OUR MISSION IS TO SUPPORT THE CHURCH IN HER CHARGE OF PRESENTING EVERY PERSON MATURE IN CHRIST (COL. 1:28).

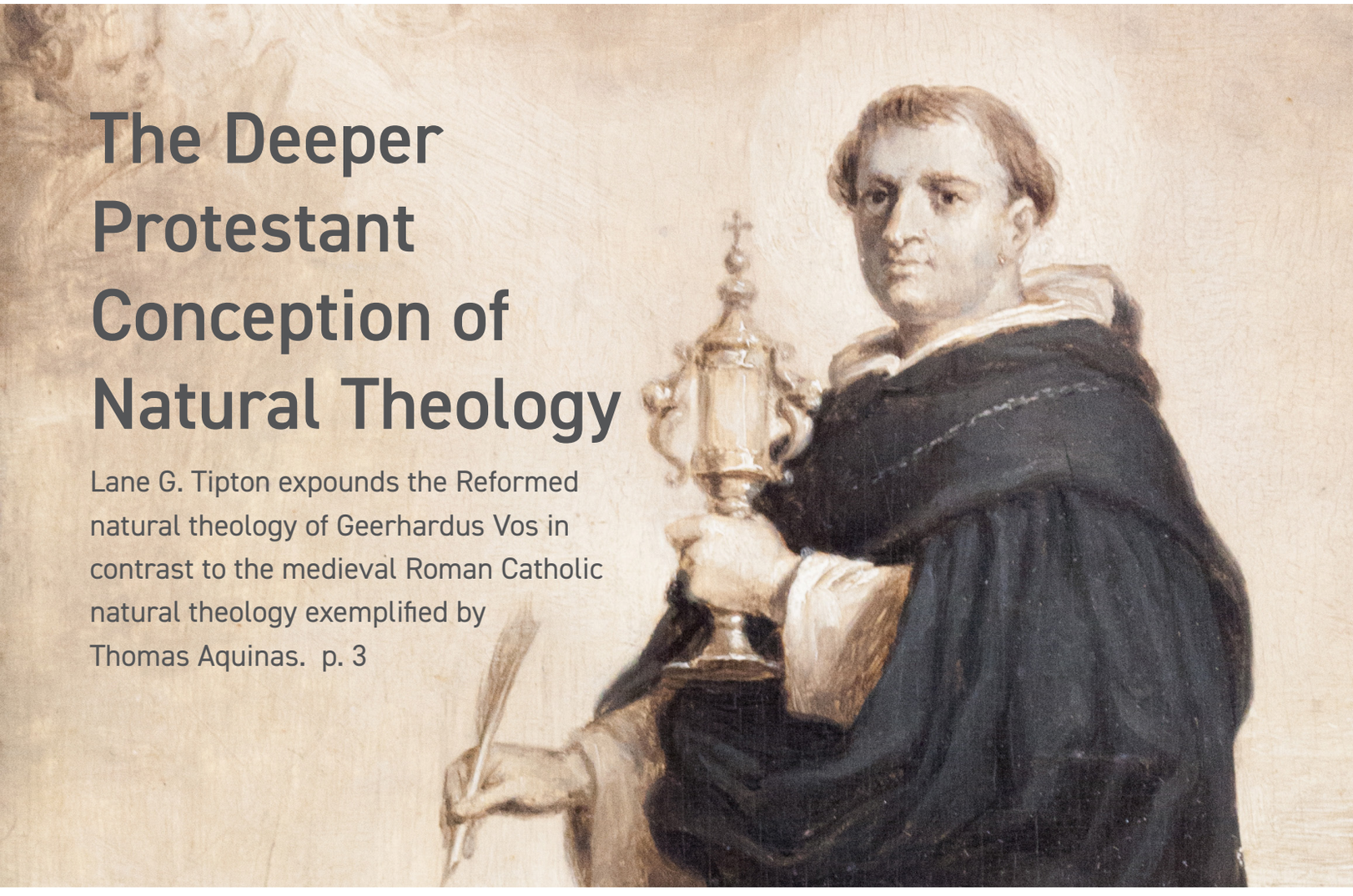
REFORMED FORUM

FALL/WINTER
2022
NEWSLETTER

ACCESSING WARFIELD'S WORKS
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Our mission is to support the church in her charge of presenting every person mature in Christ (Col. 1:28).

Our Mission

Reformed Forum is committed to offering resources to Reformed and Presbyterian churches involved in global missions. Our mission is to support the church in her charge of presenting every person mature in Christ (Col. 1:28). To this end, we developed a Global Education Initiative and have already begun to take several significant steps detailed in this strategic plan.

A New Place

Reformed Forum is a special community comprised not only of faculty and staff but also a wide network of volunteers and supporters. Yet our community requires a base of operations from which we may labor and where we may gather to fellowship and learn. God has answered our prayers on this front above and beyond our expectations.

This April, we moved to a new facility in Libertyville, Illinois. We enjoyed the nearly three years in our modest 750 square-foot office in Grayslake, but we grew out of it quickly. We frequently found ourselves moving boxes and shuffling around our book inventory simply to accomplish basic tasks.

Our new studio is four times as large and can accommodate our expanding ministry. We are scheduled to record seven on-demand courses this year. And now, with an expanded studio, we plan to host many of these as in-person events. We would love for you to come visit us.

Give Thanks

Give thanks to the Lord for these answers to prayer. Whether we face plenty or hunger, abundance or need, his mercies are new every morning. Great is his faithfulness.

Camden Bucey
Executive Director

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Donate Today

Visit reformedforum.org/donate or scan the QR code above to partner with us. Join our mission to support the church in her charge of presenting every person mature in Christ (Col. 1:28).

Your support enables people around the world to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christ revealed in all the Scriptures.

THE DEEPER PROTESTANT CONCEPTION OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

Natural Theology *in Light of Vos'* Reformed Dogmatics

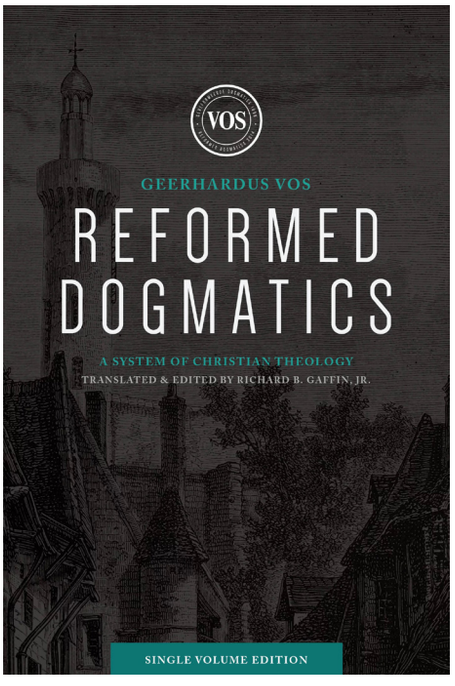
LANE G. TIPTON

It was most likely between 1888 and 1890, during his time at the Theological School in Grand Rapids, that Geerhardus Vos both delivered his Natural Theology lectures and wrote his *Reformed Dogmatics*. Together those works present a comprehensive doctrinal system of confessionally Reformed theology and therefore ought to be interpreted in light of one another.

In *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vos incisively leverages the Reformed doctrines of the image of God, the covenant of works, and original sin against "the externalist character of Roman Catholic religion"[1] that "has in principle appropriated the Pelagian conception of the will as *liberum arbitrium*."[2] According to Vos, the nature-grace externalism of medieval Roman Catholicism stands in sharp contrast to the "deeper Protestant conception"[3] of the image of God and the "deeper conception of original sin"[4] entailed by it.

In the recently published *Natural Theology*, Vos rejects the "semi-Pelagianism of the Roman Catholic church"[5] and identifies a cast of Roman Catholic "scholastics"[6] who do not view the "human race" after the fall "as entirely corrupt."[7] He sets this semi-Pelagianism of the medieval Roman Catholic church over against "Augustine's doctrine of human corruption" that was "revived during the Reformation."[8] He specifically highlights the classically Reformed rejection of the semi-Pelagianism imbedded in traditional Roman Catholic doctrine that sinners can "rely on their own powers for their knowledge of God"[9]—a view that Vos contends flows directly from a "weakened" conception of original sin.[10]

Reading Vos' *Natural Theology* in light of *Reformed Dogmatics* illumines his critique of the traditional Thomistic nature-grace anthropology and the semi-Pelagianism that flows from it. Vos' work from *Reformed Dogmatics* finds explicit and sweeping application in *Natural Theology*. Allowing the two works to interpret one another shines the spotlight from *Reformed Dogmatics* onto Vos' recurring claim in *Natural Theology* that the Reformed explicitly rejected traditional Roman Catholic natural theology and forged in its place a distinctively Reformed alternative.



Lexham Press, 2012–2016

John Fesko fails to understand this central point in his "Introduction" to Vos' *Natural Theology*, asserting that "Vos and Aquinas might seem like an ill-matched pair, but the two actually do belong together"[11] in their approaches to natural theology. Put a bit differently, Fesko thinks that Aquinas expresses a natural theology that is congenial to Vos' in the quest for the "retrieval of a Reformed

1. Geerhardus Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., trans. Richard B. Gaffin Jr., vol. 2 (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012–2016),12. "Externalist" captures Vos' comprehensive argument regarding the traditional Roman Catholic conception of religion. By "externalist" Vos alludes to what traditional Roman Catholic theology understands as sees as extrinsically and supernaturally added to the nature of Adam as the image of God. According to Vos, the traditional Roman Catholic conception of nature (*imago*) demands the ontological and ethical supplement of externally infused grace (*similitudo*) that enables a religious relation to God. Thus, Adam was not in his created nature in a religious relation to God and therefore needed an externally supplied infusion of grace to achieve such a religious relation. This is what Vos has in mind when he speaks of "the externalist character of Roman Catholic religion."
2. Ibid., 2:13. *Liberum arbitrium* means "liberty of the will," which, in the Pelagian conception, holds that the will is determined neither by natural causality nor by the decree of God.
3. Ibid. This phrase captures Vos' comprehensive argument regarding the "internalist" character of religion in classical Reformed theology. According to Vos, the deeper Protestant conception of the image of God yields a natural religious fellowship with God under the covenant of works with no need for a *donum superadditum*. This natural religious internalism of Reformed covenant theology presents a sharp contrast to Rome's supernatural religious externalism. This contrast explains Vos' rejection in *Natural Theology* of the semi-Pelagianism at the heart of the medieval Roman Catholic natural theology.
4. Ibid., 2:14.
5. Geerhardus Vos, *Natural Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), 8.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 10.
9. Ibid.
10. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:13.
11. John Fesko, introduction to *Natural Theology*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2022), xvii.

natural theology."[1] While many might view Aquinas and Vos as "oil and water,"[2] Fesko argues that such is not the case. According to Fesko, Thomas Aquinas, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and Vos fit coherently within "general patterns of patristic, medieval, and Reformation expressions, that is, in terms of God's two books, nature and Scripture."[3] Fesko makes these claims about Aquinas and Vos, even though Vos nowhere cites Aquinas in *Natural Theology*. Nonetheless, Vos does offer a sweeping and penetrating critique of the medieval Roman Catholic nature-grace model of explicit Thomistic provenance.[4]

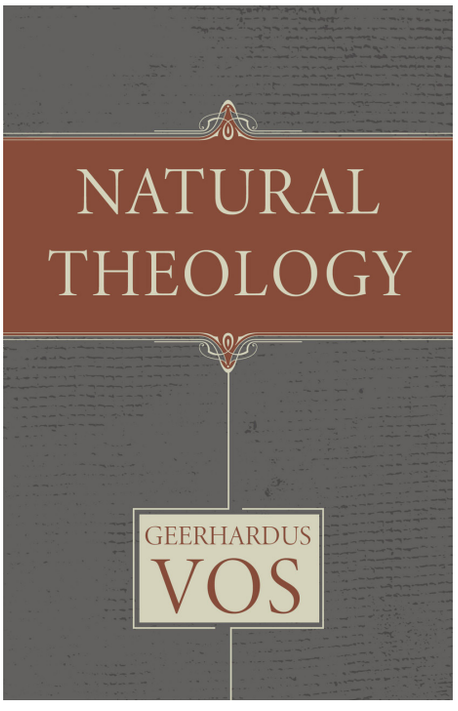
In what follows I will propose a reading of Vos' *Natural Theology* in light of his *Reformed Dogmatics* that will challenge Fesko's interpretations of Vos and Aquinas and will enable a comprehensive engagement with and critique of traditional Roman Catholic natural theology.

Reformed Dogmatics

Image of God and the Donum Superadditum: The Deeper Catholic Conception of Religion

Vos addresses the traditional Roman Catholic doctrines of nature-and-grace,[5] as shared by Thomas Aquinas, Robert Bellarmine, and the Council of Trent, as being doctrinally interdependent and mutually interpretive. By doctrinally interdependent, I mean that the doctrinal conception of nature determines the doctrinal conception of grace and vice versa. By mutually interpretive, I mean that embracing the doctrinal conception of nature entails embracing the doctrinal conception of grace and vice versa. As Vos viewed it, medieval Roman Catholic theology affirmed a doctrine of the natural image of God that demands the ethical and ontological supplementation of grace by way of the *donum superadditum*. Nature-and-grace are therefore mutually determining doctrinal conceptions for traditional Roman Catholic theology.

Vos offers a religious critique of these definite doctrinal conceptions of nature-and-grace operative in the system of medieval Roman Catholic theology. He argues that "the externalist character of Roman Catholic religion"[6] flows directly from its doctrinal conception of the image of God that carries within it the need for the *donum superadditum*.



Reformation Heritage Books, 2022

Whatever differences might emerge elsewhere in the theologies of Thomas Aquinas, Robert Bellarmine, and the Council of Trent, all share the mutually determining doctrinal conceptions of nature(*imago*)-and-grace(*donum*) intrinsic to the religious externalism of traditional Roman Catholicism.

Vos accordingly presents the doctrine of the image of God as central to understanding Adam's religious relation to God and develops his critique of traditional Roman Catholic religious externalism directly from the error he perceives in Rome's version of that doctrine. He remarks, "It is self-evident that by 'image of God' is expressed what is characteristic of man and his relation to God . . . In the idea that one forms of the image is reflected one's idea of the religious state of man and of the essence of religion itself."[7] For Vos the creational image endowment contains within it a distinctive religious relation to God that forms the inner essence of religion.

He observes further that the medieval Roman Catholic conception of the image of God demands an externalist conception of religion. The image of God consists in "metaphysical correspondence of the human spirit with God. According to Rome, the natural relationship to God exists in the fact that in this way he is similar to Him. There is no thought of a close relationship between man and God . . . That man is like God in this natural sense is a purely deistic relationship."[8] As there is for Rome no naturally implanted knowledge of

1. Ibid.
2. Ibid.
3. To substantiate this claim, Fesko speaks of "general patterns of patristic, medieval, and Reformation expressions, that is, in terms of God's two books, nature and Scripture." ("Introduction," xxix). He then cites from Thomas Aquinas and alludes to the Westminster Assembly's comments on Romans 1:19–20. His appeal to "general patterns" and citations of common texts are urged to support his initial argument that Vos and Aquinas "actually do belong together" within a general history of natural theology that affirms the two books of Scripture and nature. Fesko's claim that a common commitment to "God's two books, nature and Scripture" supplies continuity between the classical Reformed and traditional Roman Catholic approaches fails to appreciate at least two factors. First, the commitment to underproportioned nature that requires the supernatural grace resident in the *donum* unites Trent (1563), Vatican I (1870), and Vatican II (1965). Second, this explains why Vatican II's emphasis on "experience" does not alter the fundamental teaching of traditional Roman Catholic theology regarding nature and grace. In Roman Catholic theology in all eras, Scripture, reason, tradition, and experience, as interpreted by the magisterium, carries authority. These observations, along with Vos' own treatment of medieval Roman Catholic natural theology in *Natural Theology* and in *Reformed Dogmatics*, neutralize whatever unity Fesko might propose exists when it comes to how the Reformation and Rome interpret "God's two books, nature and Scripture."
4. Vos' penetrating critique of medieval Roman Catholicism most certainly includes Thomas, even if Vos does not name him. As Glen Clary noted in his excellent lecture from the 2018 Reformed Forum Conference "Participation in the Divine Life: Aquinas and Vos on the Lord's Supper" (Grayslake, Illinois, October 11, 2018), in 1567, just four years after the Council of Trent concluded its business, Pope Pius V declared Thomas Aquinas a doctor of the church. The Pope proclaimed that Thomas was "the most brilliant light of the Church," whose works are "the most certain rule of Christian doctrine by which he enlightened the Apostolic Church in answering conclusively numberless errors . . . which illumination has often been evident in the past and recently stood forth prominently in the decrees of the Council of Trent." Thus, according to Pope Pius V, the Council of Trent revived Thomism in direct opposition to the theology of the Protestant Reformation. Accordingly, Vos' programmatic critique of the nature and entailments of traditional Roman Catholic religious externalism certainly included Aquinas' theology, even though it is not directly aimed at him by name.
5. The hyphens symbolize the definite and mutually reinforcing conceptions of nature and grace contained within the system of medieval Roman Catholic theology. As we will see below, Vos identifies those definite conceptions as a Pelagian doctrine of nature (*imago*) joined to a sacerdotal notion of grace (*donum* or *similitudo*). The deeper Protestant conception rejects both of those doctrinal conceptions in their distinction (as each is conceived simpliciter) and in their relation to one another (as together they form a nature-grace system).
6. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:12.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid., 2:12–13.

God in image-bearing Adam, there is likewise no natural religious fellowship between God and image-bearing Adam. Medieval Roman Catholic anthropology has no place for the concreated natural knowledge of God, and, by extension, it has no place for concreated natural religious fellowship with God.

What, then, according to medieval Roman Catholic theology, did image-bearing Adam need in order to achieve a religious relation to God? In a phrase, he needed the "*donum superadditum* . . . that raises him above his created nature" so that Adam might "become a religious being, able to love, to enjoy his God, and to live in Him. Out of this follows entirely the externalist character of Roman Catholic religion."[1] Therefore, religion for Thomas, Bellarmine, and Trent—traditional Roman Catholic theology—"becomes something added to man, that he has but is not identified with him, does not enter into his essence."[2] In a phrase, the deeper Catholic conception enshrines a supernatural religious externalism.

Pelagian Nature, Sacerdotal Grace, and the Weakened Conception of Original Sin

If the nature-grace model constitutes a doctrinal package in medieval Roman Catholic theology, it also supplies the internal theological rationale for its semi-Pelagian doctrine of original sin. Vos notes the "Roman Catholic denial of the utter inability of man in his fallen state"—such a denial stems from its "weakened" conception of original sin.[3] Yet Vos traces this emaciated doctrine of original sin to its essentially Pelagian teaching concerning the image of God. He says, "According to Rome, man can only lose what was not essential to him, namely the supernaturally added gifts, the *dona superaddita*. Because of his fall, these are lost. The essence of man, the *imago*, consisting in formal existence as spirit, in the *liberum arbitrium* [freedom of the will], remained."[4]

Thomas Aquinas, offering a lucid example that confirms Vos' characterization of traditional Roman Catholic anthropology, masterfully explains the effects of original sin in terms of his nature-and-grace model of religious externalism as follows:

> The good of human nature is threefold. First, there are the principles of which nature is constituted, and the properties that flow from them, such as the powers of the soul, and so forth. Secondly, since man has from nature an inclination to virtue, as stated above (Q. LX., A. 1; Q. LXIII., A. 1), this inclination to virtue is a good of nature. Thirdly, the gift of original justice, conferred on the whole of human nature in the person of the first man, may be called a good of nature. Accordingly, the first-mentioned good of nature is neither destroyed nor diminished by sin. The third good of nature was entirely destroyed through the sin of our first parent. But the second good of nature, viz. the natural inclination to virtue, is diminished by sin. Because human acts produce an inclination to like acts, as stated above (Q. L., A. 1).[5]

While Thomas affirmed that the supernatural gift of original justice was destroyed in Adam's first sin, he also maintained that the natural inclination to virtue was diminished by Adam's sin. The supernatural gifts were therefore entirely lost in the fall, but the natural gifts were only diminished in the fall. Thomas, representative of medieval Roman Catholic nature-grace anthropology, advocated a doctrine of the partial diminution of human nature in Adam's original sin (a diminishing of human nature understood as a lessening of the good), rather than a total corruption of human nature in Adam's original sin (a corruption of the good understood as an enslavement to sin).

Such a weakened conception of original sin leads Vos to observe that since "there was no inner connection between the *similitudo* and the *imago*, the removal of the former cannot essentially change the latter."[6] The *similitudo* refers to the supernatural gifts of grace, whereas the imago refers to the natural gifts of creation.[7] For Rome, there is no "inner" or organic connection between them, since the *donum* is a superadded gift above and beyond the natural image endowment. What does this mean for the natural gifts in light of original sin? Vos incisively observes, "The *liberum arbitrium* might be weakened a little; in reality it is unharmed."[8] As we have seen, Thomas, as representative of medieval Roman Catholic theology, enshrines this doctrinal conception of sin in his nature-and-grace anthropology.

Vos then makes a penetrating inference regarding the conception of nature operative in back of this weakened conception of original sin. He says,

> In other words, by loosening the moral powers from the will, from the capacity of the will, and by denying that the former are natural in man, Rome has in principle appropriated the Pelagian conception of the will as *liberum arbitrium*. That capacity of free will has remained, and with that the possibility that man, even after the fall, can do something good.[9]



The Apotheosis of Saint Thomas Aquinas
Francisco de Zurbarán, 1631. Public Domain

The traditional Roman Catholic anthropology of Thomas, Bellarmine, and Trent thus joins a sacerdotal conception of grace to a Pelagian conception of nature. According to Vos, in traditional Roman Catholic theology, the definite conception of (Pelagian) nature requires the definite conception of (sacerdotal) grace and yields a definite conception of original sin. Vos therefore critiques the medieval Roman Catholic teaching of natural theology as erected upon a Pelagian conception of nature, a sacerdotal conception of grace, and a weakened conception of original sin.[10] Let us now turn to consider the com-

1. Ibid., 2:12.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 2:14.
4. Ibid, 2:13.
5. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.), Question LXXXV, art 2.
6. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:13.
7. Vos notes, "Bellarmine held that 'image' designated the natural and 'likeness' the supernaturally added." (*Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:11). This formulation of Bellarmine's restates the view of Aquinas and traditional Roman Catholic theology.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Van Til follows the substance of Vos' critique of medieval scholastic Catholicism lockstep: "The total result of such a false view of general and



Portrait of Geerhardus Vos by Min Hwan Rhee, on display at Westminster Seminary California.

prehensive alternative Vos sets forth in the deeper Protestant conceptions of the natural image of God and the revealed terms of the covenant of works.

supernatural revelation as entertained by Thomas, involves also a false view of the nature of the fall of man. Catholic theologians are accustomed to saying that in the fall man lost the *donum superadditum* (supernatural gift), and that as a result, man's nature was wounded. But it should be noted that according to Romanism, man's essential nature is his rationality, and that this rationality cannot be changed. The *donum superadditum* was only accidentally related to human nature, and when it was lost, man's essential nature was, to all intents and purposes, still intact. Man's metaphysical freedom, that is, the freedom to do what is against even the secret counsel of God, is found in the sinner today as much as it was in Adam before he sinned. . . . How, then, are we to think of the natural man? He is not to be thought of as a covenant-breaker who is under the condemnation of God and who suborns his intellect as well as the other powers of his being in the interests of his selfish God-defying purposes. He is rather to be thought of as one whose nature consists in rationality, and free will, in the same way that it did before the fall, but as one who has lost these supernatural additions of a 'grace' which is not grace. Man is therefore no more in need of grace after than before the entrance of sin, even though he is in need of more 'grace.'" *The Reformed Pastor and Modern Thought* (Phillipsburg, NJ: The Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1980), 90–92.

Image of God and the Covenant of Works: The Deeper Protestant Conception of Religion

Vos advances a parallel proposal regarding the doctrinally interdependent and mutually interpreting character of the image of God and the special terms of the covenant of works in the deeper Protestant conception. Vos perceives that the natural religious fellowship concreated in Adam as the image of God and the specially revealed terms of the covenant of works mutually define one another. Image of God, understood in terms of natural religious fellowship, and the specially revealed terms of the covenant of works, understood as the mechanism that advances that fellowship to glory, comprise the defining features of the deeper Protestant conception of religion.

Image of God

Vos sets the natural religious internalism of the classical Reformed doctrine of the image of God over against the supernatural religious externalism of the medieval Roman Catholic doctrine of the image of God. Vos says,

> the Protestant, and more specifically the Reformed, doctrine of the image of God is different than the Roman Catholic doctrine. That man bears God's image means much more than that he is spirit and possesses understanding, will, etc. It means above all that he is disposed for communion with God, that all the capacities of his soul can act in a way that corresponds to their destiny only if they rest in God. This is the nature of man.[1]

Vos sharply contrasts Adam as a natural image bearer prior to the fall who is not yet religious (the deeper Catholic conception) with Adam as a natural image bearer prior to the fall who is created in natural religious fellowship (the deeper Protestant conception). According to Vos, the classical Reformed doctrine of the image of God affirms that in his "natural relation to God,"[2] Adam was created in natural "communion with God."[3]

Vos expands this contrast when he observes,

> According to the Roman Catholic conception, there is a natural man who functions in the world, and that natural man adopts a religion that takes place beyond his nature. According to our conception, our entire nature should not be free from God at any point; the nature of man must be worship from beginning to end.[4]

In the Reformed view, the natural relation conferred in the special work of creational image endowment does not consist in bare "metaphysical correspondence"[5] to God but in concreated communion with God. Vos expands, "According to the deeper Protestant conception, the image does not exist only in correspondence with God but in being disposed toward God."[6] By being disposed toward God, Vos means a naturally implanted fellowship with God that expresses itself in religious worship.

This natural religious fellowship inherent in the image of God rests on naturally implanted knowledge of God. Vos makes this point explicit:

> Now since Adam was perfect in every respect, along with his natural relationship to God belonged a completely clear awareness of this relationship. He knew from nature, by innate knowledge, what God could demand of him—that he stood, as bearer of the image of God, under the moral opposition between good and

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:13.
2. Ibid., 2:43.
3. Ibid., 2:13.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. This is Vos' term for the Pelagian conception of the natural relation inherent in involved in the traditional Roman Catholic doctrine of the image of God. The natural relation as construed in traditional Roman Catholic theology is not a religious relation apart from supernaturally added grace in the *donum superadditum* (*similitudo*).
6. Ibid.

> evil, that upon breaking this natural relationship punishment would follow. All this and still more: He was assured of the favor of God and of life, provided that he persevered in the good.[1]

The deeper Catholic conception denies concreated natural knowledge of God and its corollary of concreated natural religious fellowship with God; the deeper Protestant conception affirms concreated natural knowledge of God and its corollary of concreated natural religious fellowship with God.[2] Vos therefore penetrates to the heart of the contrast between medieval Roman Catholic and classical Reformed theologies of nature inherent in their respective doctrines of the image of God.

The Covenant of Works

Vos next distinguishes the work of special creation from a special act of providence. The former confers natural religious fellowship in the image of God. The latter supplies the positive terms in the covenant of works by which that religious fellowship can advance to glory. While the work of special creation (image) and the special act of providence (special terms of the covenant) are distinct modes of God's relation to Adam, Vos also insists that as far as Adam was concerned the one never existed for a moment in time apart from the other. Vos argues that,

> By assuming the positive character of the covenant of works in this sense, we in no way intend to assert that Adam existed even for a single moment outside of the covenant of works. He was apparently created destined to be under it, and the garden in which he was placed was created to be a stage for his probation. The distinction between natural relationship and the covenant of works is logical and judicial, not temporal.[3]

Vos insists that while the creational work of image endowment and the specially revealed terms of the covenant of works remain distinct from one another in God's relation to Adam (see the distinction made explicit in WSC Q&A 12), the two are inseparable and simultaneous as far as Adam is concerned. In Vos' own words, the distinction is "logical and judicial," but it is "not temporal." Put differently, Adam as created image of God never existed apart from a special act of providence in the positive terms of the covenant of works. The image of God without the covenant of works is blind; the covenant of works without the image of God is empty. The two form one grand scheme of God's covenantal relation to Adam as the federal head of the race.

What precisely is the logical distinction Vos introduces? He says that Adam as a creature in covenant with God "was at the same time a private person and persona publica [a public person]."[4] By virtue of special creation simpliciter,[5] Adam did not represent all who would descend from him by ordinary generation. But by virtue of the special terms of the covenant of works, Adam was constituted a public person—the federal head of the race. Thus, the natural relation established in special creation finds instant incorporation into the covenant of works. Adam could advance from the estate of innocency to the estate of glory by way of *ex pacto* meritorious obedience to the revealed terms of the covenant of works.

Therefore, the revealed terms of the covenant of works supply the instrumental cause by which the Spirit would advance obedient Adam beyond earthly probation, confirm him in inviolable fellowship with God, and translate him into heavenly Sabbath rest to find God as his blessedness and reward (see WCF 7.1).[6] The tree of life in the Garden of Eden served as a sacramental sign and seal of the eschatology of God's covenant relation to Adam. Vos reasons that the tree of life functioned

> before the fall [as] a sign that the power of life for man was not to be sought in himself but outside himself in God. Because, moreover, this tree is in the midst of the heavenly courtyard, it therefore has a central meaning and summarizes, as it were, all the glory and enjoyment of heaven. It will, accordingly, have formed the center point of paradise on earth, from which it follows directly that paradise itself was an image of heaven. To this attaches the widely shared conception that man, if he would have remained unfallen, would have enjoyed the state of bliss not on earth but in heaven. The sacrament thus becomes an image and seal of higher spiritual good.[7]

The tree of life sacramentally pledged to Adam confirmed covenantal fellowship with God in heaven beyond probation in earthly Eden. Had Adam passed probation in Eden, he and his posterity would have enjoyed the state of bliss not on earth but in heaven. The deeper Protestant conception of the image of God and the covenant of works contains within it a distinct eschatological *telos*: a consummate covenantal communion with God in heaven beyond earthly probation in Eden.[8] The eschatology of the deeper Protestant conception hinges on personal communion with God in covenant, not in a participation of the essence of God.[9]

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1. Ibid., 2:43–44.
2. As noted earlier, Thomas denied the naturally implanted knowledge of God. Vos, in contrast to Thomas, followed Calvin and Turretin in affirming naturally implanted knowledge of God—what Calvin called the *sensus divinitatis*. By "innate knowledge" Vos does not have in view the innate ideas of Plato or Descartes. It is likely that Vos followed Turretin, who incisively expressed the classically Reformed doctrine of the implanted natural knowledge of God: "There is implanted in man a knowledge of God and sense of divinity, of which man can no more be destitute than of a rational intellect. He cannot divest himself of it without putting off himself" (Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology*, vol. I, [Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 1992], 178). Turretin insisted that to eradicate the natural knowledge of God implanted in the special work of creational image endowment would require the divestment of "self." The implanted natural knowledge of God (a) is concreated and gifted in the special creational work of image endowment itself, (b) develops over time in relation to God and the external created order, and (c) supplies in part the internal theological ground for natural religious fellowship with God—all of which stands in contrast to Thomas and traditional Roman Catholic anthropology. This was Turretin's way of expressing the doctrinal substance of what Vos would later term the deeper Protestant conception of the image of God and its implications for a Reformed theology of nature.
3. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:32.
4. Ibid., 2:42.
5. We must note that the natural relation does not exist as a thing in itself apart from the special terms of the covenant of works. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as the natural relation operating apart from the special terms of the covenant of works. We must always speak of the two in concrete relation to one another and never in abstraction from one another.
6. At around the same time Vos wrote *Natural Theology* and *Reformed Dogmatics*, he also wrote a seminal essay on the Reformed doctrine of the covenant of works set in contrast to Lutheran and Roman Catholic doctrinal alternatives (see Geerhardus Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001).
7. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:46.
8. Vos likely envisions the righteous on earth being conformed to the glory of the presently veiled heavenly dwelling of God in a new heavens and earth (see *Reformed Dogmatics*, 5:308–10). M. G. Kline speaks of the earth and the righteous upon it as "heavenized" in the consummation of the new heavens and new earth (Kline, *God, Heaven, and Har Magedon: A Covenantal Tale of Cosmos and Telos* [Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006], 28). In the event of heavenization, according to Kline the lower register of earth will be transformed and conformed to the upper register of heaven.
9. The deeper Catholic conception posits a "mystical fusion" or "melting union" between the

The Deeper Protestant Conception of Original Sin

The deeper Protestant conception of the image of God includes innate knowledge of God and a natural communion with God that made prefall Adam entirely "disposed toward God" in worship from beginning to end. This belonged to the nature of man as the image of God. Building directly from this doctrine of the image of God comes the deeper Protestant doctrine of original sin.

Vos draws several theological conclusions from the Reformed doctrine of the image of God as it bears on the character of sin. He says, for example, "by falling away from something to which he was wholly disposed, which constitutes his proper and highest destiny, man will be changed in the deepest depths of his being; a radical reversal will take place within him."[1] He says further that "the loss of original righteousness follows spiritual death, because death in its essence is disorganization, a process of dissolution."[2] He describes the implications of the divergent doctrines of original sin as follows:

> From this one can assess most clearly the Protestant and Roman Catholic conceptions concerning the capability of man to do spiritual good in his fallen state. According to us, man is dead and therefore does no good toward God. According to Roman Catholics, he is weakened or ill but nonetheless still always capable with his free will to move himself to do good.[3]

The deeper Protestant conception affirms total depravity as an entailment of its doctrine of the image of God and sets an Augustinian doctrine of sin over against what Vos termed an essentially Pelagian doctrine of sin.

According to Vos, the doctrine of original righteousness, concreated natural knowledge, and natural religious fellowship inherent in the image of God has "another consequence"[4] that further distinguishes the classically Reformed doctrine of sin from the medieval Roman Catholic doctrine. He says,

> Because the being of man was placed from the beginning in a necessary relation with God, because he is made in the image of God in the stricter sense and this image is his nature, sin therefore cannot be just a mere privation. This would mean that something that belongs to his nature can be removed and the rest left undamaged. This is impossible. Man has to be in relation with God in everything he is and does. So, if original righteousness falls away, unrighteousness replaces it as the natural state.[5]

Vos says that any doctrine that posits Adam's "supernatural gifts" being entirely lost in his original sin, while his "natural gifts" were merely "diminished" proves "impossible" on the deeper Protestant conception. The Reformed doctrine of total depravity therefore stands in the sharpest contrast to Aquinas' view outlined earlier. Vos insists that Adam and his posterity are "either positively good or positively evil; there is no middle state."[6] Vos surmises that, "One can therefore say that the deeper conception of sin, especially of original sin, that rules in Protestant theology flows directly from the view one has of the original state before the fall."[7] In summary, then, Vos argues that an Augustinian doctrine of sin flows directly from the deeper Protestant conception of the natural image of God.

Vos then situates the Arminian and Socinian views in relation to the classically Reformed and traditional Roman Catholic doctrines of the image of God. He says,

> One will now, after all that has been said, understand why a diverging opinion concerning the image of God must be formed by the Socinians and Arminians. They could not choose the Roman Catholic supernaturalism. Neither was inborn virtue (= original righteousness) a concept that fit with their line of thinking. As a consequence of this, there was no other way out than to limit the image of God in a religiously neutral sense to dominion over the lower creatures. For, according to the Socinians and Arminians, the state of rectitude is a state of neutrality, of innocence, which had not yet been determined for virtue or for sin.[8]

The Socinian and Arminian views of the image of God are in effect the Roman Catholic view devoid of the doctrine of ascending participation in God's being via the *donum superadditum*. Together with the traditional Roman Catholic view, the Socinian and Arminian doctrines deny concreated original righteousness, innate knowledge of God, and natural religious fellowship between the triune Creator and the image-bearing creature. Yet, at the same time, the Pelagian and Arminian doctrines of the *imago* refuse to embrace the Roman Catholic conception of an underproportioned natural participation in the essence of God that requires the ethical and ontological supplementation of the *donum superadditum*.

The deeper Protestant conception eschews the doctrines of nature-and-grace embedded within traditional Roman Catholic natural theology. In the light of these foundational doctrinal formulations from *Reformed Dogmatics*, we can situate and appreciate Vos' negative assessment in *Natural Theology* of the medieval scholastic expression of traditional Roman Catholic natural theology to which we now turn.

Natural Theology

It should come as no surprise that in *Natural Theology* Vos rejects the "semi-Pelagianism of the Roman Catholic church."[9] Aquinas, Bellarmine, and the Council of Trent all affirm a Pelagian conception of nature joined to a sacerdotal conception of grace that underwrites a semi-Pelagianism system. Vos' assessment unsurprisingly coheres with the penetrating critiques of traditional Roman Catholicism found in Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*.[10] Vos' key insights hinge on the way that the semi-Pelagianism of medieval Roman Catholic natural theology, including its seminal expression by Aquinas, originates in its Pelagian doctrine of the image of God that demands the supernatural religious externalism of the *donum superadditum* and yields its weakened doctrine of original sin. These foundational theological conclusions from *Reformed Dogmatics* supply the necessary theological background for understanding Vos' *Natural Theology*, yet they are conspicuously absent from Fesko's analysis in his "Introduction." This oversight leads to several theologically minacious interpretations of Vos.

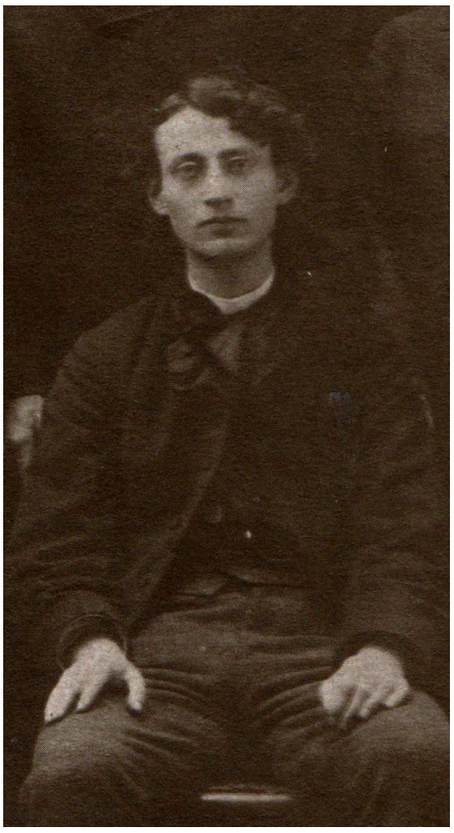
Question 25 in Natural Theology

Fesko gives special attention in his "Introduction" to Question 25 in *Natural Theology*. The question and answer found

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Creator and the creature, as the creature is reproportioned by grace to participate in and apprehend directly in the essence of God (see Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics: God and Creation*, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing, 1996] 2:539, 542). This is in part why the WCF 26.3 speaks of "communion" with God in Christ as the Last Adam in a way that "doth not make them (believers) in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead." The goal of the covenant of works is not the fruition of participation in the essence of God. It is rather the fruition of covenantal communion with condescended yet absolute Trinitarian persons.

1. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:15.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid, 15 (emphasis added).
8. Ibid.
9. Vos, *Natural Theology*, 8.
10. See especially Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:190–91, 543–44, 576–77.



Geerhardus Vos, ca. 1888–1893. Photo courtesy of the archives of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

there are as follows:

> Was the Reformation favorable of natural theology? No, for it opposed the Roman Catholic doctrine of tradition as well as the Semi-Pelagianism of the Roman Catholic church. For that reason, it preferred to stick to Scripture alone and wanted people not to rely on their own powers for their knowledge of God or to see Him by their own means, but rather simply to believe in God (Q. 25).[1]

Vos plainly asserts there and throughout his *Natural Theology* that the Reformation was not favorable to medieval Roman Catholic natural theology. Fesko offers revealing commentary on this particular text. He says, "Vos likely means that the Reformation rejected certain forms of Roman Catholic natural theology."[2] Why does he speak in this way? It appears that Fesko speaks in this way to buttress his assertion in the "Introduction" that Aquinas and Vos "actually go together" in the "retrieval of a Reformed natural theology."[3]

On what basis does Fesko allege that Vos "likely means" that the Reformation rejected only "certain forms" of medieval Roman Catholic natural theology but did not reject the Thomistic expression? What does he cite from Vos to indicate that such is Vos' intention? His reasoning is that

> only certain forms of Roman Catholic natural theology were problematic appears to be Vos' point given the way he describes Alsted's work and the internal and external books of nature, a view that echoes the earlier theme of Raymond of Sabunde, which Vos says, 'was increasingly lost from sight to the detriment of natural theology' (Q. 29).[4]

The evidence Fesko offers to support this claim stems from Vos' positive citation of a vocal critic of the semi-Pelagianism of traditional Roman Catholic natural theology, the German Calvinist Reformer Johann Heinrich Alsted. This is beyond dispute from the wider context of 25 through 29 in which Vos enlists Alsted as an example of the Reformed who "opposed . . . the semi-Pelagianism of the Roman Catholic church." Yet Fesko seems to infer that the German Calvinist Reformer Alsted somehow supplies evidence that the Reformation accepted rather than rejected a certain form of a medieval Roman Catholic natural theology! Yet the fact remains beyond doubt that Vos summons Alsted as an exemplar of a distinctly Reformed doctrine of natural theology set in antithesis to the semi-Pelagianism of medieval Roman Catholic natural theology.

What enables Fesko's misinterpretation of Vos? The answer is fairly close at hand. Notice from the quotation that Fesko makes it appear that perhaps Vos alludes to the medieval Roman Catholic Raymond of Sabunde. As we will see in Q. 29, Vos makes no such allusion. Fesko airdrops the allusion to Raymond of Sabunde to make it appear plausible that Vos has in mind some acceptable strand of medieval Roman Catholic natural theology. But Vos himself makes no such allusion.

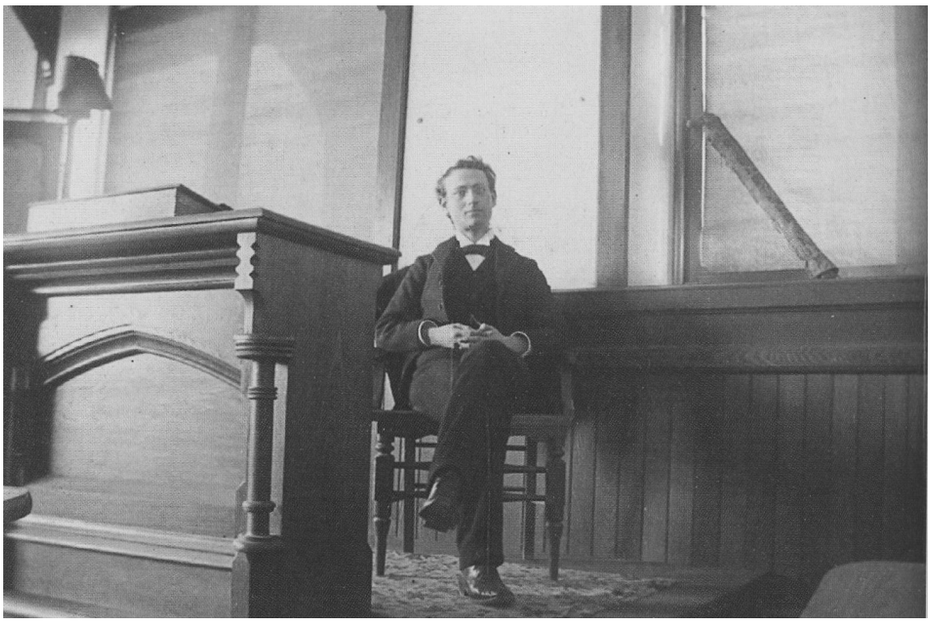
To put this point beyond doubt, we need to place the full text of Q. 28 and Q. 29 before us:

> Q. 28. How does natural theology develop after the Reformation? 1. Neither the Reformed churches nor the Lutheran churches viewed natural theology as anything more than an apologetic means against unbelief. They also did not grant that natural theology represents an introduction to revealed theology for Christians. 2. Among the Lutherans in particular theology was considered to be the doctrine of salvation, that is, soteriology. Nature teaches nothing about salvation. Therefore, it can produce no true theology. 3. In their Christology and teaching on the Lord's Supper, the Lutherans also had other reasons to disregard the testimony of reason and the natural senses. This explains why there is greater aversion to natural theology among them than there is among the Reformed.
>
> Q. 29 Who first brought improvement to this situation? Alsted, who in 1615 first published his *Natural Theology*. He speaks of an internal book of nature (the conscience, etc.) and an external book of nature (the 'objective' testimony of creation). Later on the latter was increasingly lost from sight to the detriment of natural theology.[5]

As it turns out, Vos himself notes that the Reformed did not view "natural theology [as] anything more than an apologetic means against unbelief. They also did not grant that natural theology represents an introduction to revealed theology for Christians."[6] This sets the classically Reformed view of natural theology as Vos understands it directly over against the traditional medieval Roman Catholic view of Aquinas. Vos says that the Reformed did not view natural theology as an introduction to revealed theology—the foundational premise of Aquinas' nature-grace model.

Additionally, if we understand Question 25 in *Natural Theology* in light of Vos' sweeping rejection of the religious externalism inherent in the nature-grace theology of medieval Roman Catholicism in *Reformed Dogmatics*, we can easily grasp Vos' point. The argument surveyed from *Reformed Dogmatics* above made explicit that Vos understood traditional nature-grace Roman Catholicism as a synthetic integration of a Pelagian conception of nature, a sacerdotal conception of grace, and a weakened doctrine of original sin. This reinforces why Vos' language in Q. 25 supplies a totalizing rather than selective critique of the semi-Pelagianism inherent in medieval Roman Catholic natural theology spearheaded by Aquinas. Had Fesko read Vos' *Natural Theology* in light of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, perhaps he would not have inserted qualifications that Vos himself did not make about traditional Roman Catholic natural theology.[7]

1. Fesko, "Introduction," lx.
2. Ibid., lx.
3. Ibid., xvii.
4. Ibid., lx–lxi.
5. Vos, *Natural Theology*, 10–11 (emphasis added).
6. Ibid.
7. Moreover, Fesko's positive assessment of Aquinas in relation to the classical Reformed tradition in his "Introduction" stands in contrast to Fesko's own discussion in his earlier work entitled *Reforming Apologetics: Retrieving the Classical Reformed Approach to Defending the Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2019). On page 94 in that book, Fesko observed rightly that Thomas taught a "nature-grace model of prefall anthropology." He acknowledged that Aquinas'



Geerhardus Vos, ca. 1898. Photo courtesy of the archives of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Parallel to his apparent lack of attention to *Reformed Dogmatics*, Fesko does not relate question 25 to question 21 within *Natural Theology*. Question 21 confirms beyond meaningful dispute the points made immediately above:

> Q. 21 Was the pursuit of the scholastics also related to their semi-Pelagianism? Yes, whenever the human race and human reason are not viewed as entirely corrupt, it becomes easier to try to build a theology on the basis of human reason alone. When Augustine's doctrine of human corruption was revived during the Reformation, people once again because suspicious of reason and sought recourse in Scripture as the source of theology.[1]

In the closest Vos comes to naming Aquinas, Vos speaks of the "pursuit" of medieval Roman Catholic "scholastics" as infected with "semi-Pelagianism"[2] evidenced by the fact that they do not understand the "human race" after the fall "as entirely corrupt."[3] He sets this semi-Pelagianism of the medieval Roman Catholic scholastics over against "Augustine's doctrine of human corruption" that was "revived during the Reformation."[4] He specifically highlights the classically Reformed rejection of the semi-Pelagianism imbedded in traditional Roman Catholic doctrine that sinners can "rely on their own powers for their knowledge of God."[5] In brief, without naming Aquinas directly in Q. 21, Vos unmistakably describes the semi-Pelagianism inherent in his nature-grace anthropology and weakened doctrine of original sin.

Aquinas' Eschatology of the Natural Image: Natural and Supernatural Knowledge of God

Vos, as we saw, traced the "weakened"[6] conception of original sin directly from the Pelagian conception of nature and the sacerdotal conception of grace inherent in the medieval Roman Catholic nature-grace anthropology–the view Fesko himself acknowledges in Reformed Apologetics that Thomas taught and the Reformed rejected.[7]

Another area of concern in Fesko's "Introduction" pertains to his claims about Aquinas' teaching on Romans 1:19–20. Fesko reflects on Aquinas' treatment of Romans 1:19–20 in relation to the Annotations of the Westminster Assembly, a commentary on the whole Bible. He quotes from Thomas as follows:

> God manifests something to man in two ways: first, by endowing him with an inner light through which he knows: send out your light and your truth (Ps. 43:3); second, by proposing external signs of his wisdom, namely, sensible creatures: he poured her out, namely, wisdom, over all his works (Sir. 1:9). Thus God manifested it to them either from within by endowing them with a light or from without by presenting visible creatures, in which, as in a book, the knowledge of God may be read.[8]

Fesko then claims that "similar observations appear in the Westminster Assembly's comments on Romans 1:19–20 in their Annotations, a commentary on the whole Bible."[9] While he acknowledges that there are differences between Aquinas and the Westminster Confession of Faith regarding the sources of theology—"Aquinas cites Sirach, an apocryphal book, which the confession rejects"[10]—he nonetheless urges that "the overall patterns of argumentation in the confession and Aquinas are parallel."[11]

If by "patterns of argumentation" that

nature-grace model teaches that "the *donum superadditum* (original justice)" was a "supernatural grace" added to the natural gifts endowed upon Adam as the image of God. He further recognized that in Thomas' anthropology the fall brought "the loss of supernatural grace" and that the "the nature-grace model" is not "the best way to account for prefall and postfall anthropology vis-à-vis the noetic effects of sin." Moreover, and perhaps most revealing of all in this regard, he admitted that the "Reformed tradition" has answered Thomas and Rome "in the negative" regarding the nature-grace model of theology and anthropology. While Fesko wrongly states that Thomas taught a "corruption" of human nature in the fall, he nonetheless grasps the classical Reformed rejection of Thomas' views of nature, grace, and sin—the key theological ingredients in the Thomistic recipe of natural theology. How Fesko's observation about the Reformed answer to Thomas being "in the negative" from Reforming Apologetics coheres with his contrary claims in his "Introduction" to *Natural Theology* remains inscrutable. Had he applied his own observations in *Reforming Apologetics* to the germane portions of Vos' *Natural Theology* and further interpreted Vos' *Natural Theology* in light of his *Reformed Dogmatics*, he likely would have taken steps to avoid the mischaracterizations permeating his central claim that Vos and Aquinas "actually go together" in the attempt to retrieve a "Reformed natural theology." An explanation for the inconsistency on Fesko's part may lie in his having published his broader "retrieval" view found in his 2019 *Reforming Apologetics* before Vos' *Natural Theology*, to which Fesko provided the introduction, had been translated into English. As a result, Fesko's treatment of Vos' *Natural Theology* could have been more heavily influenced by his precommitments in his earlier book than by what Vos actually presented in his *Natural Theology*.

1. Vos, *Natural Theology*, 8.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 10.
5. Ibid.
6. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:13.
7. Fesko, *Reforming Apologetics*, 94.
8. Fesko, "Introduction," xxix. The Aquinas quotation appears in Thomas' *Commentary on the Letter of Saint Paul to the Romans*, trans. F. R. Larcher, ed. John Mortensen and Enrique Alarcon (Lander, WY: Aquinas Institute for the Study of Sacred Doctrines, 2012), comm. Ro. 1:16–20, 40–41.
9. Fesko," Introduction," xxix. Fesko does not supply any primary source quotations or develop an argument to substantiate his claim.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.

are "parallel," Fesko means that Thomas and the Westminster divines both exegete Romans 1:19–20 and draw theological conclusions from that text regarding the natural knowledge of God, then he is quite correct. But such a claim yields only a formal parallel rooted in similar patterns of argument that move from the text of Scripture to theological conclusions based on a given scriptural text. Such "patterns" would hold true also for the Pelagians, the Eastern Orthodox, the Socinians, the Arminians, the classical Liberals, the Neo-Orthodox, and the Radical Orthodox. Every theological tradition engages in the same "pattern of argumentation" if we mean by that taking a biblical text as a point of departure and drawing theological implications from its teaching. On this interpretation, such parallel patterns of argumentation between Thomas and the Westminster Divines would prove inconsequential.

However, if we move beyond the trivial claim that all theological traditions follow basic patterns of parallel argumentation in moving from exegesis to theological conclusions, Fesko's claim implodes under the pressure of Thomas' mutually intertwined conceptions of natural and supernatural knowledge of God. Adam's inferential and mediated knowledge of God in the light of nature serves the end of direct and unmediated knowledge of God in the light of glory. The *donum superadditum* supplies the ontological supplement necessary to elevate Adam's inferential and mediated natural knowledge of God in creation to the direct and unmediated supernatural knowledge of God in beatitude. Thomas' doctrine of the natural knowledge of God entails his doctrine of the supernatural knowledge of God. Put a different way, the eschatology of Thomas' doctrine of the natural image of God requires the supernatural reproportioning of the intellect to participate in and directly apprehend the essence of God. This forges the distinctively Thomistic understanding of the statement that grace perfects nature.

Thomas Aquinas did not teach the *sensus divinitatis* doctrine developed by John Calvin. Thomas did not affirm the naturally implanted knowledge of God given to Adam in the creational act of image endowment. Yet he did affirm an implanted or original "inner light" of reason by which image-bearing creatures can arrive at a natural knowledge of God through an inferential process.[1] The inner light of natural reason, understood as a concreated capacity to know God, enables the attainment of the knowledge of God through a rational process that traces back from sensible objects to the connatural knowledge of God. For Thomas, "man's knowledge begins with things connatural to him, namely, sensible creatures, which are not proportioned to representing the divine essence."[2] The italicized portion supplies the indispensable contextual clue for grasping what Thomas means when he goes on to argue that "God manifests something to man in two ways: first, by endowing him with an inner light through which he knows . . . second by proposing external signs for his wisdom, namely, sensible creatures."[3] Thomas suspends the knowledge of God in the light of nature on an inferential process that yields only indirect and mediate connatural knowledge of God that is traced back from sensible effects.

The *donum superadditum* was given to initiate a process of ontologically reproportioning the natural intellect to see and participate directly and immediately in the essence of God in the light of glory. As Thomas says regarding the supernatural "term" or end of the natural intellect of Adam in light of ontologically reproportioning grace,

> Accordingly in the heavenly vision there will be no third medium, so that, to wit, God be known by the images of other things, as He is known now, for which reason we are said to see now in a glass: nor will there be the second medium, because the essence itself of God will be that whereby our intellect will see God. But there will only be the first medium, which will upraise our intellect so that it will be possible for it to be united to the uncreated substance in the aforesaid manner. Yet this medium will not cause that knowledge to be mediate, because it does not come in between the knower and the thing known, but is that which gives the knower the power to know.[4]

Aquinas taught that ontologically reproportioning supernatural grace ultimately enables an immediate and direct apprehension of the essence of God in the light of glory, as the essence itself becomes the medium by which the intellect sees God. This is his eschatology of the image of God. The light of glory brings a direct and unmediated intellective apprehension of and participation in the essence of God, thereby transcending the inferential and mediated intellective apprehension of God obtained in the light of nature from sensible objects. Aquinas' doctrine of the underproportioned and mediated character of the natural knowledge of God in creation supplies the definite dogmatic conception that requires the reproportioned and unmediated character of the supernatural knowledge of God in beatitude. Aquinas' protological understanding of the image of God determines his eschatological understanding of the image of God. Therefore, Aquinas' doctrine of the natural knowledge of God entails his doctrine of the supernatural knowledge of God—both of which the classical Reformed theological tradition abjures.

Fesko shows no awareness of Aquinas' eschatological conception of the natural image of God and its bearing on his notion of beatitude (or of his doctrines of the natural and supernatural knowledge of God). However, Aquinas' eschatological conception of the natural image of God flows organically from (a) his doctrine of the ontologically underproportioned natural intellect, (b) his doctrine of ontologically reproportioning grace in the *donum superadditum*, (c) his doctrine of the perfection of the natural intellect in the direct and unmediated vision of and participation in the essence of God in the light of glory.[5] For Aquinas, the definite conception of the underproportioned natural requires the correspondingly definite conception of the reproportioning supernatural that perfects nature in the light of glory. For whatever constellation of reasons, Fesko's presentation proceeds without comprehension of Aquinas' eschatology of the natural and its implications for a Thomistic doctrine of beatitude. His work obscures rather than illumines the foundational differences between traditional Roman Catholic teaching (represented by Aquinas) and traditional Reformed teaching (represented by Vos and Bavinck) on doctrines such as (a) the image of God, (b) the natural knowledge of God, (c) original sin, and (d) eschatological beatitude. Two examples illustrate this point.

WCF 26.3 offers an underappreciated but profound critique of the traditional Thomistic understanding of deification as partaking in

1. Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Romans*, 59.

2. Ibid (emphasis added).

3. Ibid., 60.

4. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns Oates & Washbourne, n.d.) Third Part, Supplement, Q 92, rep. obj.15.

5. For helpful studies that expand and develop the Thomistic eschatology of nature with special emphasis on the image of God, consult Lawrence Feingold, *The Natural Desire to See God According to St. Thomas Aquinas and His Interpreters* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2010); Daria Spezanno, *The Glory of God's Grace: Deification According to Saint Thomas Aquinas* (Naples, FL: Sapientia Press of Ave Maria University, 2015); and Reinhard Hütter, *Bound for Beatitude: a Thomistic Study in Eschatology and Ethics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University Press of America, 2019).

the essence of God as described above. WCF 26.3 sets participation in the essence of God over against personal fellowship with God in covenant: "This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any wise partakers of the substance of his Godhead; or to be equal with Christ in any respect: either of which to affirm is impious and blasphemous." This portion of the WCF teaches it is "impious" and even "blasphemous" to affirm that creatures in any sense partake of the divine essence—whether by nature or by grace.[1] God created Adam in natural religious fellowship under covenant that after the fall comes to fruition in union and communion with the person of Christ—a personal fellowship in covenant and not a participation in the divine essence of God. Seeing the essence of God directly with the reproportioned intellect is the doctrine of glorification for Aquinas' deeper Catholic conception. Seeing the glory of God in the face of Christ in personal covenantal fellowship with God is the doctrine of glorification in Vos' deeper Protestant conception.

As Vos himself notes, "Dr. Bavinck ably vindicates the federal character of all true religion"[2] over against the medieval scholastic approach of traditional Roman Catholic theology. Bavinck sharply criticized traditional Thomistic doctrine that Adam as the image of God participated in the being of God by nature and that supernatural grace would elevate Adam above his created nature to participate in and directly see the essence of God. Bavinck incisively grasps that the supernatural grace of the *donum superadditum* initiated the process of elevating Adam above his created nature to become a "partaker of the divine nature."[3] While Bavinck affirmed wholeheartedly that the being of God provides the efficient and exemplary causality of Adam's created being, he strenuously denied the classical Roman Catholic doctrine of human participation in the being of God. He said of the Thomistic doctrine of beatitude embedded in traditional Roman Catholic theology,

> Every vision of God, then, always requires an act of divine condescension, a revelation by which God on his part comes down to us and makes himself knowable . . . But regardless of how high and glorious Reformed theologians conceived the state of glory to be, human beings remained human even there, indeed raised above "their natural position" but never "above their own kind" and "that which is analogous to that." Humanity's blessedness indeed lies in the "beatific vision of God," but this vision will always be such that finite and limited human nature is capable of it. A divinization, such as Rome teaches, indeed fits into the system of the Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy but has no support in Scripture.[4]

Bavinck further observed that the traditional Roman Catholic view of beatitude amounts to a "melting union"[5] that rests on "a Neo-platonic vision of God and a mystical fusion of the soul with God" and entails the "erasure of the boundary between the Creator and the creature."[6] Bavinck explicitly rejected as Neo-Platonic the traditional Thomistic doctrines of nature, grace, and glory focused on the ontological elevation and reproportioning of the natural intellect to participate in and see directly the divine essence.

Vos refers to these very portions of Bavinck's incisive critique of medieval scholastic Roman Catholic natural theology in his review of volume two of Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*. Vos says,

> With the Nature of Man and The Destiny of Man the debate returns from these apologetic outposts to the heart of the Christian and Protestant position. The Romanist doctrine of the dona supernaturalia is shown to have two roots, one in the neo-Platonic idea of a mystical deification as the true destiny of man, the other in the Pelagian principle of the meritoriousness of good works. If man is to earn the status gloriæ which is supernatural, he can do so only by employment of a principle likewise intrinsically supernatural, the *gratia infusa* or *gratia gratum faciens*.[7]

Vos' staunch agreement with Bavinck regarding the Reformed rejection of the Neo-Platonic and Pelagian dialectic imbedded in the medieval scholastic Roman Catholic natural theology could not be clearer. As Vos argued in *Natural Theology* and in *Reformed Dogmatics*, so he argued in his review of Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*. According to Vos, everything turns on grasping the architectonic contrast between the classical Reformed and the traditional Roman Catholic doctrines of "the Nature of Man and the Destiny of Man."

These foundational Reformed critiques from Bavinck and Vos regarding the traditional Thomistic doctrines of the image of God, the natural knowledge of God in creation, the supernatural knowledge of God in the light of grace, and the beatitude of that knowledge in the light of glory militate in the opposite direction of Fesko's "Introduction." Every theological insight in Vos' *Natural Theology*, *Reformed Dogmatics*, "Doctrine of the Covenant," and "Review of Bavinck's Gereformeerde Dogmatiek" subverts Fesko's argument that Vos and Aquinas belong together in an attempted retrieval of a so-called Reformed natural theology.

Conclusion

This essay could have focused on Vos' place in the Reformed history of natural theology, Vos' Reformed theology of theistic proofs, contrasting conceptions of apologetical method in Old Princeton and Old Amsterdam, or the proper interpretation of Van Til's theology as an organic extension of Vos' deeper Protestant conception,[8] but it has

1. While the immediate historical concern for this language in 26.3 is Osiander and certain expressions of Cambridge Platonism, the extension to the Roman Catholic doctrine of participation in the essence of God seems quite natural.
2. Vos, "Review of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*—Vol. Two by H. Bavinck," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2001), 492.
3. "Grace, in the thinking of Rome, is, in the first place, a supernatural quality added to human beings by which they are in principle taken up into a supernatural order, become partakers of the divine nature, of the vision of God, and are able to perform supernatural acts such as by a condign merit deserve eternal life." (Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 3:576). He also says, "Grace creates in humans a kind of being by which, in a totally special way, they are divinized. It elevates them "into the divine order." It cannot make them into God but does put them in a very special relation to the Deity. It does not merely raise persons—with all their capacities—to the highest pinnacle of which they are by nature capable, for in that case they would not exceed their natural perfection. But inasmuch as in the strict sense grace is supernatural, it elevates them to a level above their nature, above the nature of angels, above all nature, above actual creation, and also above all possible natures" (Ibid., 3:577).
4. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:190–91.
5. Ibid., 2:539.
6. Ibid., 2:190.
7. Vos, "Review of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*," 492.
8. See my book *The Trinitarian Theology of Cornelius Van Til* (Libertyville, IL: Reformed Forum, 2022) and my forthcoming *Van Til's Doctrine of Revelation* for sustained argumentation that Van Til affirmed Vos' deeper Protestant conception of natural and supernatural revelation and applied it to traditional Thomistic theology. For an excellent discussion that both recognizes Van Til's criticisms of certain aspects of Reformed Scholasticism, yet which also persuasively argues that Van Til agreed in substance with the classical Reformed doctrine of natural revelation expressed by the Reformed Scholastic tradition, see Jeffrey K. Jue's essay, "*Theologia Naturalis*: A Reformed Tradition" in *Revelation and Reason: New Essays in Reformed Apologetics*, edited by Lane G.

instead remained more narrowly focused on the claims of Fesko regarding a retrieval of a Reformed natural theology that seeks to join Aquinas and Vos. Fesko's arguments toward such an end collapse under the weight of Vos' sustained critique of medieval scholastic Roman Catholic natural theology.

Moreover, this essay did not seek to address Aquinas' relation to Reformed theologians in the sixteenth century as, for instance, John Patrick Donnelly, Calvinist Thomism or Calvinism and Scholasticism in Vermigli's Doctrine of Man and Grace. Rather, this essay has focused exclusively on Vos' critique of medieval scholastic Roman Catholic natural theology. Vos, following Bavinck, has no place for the medieval Thomistic doctrine of the image of God and its pluriform entailments for traditional Roman Catholic natural theology.

While I have delineated the systemic contrasts between Thomas and Vos on the nature and eschatology of the image of God, the nature and eschatology of the knowledge of God, and the nature of original sin and its effects, this essay by no means exhausts the profound differences between the two theologians. For Vos, natural theology serves covenant theology and the advancement of natural religious communion with God. For Thomas, natural theology serves the *donum superadditum* and supernatural participation in the essence of God. For Vos, the work of Christ as the Last Adam and life-giving Spirit in his estates of humiliation and exaltation attains the covenantal kingdom that Adam lost in the fall. For Thomas, the instant divinization of Christ's humanity in the incarnation realizes the eschatological potency of the *donum superadditum* and supernatural participation in the essence of God that Adam lost in the fall. For Vos, it is union with Christ by Spirit-gifted faith in the covenant of grace that brings perfected covenantal fellowship with God to ultimate consummation. For Thomas, through Christ's substantial presence in the Eucharist, God deifies the church to attain a direct participation in and unmediated apprehension of the divine essence.[1] The divergent doctrinal conceptions of nature between Rome and the Reformed yield distinct and wide-ranging theological differences regarding the nature of grace, the function of the incarnation, the role of the sacraments, and the character of beatitude.

Vos' critique of medieval scholastic Roman Catholic theology therefore aims at preserving the heart of true religion as defined in terms of the deeper Protestant conception. He reminds us that we have before us two antithetical religious conceptions:

> The Reformed dogma of the covenant of works differs from this in that according to it eternal life was not to be earned by Adam *ex condigno*, but *ex pacto* (p. 524), not by supernatural, but by natural means. Virtually Rome eliminates all grace, for there is no reason to call the *donum superadditum* grace, in any other sense than life, intellect, wisdom, power were grace to Adam. Christianity may, according to Rome, be in an incidental and subordinate way a soteriological scheme: primarily it aims not at *reparatio*, but at *elevatio naturæ* (p. 528).[2]

Vos' sharpest criticism against medieval scholastic Roman Catholic theology hinges on the way its Pelagian conception of nature and sacerdotal conception of grace together compromise the glory of God in the salvation of his church. Vos says,

> The obtaining of eternal life thus comes to lie in God, as a work that is His alone, in which His glory shines and of which nothing, without detracting from that glory, can be attributed to the creature. On this point the entire Reformation, both Lutheran and Calvinist, took exception to Rome, which failed to appreciate this fundamental truth.[3]

All of these concerns that Vos expresses flow out of "the externalist character of Roman Catholic religion"[4] and its doctrine of nature that has "appropriated the Pelagian conception of the will as *liberum arbitrium*."[5] This is the fruit of reading his *Natural Theology* in light of his *Reformed Dogmatics* that develops constructively and appropriates polemically the deeper Protestant conception of classical Reformed theology in sustained contrast to medieval Roman Catholic natural theology, so that we must abandon Fekso's claim that Aquinas and Vos actually go together in the retrieval of a Reformed natural theology.



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Tipton and K. Scott Oliphint, (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 2007), 168–89. While not in Jue's purview, that essay demonstrates from yet another angle, especially in light of the argument contained in this essay, that Van Til taught the classically Reformed doctrine of natural revelation in line with Vos' deeper Protestant conception.

1. Matthew Levering clearly grasps and crisply expresses how Thomas' doctrines of nature and grace bear on his theology of the incarnation. He says, "He first points out that the hypostatic union itself is a grace, as an unmerited gift that elevates Christ's holy humanity at the instant of its conception to perfect union with the divine nature in the Person of the Word. As a result of that perfect union, Christ as human receives the full influence of the Holy Spirit upon his soul, filling it with the charity and wisdom that befit such a union. Given his uniqueness, Christ in his holy humanity receives a graced participation in God's life that includes 'everything that could pertain to the nature of grace'. Created nature could not receive a higher participation in the divine life than Christ's humanity receives, as befits the union, at the instant of his conception" ("Participation and Exegesis: Response to Catherine Pickstock," *Modern Theology* 21, no. 4 (2005): 587–601). Van Til synthetically grasps both points and applies them to the *ordo salutis* when he says, "The incarnation is a process continued in the church, as the whole of human personality is in process of divinization. There could be no one fact at the beginning of history by which all men are influenced to the extent of being guilty as well as polluted; so there could not be one finished fact in history by virtue of which men are made righteous and holy in principle. The distinction between justification and sanctification is practically wiped out; or rather justification is virtually reduced to the process of sanctification, and sanctification is virtually said to be elevation in the scale of being" *The Reformed Pastor and Modern Thought*, 93.
2. Vos, "Review of *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek*," 492.
3. Vos, "The Doctrine of the Covenant in Reformed Theology," 246.
4. Vos, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 2:12.
5. Ibid., 2:13.

ACCESSING WARFIELD'S WORKS

JEFFREY A. STIVASON

What Warfieldian works are essential to knowing the man as a biblical and systematic theologian?

It is not gratuitous admiration to describe Benjamin B. Warfield as a true Renaissance man. The Princetonian's interests are enough to tell the tale. For example, from the very beginning, Warfield's tastes were strongly scientific and his short shift as livestock editor of the *Farmer's Home Journal* in 1873 is evidence of his eclecticism. However, following his conversion and training for the ministry, he was initially appointed as stated supply to First Presbyterian Church of Dayton, Ohio. He was then called to occupy the chair of New Testament at Western Theological Seminary before being whisked away to Princeton Theological Seminary in order to fill the vacancy in the department of systematic theology left in the wake of A. A. Hodge's death, which was felt as much as observed. As if that weren't enough, Warfield also did the work of a church historian. And in keeping with his naturally quizzical mind, Warfield investigated the figures, patterns, and trends of history and admirably so. His work on Augustine, Tertullian, Calvin, and the Westminster Assembly are valuable still.

However, this article will ask the question, what Warfieldian works are essential to knowing the man as a biblical and systematic theologian? Perhaps we might do better to consider his works which endear him to the church. Yet, I would suggest that the two are interrelated. What makes Warfield a great theologian also makes him a precious son of the church. For example, the positions he advocated to the academy were beneficial to the church and such a comment cannot be made about every exegete and theologian today.

Warfield possessed what many today lack. Warfield was orthodox or confessional in his theology, and his confessional orthodoxy was no mere form. When he assumed the Chair of New Testament Literature and Exegesis in the Western Theological Seminary he said, "I wish, therefore, to declare that I sign these standards not as a necessary form which must be submitted to, but gladly and willingly as the expression of a personal and cherished conviction. . ."[1] And there was a reason for his conviction. He believed that the system of theology taught in the confession and catechisms of Westminster was drawn out of Scripture. To put it even more emphatically, he believed that Scripture could be made to teach nothing other than the content of the confession.[2] To put it succinctly, Warfield's confessional orthodoxy arose from Scripture and because of their source he held his convictions with tenacity. The works I will highlight all have that quality about them.

However, what may surprise the reader unfamiliar with Warfield's corpus is the dearth in the number of book-length pieces which came from his prodigious pen. Yet, Warfield produced articles for the academy and the laity alike in venues from the *Sunday School Quarterly* to the *Princeton Theological Review*. Some of his articles stretch near one-hundred pages, and some, like those published in his work on perfectionism, read like chapters. I'll leave those for the reader to explore. Again, my choices will reflect Warfield's concern that good theology be for the academy and the church rather than the length of the work.

A Book Little Remembered

In 1886 Warfield published *Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament*. Not only was it Warfield's first volume but it was the first book of its kind to be published in America. Today, New Testament scholars are not inclined to view Warfield as a contributor to the field of textual criticism.[3] However, that view was not held by Warfield's contemporaries. A. T. Robertson was a Southern Baptist biblical scholar well-known for his acumen in the New Testament language. He wrote the mammoth and landmark *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in Light of Historical Research* and his *Word Pictures in the New Testament* is still in use today.



B. B. Warfield, Wikimedia Commons

In 1925 Robertson wrote *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the Greek New Testament*. In the preface, he laments the fact that Warfield's book had gone out of print. Robertson says that many other New Testament teachers expressed similar regret that Warfield's book was no longer available. What is more, Robertson writes that he encouraged Warfield to update and revise his work. However, Warfield declined because having moved to Princeton his interests had become chiefly that of dogmatic theology. It is little wonder that Robertson dedicated his book on textual criticism "To the Memory of B. B. Warfield."

Clearly Warfield's primer was valued by his peers. However, today we would do well to retrieve the confidence Warfield expressed in our ability to possess what God has mediately preserved through copies of texts. In the end of chapter one of his primer, Warfield

1. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1948), 419.
2. Ibid.
3. In Warfield's preface he claimed his work as an introduction to the art of textual criticism in order to prepare his students for the science of the discipline.

assured his readers that the text of Scripture has been "transmitted to us with no, or next to no, variation; and even in the most corrupt form in which it has ever appeared, to use the oft-quoted words of Richard Bentley, 'the real text of the sacred writers is competently exact. . .'"[1] Today such confidence is lacking. Even evangelical text critics lament our ability to reconstruct the autographic text. Instead, they speak of an archetype or a text that originates a particular text tradition. Warfield would have lamented such a pessimistic view of the text. But he would have gone further. He would remind us that "it is as truly heresy to affirm that the inerrant Bible has been lost to men as it is to declare that there never was an inerrant Bible."[2]

A Book Well-Known but Little Read

It is not hard to understand why the book titled *The Inspiration and Authority of the Bible* is on the shelf of every person concerned with the doctrine of Scripture's inspiration. This book is known by almost all who love Scripture. However, it is equally not difficult to understand why the same book is often not read. The book is a posthumous work. It is a collection of articles that Warfield wrote on the doctrine of Scripture. Some of them were written for journals, others were published as encyclopedia or dictionary articles, at least one was penned for the American Sunday School Union, and the second appendix is Warfield's Inaugural Address from his early days at Western Theological Seminary in Pittsburgh, PA.

However, this book is pure gold. I recognize that not everyone will labor through "The Oracles of God," which is a word study of the term λόγια. "God-Inspired Scripture" may draw more readers but its technical nature will likely ward off all but the courageous. However, "The Biblical Idea of Revelation," "The Biblical Idea of Inspiration," and "The Church Doctrine of Inspiration" are worth the price of the book. They provide any reader with a firm foundation and appreciation for Warfield as a defender of an orthodox view of inspiration. More importantly, these articles will instill not only understanding but confidence in a high view of Scripture that is continually under attack. This is not to say that "The Real Problem of Inspiration" holds no value today. It certainly does. In fact, there is more here for us today than meets the eye. What is more, "'It says:' 'Scripture Says:' 'God Says'" is a tour de force that will remind the reader that Scripture views itself as God's word.

Books that Provide Access

This final point is more about providing a way into Warfield than anything else. Warfield was a great theologian in our recent past, and he ought to be read. So, I am going to suggest three titles that will enable you to get your footing as you begin to ascend the theological heights to which Warfield will be a steady and faithful guide.

The first is *Faith and Life*. Warfield kept up the Princeton tradition of Sunday afternoon classes with the students of the seminary. This book contains some of those Sunday afternoon addresses. These sermons, though full of biblical logic, are an invitation into the heart of the man. Warfield loved his students. They were in his home. He treated their children like his grandchildren. And these addresses are to those men.

As an aside, Warfield published a book with the American Tract Society called *Is Jesus God: An Argument by Graduates of Princeton Seminary*. The only thing Warfield wrote in this book was the introductory note commending these essays written in 1912 by Princeton graduates saying, "It is with great confidence that I place these essays by a company of earnest young men seeking (and finding) the truth, before a larger public than that for which they were prepared, asking for them a candid—I scarcely need ask an indulgent—reading."[3] He was proud of his theological sons.

The second is *The Plan of Salvation*. This short one-hundred page book was first published in 1915, and it is as insightfully logical as it is biblical. No person who is concerned with the doctrine of salvation should leave this book unread. It would certainly be a shame for a man to go through seminary never having worked through the taxonomy of these pages.

The final book I would commend is the two-volume *Selected Shorter Writings*. These books are full of short articles that were mostly published in church periodicals. The topics range and rove. There are articles dealing with dreams, doubts, the inspiration of Scripture, Calvinism, baptism, miracles, the apocalypse, and so many more. Each of these short articles is worth a reading and will give you a taste of the man's intellect, his devotion, and sometimes a bit of his humor.

No, it is not gratuitous to say that Warfield was a Renaissance man. He certainly was. His interests were wide ranging. He endeavored to know everything to which he put his mind. So, to have Warfield's works available to us and yet for them to remain shelved and unread would be a terrible shame. *Tolle Lege!* ❧



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1. Benjamin B. Warfield, *An Introduction to the Textual Criticism of the New Testament* (London; Hodder & Soughton, 1886), 14.
2. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Selected Shorter Writings, vol. 2*, "Westminster and the Original Autographs" (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005), 590.
3. Benjamin B. Warfield, ed., *Is Jesus God: An Argument by Graduates of Princeton Seminary* (NY: American Tract Society, 1912), 8.

REFORMED ACADEMY UPDATE

RYAN NOHA

Reformed Academy exists to serve the church with theological curricula for the gathering and perfecting of the saints. We strive to be faithful to our mission by producing more courses and making more connections in the US and abroad, reaching our 3,800 students and their churches in over 70 countries with the riches of the Reformed faith.



More Courses

In 2020, we launched our Fellowship in Reformed Apologetics, which is dedicated to training students in the theology and apologetics of Cornelius Van Til. This rigorous academic program combines free video courses with the opportunity for mentorship and collaboration through online cohorts. This year, Dr. Lane Tipton will return to the Reformed Forum studio to record the next four installments of this curriculum, with *Van Til's Apologetic Method* scheduled for July. These courses will build upon our most recent offering in this series, *Van Til's Doctrine of Revelation* (available now on-demand for free), foundational for a consistent Reformed defense of the faith.

Our faculty and regular contributors are also actively developing classes for two new, non-technical series in biblical studies. We hope to launch a traditional Bible study series this summer with Dr. Mark Winder, host of our *Proclaiming Christ* podcast, on the prophecy of Zephaniah. A second Bible study series, planned for 2023, will cover entire books of the Bible in a single lessons, addressing matters of introduction and then moving on to historical, theological, and Christological themes. While these courses are geared for laypersons young and old, we are confident that by God's grace they will be nourishing for anyone who desires to know Christ more deeply as he is revealed in all of Scripture. Lord willing, we plan to record some of these classes as live events, open to a limited number of students.

More Connections

One of the greatest joys of teaching is seeing the Spirit-wrought fruit that it bears in the life of the church. We are consistently humbled by the greatness of our God who is pleased to give the increase to our efforts for the sake of his people. Dozens of churches in North America are now using our Reformed Academy courses for Adult Sunday Schools and small groups. Seminaries in South America and Asia are actively exploring partnerships with Reformed Forum to supplement their own training up of ministers for service in indigenous churches. Saints in nations where access to faithful teaching is limited have been encouraged in the faith through our online resources. We rejoice in the Lord for the warm greetings that we have received from students in Bolivia, Italy, Malaysia, and Kenya, to name but a few countries!

Recognizing that translation is a vital to our ability to make connections across cultures, we continue to partner with native speakers for the sake of the gospel. We remain steadfast in our commitment to offer subtitles for our courses in several major languages, including simplified Chinese, Spanish, and

Arabic. We joyfully collaborate with faithful, theologically trained saints around the world who correct our subtitles, translate our resources, and even dub our videos as a labor of love. Hand to the plow, we earnestly pray that the Lord would continue to expand the reach of Reformed Forum—not for our own sake—but for the advancement of his kingdom in all the world.

Donate today to make new courses and new connections possible among the nations.

Your support spurs us on in our mission to support the church in her charge of presenting every person mature in Christ (Col. 1:28).

Reformed Academy exists to serve the church with theological curricula for the gathering and perfecting of the saints. We strive to be faithful to our mission by producing more courses and making more connections in the US and abroad, reaching our 3,800 students and their churches in more than 75 countries with the riches of the Reformed faith. ❧

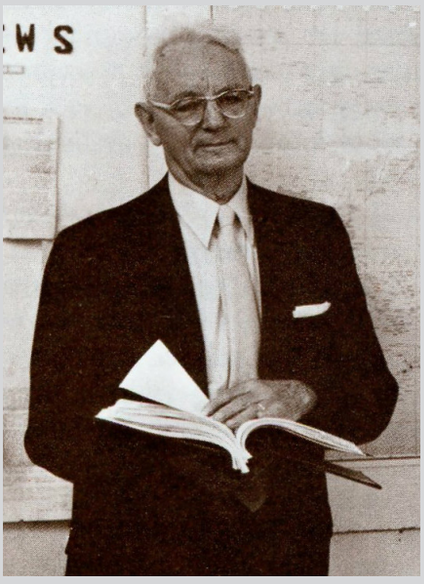


Ryan Noha is Director of Education and Advancement for Reformed Forum.

NEW COURSE ON VAN TIL'S DOCTRINE OF REVELATION

In the third course in our Fellowship in Reformed Apologetics, Dr. Lane G. Tipton addresses Cornelius Van Til's doctrine of revelation. Topics include:

- The implications of the self-contained and immutable Trinity for a doctrine of revelation in the work of creation and in the special act of providence in covenantal condescension;
- The distinctive character of natural revelation and the natural knowledge of God in Reformed theology, set in comparison and contrast to the views of Thomas Aquinas and Karl Barth;
- The relation between natural and supernatural, or general and special revelation, giving special attention to Van Til's key essay, "Nature and Scripture";
- The Vosian doctrine of eschatology as it bears upon the distinction and the relation of God's revelation in nature and God's revelation in covenant (and in Scripture).



Cornelius Van Til in 1970. Photo courtesy of the archives of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

The course gives sustained attention to a close reading of central primary sources in Van Til's corpus that bear on his doctrine of the revelation of the self-contained Trinity in nature and in covenant. This on-demand video course includes English, Spanish, and Chinese subtitles. It has been made available for free by the generous support of our donors.

For more information, www.reformedforum.org/courses/van-tils-doctrine-of-revelation/



B. B. WARFIELD'S REVIEWS OF HIS OWN WRITINGS IN THE PRINCETON SEMINARY JOURNALS

BARRY WAUGH

If an academic journal were opened nowadays and a review of a publication written by the editor was included it would be thought inappropriate, if not vain. B. B. Warfield began reviewing his own publications and those issued with his Princeton Seminary colleagues beginning in 1890 in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*. The Princeton journals were considered sources of reliable information about publications useful to Christians in general and Presbyterians in particular. Whose books would be better to recommend than those written by Warfield and his like-minded colleagues? The growing doctrinal division within the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) would accelerate due to publicity from the heresy trial of Charles A. Briggs resulting in greater public interest in theological issues such as higher criticism, modernism, fundamentalism, and confessionalism. It was Princeton Seminary's responsibility as a servant of the church to critique the worst and recommend the best theological literature relevant to current issues. As events came to crisis in the late nineteenth and into the twentieth century, Princeton was looked to as the seminary to defend the infallible Word with its journal providing responses to not only Charles A. Briggs, but others such as Adolf Harnack and Albrecht Ritschl. Whether the Bible-believing church was Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, or Fundamentalist, Princeton provided the ordnance needed to defend Scripture and its doctrines.

The fourteen reviews that follow have been determined to be Warfield's based on his signature at their ends, because he is listed as author in a journal index, or because he was editor of the journal at the time. The word "review" includes anything from a brief notice of a sentence or two to nearly three pages. Among the authors reviewed in the seminary journals by Warfield, his own publications rank fifth.

B. B. Warfield did not only subscribe to the Westminster Standards as a Presbyterian minister but was also a historian, bibliographer, and defender of their confession and catechisms. A two-page review of nineteen titles addressing the PCUSA's proposed revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith was published in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for November 1890.[1] Revision was brought to the fore when the General Assembly of 1889 sent down to the presbyteries two questions for consideration. The first question was whether the presbyteries desired revision of the Confession of Faith, and if they did, the second asked in what respect and to what extent should it be revised.[2] The next Assembly received the presbytery votes which favored moving toward revision by a nearly two to one margin.[3] A committee was appointed to bring recommendations to the Assembly scheduled for 1891. The controversy resulted in numerous newspaper and journal articles, pamphlets, and books that made cases on both sides of the issue.[4] Two of the nineteen titles included in this review were works by Warfield, one authored by him alone under the title, *On the Revision of the Confession of Faith*, and the other publication reprinted a press debate prompted by Henry J. Van Dyke's response to a newspaper article about revision published by John De Witt. Fellow Princetonian Warfield and Union Seminary's W. G. T. Shedd also entered the dispute.[5] Other books reviewed include titles by Charles A. Briggs, Philip Schaff, and Francis L. Patton, among others.[6] Warfield summarized his assessment:

> Nearly all conceivable positions are taken in them; ability is shown on every side; though both the logical and theological victory belong in our judgment to those who defend the Confession, and certainly to those who defend the old theology, against which nothing is urged in these pamphlets which has not been urged with greater force, and refuted, in the Remonstrant and Arminian controversies.[7]

Note the use of "in our judgment." This might be thought a matter of Victorian propriety, but in fact the journal was published by the Princeton Seminary faculty and the views expressed were at least in theory common among the professors. The faculty as writers and editors for the journal stood together. This was all the more reason for Presbyterians to look to *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* for orthodox direction. Warfield assessed the publication as a historical theologian and looked back three-hundred-fifty years to the divines assembled at

1. *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, 1890, 1:4, 698.
2. Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America with an Appendix, New Series, Vol. 13 (Philadelphia: McCalla, 1890), 122.
3. The count of the presbyteries was as follows: 4 failed to vote; 7 declined to do so; 134 were for the overture, and 68 were against it.
4. Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America with an Appendix, New Series, Vol. 13 (Philadelphia: McCalla, 1890), 127.
5. John DeWitt, Henry J. Van Dyke, W. G. T. Shedd, and B. B. Warfield, *Ought the Confession of Faith to be Revised? A Series of Papers* (New York: Anson D. F. Randolph, 1890).
6. Charles A. Briggs, et al, *How Shall we Revise the Westminster Confession of Faith? A Bundle of Papers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890); Philip Schaff, *Creed Revision in the Presbyterian Churches* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890); and Francis L. Patton, *The Revision of the Confession of Faith Read before the Presbyterian Social Union*, New York, December 2, 1889 (New York: K. Van Rensselaer, 1889).
7. *TP&RR*, 1890, 1:4, 699.

Westminster as they addressed the theological influences of their day. The Westminster Standards were not composed in isolation but in the context of other theological influences such as Socinianism, Anabaptist, Roman Catholicism, and mysticism which would soon seed the quietist Quakerism of George Fox. The move to revise, said Warfield, was really a move to adopt the views James Arminius expressed in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century and dilute if not wipe away the Calvinism of the Westminster Confession.

When the 250th anniversary of the Westminster Standards occurred in 1897, Warfield accepted an opportunity to speak on their significance before the Presbytery of New York.[1] It was a particularly significant invitation given that just a few years earlier Charles A. Briggs had been convicted of eight counts of heresy by a three-to-one vote of the General Assembly as it overruled the Presbytery of New York's decision to the contrary. Warfield was among those seeking the conviction of Briggs because his views were contrary to the Westminster Standards and because of his higher critical approach to the Bible. It could have been a collar-tugging experience for Warfield. His address was summarized in The New York Times:

> The significance of the Westminster Standards as a creed is to be found in the three facts that, historically speaking, they are the final crystallization of the elements of evangelical religion, after the conflicts of 1,600 years: scientifically speaking, they are the richest and most precise and best guarded statement ever penned of all that must be safeguarded if evangelical religion is to persist in the world, and, religiously speaking, they are a notable monument of spiritual religion.[2]

He included his published speech in a single review of five items commemorating the semiquincentennial. After starting with a positive verse tuned by a patronizing tone regarding James Moffat's work, Warfield critiqued his contribution to one of the books:

> The query may occur to the reader, indeed, whether in his assumption of a defensive rather than a positively self-congratulatory point of view, Dr. Moffat may not, in one instance, have been misled into the use of language—no doubt unwittingly—which may seem to surrender the very principle of electing grace which he is engaged in so winningly defending.[3]

But Moffat's surrender was not unique because Warfield found the other publications feeble regarding their backing of the Standards.

> If any criticism arises in the mind of the reader of them, as they lie on the printed page divorced from the voice and gesture which gave them wings to the hearer, it is that a slightly apologetical tone is perhaps too prominent in them.[4]

With the increasing movement to revise the Westminster Confession came hedged support for its teaching from some who wanted to appear faithful to their ordination vow subscribing to its teaching. Warfield's position was not half-hearted but enthusiastic because he believed "the essence of evangelical religion" has been "clearly and purely stated in the Westminster Standards," and they manifest "combined scientific precision and religious vitality."[5] He did not elaborate on how they are scientifically precise, but one can picture the Assembly committees gathered for sessions searching the Scriptures and theological resources for facts much as one analyzes geological specimens noting their attributes for categorization. For Warfield, Christianity is the scientific religion based on the Bible and it necessarily follows that since the Standards are derived from Scripture, they too must be scientific. His observations concluded hoping that, despite his sense it was too late, the Presbyterian Board of Publication would collect from the many lectures delivered throughout the denomination and publish two volumes as "a fitting memorial of a great occasion."[6] Unfortunately, Warfield's observation of an apologetical tone among the writers might have precluded carrying the anniversary celebration (reluctant remembrance?) too far. It is indeed unfortunate that as the anniversaries of the Standards have passed, there have been fewer and fewer that cared to wholeheartedly celebrate their composition and abiding value.

The Warfields were unable to have children, but their situation did not prevent him from reviewing theological publications and subjects relevant to children and parents. In fact, his reviews of family-relevant books, catechetical tools, and children's fiction and non-fiction show that the absence of children at home made the couple's hearts grow fonder. Those who have suffered the loss of a child or could not have children can identify with the Warfields. One subject of pressing consequence to parents is the salvation of their unborn or infant children. In 1891 Warfield reviewed D. L. Wilson's *Are They Lost or Saved? What do Presbyterians Believe about Those who Die in Infancy?* He said of the book that despite some exegetical weakness, it was a "sound little tract," because it lays, first, "emphasis where it ought to be laid, on the need of salvation for infants," and secondly, "their dependence for salvation on the electing love of God." He added that no "declaration of infant salvation can be held to be accordant with God's Word, which does not emphasize these two necessary truths."[7] In the review that follows the one for Wilson's book, Warfield summed up his own sixty-page pamphlet on the subject, *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*.[8] He said that the booklet describes "briefly the historical course of doctrinal thought as to the salvation of infants" and shows "that the Calvinistic theology alone offers a logical basis for teaching that all that die in infancy are saved."[9] The "all" is an all-inclusive all; he is speaking of universal infant salvation (but he does not use the term universal). In 1897, Warfield took up infant salvation again refining his previous

1. B. B. Warfield, *The Significance of the Westminster Standards as a Creed. An Address delivered before the Presbytery of New York, November 8, 1897, on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Completion of the Westminster Standards* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898).
2. "N. Y. Presbytery Meets: The Members Celebrate the 250th Anniversary of the Adoption of the Westminster Standards," *The New York Times*, Tuesday, November 9, 1897, 4; it is not clear if the reporter wrote this as his summary or if it was excerpted from Warfield.
3. James Moffatt, "Fundamental Doctrines of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms," in William H. Roberts, ed., *Addresses at the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Westminster Assembly by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1898), 109–27; *TP&RR*, 1899, 10:39, 561.
4. *TP&RR*, 1899, 10:39, 561.
5. B. B. Warfield, *The Significance of the Westminster Standards as a Creed. An Address delivered before the Presbytery of New York, November 8, 1897, on the Occasion of the Celebration of the Two Hundred and Fiftieth Anniversary of the Completion of the Westminster Standards* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1898).
6. *TP&RR*, 1899, 10:39, 562; the author could find no evidence of such a publication being issued.
7. *TP&RR*, 1891, 2:7, 534; a copy of Wilson's pamphlet could not be located.
8. *TP&RR*, 1891, 2:7, 534; B. B. Warfield, *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1891).
9. *TP&RR*, 1891, 2:7, 534; the series ran as the lead article in monthly installments from March to August 1897, in *Christian Literature* 16:5 to 17:4, issue 1 of vol. 16 was published Nov. 1896 and issue 1 of vol. 17 May 1897.



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work in *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, which he reviewed in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.[1] The review was primarily a response to William Rupp's criticism of his series of articles on infant salvation published sequentially in *Christian Literature* from March to August 1897.[2] Rupp published his review as editor of *The Reformed Church Review*.[3] He briefly presented summaries of historic interpretations of infant salvation before saying that Warfield had no proof for his view of universal infant salvation other than its growing popularity among Christians. Rupp said the Bible did not support it, but more importantly, it contradicted the Westminster Confession, 10:3, "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated, and saved." For Rupp, elect is used in the sense of infants who are elect, not the sense that all infants are elect.[4] He also turned to Article 17 of the Canons of Dort referring to, "godly parents have no reason to doubt of the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy."[5] Dort's statement seems more reassuring than the Confession in that having "no reason to doubt" means certainty of salvation of all infants of "godly parents," but like Westminster, it comes short of universal infant salvation. Rupp's presentation looks good so far but then his review took a turn when he rejected what he described as "the odious theory of unconditional predestination," for which he substitutes the moral theory of infant salvation that universally implies faith, free choice, and moral development.[6] How he could appeal to Dort and Westminster yet deny predestination is not developed. He said, "The dying infant, it must be assumed, will not always remain an unconscious infant, but will pass through a process of intellectual and moral development, which will be essentially the same as that which it would have passed through if it had lived to maturity in this world" and this development occurs after death "in the spirit world." Interest in an intermediate spiritual state between death and hell had recently become influential within the Church of England as well as among other individuals such as Charles A. Briggs and here it is seen in Rupp's analysis. Warfield responded that Rupp offered at best the possibility of all infants dying in infancy being saved because his abandonment of predestination left deceased infants in a worse condition than when alive in a loving home with Christian influences.

> Dr. Rupp, indeed, tentatively suggests that parents may "trust that the place of their own care and training will be supplied by the loving service of beings holier and wiser than they [are], who will not even make the mistakes which they themselves would have been likely to make," and feels authorized on this suggestion to conclude that "the salvation of dying infants, if not more sure, is at least not less sure, than is that of the living."[7]

Rupp's contention that Warfield had no biblical nor confessional foundation for his view received no response other than his general appeal to Calvin and Reformed theology. It is difficult to determine exactly where Warfield stood on the issue. As Rupp interpreted him, it was for him a fact that Warfield held to infant salvation, but in all three of Warfield's publications his position is not precise. He found the idea "probable,"

1. B. B. Warfield, *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine. Augustine and the Pelagian Controversy: The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897); *TP&RR*, 1898, 9:33, 176.
2. *TP&RR*, 1898, 9:33, 176; The chronology is: Warfield published *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*, then the series of articles in *Christian Literature* was published, Rupp reviewed them, Warfield published the section on infant salvation for *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, and then he reviewed his book interacting with Rupp's critique.
3. William Rupp, editor, "Infant Salvation," *The Reformed Church Review* 1 (Jan. 1897), 521–30.
4. Rupp, "Infant Salvation," 526.
5. *TP&RR*, 1891, 2:7, 534; B. B. Warfield, *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine. Augustine and the Pelagian Controversy: The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation* (New York: The Christian Literature Co., 1897).
6. Rupp, "Infant Salvation," 528.
7. Rupp, "Infant Salvation," 529.

in *Development* and "a certain or probable fact" in the subsequent two works.[1] What is curious is he did not deny Rupp's attribution of belief in salvation for all deceased infants. It appears his view is asymptotic—he came as close to believing all infants dying in infancy were elect and thus saved without quite getting to the view. The subject is a delicate one and pastors sometimes find themselves having to counsel parents about the deaths of their infants. Warfield's childless home may have increased sensitivity to the gravity and emotional difficulty of the subject. If he and Annie had suffered from the death of unborn children, then the subject was close to home and he would have empathized with those experiencing similar loses.

The deity of Christ has been questioned since the day when the Jews said he was a blasphemer because he called "God his Father, making himself equal with God" (John 5:18). In Warfield's era denial of Christ's deity was not based on jealousy for the Father's divinity, as was the case with the Jews' accusation against Jesus, but instead resulted from anti-supernaturalism gaining ground within Christianity. Two titles reviewed by Warfield published by the seminary community are *The Lord of Glory* and *Is Jesus God?*[2] Both books were reviewed by him in *The Princeton Theological Review*.[3] In his single-page notice for *The Lord of Glory* he summarized the purpose of his book.

> What is attempted in this book is primarily a survey of the designations which the New Testament writers apply to our Lord, with a view to acquiring a sense of the attitude, intellectual and emotional, sustained by them to the Lord's person. But a secondary purpose is intertwined with this. This is to exhibit, by this example, the clearness and strength of the testimony of the New Testament to our Lord's essential divinity.[4]

The book not only defends the deity of Christ but does so interacting with critical views to the contrary. One such critical perspective involved the messianic self-consciousness which theorized Jesus instead of being the Messiah conformed himself to fit the Bible's description of the Messiah. At best this made the perfect Son of God merely a confused man; at worst it made him a charlatan. Another critical perspective that developed came from the views of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolph Harnack, also manifest in the work of Albert Schweitzer, which contended that the true account of the primitive Jesus must be selectively harvested from the Gospels which are muddled accounts resulting from confusion about his identity distorted by supposed supernatural events. Critics said the Gospels were composed late in the second century and by then too much water had gone under the bridge for the writers to have any chance of getting their facts right.[5] Warfield makes it clear with his detailed account of the names and designations of Jesus that not only was the Lord self-consciously aware of his deity, so were those who walked with him and wrote about him. The great list of designations referring to Jesus are decidedly supernatural describing the Son of God. The overwhelming evidence to Jesus' deity could not be denied. A few years later *Is Jesus God?* was published in celebration of Princeton Seminary's centennial.[6] The book provides the nine best essays composed by Princeton seminarians for class work to answer six questions in defense of the divine Christ. Warfield's review sets out a summary of the book for which he wrote the introduction. He notes that it is "a specimen of the kind of work done in the class-rooms of the Seminary, and it is hoped that in their published form they may prove useful."[7] What better way is there to affirm the effectiveness of a Princeton Seminary education than the orthodox papers of students defending doctrine? The deity of Christ is an essential fact drawn out historically by the ecumenical councils and believed for centuries, but in Warfield's day it faced increased skepticism as higher criticism created a de-divinized Bible yielding a de-divinized Christ.

Warfield's *The Right of Systematic Theology*, 1897, is the reprint of an article bearing the same title published in *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review*.[8] The reprint was issued in an attractive burgundy binding with gold leaf lettering which surely appealed to Warfield the bibliophile's aesthetic sense. The reason for publication in Scotland as expressed in the "Note of Commendation" prefacing the book was to make available his defense "of that science" of theology which "appeared to us well worthy of a wider circulation in this country than it can hope to have in a journal published in America." Included among the twelve theologians commending "to the attention of all who have in any degree realized the importance of the subject" are W. G. Blaikie, A. H. Charteris, and John Laidlaw. Warfield's entire review is as follows:

> The readers of this Review are entitled to share the gratification which its author feels in the republication in Scotland of this paper from the pages of the Review, at the call of a number of leading theologians, and with a kind and interesting Preface by Prof. Orr. They will doubtless join with the author in returning thanks to the gentlemen who have taken the responsibility in the matter, and in expressing appreciation of the pleasant words they have spoken and the hope that the little book will prove sufficiently useful to justify their action.[9]

James Orr and company's graciousness were appreciated, but Warfield was not always in agreement with the theologians from Scotland. Blaikie had defended the vindication of Marcus Dods and A. B. Bruce by the Free Church of Scotland General Assembly in 1890 regarding their views of inspiration, and he was criticized for it by Warfield.[10] He said of Laidlaw's *Foundation Truths of Scripture as to Sin and Salvation* that the "whole objective side of salvation might, indeed, be wisely strengthened in the second edition of this excellent little volume."[11] He would come to be critical of Orr's lectures delivered at Western Seminary objecting to his views of the formation of the Canon, Augustine's understanding of regeneration

1. Warfield, *Development*, 37–38, uses "probable"; and the last two use "to be a certain or probable fact," *Christian Literature* 17:4 (Aug. 1897), 275, and Two Studies, 239.
2. B. B. Warfield, *The Lord of Glory. A Study of the Designations of our Lord in the New Testament, with Especial Reference to His Deity* (New York: American Tract Society, 1907); B. B. Warfield, intro., *Is Jesus God? An Argument by Graduates of Princeton Seminary. With Introductory Note by Prof. B. B. Warfield, D.D.* (New York: American Tract Society, 1912).
3. *TPTR*, 1908, 6:1, 127.
4. *TPTR*, 1908, 6:1, 127.
5. Those who hold to the historicity of the Gospels including their supernatural events would say all the gospels were complete by 70 A.D. and many would date them at least a decade earlier.
6. R. B. Kuiper, D. S. B. Joubert, H. H. Meeter, Johannes D. Roos, Frank M. Richardson, William A. Motter, William Nichol, Gerrit Hoeksema, and Luther M. Bicknell.
7. *TPTR*, 1913, 11:2, 338
8. Benjamin B. Warfield, intr. James Orr, *The Right of Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897); "The Right of Systematic Theology," TP&RR 27 (July 1896), 412–58; the previous issue of *TP&RR* included an article titled, "The Idea of Systematic Theology," pages 243–71.
9. Benjamin B. Warfield, intr. James Orr, *The Right of Systematic Theology* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897), 5. 34 TP&RR, 1897, 8:30, 360.
10. *TP&RR*, 1891, 2:6, 348.
11. John Laidlaw, eds. Marcus Dods and Alexander Whyte, *Foundation Truths of Scripture as to Sin and Salvation in Twelve Lessons* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1897); *TP&RR*, 1897, 8:32, 823.

and predestination, and "the Kenotic corollary of the limitation of Christ's earthly knowledge."[1] And with respect to Charteris, he would assess *The Church of Christ*, 1905, as "Harnackian" and say that the author minimized "the value of sound doctrine in the Church," but then he would kindly conclude his review saying, "May the blessing of God attend Dr. Charteris' message to His Church and give it effect upon us all."[2] Warfield had praised the practical aspects of the book, so his intention in calling for God's blessing must have been with reference to that aspect. Regardless of differences, the generosity of the Scots made Warfield's work more readily available in Great Britain and showed that even criticism does not necessarily exclude graciousness. It is sometimes difficult to determine in his reviews how much of what he said was sincere and how much was tongue-in-cheek or patronizing, but in this case, his gratefulness appears genuine.

Warfield used one of his reviews to defend himself. The title is a volume in the Temple Bible Series which provides the text of Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, and Philemon.[3] J. M. Dent & Company had made its name publishing classics and would go on to publish other series. The Temple Bible Series provided pocket-size portions of Scripture with introductions and other information in appendices. Bindings are leather with gold lettering and gilt-edge text blocks. Included in each book is a quality reproduction of a relevant work of art for its frontispiece. The text is printed in black with red ink phrases setting off sections and accenting the book in other ways. The series is an aesthetically pleasing one which would have appealed to Warfield's love of fine books. The series had an introduction volume by Bishop of London William Boyd Carpenter, and an assortment of writers edited the other books which totaled about thirty. Warfield's single-paragraph review of his book clarifies what he contributed to the finished product.

> This is one volume of the "Temple Bible" which, under the editorial care of Mr. Oliphant Smeaton, is published by J. M. Dent & Co. in the dainty form for which that house has grown famous. The present writer is responsible only for the "Introduction" (pp. i–xlviii); in it he has tried to set forth in a form suitable to the English reader the salient literary facts concerning the Acts, the Pastoral Epistles, and the Epistle to Philemon. He did, indeed, prepare also the very brief series of "Notes" (pp. 123–130); but by some accident he missed seeing the proofs of this portion of his work and he would not like to be held responsible for the form in which they appear. For the rest of the volume, he has no responsibility whatever, and he thinks it worthwhile to emphasize this, inasmuch as in the "Synchronism of Ancient History" (given on pp. 132–139), a scheme for dating the New Testament books is set down which runs athwart the dates suggested in the "Introduction." He cannot help accounting it an infelicity that the title-page bears only his name as "Editor," whereas he is in no sense the "Editor" of the volume and is responsible for only a portion of its contents.[4]

Once one gets past the Kentucky-born breeder of short-horn cattle using the word "dainty," it is clear he was upset about being designated editor and troubled by the dating of the New Testament books. But what is it about the "Notes" that he found objectionable as to "the form in which they appear?" An answer can only be surmised, and it is not theological but utilitarian. The biblical text in the book does not use chapter and verse numbers. Instead, the beginning of each chapter as taken from the Authorized Version (King James) is noted with an asterisk and line numbers in the margin of each page have replaced versification (like in a legal or congressional document). There is no indication in the biblical text that there is a note regarding a passage; one must read the notes and then reference back by means of page and line numbers. For example, one comment in the notes on page 124 says that the portion of text on page 29, lines 22–26, beginning with "it is hard" and ending with "And the Lord said unto him," should be omitted. The passage is Acts 9:5b–6a. This is one of seven textual omissions in Acts noted by Warfield. No reasons are given for the omissions (at least none were published), but it is probable they are based on analysis of original language biblical manuscripts in addition to the Textus Receptus used for the King James for a more accurate translation. The system for notes is cumbersome at best and simply inept at worst. If Warfield wrote his notes in the traditional footnote form in his manuscript, then when the editor modified them for publication he could have confused or inadvertently removed important material. Warfield liked the small, quality form of the book, but he was not pleased with how his material was handled. This is a case for Warfield of not being able to judge a book by its cover.

One particularly important title reviewed by Warfield which included an essay by him was *Biblical and Theological Studies*, 1912, which celebrated the Princeton Seminary centennial. Warfield's contribution, "On the Emotional Life of Our Lord," is described in his review as "an attempt to ascertain with some exactness the precise emotions which are expressly assigned to our Lord in the Evangelical narrative, that a firm basis may be laid for a study of our Lord's emotional life."[5] He looked at several words such as compassion to bring out the emotional aspect of the Lord. Francis L. Patton wrote on theological encyclopedia; John D. Davis focused on Christ; a study of Jonathan Edwards was given by John DeWitt; William B. Greene, Jr. emphasized the supernatural; Geerhardus Vos studied the eschatological aspect of Paul's conception of the Spirit; the Aramaic of Daniel interested linguist Robert D. Wilson; William P. Armstrong summarized the resurrection appearances of Jesus; Charles R. Erdman was concerned about modern spiritual movements; homiletics was F. W. Loetscher's subject; James O. Boyd addressed sin and grace parallels in the Koran (would not likely go over well post 9–11); the finality of the Christian religion was C. W. Hodge, Jr.'s topic; Kerr D. Macmillan wrote about the Shepherd of Hermas; Jesus and Paul was J. Gresham Machen's focus; and O. T. Allis offered thoughts on the transcendence of God. The review concludes with Warfield's bibliophilic assessment that the book is "clearly printed and handsomely bound."[6] The review is simply an advertisement for *Biblical and Theological Studies*.

Four of the Warfield self-reviewed titles are collections of sermons or lectures he delivered on the Princeton campus. The longest review is a few paragraphs about *The Power of God unto Salvation*, 1903, which is an assortment of eight chapel sermons.[7] In the context

1. *TP&RR*, 1902, 13:51, 486; James Orr, *The Progress of Dogma, being the Elliot Lectures, delivered at the Western Theological Seminary, Allegheny, Penna., U.S.A.*, (New York: A. C. Armstrong & Son, 1902).
2. A. H. Charteris, *The Church of Christ, Its Life and Work*. An attempt to trace the work of the Church in some of its departments from the earliest times to the present day (London: Macmillan, 1905); *TPTR*, 1907, 5:1, 147.
3. B. B. Warfield, ed. *Acts & Pastoral Epistles Timothy-Titus & Philemon*, series The Temple Bible (London: J. M. Dent & Co., New York: J. B. Lippincott Col, 1902).
4. *TPTR*, 1904, 2:1, 157.
5. *TPTR*, 1912, 10:3, 465; *Biblical and Theological Studies, by the Members of the Faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary. Published in Commemoration of the One Hundredth Anniversary of the Seminary* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912).
6. *TPTR*, 1912, 10:3, 467.
7. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Power of God unto Salvation* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of

of skepticism about the divinity of Christ and the nature of salvation in his era, "A certain unity is given to the volume by the fact that all the sermons treat of the divine element in the process of salvation, as is, indeed, intended to be indicated by the title."[1] Warfield's *The Savior of the World* was released a decade later with nine sermons stressing Jesus Christ as the Savior of not only *individuals* but of the *world*.[2] The first sermon "endeavors to make plain the universal need of salvation; the second the sole provision of Salvation in Christ; the third the world-wide reach of His salvation; while the subsequent ones seek to enforce this main message and to bring out particular elements in our Lord's saving work."[3] Then in 1915 the book that became a classic, *The Plan of Salvation*, was published containing five lectures delivered during the Princeton Summer School of Theology. It was dedicated to Emeritus Professor of Church History John De Witt whom Warfield described as a "Lover of Letters, Lover of Men, Lover of God."[4] The first lesson set the pattern for the remaining four.

> The differing conceptions are passed in rapid review, in an ascending order. First the fundamental opposition of Naturalism and Supernaturalism is pointed out; then the division among the Supernaturalists between Sacerdotalists and Evangelicals is indicated; next the Universalistic and Particularistic varieties of Evangelicals are distinguished; and lastly the several kinds of Particularists are intimated. The outcome is to fix on Infralapsarian Calvinism as the only tenable conception. This lecture is accompanied with a tabular arrangement of the several views which is supposed to facilitate their understanding.[5]

Warfield's scientific method comes through again as he differentiates naturalism and supernaturalism and their sub-categories as if he were breaking down the classifications of fauna or flora. As these personal reviews tend to do, this one is simply a summary of the content which could be used on the dustjacket of a modern reprint to entice shoppers to purchase a copy. The final book reviewed is *Faith and Life*, published in 1916.[6] When his close friend and colleague George T. Purves passed away in 1902, Warfield and some seminary colleagues edited a book in his honor bearing the same title.[7] Warfield dedicated his own *Faith and Life* to his brother Ethelbert describing him as "A Brother Beloved in the Flesh and in the Lord." The book was published just a matter of months after the passing of his wife Annie. Her death appears to have turned him to remember his brother as he recognized the frailty of earthly life and two brothers in the Lord, Purves and Ethelbert. It is speculative, but the death of those near and dear tends to focus one's thoughts more on being absent from the body, and it seems sentimentality may have contributed to titling the book *Faith and Life*. Included are forty-one discourses delivered Sunday afternoons, which "are in the main expository in intention" with the passages randomly selected but intended for men preparing for the ministry with Warfield's hope that the lessons "may prove useful in wider circles than those to which they were first spoken."[8] Consistent with Warfield's staying close to home to care for his wife, these four collections of sermons, discourses, and lectures were first delivered within the Princeton community.

Conclusion

As the years have passed academic journals have tended to limit their subject matter to publications specifically related to their areas of expertise, but it is clear from reading more than 1,200 reviews by B. B. Warfield in the Princeton journals that just about anything was fair game even reviews of his own works. As the years passed, the journal became more specialized with less editorial authority given to any one faculty member. The journal titles during Warfield's tenure at Princeton were *The Presbyterian Review* (1880–1889), *The Presbyterian and Reformed Review* (1890–1902), and *The Princeton Theological Review* (1903–1929)—Warfield died in 1921. His greatest influence was during *TP&RR* years as editor with his articles and reviews dominating some of the quarterly issues. In some issues there were more pages dedicated to reviews than articles, but reviews always had a substantial portion of the text. Warfield's self reviews provide a perspective on how Princeton used its journals. First, reviews could not only be serious criticism interacting with books but also simply provide information summarizing content and perspective. The seminary faculty functioned under the oversight of its denomination and was not only an institution for training ministers but also a source of information about books for church members. If a church Bible teacher wanted a good book on justification, prayer, or the Reformation, it was the obligation of the Princeton journals to give guidance. In Warfield's day, it was not uncommon for not only seminary and religiously based colleges to subscribe to the Princeton journal, but also local public universities, community libraries, and even state libraries (surprising, isn't it). Second, as has been seen regarding Warfield, reviews were used for defense and setting the record straight. When he thought he was assessed incorrectly by Rupp and misrepresented by *The Temple Bible*, he used his reviews to clarify and defend his positions. Third, the seminary's journal was used to promote the seminary as seen in Warfield's reviews of the student publication *Is Jesus God?* and the faculty collection *Biblical and Theological Studies*. Fourth, as is the case with Warfield's reviews of his titles on Christology, reviews confronted the errant directions taken by contemporary theology. Christ's deity and authenticity as the Messiah were denied by some, so his writings addressed these subjects and his reviews of his own writings presented them to the public. Finally, failure to read reviews written by authors eliminates a valuable source of information that might not be available in their monographs, essays, sermons, or articles. ❧

Scan the QR code below to download a tabulation of B. B. Warfield's reviews as published in the Princeton Seminary Journals, 1880–1921.

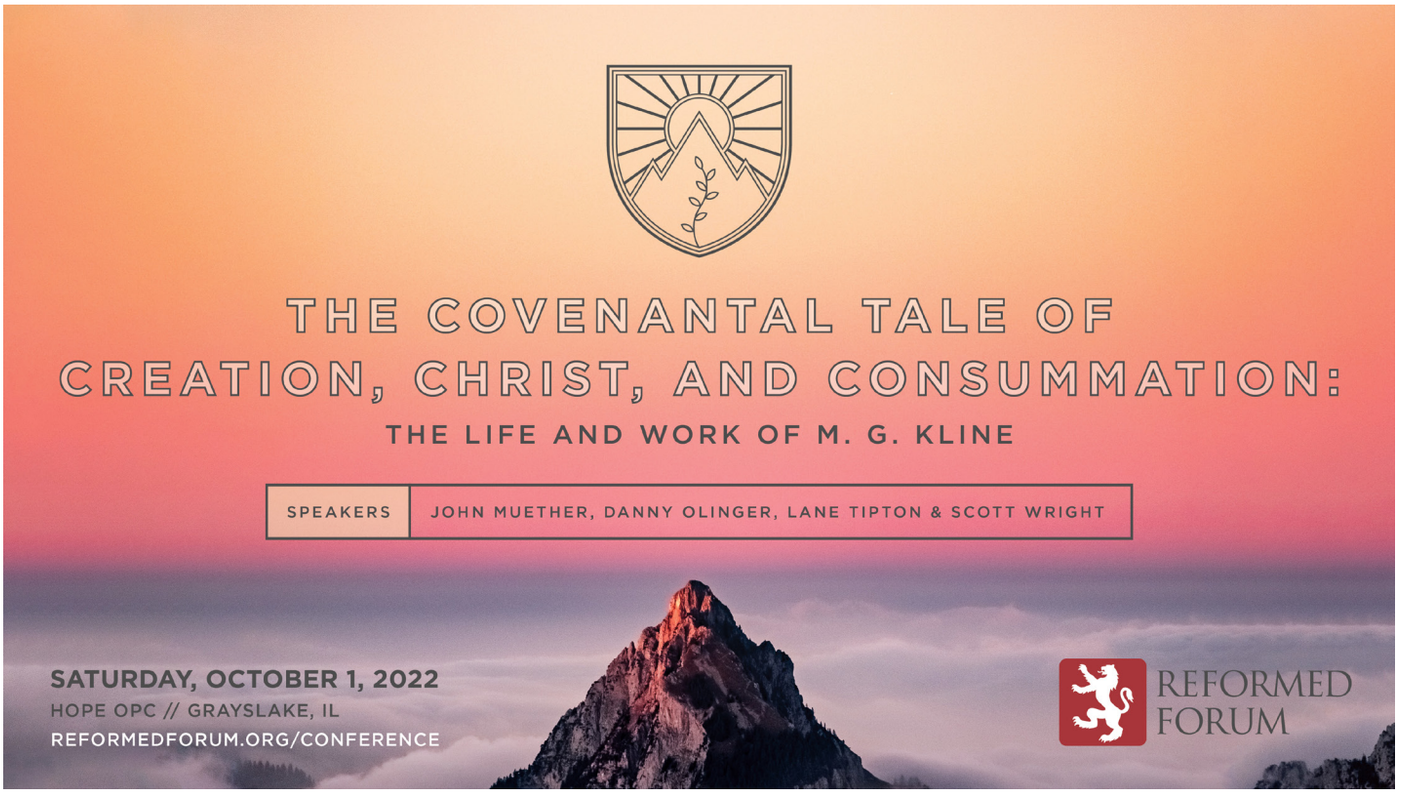
Barry Waugh is a church historian. He is the transcriber and editor of Letters from the Front: J. Gresham Machen's Correspondence from World War I*, published by P&R Publishing. He writes at presbyteriansofthepast.com.*

Publication, 1903).

1. *TPTR*, 1903, 1:4, 683.
2. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Savior of the World: Sermons Preached in the Chapel of Princeton Theological Seminary* (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1913).
3. *TPTR*, 1914, 12:4, 695.
4. Benjamin B. Warfield, *The Plan of Salvation: Five Lectures delivered at the Princeton Summer School of Theology, June 1914* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1915).
5. *TPTR*, 1915, 13:3, 496.
6. Benjamin B. Warfield, *Faith and Life; Conferences in the Oratory of Princeton Seminary* (New York: Longmans, Green, ,and Co., 1916).
7. George T. Purves, ed. B. B. Warfield, E. R. Craven, John De Witt, and W. P. Armstrong, *Faith and Life: Sermons* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication, 1902).
8. *TPTR*, 1916, 14:4, 677.

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