrowing a phrase from John Walton, in its original “cognitive environment.”

Perhaps most importantly, Professor Kline impressed upon us the need to explore the interconnections between biblical texts and to use our exegetical imaginations to see the organic unity of Scripture. On occasion he could be criticized for reading too much into a biblical passage or metaphor based on other passages, but he encouraged us to go beyond a kind of arid historical-grammatical exegesis and to take into account the resonances

of a biblical text within the canon. In a way, he anticipated the interest in intertextuality and canonical criticism that many of us find so helpful today.

Professor Kline's work on the opening two chapters of Genesis has also been of major import for the study of these texts, which has once again grown intense among evangelical Protestants in the aftermath of the sequencing of the human genome. His studies going back to the late '50s (see in this volume "Because It Had Not Rained") and beyond ("Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony") demonstrated to many of us how wrong-minded it was to take these chapters as a straightforward depiction of how God created creation.

Professor Kline wrote during a time when evangelical Old Testament scholarship was at a low. Evangelical scholars were more marginalized than they are now. Fewer evangelicals had doctorates and wrote studies derived from their academic research than at the present. Meredith Kline was a beacon of light in that rather dark period. His work encouraged the students of the next generation, including myself, who were part of a kind of evangelical renaissance in church and academy, to follow in his footsteps. Having been produced predominantly in this period of marginalization, Professor Kline's writings deserve a broader reading beyond the Reformed and evangelical audience that will continue to benefit from his work. With great pleasure, I invite you to read these incredibly stimulating and important studies that take us from the creation to the consummation.

Tremper Longman III, PhD

Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College

Acknowledgments

Original Publication Information

“Oracular Origin of the State” was originally published as pp. 132–41 in *Biblical and Near Eastern Studies: Essays in Honor of William Sanford LaSor*, ed. G. A. Tuttle (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978). Reprinted by permission of the publisher; all rights reserved.

“Death, Leviathan, and the Martyrs: Isaiah 24:1–27:1” was originally published as pp. 229–49 in *A Tribute to Gleason Archer*, ed. Walter C. Kaiser Jr. and Ronald R. Youngblood (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986). Reprinted by permission of the publisher.

“Trial by Ordeal” was originally published as pp. 81–93 in *Through Christ’s Word: A Festschrift for Dr. Philip E. Hughes*, ed. W. Robert Godfrey and Jesse L. Boyd III (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1985). Used with permission from P&R Publishing Co., P. O. Box 817, Phillipsburg, NJ 08865. www.prpbooks.com.

“Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony” was originally published in *Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith* 48.1 (Mar. 1996): 2–15. Used by permission. <http://network.asa3.org/?page=PSCF>.

The following articles are used by permission of Wipf and Stock Publishers. www.wipfandstock.com.

“The Two Tables of the Covenant.” Pp. 113–30 in Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 1997). Originally published in *WTJ* 22 (1960): 133–46. (The original page numbers for this article, which are set off in double brackets in the present book, are the page numbers from *The Structure of Biblical Authority*.)

“The Old Testament Origins of the Gospel Genre.” Pp. 172–203 in Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Eugene, OR: Wipf &

Stock, 1997). Originally published in *WTJ* 38 (1975): 1–27. (The original page numbers for this article, which are set off in double brackets in the present book, are the page numbers from *The Structure of Biblical Authority*.)

“The Rider of the Red Horse.” Pp. 1–30 in Meredith G. Kline, *Glory in Our Midst: A Biblical-Theological Reading of Zechariah’s Night Visions* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2001). Originally published in two parts in *Kerux* 5.2 (Sept. 1990): 2–20 and *Kerux* 5.3 (Dec. 1990): 9–28. (The original page numbers for this article, which are set off in double brackets in the present book, are the page numbers from *Glory in Our Midst*.)

The following articles were originally published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* and are reprinted here by permission:

“*Lex Talionis* and the Human Fetus.” *JETS* 20 (1977): 193–201.

“Double Trouble.” *JETS* 32 (1989): 171–79.

“The Feast of Cover-over.” *JETS* 37 (1994): 497–510.

“Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium.” *JETS* 39 (1996): 207–22.

The following articles were originally published in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, which retains the copyrights, and are reprinted here by permission:

“Because It Had Not Rained.” *WTJ* 20 (1958): 146–57.

“Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1–4.” *WTJ* 24 (1962): 187–204.

“Abram’s Amen.” *WTJ* 31 (1968): 1–11.

“The First Resurrection.” *WTJ* 37 (1975): 366–75.

“The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation.” *WTJ* 39 (1976): 110–19.

Bible Translations

The articles that are included in this book were produced over the span of four decades, from 1957 to 1996, and (as indicated above) they originally appeared in a variety of journals and books. For these reasons, the articles employ a number of different Bible translations, only some of which are explicitly marked. In many cases the author used either the KJV or produced his own translations, but he also sometimes quoted the following translations (occasionally, though not usually, marking them): AV, ASV, RSV, NIV.

Verse Numbers

In biblical citations, when an English (or, in the case of a Septuagint reference, a Greek) verse number differs from the Hebrew verse number, the former is listed first, then the latter (in brackets).

Indexes

The publisher gratefully acknowledges the generous work of John Muether of Reformed Theological Seminary in compiling the indexes for this volume.

Abbreviations

General

| | |
|----------------|--------------------------------|
| 1QH | Hodayot (Thanksgiving Hymns) |
| ASV | American Standard Version |
| AV | Authorized Version |
| cf. | see (by way of comparison) |
| ch(s). | chapter(s) |
| e.g. | for example |
| esp. | especially |
| ff. | and the following verses/pages |
| ibid. | the same |
| i.e. | that is |
| <i>in loc.</i> | in the place (cited) |
| KJV | King James Version |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| n. | note |
| NIV | New International Version |
| obv. | obverse |
| rev. | reverse, revised |
| RSV | Revised Standard Version |
| sec. | section |
| sing. | singular |
| v(v). | verse(s) |

Journals, Series, and Reference Works

| | |
|-------------|--|
| AB | Anchor Bible |
| <i>ANET</i> | <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament.</i> Edited by James B. Pritchard. 3rd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969 |

- AnOr *Analecta Orientalia*
 ARM *Archives royales de Mari*
 BA *Biblical Archaeologist*
 BAR *Biblical Archaeology Review*
 BASOR *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
 BibOr *Biblica et Orientalia*
 CBQ *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*
 CT *Christianity Today*
 EA El-Amarna tablets. According to the edition of Jørgen A. Knudtzon. *Die el-Amarna-Tafeln*. Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1908–1915. Repr., Aalen: Zeller, 1964
 GKC *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*. Edited by Emil Kautzsch. Translated by Arthur E. Cowley. 2nd ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1910
 HTR *Harvard Theological Review*
 HUCA *Hebrew Union College Annual*
 IB *Interpreter's Bible*. Edited by George A. Buttrick et al. 12 vols. New York, 1951–1957
 Int *Interpretation*
 JANESCU *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*
 JBL *Journal of Biblical Literature*
 JCS *Journal of Cuneiform Studies*
 JETS *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*
 JJS *Journal of Jewish Studies*
 JNES *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*
 JTS *Journal of Theological Studies*
 KAI *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*. Herbert Donner and Wolfgang Röllig. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1966–1969
 NIGTC *New International Greek Testament Commentary*
 OtSt *Oudtestamentische Studiën*
 PRR *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*
 RB *Revue biblique*
 ResQ *Restoration Quarterly*
 SHR *Studies in the History of Religions*
 TDNT *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Translated by Geoffrey W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–1976

- TDOT *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. Edited by G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren. Translated by John T. Willis et al. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2006
- TWNT *Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*. Edited by Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932–1979
- TynBul* *Tyndale Bulletin*
- UF *Ugarit-Forschungen*
- UT *Ugaritic Textbook*. Cyrus H. Gordon. AnOr 38. Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1965
- VT *Vetus Testamentum*
- VTSup Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum*
- WBC Word Biblical Commentary
- WMANT Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
- WTJ *Westminster Theological Journal*
- ZAW *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Books by Meredith G. Kline Cited in This Volume

- BOC *By Oath Consigned: A Reinterpretation of the Covenant Signs of Circumcision and Baptism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968
- IOS *Images of the Spirit*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980
- KP *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2006
- SBA *The Structure of Biblical Authority*. 2nd, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975
- TGK *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy, Studies and Commentary*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963

Meredith G. Kline: A Biographical Sketch

My father, Meredith George Kline (December 15, 1922–April 14, 2007), was a covenant theologian. Providentially, my dad’s academic career began as scholars started to compare the recently discovered Hittite diplomatic treaties to biblical covenants. Because of his training at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia (WTS), my dad recognized that the concept of covenant is a core component in Reformed theology. The task of developing the implications of the correlations between these ancient Near Eastern texts and the Bible set the trajectory for the next half a century of my dad’s scholarly research. What follows is a sketch of his vocational and research paths.

Vocational Path

The ability to steer his artistic and analytic skills in a specific direction was evident in the path my dad’s vocational activity took. After he graduated from Boston Latin School in 1940, he wondered whether he should be a dentist, a schoolteacher, or a commercial artist. He contemplated what he might accomplish after fifty years of one of these endeavors and realized that he wanted a lifework that would produce fruit found in eternity as well as on earth. As a result, he withdrew his registration at Harvard University and enrolled at Gordon College of Theology and Missions (later named simply Gordon College), in order to prepare for the ministry of the gospel.

Vocationally, my father functioned as a preacher, pastor, presbyter, and professor. From 1947 to 1950 he actually was engaged in all four activities, while simultaneously pursuing doctoral studies and helping to raise a growing family.¹ Over the course of the next two decades, he ended his involvement in the first three areas so he could concentrate on being an academic

1. I was born in June 1945 and my brother Sterling in June 1947, while Dad was a student at WTS. Calvin was born in June 1950, as Dad finished his tenure as pastor at the Orthodox Presbyterian church in Ringoes, New Jersey.

research scholar. He felt most at home in the study² and the classroom, not at the pulpit or in administrative meetings.

Preacher

Already at the age of eighteen, during his first semester of college, my dad, who had acquired the nickname “Rev” (i.e., “Reverend”), was studying homiletics and, as a member of the college “Gospel Team,” was going to various venues to play violin solos and engage in evangelism. He also preached a couple evening sermons at his boyhood church, Central Congregational in Dorchester, Massachusetts,³ which at the time was led by a theologically conservative pastor, Norman King. Throughout college Dad continued to preach at chapels, including a Six Principle Baptist congregation in Rhode Island, which belonged to the denomination in which his fiancée’s father had been ordained in London, England, and for which he subsequently pastored in Rhode Island.

During his student days at WTS, my dad also preached frequently at Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) congregations in the Philadelphia area. After graduating from seminary, he preached twice on Sundays and monthly at a jail service as part of his pastoral responsibilities at an OPC congregation in Ringoes, New Jersey.

During his years of full-time teaching at WTS (1950–1965), he occasionally preached for Reformed churches within a couple hours’ drive of Philadelphia, as well as at the OPC’s Boardwalk Chapel in Wildwood, New Jersey, at French Creek (Pennsylvania) Bible Conference, and at Deerwander Bible Conference in Maine (part of the youth ministry of the OPC New York and New England Presbytery).⁴ After moving to Massachusetts to teach at Gordon Divinity School (GDS; later named Gordon-Conwell Theological

2. Imitating his Jewish paternal grandfather, Jacob Klein, who immigrated to America at the turn of the twentieth century and, according to family report, spent his days studying Torah. Jacob’s son Harry, my dad’s father, did not carry on in this tradition, abandoning Jewish culture and changing the spelling of his last name.

3. Dad had been born in Coplay, Pennsylvania, but grew up in Dorchester, Massachusetts.

4. Dad was the speaker/preacher at Deerwander in August 1957. Subsequently, he functioned as Deerwander’s waterfront director (during college summers he had been a counselor with waterfront duties at Camp Waldron on Lake Winnepesaukee in New Hampshire, and for one year during seminary days he had swimming responsibilities at the Abington, Pennsylvania, YMCA). He also was the staff class teacher at Deerwander for over forty years.

Seminary), he preached only sporadically at non-Presbyterian churches, and he stopped doing this altogether in early 1968. Even though preaching by seminary professors is sometimes viewed by their institutions as a partial job responsibility with public relations benefits, Dad subsequently did not preach even when he again taught at WTS in Philadelphia and at the WTS campus in Escondido, California. He never participated as a minister in any of his sons' or grandkids' weddings or at the baptisms of three generations of Klines.

The only biblical book my father preached a series on was Philippians. He did, however, have groups of sermons on topics, such as the five points of Calvinism, the Ten Commandments, and the Beatitudes. His sermons were exegetical and doctrinal in the tradition of his homiletics professor, R. B. Kuiper, whom he admired, but were not biblical-theological in the style of Ed Clowney, a subsequent WTS colleague of his with whom he discussed biblical theology in car rides to the seminary or to presbytery meetings. His later sermons were often related to subjects he was working on for books, so they tended to be more academic. Yet he was always oriented to the heart as well as the head. Richard Barker, clerk of the OPC New Jersey Presbytery, once wrote to my dad to say that he considered the devotional my dad had given at a presbytery meeting to have been the best he had heard in his twenty years of attendance.⁵

Presbyter

My father was ordained in the New Jersey Presbytery of the OPC in 1948. During his Ringoes pastorate and WTS teaching days, he participated in presbytery and general assembly activities. He took part in ordination services, served on candidate credentialing⁶ and congregational visiting committees, and was even moderator of the presbytery from 1960 to 1961. He also served on general assembly committees dealing with doctrinal issues. By the time he left Westminster in 1965, he had written minority reports, whose ideas were not followed by the denomination, on the

5. Similarly, graduates of Gordon-Conwell who told me my dad's lectures had profoundly influenced their thinking would also comment that they greatly appreciated his prayers before class.

6. After moving to Massachusetts, he sometimes agreed to administer Hebrew qualifying exams for ordination candidates of the New York and New England Presbytery.

doctrine of divine guidance and on the concept of medical missions. When it came to church-cultural relations, he was an “old school,” Reformed-wing rather than a “new school,” evangelical-wing Presbyterian, believing that the church’s duty is to proclaim the gospel and nurture its members, who would appropriately attempt to steer the culture in biblical directions through involvement in parachurch and secular institutions. Thus in 1963 he wrote a minority report for the OPC committee investigating whether the denomination should build a hospital in Eritrea. He argued that an ecclesiastical institution should not construct and operate medical facilities; he thought this was the responsibility and an appropriate function of the nonecclesiastical architectural and medical professions and corporations. According to my dad, the distinction was subtle but crucial for the biblical use of church funds.⁷

After he moved to Massachusetts to teach at Gordon Divinity School, my dad did not participate in ecclesiastical life as pastor or presbyter, since he felt the best use of his gifts was in the academic arena. He did agree, however, to engage in discussions about the doctrine of justification at Westminster Theological Seminary in the late 1970s at the request of Ed Clowney, who was then the seminary’s president; this was a controversy that also involved OPC actions. As he told me at the time, he only agreed to invest the time, energy, and emotional stress in the matter because he thought the gospel was at stake.

Professor

Starting in the fall of 1948, my dad taught for two years as an instructor at WTS, while pastoring in Ringoes. From 1950 to 1965 he taught at WTS full time, and in the fall of 1965 he left WTS for Gordon Divinity School. Dad had been invited to Gordon earlier, in 1958, but had declined that invitation.⁸ Although he was frustrated at WTS over meetings that had occurred about his differences with Old Testament colleague E. J. (Joe) Young over

7. Interestingly, at the same time, when the family of one of my high school classmates took the Abington, Pennsylvania, school system to the U.S. Supreme Court because the protocol at the beginning of the school day included recitation by students and faculty of the Lord’s Prayer along with the Pledge of Allegiance, my dad would go to meetings of Christians to explain why the atheists were correct that such a required religious practice has no place in a secular institution.

8. My dad also declined invitations in 1958 and 1959 to teach at Calvin Theological Seminary, and an invitation in 1965 to teach at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School.

the interpretation of Gen 1, my dad's main reasons for leaving WTS lay elsewhere: these included his unhappiness with his teaching load and course assignments, his desire to be the head of an Old Testament department, his financial hardships, and the fact that at the time his two oldest sons were college students in Boston. Another factor involved in the move was that he loved New England and its evergreen trees (he made sure to plant some around the house he purchased in South Hamilton, Massachusetts); when he drove his family from Philadelphia to Boston to visit his parents and his sister's family, he always let out a shout of joy when we crossed the state line into Massachusetts.

An additional significant reason for his returning to Boston, where he and my mom had grown up, and his maintaining it as his base, even during his later involvement with both Westminster seminaries, was my mom's emotional health. Muriel Grace had spent months on multiple occasions in the 1950s in a psychiatric hospital for bouts of depression and was later diagnosed as paranoid schizophrenic. According to a note she wrote for the family, this was reflected in the fact that she signed her paintings as Muriel and used that name with doctors but went by Grace at home, church, and the assisted-living facility where she resided the last ten years of her life. After moving back to Massachusetts, her condition was moderated by medicine, but it remained a struggle the rest of her life. As a consequence of my mom's health, in 1957 Dad canceled a projected sabbatical in Basel; in fact, he never ended up traveling abroad. In the 1950s, while teaching at WTS and writing his PhD dissertation at Dropsie College, Dad spent extended periods during Grace's hospitalizations as a single parent of three young boys, surviving with generous assistance from our neighbors, Joe Young's family, and other friends from the WTS and Glenside, Pennsylvania, OPC communities. In order to adequately perform his academic responsibilities, my dad maintained tight control over family activities and restricted his professional engagements beyond the classroom.

My dad taught at Gordon Divinity School from 1965 to 1993. But his heart remained with Westminster Theological Seminary, first with the Philadelphia campus and later with the one in Escondido, California (now Westminster Seminary California). After Joe Young died unexpectedly in February 1968, the WTS faculty voted to bring Dad back, but after protracted negotiations a compromise was worked out according to which my dad would teach in Philadelphia only during Januarys, which he did most years through 1977. Dad then arranged to teach during Januarys at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Mississippi, which he did through 1982. In

February 1982, he began to teach during spring semesters at the Escondido, California, campus of Westminster Theological Seminary, a practice he continued through 2001 (while continuing, through 1993, to teach during the fall semesters at GCTS). At this point, Dad confided to me that he no longer had the stamina to maintain a weekly schedule of classes and manage daily life away from home. He was happy that he had finished his teaching career at WSC, since he identified with its theological convictions most strongly and since it was continuing to pass on his ideas.

From 1999 to 2002 my father also taught classes, one evening a week in the fall, at the Granite State School of Theology and Missions, which was sponsored by his friend Greg Reynolds, who pastored Amoskeag Presbyterian Church (OPC) in Manchester, New Hampshire, where the classes were held.

My dad maintained high academic standards for five decades and did not board the grade-inflation train. He had a reputation as a tough grader, and students would take his courses pass-fail. He would use blackboards or whiteboards to scribble words during his lectures. The board might start out with a semblance of order, but by the end of class it resembled a Jackson Pollock painting. That may be the reason a student once complained that he was lost trying to follow the day's lecture—to which my dad responded, "Let me share the gospel with you!" While an indication of my dad's sense of humor, the retort reflects his constant concern that the Christian's pastoral, apologetic, teaching, or counseling responsibility is to clearly present the good news of how Christ's death and resurrection delivered us from the divine wrath to which we were subject based on our union with Adam and our personal transgressions of covenant requirements. It was also the reason he regularly assigned Isa 52:13–53:12 as the passage for the paper in his Prophets course.

Research Path

Major Influences

Training at Westminster Theological Seminary from 1944 to 1947 provided my father with a solid foundation in Reformed theology. My dad respected his teachers. Joe Young, his Old Testament professor, was a model as a strong proponent of the inerrancy of the Bible and a defender of conservative positions on matters of Old Testament introduction; but he also guided Dad into preaching opportunities, a pastoral job, a doctoral program, and a teaching position. In addition, Joe Young sold my parents some of his

property, on which our Willow Grove house ended up being built, and his family supported us through difficult times. Ned Stonehouse, supervisor of Dad's ThM thesis on the structure of the Apocalypse, passed on his love for Geerhardus Vos, as did John Murray, though my dad later disagreed with Murray's views on covenant theology. My dad learned much about Presbyterian polity from Westminster's church historian, Paul Woolley.

Of all his WTS professors, however, Cornelius Van Til had the greatest impact on my dad's thinking and methodology. Van Til sought an apologetic method that was consistent with biblical truth, which he believed was most accurately represented by Reformed theology.⁹ Central to Van Til's position is the antithesis between the believer's and the unbeliever's systems of belief, insofar as these systems are consistent with one's epistemological foundations. Like Van Til, my dad applied this concept of system coherence to differing theological perspectives. When one discusses a particular theological issue, it may be possible to arrange competing positions on a spectrum; nevertheless, when theological systems are compared in their totality, they are incompatible in significant respects. For example, dispensationalism, theonomy, and various versions of covenant theology might be plotted on a scale representing the amount of continuity or discontinuity they perceive between the old and new covenants. My dad, however, was most interested in the congruence of each interpretive paradigm with the sum of biblical truth, with the goal of arriving at a unified "field theory" of covenant theology.

My dad's other significant educational mentor was his PhD advisor, Cyrus Gordon, who confidently followed into uncharted waters the conclusions that he thought facts pointed to, even against vociferous naysayers. Gordon's confidence in this pursuit stemmed from his thorough knowledge of ancient texts in their original languages and from his integrated understanding of how cultural phenomena functioned. My dad had to be well prepared for his doctoral classes, especially the one in which Gordon (who reportedly could identify any biblical text by seeing only the vowels) was the professor and Nahum Sarna (who supposedly had memorized *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar!*) was the other student. In later years, after my dad had moved back to Massachusetts to teach at GDS, Gordon permitted him to sit

9. Since covenant theology is the core of Reformed doctrine, my dad would have approved Scott Oliphint's change in nomenclature for Van Til's apologetics from "presuppositional" to "covenantal" in *Covenantal Apologetics: Principles and Practice in Defense of Our Faith* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013).

in on his lectures at Brandeis University. My dad imitated Gordon's tenacity in defending unpopular positions and not acquiescing to academic or administrative opposition.

In addition to his skill at thinking analytically, my dad applied artistic talent to his work. Dad was an amateur artist. In his high school days he created cartoons for Boston Latin School publications, and in his student days at Gordon College of Theology and Missions he served for a year as art editor of the school yearbook. Also while in college, he joined my mother, Muriel Grace, in taking classes at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. During the 1950s, while sitting in Saturday morning faculty meetings at WTS concerning administrative matters, he drew plans for our house in Willow Grove, Pennsylvania, and sketched his colleagues. After returning to teach at GDS in 1965, he and my mother both became members of the Beverly (Massachusetts) Guild of Artists.

Dad combined the strategies he derived from Cornelius Van Til and Cyrus Gordon with rigorous scholarship and artistic capabilities in a way that allowed him to move comfortably between exegetical detail and canonical unity.

Reputation

My father was a creative but controversial scholar. His readers—not only his Presbyterian brethren but also Baptists who differed on their understanding of the church-membership sacrament, or those who recoiled at his conservative views of Scripture—could appreciate the depth of his research while disagreeing with his conclusions.

My dad's WSC colleague John Frame, while acknowledging methodological and conceptual differences between them, wrote, "I regard him as the most impressive biblical theologian of my lifetime. . . . His work is orthodox, yet often original, and it always provides us with rich analysis of Scripture."¹⁰

In a review of *Images of the Spirit*, Liberty Baptist Seminary professor James Borland commented that

anyone familiar with the writings of Meredith G. Kline has probably come to expect clarity and precision in expression, penetrating analysis of pertinent viewpoints, meticulous documentation, complete familiarity with ancient

10. *The Doctrine of the Christian Life* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2008), 520.

Near Eastern religious laws and customs, and a careful use of the Biblical languages, all brought to focus on elucidating some scriptural text or idea.

Yet Borland also realized that

dispensational pretribulationists will dispute Kline's identification of the lampstands in Revelation 11 with the Church. This involves a substitution of symbolical, typological interpretation for normal, literal, hermeneutical principles and selectively ignores details not in accord with the symbolic understanding.¹¹

Horace Hummel, a Lutheran reviewer of *Images of the Spirit*, commented that

not only Lutherans, but many conservatives, will often find Kline hard going, however.¹² This is true not only because of his very compact style and close attention to details of the Biblical text, but precisely because he uses exegetical or Biblico-theological categories, not systematic or dogmatic ones.

He added that

throughout, of course, Kline proceeds Christologically and typologically. In fact, the unity of Scripture and the material content of "verbal inspiration" are worked out so beautifully that one wonders how higher-critics will be able to tune into Kline's labors at all.¹³ He excels at demonstrating how the highly variegated Biblical imagery (so often the despair of the more systematically oriented) can and must ultimately be unified.

Hummel finished by stating:

Inevitably, one will not be equally convinced about all the exegetical judgments, but it is hard to see how anyone could read—or preach on—the Bible in the same way after "inwardly digesting" the contents of this exceedingly rich and stimulating work.¹⁴

11. Review of *Images of the Spirit* in *JETS* 24 (1981): 275–76.

12. Students often reported that they had to read *Kingdom Prologue* two or three times before understanding it.

13. As illustrated by Brevard Childs's comments in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 56, on *The Structure of Biblical Authority*: "Kline's basically dogmatic formulation of the history of the canon in terms of divine inspiration which assured an inerrant transmission of the Word of God reflects completely the pre-Semler, seventeenth-century understanding which has not even seen the historical problem. These issues are far too complex simply to circumscribe by a strictly theological definition. Therefore, in spite of some excellent insights, the total impact of the book misses its intended goal."

14. Review of *Images of the Spirit* in *Concordia Journal* 8.1 (1982): 34–35.

These readers of my dad's writings recognized that he applied his artistic and analytical abilities to his literary analysis of Scripture and ancient Near Eastern texts in the original languages for semantic precision, structural symmetries, and thematic continuities. He had skills as a linguist, a literary critic, and a systematic thinker. He was equally comfortable and proficient in demonstrating the thematic unity of Scripture and in defining its concepts.

Linguist

Since he was proficient in multiple languages, my dad could have had a capable career as a Bible translator. One of his sisters-in-law, Joan Law, who was a Gordon College classmate and later a Wycliffe translator, envied the ease with which he learned Spanish.¹⁵ He had studied Latin and Greek at Boston Latin School and Greek and Hebrew in college. At Dropsie he studied multiple ancient Near Eastern languages as part of his doctoral program, and he even taught courses on Egyptian at WTS. Part of his doctoral dissertation under Cyrus Gordon on the Ḥabiru¹⁶ involved linguistic analysis of the name of the group.¹⁷ Later he was one of the translators for the NIV version of the Old Testament. He and his GCTS colleague Elmer Smick did the original work on the difficult poetry of Job and Psalms.

Several of my dad's articles hinged on linguistic points—"Abram's Amen" on the function of a verb form; "The Feast of Cover-over" on the Egyptian origin of the word traditionally translated as "Passover"; and "Har Magedon" on the derivation of "Magedon" from the Hebrew word for "assembly" rather than from the name of a Canaanite town. Dad was also a word-coiner. Examples of his kennings include the "endoxation" of the Holy Spirit (to parallel the "incarnation" of the Son); "metaworld," for the invisible heaven; and many hyphenated words involving "glory," such as "Glory-cloud" (for the Old Testament Shekinah that filled the Israelite tabernacle and temple).

15. My dad must have assumed his students would have comparable proficiency in mastering languages since he expected them to learn Aramaic as part of a month-long exegesis course on the biblical book of Daniel!

16. In 1955 he completed his doctoral dissertation entitled *The Ḥa-BI-ru: Kin or Foe of Israel?*, which he later published as articles in the *Westminster Theological Journal*.

17. While I was studying with Cyrus Gordon from 1972 to 1973, he commented to me that my dad had been the best linguist of his students to that time.

Literature Analyst

Dad looked at Scripture as an artist, analyzing how the parts fit into the whole. Underlying his textual analysis was the visualization of literary patterns, whether at the level of the parallelism of the lines of poetic verse, of topical repetitions in a pericope (as in Gen 1), or of the organization of a whole book (as seen in his presentations of the structures of Genesis, Zechariah, and Revelation). He also was skilled at seeing comparisons, whether of genres (such as when comparing the organization of Deuteronomy with that of ancient Near Eastern diplomatic treaties), of cultural phenomena (such as God's questioning of Job, which he considered to be modeled after ancient Near Eastern belt-wrestling contests), or of typological relations between various forms of the covenant community or between different biblical characters.

Systematician

Dad's most significant influence for his covenant theology was Geerhardus Vos. Dad's teaching responsibilities at WTS included a course on Old Testament Biblical Theology. That course of subsequent myriad names taught at multiple seminaries ultimately blossomed as *Kingdom Prologue*, a covenant theology in the tradition of Vos, whose *Biblical Theology* was always a required text for the course. Dad received the Vos influence from his WTS professors (particularly Stonehouse, and also Murray and Van Til, as mentioned above), who championed Vos's presentation of Reformed covenant theology. But my dad was also sympathetic with his WTS colleague Ed Clowney's development of biblical-theological preaching, since, like my dad, Clowney had artistic talents and could perceive beautiful relationships among biblical passages.

Dad also utilized his artistic ability to perceive parallels among various biblical data. For example, he correlated Eden and Israelite territory as holy lands where a theocracy was regulated by a works covenant. Likewise, he viewed the conflicts of our first parents versus the serpent, incarnated deity versus a fallen angel, and the Lamb's army versus draconic forces as all taking place on the heavenly Mount of Assembly.

In addition to these creative literary comparisons, Dad also developed rigorous arguments for theological conceptions—preeminently, his understanding of covenant theology, but also concepts such as the image of God, biblical canon, justification, and the Sabbath.

Research Trajectory

In the four centuries prior to my dad's beginning his teaching career at WTS in 1950, ideas about covenant theology had been based solely on biblical data. But that changed with the publication, just before World War II, of second-millennium BC Hittite diplomatic treaties. After the war, biblical scholars began to integrate ancient Near Eastern treaty material with biblical covenants, and Dad quickly realized the significance of the new evidence for elaborating the distinctive ideas of Reformed theology. As I mentioned at the beginning of this biographical sketch, that project oriented his scholarly output for the next five decades as he creatively, and controversially, applied the recent archaeological findings in new directions. He was in the forefront of those comparing the treaties with the texts of the Decalogue and Deuteronomy, which resulted in *Treaty of the Great King*, published in 1963. In this book he demonstrated the formal unity of Deuteronomy and supported a second-millennium date for the book, to the pleasure of conservatives and the consternation and contempt of critical scholars, whose documentary hypothesis it undermined.

After applying information derived from ancient Near Eastern treaties to biblical form criticism and the dating of Old Testament texts, Dad related treaty ratification methods to the sacraments in *By Oath Consigned* (1968). This book treated both circumcision and baptism as symbols of the curse sanctions of their respective covenants and as rites establishing their recipients, whether adult or infant, as members of the covenant community, which made previous Presbyterian arguments for the doctrine more concrete. Some Baptists still feel obligated to interact with Dad's arguments.¹⁸

Next, in *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (1972), Dad related the Deuteronomic document clause to the topic of biblical canon. Here he attempted to demonstrate the covenantal nature of all of Scripture, and used the administrative functions performed by historical and prophetic books in directing the covenant community to argue for the traditional dating of biblical books. Critical scholars were not convinced, because of the lack of extrabiblical documentation of significant portions of biblical texts before the Qumran material. Because my dad changed the definition of canon from a completed list of authoritative texts (the definition that had dominated

18. See Duane Garrett, "Meredith Kline on Suzerainty, Circumcision, and Baptism," in *Believer's Baptism: Sign of the New Covenant in Christ*, ed. Thomas Schreiner and Shawn Wright (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2006), 257–84.

the debate between conservatives and liberals) to texts that functioned in the administration of the covenant community, he proposed that since the form of the covenant community changed from a theocracy for the Old Testament to the church for the New Testament, the Old Testament was no longer canon for the church (in his redefined sense of the term “canon”), a concept that conservatives consider controversial.

At about the same time in his career, Dad’s focus on the form of the covenant community also was central in his opposition to theonomy, because of the latter’s manner of applying some Israelite theocratic laws and sanctions to non-theocratic geopolitical institutions. Likewise, he distinguished ecclesiastical (cultic or kingdom of heaven) activity from cultural (kingdom of earth) endeavors, a distinction that currently has his followers engaged with neo-Kuyperians in the two-kingdoms debate.¹⁹

My dad’s core course on covenant theology culminated, as mentioned above, in *Kingdom Prologue* (written over the course of the 1980s), which considers Genesis as the historical background to the forming of the Israelite kingdom by means of the Sinai covenant and its renewal on the Plains of Moab. The book demonstrates the existence of a Covenant of Works in Eden and explores how the principles of works and grace function in the accomplishment and application of redemption.

The other major course my dad taught at WSC was on the Old Testament prophetic books. In it he tackled the exegesis of passages that were central to dispensational or various millennial interpretations, arguing for an amillennial position.²⁰ His eschatological views and an argument for his controversial view on the Sabbath appeared in his final book, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon* (2006). This book, which deals with universal history from the “Alpha Radiation” to the “Omega Apocalypse,” evidences the way in which my dad analyzed the Bible as a literary whole, as do his articles on Genesis and Job in one-volume Bible commentaries²¹ and his posthumously published Genesis commentary.²²

19. For an entry into the discussion, see David VanDrunen, *Living in God’s Two Kingdoms: A Biblical Vision for Christianity and Culture* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2010).

20. Some in the OPC thought his arguments so cogent that they talked about making adherence to amillennialism a requirement for ordination in the denomination!

21. “Genesis,” in *The New Bible Commentary Revised*, ed. D. Guthrie and J. Motyer (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970), and “Job,” in *The Wycliffe Bible Commentary*, ed. Charles Pfeiffer and Everett Harrison (Chicago: Moody, 1962).

22. *Genesis: A New Commentary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016).

An example of how my dad followed biblical imagery where it took him was his development of the concept of the image of God in *Images of the Spirit* (1980). The book illustrates how the glory of God was replicated in human royal, priestly, and prophetic functions. These evidences of the majestic divine beauty pointed to their fulfillment in the incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, whose splendor was prophesied in the book of Zechariah, an idea my dad developed in *Glory in Our Midst* (2001).

My father felt confident in his ability to fathom the intricacies and complexities of biblical texts and theological conceptualizations. At first, he naively thought that what in his mind were undisputable scholarly results would convert honest researchers to conform deviant and diverse theories to hard data. The evidence from second-millennium suzerainty treaties would, he thought, surely convince critics to abandon a first-millennium dating of Deuteronomy in favor of the traditional belief in Mosaic authorship. Or surely Baptists would all become Presbyterians because of the clear implications of ancient diplomatic treaty-ratification rituals. Alas, the failure of his optimistic hope that fellow fighters of theological battles would follow his lead ultimately led to his final academic productions being intellectual tours de force devoid of documentation, leaving readers to ferret out the identity of even his theologically closest interlocutors.

As a professor training predominantly pastors along with a few future seminary professors, Dad attempted to convey the reliability and organic unity of Scripture, with its focus on the glory of our divine covenant Lord, the Creator, Redeemer, and Consummator. The articles collected in this volume evidence different aspects of my father's creativity and reveal stimulating, if sometimes controversial, interpretational perspectives.

Meredith M. Kline, ThD

Retired Director of Goddard Library and Ranked Adjunct Assistant Professor of Oriental Languages, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary

Introduction

For years I have wanted to put together a collection of my grandfather's writings that showcased what I consider to be the "best of" his thinking and scholarship. Of the approximately seventy articles my grandfather wrote during his half-century-long career, I have chosen the sixteen included in this volume because they seem to me to manifest most clearly his primary strengths and his main ideas. In addition, and as is reflected in the section headings of this book, these articles represent the breadth of his interests, which ranged, according to the familiar phrase, from creation to consummation.

As I reflect in more detail on what led me to select these articles as the most compelling pieces my grandfather wrote, the word to which I keep returning is *creativity*. My grandfather was, of course, thoroughly Reformed and evangelical in his theology; his view of Scripture and his interpretations of both individual biblical passages and of the Bible as a whole were always shaped by his particular interpretive grid, which circumscribed his beliefs and set the ideological limits for his intellectual activity. Within the particular hermeneutical framework in which he operated, however, he exercised—in what ended up being a kind of counterforce to his traditionalism—a great deal of ingenuity in his approach to the Bible. The result was a unique and interesting blend of classical Reformed theology and innovative ideas. For this reason, despite the fact that some of his writings have a dated feel (they were nearly all produced in the second half of the twentieth century), they continue to be fascinating and thought-provoking works that are worth rereading and pondering.

One example of my grandfather's creative approach to the Bible is found in the fresh interpretations he offered for the Hebrew and Greek texts of particular passages, especially ones that historically have proven difficult to understand or that have been used to support traditional dogmas that in his view are misguided. This kind of approach can be seen, for example, in "Oracular Origin of the State" (pp. 49–61), "Abram's Amen" (pp. 105–13), and "Double Trouble" (pp. 139–48). My grandfather's innovative philological

discussions were often coupled with enlightening and sometimes novel interpretations of ancient Near Eastern material (mostly textual, but occasionally pictorial as well) that he thought had a direct bearing on biblical interpretation. For example, his identification in “Divine Kingship and Genesis 6:1–4” (pp. 63–78) of the characters in this passage not as celestial beings (the common view) but as self-deifying human kings draws on his understanding of the concept of divine kingship in the ancient Near East. And in “The Two Tables of the Covenant” (pp. 79–92) he used the evidence of ancient diplomatic treaties to provide a novel interpretation of the nature of the Ten Commandments. Even if in certain cases one is not convinced by my grandfather’s arguments in these or others of his articles, his analyses are undeniably interesting and provocative. As the best biblical scholarship tends to do, these treatments force us to take the text seriously and to wrestle with and try to make sense of its difficult parts.

Another way in which my grandfather approached the Bible creatively was by reading it in the light of modern discoveries, specifically those from the realm of natural science. In “Because It Had Not Rained” (pp. 9–19) and “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony” (pp. 21–45), he tried to deal with apparent contradictions between the biblical text and the currently accepted scientific conclusion that the earth is very much older than a literal reading of the beginning of Genesis allows. My grandfather’s main goal in these pieces was to demonstrate that “general revelation” (natural science) and “special revelation” (the Bible) are in harmony with one another, since God is the source of them both. He believed that if these two modes of revelation appear to contradict each other, then our interpretation of one or the other (or perhaps both) must be faulty or incomplete. Although he always considered the Bible to have the ultimate authority, he did allow current scientific hypotheses to prompt him to ask whether certain traditional interpretations of the Bible are perhaps incorrect or unnecessary.

A final way in which my grandfather exercised creativity in his approach to biblical interpretation can be seen in the fact that he was often on the lookout for new, surprising, or overlooked elements in the text. Often this search resulted in his identification of unexpected redemptive reversals. One example of this is found in “Trial by Ordeal” (pp. 169–82), in which he argues that Satan is the one who is really on trial in the book of Job. This startling interpretation, according to which the accuser ultimately turns out to be the accused, reflects my grandfather’s view that, despite circumstances and appearances, God always advocates and fights for his people, especially in their trials. Similarly, in a trio of articles he wrote on the theme

of resurrection—“Death, Leviathan, and the Martyrs” (pp. 217–37), “The First Resurrection” (pp. 239–47), and “The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation” (pp. 249–57)—my grandfather argued that for Christian believers death should actually be viewed as a resurrection (the “first” resurrection), since this experience ushers them, redeemed and vindicated on account of Christ’s death and resurrection on their behalf, into God’s presence.

My grandfather’s novel interpretations sometimes grew—as I alluded to above—out of his frustration over traditional interpretations that in his view have distracted people from what he considered to be the Bible’s primary message, particularly its emphasis on the justifying work of Christ on behalf of his people. He lamented that Christians expend so much time, energy, and thought defending ideas such as a literal, twenty-four-hour-day interpretation of Gen 1 (see “Because It Had Not Rained” and “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony”) and a literal interpretation of the millennium in the book of Revelation (see “Har Magedon: The End of the Millennium”; pp. 259–77). He viewed these and similar interpretations as harmful, self-imposed stumbling blocks that discredit the Christian witness and that distract believers from Scripture’s positive and encouraging messages about God’s power and kingship (the point of Gen 1) and God’s abiding presence with his people in the midst of their tribulations throughout the entire church age (the point of “the millennium”).

Although like many writers of his time my grandfather did not shy away from a theological fight—he engaged in vociferous argumentation especially (and ironically) with those who ideologically were most like him—he was, in person, a sweet and humble man. His awareness of the fact that his penchant toward polemic needed to be tempered by his efforts to love his neighbor as himself comes out in a humorous way in his opening statement in “The First Resurrection: A Reaffirmation,” which he wrote as a rejoinder to one of his seminary colleagues:

The characteristic courtesy of Ramsey Michaels in discussion, even when the discussion is a disagreement, is amply evidenced again in his Response to my earlier article. I admire the virtue and appreciate this particular instance of it, but as one notably deficient in irenic grace I could almost wish he had set a less noble example! Despairing of matching it, I tender my apologies beforehand, ere the ardor of offensive defensiveness has quite carried me away.

Folks who knew my grandfather, or knew of him, often remark when they meet me that I am the third-generation Old Testament scholar in our family. (My father, who wrote the biographical sketch for this volume, is also a scholar in the field.) This is true, but the story goes back even further. My

grandfather had Jewish heritage; his own grandfather, who immigrated to the United States from Latvia around the turn of the twentieth century, was reportedly devoted to studying Torah. I don't know much more about this part of our heritage, unfortunately, and I wonder how far back the tradition of biblical study in our family goes. Since the time I learned about this aspect of our history, I have come to appreciate how my grandfather's way of interpreting the Bible bears some resemblance—and perhaps may be directly indebted—to the way in which his forebears likely read the text. I began my remarks above by saying that in light of my grandfather's theological traditionalism, it is interesting to consider the degree to which he exercised creativity and ingenuity in his interpretations of the biblical text. However, in light of our family history, this may make more sense: it seems that it is not too much to say that my grandfather's interpretations are often "mid-rashic." This term is notoriously difficult to define, of course, and I am not using it here in any technical sense; I simply mean to invoke the brilliantly creative way in which many traditional Jewish exegetes have interpreted the Bible's individual words and phrases by connecting them in fascinating and sometimes counterintuitive ways with other parts of Scripture. I see my grandfather as following very much in this tradition—even though he combined his activity in this regard with careful attention to modern philological and historical research, and even though the broad conclusions to which he came (especially given his intensely christological focus) differed markedly with those his ancestors would have espoused.

I would like to mention one final aspect of our family history in connection with my grandfather's creativity. His wife, Grace—my grandmother—was a painter, primarily a watercolorist. One of her oil paintings adorns the cover of my grandfather's last book, *God, Heaven and Har Magedon*, and over the years I have met a number of my grandfather's students who (like me and most of his and Grace's other descendants) have some of my grandmother's paintings hanging in their home. My grandfather loved and supported my grandmother's artwork, and he himself enjoyed sketching and painting, especially in his younger days. It seems to me that, in addition to his Jewish heritage, this artistic inclination was another element of my grandfather's personality that influenced his biblical interpretation. In a way, he saw the Bible as a grand painting—a vast, panoramic masterwork whose individual parts all contribute to the beauty of the whole, and (correlatively) whose whole provides meaning, context, and significance to the individual parts.

The creative tension that lies at the heart of my grandfather's work—his unique blend of tradition and innovation—has elicited strong reactions from readers. Some have considered his work too Reformed, while others have considered it not Reformed enough or too novel for their taste. But other readers and students—and this seems to be the attitude of most people I have met who took a class from him or who have read something he wrote—have deeply appreciated his blend of classical theology and creative exegesis; in their view, this rare mixture has produced a brilliant, paradigm-changing way of understanding the Bible that is both intellectually and spiritually satisfying. It is my hope that the collection of “essential writings” found in this book—which my family, colleagues, and I offer in love and respect for the memory of my grandfather and in friendship to the book's readers—will be welcomed not only by those who have already come to appreciate his work but also by new audiences who desire to further explore the beauty and wonder of God's word and his continued work in the world.



My editorial touch on the articles in this book has been relatively light, but I have made some minor changes in order to make the reader's experience as smooth and consistent as possible. Abbreviations for all biblical book names have been made consistent, for example, as have (inasmuch as was practicable) the capitalization and spelling of words that were treated differently in the original articles. I have transliterated everything that was originally in either Hebrew or Greek script in the articles in order to make this consistent throughout the volume and in order to ensure that the argumentation will be fully accessible to readers who do not know these languages.

Despite my efforts to make everything in this book as consistent as possible, the fact remains that my grandfather produced the articles found here in a variety of journals (or, occasionally, books) over a period of forty years. It is inevitable, therefore, that some minor inconsistencies of style remain, and it seemed neither practical nor desirable to try to smooth all of these out. In any case, I hope that such inconsistencies as may remain will create little if any distraction for the reader.

In order to help the reader locate the original page numbers for the articles in this volume (in case the reader finds these cited in another work by

my grandfather, for example), I have included all the original page numbers in a small font and in double brackets (e.g., [[184]]).

All citations of *Kingdom Prologue* in this volume have been updated to reflect the page numbers of the most recent edition, which was published in 2006 by Wipf & Stock.

Jonathan G. Kline, PhD
Associate Editor, Hendrickson Publishers

PART ONE

Creation

CHAPTER ONE

Because It Had Not Rained

(1958)

There are no signs that the debate over the chronological data of Gen 1 is abating. Among those who hold biblical views of the inspiration of the Scriptures certain interpretations of that chronology have, indeed, long been traditional. These may disagree as to the duration of the “days” of Gen 1 but they have in common the opinion that the order of narration in that chapter coincides with the actual sequence of creation history. Although these traditional interpretations continue to be dominant in orthodox circles there also continues to be debate and its flames have recently been vigorously fanned by the bellows of the dissenters.¹

At the heart of the issue, though its crucial character appears to be generally overlooked, is the question of whether the *modus operandi* of divine providence was the same during the creation era as that of ordinary providence now. This is not to raise the question of whether Gen 1 leaves the door open for some sort of evolutionary reconstruction. On the contrary, it is assumed here that Gen 1 contradicts the idea that an undifferentiated worldstuff evolved into the present variegated universe by dint of intrinsic potentialities whether divinely “triggered” or otherwise. According to Gen 1, the divine act of absolute beginning—or creation *in nihilum*—was followed by a succession of divine acts of origination, both *ex nihilo* and *intra aliquid*.² The present [[147]] world with the fulness thereof is the net result of

1. Two discussions in particular have evoked animated reactions among evangelicals in this country: B. Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1954), 173ff. and N. H. Ridderbos, *Is There a Conflict Between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957).

2. *In nihilum* serves to distinguish the initial creative act as alone having had no setting of prior created reality. *Intra aliquid* has the advantage over *ex materia* (for productions like that of Adam’s body out of existent dust) that it does not obscure the pure creativeness of the divine act. There should be no hesitation in classifying such works as creation in the strict sense. The opinion that Calvin refused to do so

this succession of discrete creation acts of God completed within the era of the “six days” (Gen 2:1–3).³

Though this closed era of the “six days” was characteristically the era of creation, it was not exclusively so. That is, the works of creation were interlaced with the work of providence in a manner analogous to the mingling of natural and supernatural providence in the structure of subsequent history.⁴ As a matter of fact, one aspect of the creative acts themselves (excepting the act of absolute beginning) may properly be subsumed under the rubric of providence. They were works of providence in that they were part of the divine government of the world in so far as that world was already existent before each new creative act occurred. In the discussion which follows, however, predications made concerning the *modus* [148] *operandi* of divine providence during the creation era will have in view only the work of God other than his acts of creation.

is mistaken. (Cf. the criticism of B. B. Warfield on this point by J. Murray in “Calvin’s Doctrine of Creation,” *WTJ* 17 [1954]: 29ff.) Calvin does on occasion insist that the word “create” be restricted to *ex nihilo* fiat. Thus, in commenting on the use of the word “create” in Gen 1:21 for the origin of creatures of sea and air, which Calvin interprets (mistakenly) as having involved the use of existent water, he accounts for this usage solely on the ground that the material employed belonged to the universal matter created *ex nihilo* on the first “day.” However, in such a passage it must be observed that Calvin is exclusively concerned with the precise meaning of the Hebrew word *bārā’*, not at all with the general theological use of the word “create.”

3. There have been acts of creation since the creation of man which terminated the era of the “six days”; cf., e.g., the origin of souls and such miracles as the multiplying of the loaves and fishes. None of these, however, has added to the “kinds” originated within the “six days.”

4. Cf. B. B. Warfield, “Christian Supernaturalism,” in *Studies in Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 37ff. The likeness of creation acts to subsequent supernatural acts is profound. They are alike highways to consummation. It is by the road of his successive creation acts that God has betaken himself to the Sabbath of the seventh “day.” In the sequel, it is by the way of supernaturalism that God directs his image-bearer to union with him in his consummation rest. Adam wakes to the supernatural voice and it is to him from the very beginning a voice that speaks to him out of God’s Sabbath, challenging him with the invitation, “Come up hither”—to consummation. And every supernatural word thereafter issues from and beckons covenant-man unto that same Sabbath dwelling-place of God, while every supernatural work propels him towards it. The redemptive principle becomes necessary by the supernaturalism that conducts *fallen* man to consummation rest and it is, therefore, prominent in biblical revelation; but it is nevertheless subordinate to the eschatological thrust that marks all supernaturalism.

The traditionalist interpreter, as he pursues his strictly chronological way through the data of Gen 1, will be compelled at one point or another to assume that God in his providential preservation of the world during the “six days” era did not operate through secondary means in the manner which men now daily observe and analyze as natural law. The question, therefore, is whether the Scriptures justify this traditional assumption of supernatural providence for the creation era or whether they contradict it—or whether possibly they leave it an open question. It will be the central contention of this article that a clear answer to that question is available in Gen 2:5 and that that answer constitutes a decisive word against the traditional interpretation.

Genesis 2:5ff.

The major English versions exhibit marked divergence in the way they translate Gen 2:5 and relate it grammatically to verses 4 and 6–7.

| <i>Authorized</i> | <i>American Standard</i> | <i>Revised Standard</i> |
|--|--|--|
| (4) These <i>are</i> the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (5) and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and <i>there was</i> not a man to till the ground. (6) But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (7) And the LORD God formed man <i>of</i> the dust of the ground . . . | (4) These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that Jehovah God made earth and heaven. (5) And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground; (6) but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (7) And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground . . . | (4) These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, (5) when no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up—for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; (6) but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground—(7) then the LORD God formed man of dust from the ground . . . |

[149] Of these versions the treatment of verse 5 in the ASV is alone acceptable. A Hebrew idiom for expressing an emphatic negative found in the original of this verse has been muffed by the AV with the result that it is obscured at best. The RSV like the ASV correctly renders the negative element but has other serious defects. It treats verse 5 as though it were part of an involved temporal section extending from 4b through 6, all subordinated to the action of verse 7. This is an old interpretation which Delitzsch properly rejects because it required “a clumsy interpolated period” such as is “not to be expected in this simple narrative style.”⁵ The RSV rendering would also compel Gen 2 to teach that man was created before vegetation, whereas the ASV permits the exegete to regard the arrangement of its contents as topical rather than chronological. If the arrangement of Gen 2 were not topical it would contradict the teaching of Gen 1 (not to mention that of natural revelation) that vegetation preceded man on the earth.⁶

Set against the vast background of creation history, these verses serve to bring together man and the vegetable world in the foreground of attention. This prepares for the central role of certain objects of the vegetable kingdom, i.e., the garden of God and especially the trees in the midst of it, in the earliest history of man as recorded in the immediately following verses (cf. 2:8ff. and 3:1ff.).

Verse 5 itself describes a time when the earth was without vegetation. And the significant fact is a very simple one. It is the fact that an explanation—a perfectly natural explanation—is given for the absence of vegetation at that time: “for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth.” The Creator did not originate plant life on earth before he had prepared an environment in which he might preserve it without by-passing secondary means and without having recourse to extraordinary means such as marvelous methods of fertilization. The unargued presupposition of Gen 2:5 is clearly that the divine providence was operating during the [150] creation period through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day.

The last clause of verse 5 cites as a second reason for the lack of vegetation the absence of men. Though there be no rainfall, if man is present “to till the ground” and, in particular, to construct a system of artificial ir-

5. *New Commentary on Genesis* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1888), 1:115. Cf. W. H. Green, *The Unity of the Book of Genesis* (New York: Scribner's, 1910), 25.

6. That much is deducible from Gen 1:26–30 whatever one's view of the chronological character of the order of narration in Gen 1 as a whole.

rigation, he can make the desert blossom as the rose.⁷ The effect of this last clause of Gen 2:5 is to confirm and strengthen the principle that normal providential procedure characterized the creation era.⁸

Verses 6 and 7 then correspond respectively to the two clauses in verse 5b and relate how the environmental deficiencies there cited were remedied. First, “flooding waters⁹ [151] began to rise from the earth and watered all the face of the ground” (v. 6). Here was a source of natural irrigation to compensate for the want of rain. The first verb is a Hebrew imperfect and the inceptive nuance—“began to”—is legitimate for that form and is required in this case if verse 6 is not to neutralize the first clause in verse 5b. The English versions of verse 6 convey the impression that there was an ample watering

7. This verse reflects conditions in the East where irrigation is of the essence of farming and distinct terms are found to distinguish land that is naturally irrigated from land that is artificially irrigated. Cf. T. H. Gaster, *Thespis: Ritual, Myth, and Drama in the Ancient Near East* (New York: Schuman, 1950), 123, 126.

8. If the view of some exegetes were adopted that the sphere of Gen 2:5 is limited to such cultivated plants as were found in the garden of Eden, the concept of providential operations involved would remain the same. The text would still affirm that at a point prior to the creation of man and, therefore, within the creation era the absence of certain natural products was attributable to the absence of the natural means for their providential preservation. It may here be added that this avoidance of unnecessary supernaturalism in providence during the “six days” accords well with the analogy of subsequent divine providence for the latter too is characterized by a remarkable economy in its resort to the supernatural.

9. The meaning of the Hebrew word *ʿēd* is uncertain. It probably denotes subterranean waters which rise to the surface and thence as gushing springs or flooding rivers inundate the land. The watering of the garden of Eden by a river in the immediate sequel (v. 10) may be intended as a specific localized instance of the *ʿēd* phenomena (v. 6). Note the similar advance in the case of man, viewed in verse 5b as the artificial irrigator, from the general statement of verse 7 to the specific assignment in the garden (vv. 8, 15). The word *ʿēd* appears elsewhere in the Old Testament only in Job 36:27. That passage is also difficult; but *lēʿēdô* there seems to denote the underground ore, as it were, from which the raindrops are extracted and refined, i.e., by the process of evaporation in the cycle of cloud formation and precipitation. (For the translation of the preposition *lē* as “from” see C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Manual* [Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1955], 75.) The Hebrew *ʿēd* is probably to be derived from the Akkadian *edû*, a Sumerian loanword which denotes overflowing waters. (Cf. E. Speiser, “*ʿed* in the Story of Creation,” *BASOR* 140 [1955]: 9–11.) Other views are that it comes from Akkadian *id*, “river,” also a Sumerian loanword (used in the Mari texts as the name of the river god) or from *Îda*, the name of a high mountain in central Crete (a tentative suggestion of C. H. Gordon in “Homer and Bible,” *HUCA* 26 [1955]: 62–63).

of the earth during the very time which verse 5 describes. If that were so, the explanatory statement of verse 5, “for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth,” would be stranded as an irrelevance. Actually, verse 6 reports the emergence of a new natural phenomenon, the necessary preliminary to the creation of the flora described in verse 5a.

Verse 7 then records the creation of man. With adequate natural irrigation already available, the mere preservation of vegetation does not require man’s husbandry. But its full horticultural exploitation does. Besides, the mention of man at this point need not be accounted for solely in terms of his services to the vegetable kingdom for he was not made for it but it for him.

Genesis 2:5ff. and the Interpretation of Genesis 1

Embedded in Gen 2:5ff. is the principle that the *modus operandi* of the divine providence was the same during the creation period as that of ordinary providence at the present time. It is now to be demonstrated that those who adopt the traditional approaches cannot successfully integrate this revelation with Gen 1 as they interpret it.

In contradiction to Gen 2:5, the twenty-four-hour day theory must presuppose that God employed other than the ordinary secondary means in executing his works of providence. To take just one example, it was the work of the “third day” that the waters should be gathered together into ^[152] seas and that the dry land should appear and be covered with vegetation (Gen 1:9–13). All this according to the theory in question transpired within twenty-four hours. But continents just emerged from under the seas do not become thirsty land as fast as that by the ordinary process of evaporation. And yet according to the principle revealed in Gen 2:5 the process of evaporation in operation at that time was the ordinary one.

The results, indeed, approach the ludicrous when it is attempted to synchronize Gen 2:5 with Gen 1 interpreted in terms of a week of twenty-four-hour days. On that interpretation, vegetation was created on what we may call “Tuesday.” Therefore, the vegetationless situation described in Gen 2:5 cannot be located later than “Tuesday” morning. Neither can it be located earlier than that for Gen 2:5 assumes the existence of dry land which does not appear until the “third day.” Besides, would it not have been droll to attribute the lack of vegetation to the lack of water either on “Sunday” when the earth itself was quite unfashioned or on “Monday” when there was nothing but water to be seen? Hence the twenty-four-hour day theorist

must think of the Almighty as hesitant to put in the plants on “Tuesday” morning because it would not rain until later in the day! (It must of course be supposed that it did rain, or at least that some supply of water was provided, before “Tuesday” was over, for by the end of the day the earth was abounding with that vegetation which according to Gen 2:5 had hitherto been lacking for want of water.)

How can a serious exegete fail to see that such a reconstruction of a “Tuesday morning” in a literal creation week is completely foreign to the historical perspectives of Gen 2:5? It is a strange blindness that questions the orthodoxy of all who reject the traditional twenty-four-hour day theory when the truth is that endorsement of that theory is incompatible with belief in the self-consistency of the Scriptures.

But any strictly chronological interpretation of Gen 1, even if the “days” are regarded as ages, forces the exegete inescapably into conflict with the principle disclosed in Gen 2:5. The traditional day-age theorist must, for example, imagine that during the creation era plants and trees flourished on the face of an earth spinning alone through a sunless, ^[153] moonless, starless void. Now it will be recognized that that is not ordinary botanical procedure—and yet Gen 2:5 takes for granted ordinary botanical procedure.

In the vain attempt to avoid such a reconstruction, according to which vegetation (product of the “third day”) thrives without benefit of the sun (product of the “fourth day”), the most unwarranted notions of the work of the “fourth day” have been substituted for the straightforward statements of the text. Genesis 1:14–19 declares that the heavenly bodies were on the “fourth day” created and set in their familiar positions. Moses is certainly not suggesting merely that hitherto hidden heavenly bodies now become visible on earth. He knew how to express such an idea in Hebrew if that had been his intent (cf. his account of the appearance of the continents from under the seas, v. 9). The very least that transpired on the “day” in question is that the sun was brought into a radically new relationship to the earth wherein it began to govern earth’s times and seasons and in general to affect life on earth as men now observe it to do. But the strictly chronological view of Gen 1, even with such a minimizing exegesis of the “fourth day,” must still suppose that prior to this reordering of the universe on the “fourth day,” plant life had flourished on the earth contrary to present natural law.

On this traditional reconstruction it is impossible to make sense of Gen 2:5. Surely if vegetation could have flourished without the sun it could have survived without rain. Laws quite unlike any we know would then have prevailed. For that matter, God could have preserved forests in space without

so much as roots in a dry earth. It would then, however, be completely irrelevant for Gen 2:5 to assign natural reasons for the absence of vegetation. Indeed, the very fact that it offered a perfectly natural explanation would bring Gen 2:5 into principal contradiction to Gen 1.

To the divisive higher critic this might mean only that there is another item to add to this list of alleged contradictions between the two variant creation accounts he supposes he has discovered in Gen 1 and 2. But the orthodox exegete, having been confronted with the evidence of ordinary providential procedure in Gen 2:5 will be bound to reject the rigidly chronological interpretations of Gen 1 for the reason ^{[[154]]} that they necessarily presuppose radically different providential operations for the creation period.

If Gen 2:5 obviates certain traditional interpretations of Gen 1, by the same token it validates the not so traditional interpretation which regards the chronological framework of Gen 1 as a figurative representation of the time span of creation and judges that within that figurative framework the data of creation history have been arranged according to other than strictly chronological considerations.

To be sure, certain features are found in their proper relative positions chronologically. But where that is so it must be determined by factors other than the order of narration. It is perfectly obvious, for example, that the rest of the "seventh day," expressive of the divine joy in creation consummated, must follow chronologically the creation labors themselves. Again, the implications of man's position as lord of creation, the scope of the cultural mandate, and other considerations require that the creation of man concluded the creative acts of God in the actual historical sequence as well as in the order of narration.

Nevertheless, Gen 2:5 forbids the conclusion that the order of narration is exclusively chronological. The rationale of the arrangement involves other factors. To some extent a topical approach informs the account. As has been frequently observed, a succession of correspondences emerges when the contents of "days" one to three are laid alongside the contents of "days" four to six. Another literary interest at work within this parallelism is that of achieving climax, as is done, for example, in introducing men after all other creatures as their king.

Of greater significance for the life of man than these merely literary devices is the Sabbathic pattern of the overall structure of Gen 1:1-2:3. For the Creator's way in the day that he made the earth and the heavens must be the way of his image-bearer also. The precise ratio of man's work to his rest is a matter of following the chronological structure of the revelation

in which God was pleased to record his creation triumph. The aeons of creation history could have been divided into other than six periods. For temporally the “days” are not of equal length (cf., e.g., the seventh “day” ^{[[155]]} which is everlasting), and logically the infinitely diversified creative works were susceptible of analysis into other than six divisions. But the Creator in his wisdom, adapting the proportions of the ordinance, it would seem, to the constitutional needs of man, chose to reveal his creative acts in terms of six “days” of work followed by a seventh “day” of rest.

The divine demand for human imitation inherent in the Sabbathic pattern of that revelation becomes articulate in the fourth word of the Decalogue. The comparison there drawn between the divine original and the human copy is fully satisfied by the facts that in each case there is the Sabbathic principle and the six-one ratio. The argument that Gen 1 must be strictly chronological because man’s six days of labor follow one another in chronological succession forces the analogy unnecessarily. The logic of such argument would not allow one to stop short of the conclusion that the creation “days” must all have been of equal duration and twenty-four hours at that.

The Literary Genre of Genesis 1

Quite apart from the evidence of Gen 2:5 the figurative framework interpretation of Gen 1 which it demands would commend itself to us above the traditional interpretations. Only brief mention will be made here of other lines of evidence since it is the main burden of this article to center attention on Gen 2:5 whose decisive import for the Gen 1 problem has (to the writer’s knowledge) been hitherto unappreciated.

The literary character of Gen 1:1–2:5 prepares the exegete for the presence there of a stronger figurative element than might be expected were it ordinary prose. This passage is not, of course, full-fledged Semitic poetry. But neither is it ordinary prose. Its structure is strophic and throughout the strophes many refrains echo and re-echo. Instances occur of other poetic features like parallelism (1:27; 2:2) and alliteration (1:1). In general then the literary treatment of the creation in Gen 1 is in the epic tradition.

Having made such an observation concerning the literary ^{[[156]]} genre of the creation record, it is imperative (especially in the present theological scene) that one convinced of the genuinely historical nature of the events recorded in the opening chapters of Genesis promptly add that the disregard

for historical truth associated with the usual epic is not imported along with the formal literary aspects of the epic style into the divine revelation. Such importation was no more inevitable than that the polytheism of pre-biblical psalmody, for example, must have been carried over with the religious lyric form into the biblical Psalter. Though Gen 1 be epic in literary style, its contents are not legendary or mythical in either a Liberal or Barthian sense. The semi-poetic style, however, should lead the exegete to anticipate the figurative strand in this genuinely historical record of the origins of the universe.

It also needs considerable emphasis, even among orthodox exegetes, that specific evidence is required for identifying particular elements in the early chapters of Genesis as literary figures. The semi-poetic form of Gen 1 does not make it an exception. Exegesis which disregards this degenerates into allegorizing and these chapters are not allegories.

The specific exegetical evidence for the figurative character of the several chronological terms in Gen 1 has been repeatedly cited. The word “day” must be figurative because it is used for the eternity during which God rests from his creative labors. The “day’s” subordinate elements, “evening” and “morning,” must be figurative for they are mentioned as features of the three “days” before the text records the creation of those lights in the firmament of heaven which were to divide the day from the night. (From the position taken in this article the last argument is, of course, only *ad hominem*. But on the other hand, if the validity of the interpretation advocated here is recognized, the figurative nature of the “evenings” and “mornings” follows with equal necessity.)

Purely exegetical considerations, therefore, compel the conclusion that the divine author has employed the imagery of an ordinary week to provide a figurative chronological framework for the account of his creative acts. And if it is a figurative week then it is not a literal week of twenty-four-hour days. Furthermore, once the figurative nature of the chronological pattern is appreciated the literalness of the sequence is ^{[[157]]} no more sacrosanct than the literalness of the duration of the days in this figurative week.

Whether the events narrated occurred in the order of their narration would, as far as the chronological framework of Gen 1 is concerned, be an open exegetical question. The question is actually closed in favor of the non-chronological interpretation by the exegetical evidence of Gen 2:5. But if the exegete did not have the light of Gen 2:5, he would certainly be justified in turning to natural revelation for possible illumination of the question left open by special revelation. And surely natural revelation concerning the sequence of developments in the universe as a whole and the sequence of the

appearance of the various orders of life on our planet (unless that revelation has been completely misinterpreted) would require the exegete to incline to a not exclusively chronological interpretation of the creation week.

The exegete could then find confirmation of this view in the evidence of a topical interest in the arrangement of Gen 1 and in the non-chronological mode of representing history which is certainly common enough elsewhere in Scripture. He might also well observe the likeness between Moses' record of the creation "week" and certain visions of John, the seer of the Apocalypse, which are heptad in structure with successively numbered divisions and yet are not strictly chronological in sequence. It appears that the God of revelation chose to reveal the primeval ages of creation and the eschatological ages of re-creation in similar literary form.