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A DERELICTION OF DUTY: SIXTY DOCTORS REFUSE TO DIAGNOSE THE HEALTH OF THEIR PATIENT

Vic Reasoner

The United Methodist Church has debated its position on Christian sexual ethics at every general conference since 1972, but the church still has no clear sense of direction. According to their *Discipline,* the United Methodist Church expects their bishops to give them leadership. Yet the sixty-six active United Methodist bishops which comprise the Council of Bishops have not fulfilled their duty.

At the most recent General Conference in May 2016, which just adjourned in Portland, Oregon, Tom Berlin said, "This morning, Bishop Ough said that at General Conference, the role of the bishop was to preside. Quite frankly, bishop, we think it's your role to lead. We are asking for your leadership."

Adam Hamilton also pled with the bishops to help. "We are in a stuck place at this General Conference. We in theory could find ourselves leaving on Friday still stuck and wounded. I'm pleading with you. Please help us."

The "leaders" seem to be unaware that the apostle Paul already answered their questions in Romans 1. Speaking as the leader of the whole church around AD 56, Paul also described these "clergy" by explaining that although they profess themselves to be wise, their foolish hearts are darkened by their sin.

The UMC bishops responded to the pleas, beginning closed-door meetings at 4:00 p.m. on May 18 that they expected to last long into the evening. Their "leadership" amounted to still another delay:

> We recommend that the General Conference defer all votes on human sexuality and refer this entire subject to a special commission, named by the Council of Bishops, to develop a complete examination and possible revision of every paragraph in our *Book of Discipline* regarding human sexuality.

The conference delegates finally agreed to appoint a commission to study the issue. In the

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meantime, the pagan and sodomite demonstrators at this church conference continue to blaspheme and desecrate the Christian faith with no impunity. By electing to do nothing, the "leaders" have in fact emboldened those who are hell-bent on destroying their church.

Prior to the conference, 111 United Methodist Church clergy arrogantly identified themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex. Yet the beleaguered UMC must continue to wait and bleed while the doctors confer on their diagnosis. They may call a special General Conference in 2018 or 2019 to address the results of their commissioned study.

However, the "study group" is nothing more than a ruse to wear down Bible-believing Methodists. On July 16, 2016 the Western Jurisdiction elected Karen Phyllis Oliveto, the first open lesbian to be elected a bishop. Oliveto has been legally "married" to Robin Ridenour for more than two years, and they have been in a relationship since they met at a junior high camp as counselors 17 years ago.

Greater Northwest Episcopal Area Bishop Grant Hagiya said the election of Oliveto was led by the Holy Spirit. But there was nothing "holy" about this unclean spirit which possesses the "leadership" of the United Methodist Church.

The United Methodist Church has been in decline since 1965, even though their latest merger did not occur until 1968. Their founder, John Wesley, declared that Methodism was raised up to spread Scriptural holiness. But since 1972 their current "leaders" have been unwilling to address the unholy abomination that has infected their clergy. They are more afraid of being labeled politically incorrect than they are in taking drastic measures to stop the bleeding.

Methodism began as an effort to reform the Church of England, which was just as depraved as the leadership in the United Methodist Church is today. *Semper Reformanda* means "always reforming." The church must perpetually go back to the Bible to settle current issues. Wesleyan-Arminians worldwide grieve over the spiritual adultery of our mother church. She needs a thorough housecleaning. According to 1 Peter 4:17, God will judge his house even if its highest leaders refuse to do anything.

CALVINISTIC ASSUMPTIONS

Gil VanOrder, Jr.

Reformed theology is largely based on assumptions. Calvinists must make all these assumptions in order to maintain coherence in their theology. They must do so even if none of the assumptions are found in the Bible and create a God who is pernicious. To believe in Calvinism requires one to accept these assumptions even if they go against your God-given sense of fairness and every scriptural teaching on justice. The purpose of this series is to examine some of the more prominent assumptions Calvinists accept as true.

1. Calvinists assume if you are void of something, only the opposite extreme can be true.

Total depravity is based on the assumption that if an unregenerate man is without any of God's righteousness, he must therefore possess only evil. In chapter VIII of the Second Helvetic Confession it states that man is "Full of all wickedness, distrust, contempt and hatred of God [not just indifference but hatred], we are unable to do or even to think anything good." In chapter six of the Westminster Confession of Faith it states that as a result of original corruption we are "made opposite to all good."

Man is sinful, but is he by his very nature "opposite to all good?" If a non-Christian rushes into a burning building and rescues a child from the flames, is he doing something that is opposite to all good? Wouldn't throwing a child into the flames to be burned alive be more opposite to all good? Being sinful does not mean one cannot even "think anything good." That isn't universally true. There are many non-Christians who think

good things and act accordingly. Some do good due to their early childhood Christian training even though they themselves have never accepted Christ personally.

Non-Christians have no righteousness, but that does not mean we must conclude total depravity is all they have. If a person does not have something, why must we assume the person can only possess the totally opposite?

Total depravity views mankind as a monolithic group (i.e., constituting or acting as a single uniform whole). But men do not all act or think the same. While all men are sinful and separated from God, not all wish to stay that way. Like lost sheep, some run away from the fold as far as possible. Some even run when pursued. Others, however, only wander a short distance away. Fewer still are wise enough to realize when they become hungry that food can be found inside the pen. These sheep may even bleat in hope that the shepherd will open the gate and allow them to enter. While all are outside the safety of the fold, not all are as eager to stay there.

In the same way, not all men hate God and are fighting to avoid him. Some are mildly interested in him. Others are very interested. A few are wise enough to recognize they are spiritually empty and actually seek after God. All men lack righteousness, but not all men's hearts are the same. For example, Abel was not like Cain. Their hearts were different and their attitudes toward God were different. When everyone else had become corrupt, Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord because he "walked faithfully with God" (Gen 6:9). Cornelius was "a devout and God-fearing" man even before he became a Christian (Acts 10:2). Why was Mary chosen to be the mother of Jesus if she "hated God" and was "opposite to all good?" People's hearts vary.

1 Chronicles 29:17 declares, "You test the heart and are pleased with integrity." He examines the hearts of all men, both Christian and non-Christian. Jeremiah 11:20 informs us that it is the Lord Almighty who judges righteously and tests the heart. God sees what is in our hearts. He knows there are differences between one heart and the next. He also knows some hearts will be open to the gospel and some will not. Romans 10:10 tells us that it is with your heart that you believe and are justified.

–Predestined to be continued

THE AUTHORITY BY WHICH THE SABBATH WAS CHANGED TO THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK

Joseph D. McPherson

The Lord's Day or first day of the week is recognized by most in the Christian community as being the New Testament Sabbath. This is admittedly a departure from the Jewish Sabbath established by the moral Law of Moses. A legitimate question is then heard. How did such a change take place and by what authority within the New Testament church is the Sabbath moved from the seventh day of the week to the first? William Burt Pope, considered to be the "prince of Methodist theologians," and Richard Watson, author of the first systematic theology for early Methodism, offer scripturally based answers to these questions.

"Amongst the permanent Divine ordinances of worship," writes Pope, "must be reckoned THE SABBATH as its chief and representative season. This institution was an appointment of God from the beginning of time to the end.... Christianity has retained the institution as belonging to Divine worship; but, by the same authority which gave the original law, has modified it." By way of explanation, he says: "Its connection with the Jewish sabbatical cycle ended, and therefore its place as a covenant sign between Jehovah and the peculiar people." He assures us that "Its original purpose to commemorate the creation and bear witness to the government of

the One God was retained, but, as the new creation of mankind in Christ Jesus had more fully revealed the Triune God, the day of the Lord's resurrection, the first day of the week, became the Christian Sabbath, or the Lord's Day" *(Compendium,* 3:290).

Pope then assures us of the true source of authority for the present and modified existence of the Christian Sabbath and our obligatory adherence to it.

> The new ordinance of the Sabbath in the Gospel was given by Christ Himself, the Lord also of the Sabbath. Before His passion He dealt with it as with all His Institutions, by preliminary indications of His future will. He condemned false interpretation, while He included it in the law which He did not come to destroy.... With His resurrection began a formal appointment of the First day, and with the Pentecost He finally ratified it.... Hence we find the first day, as the Lord's Day, hallowed throughout the New Testament; the last tribute uniting the Resurrection and the Pentecost: I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. To use St. Paul's word on another occasion, the law of the Christian Sabbath is not of man, neither by man, not of the Church nor by the Church, but by Jesus Christ (3:291).

The New Testament Sabbath is a departure from the Jewish Sabbath.

Richard Watson, in a part of his lengthy discourse on this subject, assures us that "the observance of the Sabbath is a part of the moral law." This is clear, he assures us, "from its being found in the decalogue, the doctrine of which our Lord sums up in the moral duties of loving God and our neighbor." Watson reminds us that "its observance is connected throughout the prophetic age with the highest promises, its violations with the severest maledictions; it was among the Jews in our Lord's time a day of solemn religious assembling, and was so observed by him; when changed to the first day of the week, it was," says he, "the day on which the first Christians assembled; it was called, by way of eminence, 'the Lord's day;' and we have inspired authority to say, that both under the Old and New Testament dispensations, it is used as an expressive type of the heavenly and eternal rest."

> Now, though there is not on record any Divine command issued to the apostles, to change the Sabbath from the day on which it was held by the Jews, to the first day of the week; yet, when we see that this was done in the apostolic age, and that St. Paul speaks of the Jewish Sabbaths as not being obligatory upon Christians, while he yet contends that the whole moral law is obligatory upon them, the fair inference is, that this change of the day was made by Divine direction. It is at least more than inference, that the change was made under the sanction of inspired men; and those men, the appointed rulers in the Church of Christ; whose business it was to "set all things in order," which pertained to its worship and moral government. We may rest well enough, therefore, satisfied with this, —that as a Sabbath is obligatory upon us, we act under apostolic authority for observing it on the first day of the week, and thus commemorate at once the creation and the redemption of the world.
>
> Thus, even if it were conceded, that the change of the day was made by the agreement of the apostles, without express direction from Christ, (which is not probable,) it is certain that it was not done without express authority confided to them by Christ (*Theological Institutes,* 2:509; 511-512).

It is recognized by all that the weekly and daylight hours of the Lord's Day cannot be the same in all time zones around the earth. It is furthermore recognized that the commandment expressly states that "after six days of labor" the seventh is to be reverenced as the Sabbath. Thus we see that the Christian practice is found to

conform exactly to the Jewish. "It is not, however, left to every individual to determine which day should be his Sabbath," warns Watson, "though he should fulfil the law so far as to abstract the seventh part of his time from labor. It was ordained for worship, for public worship; and it is therefore necessary that the Sabbath should be uniformly observed by a whole community at the same time." Watson, with emphasis, assures us that it was "By apostolic authority, [the Christian Sabbath] is now fixed to be held on the first day of the week; and thus one of the great ends for which it was established, that it should be a day of 'holy convocation,' is secured" (2:51314).

It has been argued by some that such a narrow view of the Christian Sabbath is overturned by St. Paul's letter to the Romans in which he writes: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it" (Rom. 14:56).

The Sabbath is of lasting obligation.

It is a mistake to suppose that the Apostle has the Sabbath in mind when writing these words. Such an erroneous supposition would be a wrenching of his words and meaning out of context. It must first be remembered that he is writing to a church whose members are made up of both Jewish and Gentile converts. Reliable Bible expositors, such as Adam Clarke, agree that "Reference is being made here to the Jewish institutions, and especially their festivals; such as the passover, pentecost, feast of tabernacles, new moons, jubilee, &c." Jewish Christians continued to think of these special days and festivals to be of moral obligation. In contrast, the Gentile Christians had never been trained to observe these special days related to the Jewish ceremonial law and therefore had no inclination nor desire to observe them. Furthermore, those who had been instrumental in their conversion enforced no such requirement upon them. In consequence, they paid no religious regard to these special days of the Jewish institution.

"The converted Gentile," writes Clarke, "esteemeth every day — considers that all time is the Lord's and that each day should be devoted to the glory of God; and that those festivals are not binding on him." Accordingly, it is concluded that "With respect to the propriety or nonpropriety of keeping the [Jewish special days and] festivals, 'Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind;' there is sufficient latitude allowed: all may be fully satisfied."

Our translators have added the word "alike" in verse 5. This word, according to Clarke, "should not be added; nor is it acknowledged by any [manuscript] or ancient version." By adding the word "alike," they "make the text say what [we can be] sure was never intended, viz. that there is no distinction of days, not even of the Sabbath: and that every Christian is at liberty to consider even this day to be holy or not holy, as he happens to be persuaded in his own mind."

"That the Sabbath is of lasting obligation," writes Clarke, "may be reasonably concluded from its institution and from its typical references. All allow that the Sabbath is a type of that rest in glory which remains for the people of God. Now, all types are intended to continue in full force till the antitype, or thing signified, take place; consequently, the Sabbath will continue in force till the consummation of all things" (*Commentary*, 6:151).

Wesley Stories

Joseph Beaumont Wakeley

In 1783 the Rev. Robert Miller asked Mr. Wesley, "What must be done to keep Methodism alive when you are dead?" Mr. Wesley gave the following answer: "The Methodists must take heed to their doctrine, their experience, their practice, and their discipline. If they attend to their doctrines only, they will make the people Antinomians; if to the experimental part of religion only, they will make them enthusiasts; if to the practical part of religion only, they will make them Pharisees; and if they do not attend to their discipline, they will be like persons who bestow much pains in cultivating a garden, and put no fence around it to save it from the wild boars of the forest."

REVIEWS

G. Stephen Blakemore, "How to Know the Words are 'The Word.' Re-Evaluating the Legitimacy of Biblical Inerrancy as a Wesleyan Commitment." *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 51:1 (Spring 2016) 65-91.

When the Wesleyan Theological Society was organized in 1965, the doctrinal statement affirmed biblical inerrancy. Kenneth Geiger, former president of the National Holiness Association, wrote that the inerrancy of the original autographs of Scripture was the official position of the National Holiness Association and "quite uniformly, the view of Wesleyan-Arminians everywhere."

But the last journal article affirming biblical inerrancy appeared in 1981, although the journal published several articles attacking the position. I submitted an article on the subject in December 2011, which was rejected by the editor. Later I learned that he chose almost single-handedly what was accepted. He retired in 2014, after serving as editor for over twenty years, and the censorship was finally lifted.

The Spring 2016 issue contains an article by Steve Blakemore, Professor of Christian Thought at Wesley Biblical Seminary. Steve had presented this paper at the Fall 2015 Fundamental Wesleyan Conference. After a twenty-five year blackout, the Wesleyan Theological Society finally acknowledged that some Wesleyans still hold to their original position.

-Vic Reasoner

A MONSTROUS INVERSION: Review of *Nazarenes Exploring Evolution,* Part Three

In part one of this review I should have noted that a few NEE authors strike conciliatory notes and may be read profitably. I nodded in general agreement with most of chapters 3, 11-13, 22 and a few others. One chapter was so atrociously written that I can only think it was submitted late. But most chapters are clear, and come at the "exploration" from a wide (and helpful) range of disciplines. In the first two parts I noted four areas of concern, and now turn to six others. When painting with such broad strokes please bear in mind that clearly each critique won't fit every contributor.

1) CHALLENGING THE MAIN CANARD: We left off with salient quotes on how evolutionism in the last century has bankrupted the faith of many. The quotes merely remind us of the proven, toxic impact of evolutionism; a warning for the Church that this "universal acid" is relentlessly corrosive.

NEE's inference is that evangelism and member retention would be easier if the scientifically ill-informed would just relax their ham-fisted literalism in favor or something more intellectually tolerable or scientifically informed (read: "less embarrassing"). So theistic evolution [TE] is something of a tunicate to stop the hemorrhaging of membership allegedly brought on by out-of-touch churches/pastors who foment conflict between science and the Bible.

Are there those who, as NEE contends, leave the faith for the lone reason of some perception of anti-intellectualism? Likely. But it may just as credibly be surmised that their "conversion" by the likes of Giberson in COTN citadels of higher education was a significant contributor in developing a cynicism toward non-Darwinian church leaders.

Imagine how different things might have been if the prodigals had been schooled in institutions equipped to show how the Bible holds up under fire. There has to be many COTN pastors, parents, and parishioners grounded in apologetics, and poised to guide young minds through the exegetical and scientific data. But NEE tends to caricature Darwin-questioning pastors as uninformed bumpkins. This straw man fallacy seems to span most of the NEE volume; namely a composite sketch of pastors or creationists who suppress critical thinking and either live in fear of science or deny it outright.

NEE portrays some pastors who see science as an "enemy" and/or engage in an unsustainable literalism. The more informed in COTN know what an uncharitable and coarse miscaricaturization it is to lump all creationists with the "anti-science" class. But why do NEE authors pander to this false narrative? Is it so hard to grasp that while creationists tend toward a more literal reading of Gen. 1-11, this doesn't mean we can't recognize and accommodate nonliteral nuances in the text, or discern when a figure of speech might be in play.

Nineteenth century liberals posited naturalistic explanations for everything the church saw as supernatural. So, NEE as a whole must be asked why they hold to any miracle in Scripture? And how do they do this without appearing arbitrary? Will the church always need the imprimatur of ninety-seven percent of scientists to tamp down its exegesis? No wonder Biola's Dr. Craig Hazen has wondered out loud whether it's still safe in some circles to doubt evolution at all.

2) UNCHARITABLE DISCOURSE: One contributor, Trevecca President Dan Boone, wants to see a "holy conversation" occur. In the NEE introduction, Oord pulls some excerpts from Boone's work, *A Charitable Discourse,* where Boone says he wants to "engage a young generation in an open-minded biblical conversation that welcomes scientific discovery, reasoned philosophy, and careful logic" instead of "ignoring all of these in favor of an interpretation of creation that is barely one hundred years old and rooted in the fear of science."

How can Dr. Boone be so self-unaware as to the stereotypes/prejudices he labors under when addressing "those" literalists? Is it really charitable to make thinly-veiled swipes that some 1) are closed-minded, 2) are less than welcoming (or even in total denial) of scientific discovery, 3) embrace a relatively novel view on the opening chapters of Genesis, 4) employ less-than-reasoned-and careful philosophy and logic, and 5) have a fear of science?

Let's briefly look at the gratuitous assumptions Boon makes with his inferences.

Open-minded. The inference is that the "other" side is closed-minded. A little more humility and bend-over-backwards honesty is needed here, because there are closed and open minds on both sides. Much of what passed for science 150 years ago has today been completely overturned.

Boone writes that he prefers to read Gen. 1 "as the story of God interacting with his already in existence, chaotic, death-bound, disordered creation" (64). But given his sermon, "God's Approbation of His Works," Wesley would appear to be terribly closed-minded to Boone's dysteleology.

Denying science. Would Boone feel he was being addressed charitably if conservatives said he was engaged in a total denial of exegesis as we know it? Not likely. So why does he address conservatives in this manner? Neither Boone nor NEE provide specific examples of what science is actually being denied by the world's leading creationists.

Relatively novel view. Terry Mortenson has done the church a huge service by meticulously scouring Genesis commentaries written from 1639 to 1856, showing that the vast majority held to a normative hermeneutic, including a recent creation within a period of six 24-hour days, and of course a global catastrophic deluge. This doesn't prove the case, of course, but we're only focusing here on Boone's "barely one hundred years old" misrepresentation.

Geologist Davis Young, no fan of Young Earth Creation, concludes that,

> The virtually unanimous opinion among the early Christians until the time of Augustine was that human history from the creation of Adam to the birth of Christ had lasted approximately fifty-five hundred years.

Fear of Science. What does this even mean? Clinging to our KJVs in the church basement with one hand, while handling snakes with the other? I've never met a creationist who fears science qua science, but only ones intensely suspicious of philosophical naturalism masquerading in scientific garb.

3) HIGHER CRITICISM. The old JEPD documentary hypotheses? Seriously? Dr. Lowery, Chair of Olivet Nazarene University's Theology/Philosophy Department, is referred to as a key player in forming "new Wesleyan theologies" today. His pilgrimage away from creationism began, oddly enough, when pursing a Master of Divinity degree at Asbury Theological Seminary. There he encountered seminary professors who pointed out that there were two creation accounts, and that the Pentateuch was compiled from several sources, and not written by Moses (250). Lowery's response was anger and disgust — not at his professors, but at his church and denomination who let him down by shielding him from data. In his PhD studies, he later found the evidence for evolution mounting, while creationist ideas seemed "contrived and convoluted" and "desperately grasping for straws."

The "problem" of two creation accounts is brought up several times in NEE (see 45, 120, 193-194, 229, 255,

261), with Lowery and others apparently either unaware or willfully ignorant that good responses exist not only for this "apparent contradiction," but also for all of Lowery's objections; most of which seem to radiate from the now defunct JEDP theory. It's noteworthy that during my M.Div studies at ATS, Drs. Livingston, Wang, Oswalt made sure we were at least aware of the many weaknesses in the Documentary Hypothesis.

But Lowery imbibed different perspectives, now accepts evolution, and is quite blunt about what this means for him. The most obvious impact, he states, is how it's influenced his view of revelation. Namely, since "Biblical scholars tells [sic] us that the creation narratives in Genesis are adaptations of older creation myths – we can no longer view [these creation narratives] as historical accounts, though they can certainly be regarded as revelatory."

It's one thing to say Genesis is not science; now we're hearing that it is not even historical! Lowery continues, "Although Jesus mentions Abel in the gospels, we don't know whether he viewed Abel as a historical figure." You read that right! And why stop there? Lowery admits he's "not convinced that viewing Adam as of archetype [i.e. a symbol, but not historical] challenges the historicity of Christ as the second Adam."

Here we bump up against the first of two smoking pistols in NEE; namely chipping away at the authority of Christ (the other is dehistoricizing the fall). Where does Christ ever insert an artificial wedge between history and theology? What are we to do with a Savior who seems to take Genesis as straightforward history (no exceptions)? Walking the higher-critical tightrope means Jesus was either misled or misleading.

If Adam and the fall aren't literal, asks Greg Koukle, "when did the moral wound occur in history that would actually be healed in history at Golgotha?"

4) THE PROBLEM OF NATURAL EVIL: All stripes of theistic evolution sooner or later must bump up against the problem of evil. More specifically they must address the problem of natural evil (paleo-natural evil), and when it originated. NEE, however, does little more than mention the problem.

The problem with every stripe of TE is that essentially all natural evils we now see were present long before the advent of mankind. For Luther, Calvin, and Wesley, all natural evils are post-lapsarian intrusions – due directly to the disobedience of Adam and Eve and not part of the original created order.

This position was also held by the well-known Nazarene theologian, H. Orton Wiley, who contends that Paul "clearly taught that before Adam, there was neither sin nor death; after his fall there were both, and these are regarded as the direct consequences of sin. It seems clear also from this statement, that natural evil is the consequence of moral evil, for death is by sin."

Please note that NEE dedicates their volume to Wiley, but is predictably silent when Wiley affirms Adam as a literal person, whose time-space act of disobedience directly brought about physical death and natural evil.

5) NO EVIDENCE FOR MACRO-EVOLUTION PROVIDED: If one is looking for actual empirical data to support the neo-Darwinian synthesis, NEE is not the place to look, except perhaps in the footnotes. We cannot fault authors for this since they're only allotted 56 pages each to journal about their making peace with an evolutionary perspective, and a few authors steer their essays in a different direction altogether. Still, some science would seem warranted. Perhaps reviewers of this review will sidestep the request for just a little evidence with a dismissive platitude. But wouldn't it be more effective to silence me by simply pointing to the pages referencing the empirical data that I missed?

6) SOME REDUNDANT THEMES IN NEE.

THE BIBLE ISN'T A SCIENCE TEXTBOOK. We often hear the straw man in NEE that Genesis/the Bible (15, 135, 147, 236 etc) isn't a science textbook. Such is a "loaded" statement, for who has actually ever made this claim? If NEE can't provide the name of one prominent creationist who says this, then please have some integrity and dispense with the rhetoric.

In a technical sense the Bible is not any kind of textbook; it is supernatural revelation. So, neither is the Bible a philosophy textbook, or history textbook, or anthropology textbook, etc. But when Scripture broaches these areas, wouldn't it stand to reason that their veracity (or lack thereof) would be a reflection on the trustworthiness of the One who inspired the Text?

A DISINGENUOUS REVISIONISM OF GALILEO: Bible interpretations have been wrong so often, we're told. And this comes through with primary reference to the Galileo debacle (see 156-57, 206, 282, 285, 340, 360).

First, Galileo's main infraction was disobeying a papal decree, and at first was only residually about hermeneutics. Second, it's somewhat of a rationalist myth that the Galileo controversy was the reaction of intolerant fixed-earthers vs. truth-loving heliocentrists who were in possession of unassailable scientific facts. Third, the initial "evidence" for the heliocentric model was far from convincing. Fourth, at the risk of oversimplification, the

church would never have gotten itself embroiled in this mess had it not canonized Aristotle's natural philosophy, including geocentric thoughts (that were later tweaked by Egyptian astronomer, Ptolemy).

While the Galileo saga is often invoked to censure conservatives, the sword cuts both ways. For it seems that TE should also learn the lesson of a church aligning itself too closely with a theory of secular origin. Any model incompatible with Scripture is doomed to fail, as will the evolutionary model. It is loaded with scientific problems, it presents insurmountable theological hurdles, and it has inspired some of the most barking mad exegetical speculation in all of church history. So when NEE intimates that adopting evolution will make us more relevant, it is they who risk complete irrelevance when the next Copernican shift hits the philosophical fan. In the future, churchmen who refused to see the heavy price exacted by absorbing Darwinian precepts are destined to have George Santayana quoted at them. Indeed, we all have much to learn from the Galileo affair.

Fifth, Galileo's intense interrogation by Rome is well documented. But while there may have been threats of torture, he was never actually tortured, or even thrown in jail; but the popular perception is that he endured both. Sixth, we all know that the church danced down an embarrassing hermeneutical path in the seventeenth century. Instead of following Scripture, the church elevated tradition, and allowed Greek philosophy to sway its theology and exegesis.

Additionally, it's no minor detail that the earth's rotation is never called into question in the historical books. The key biblical texts at the heart of the geocentrism controversy were largely lifted from poetic texts – verses forced to perform a role they were never intended to play. How unfortunate, then, that NEE's mis-assessment of events in Galileo's day has two grievous outcomes. One, it gives them cover to perpetuate the myth that the genre, historicity, and exegesis of Genesis are up for grabs. And two, it is NEE who forces (prose narrative) sections of Genesis to perform a role they were never intended to play – namely overriding authorial intent by poeticizing texts meant to be taken historically. The early chapters of Genesis are not nearly as ambiguous as NEE infers.

GENESIS 13 EMPHASIZED AS POETRY. NEE constantly refers to the creation account as poetry (73, 223-225, etc). While the opening chapters of Genesis are stylized, absent are the earmarks of Hebrew poetry. Compare Genesis 1 with Psalm 104, for example, and you'll see how different these texts are. If one wants poetic reflections on the acts of creation, she can read Job 38:1-11, and Psalm 33:6-9, and Psalm 104. And even when poetic elements appear in Gen. (1:27 and 2:23), these don't mean that the referents aren't literal. Poetry often serves as a vehicle to convey real, spacetime events. NEE seems to labor under the false assumption that literary form and literal meaning are mutually exclusive in Genesis.

Biblical Hebrew has distinct, even unmistakable, devices to convey the poetic—but such are almost completely absent in Gen 1-11. Where are the tropes and symbolic language? Where is parallelism of juxtaposed couplets, or the metrical balance so characteristic of Hebrew poetry? Instead we find meticulously composed prose. Parallelism is a feature of Hebrew poetry, true, but there's no rule meaning that the referent/s is therefore ahistorical.

At any rate, we have seen that NEE has recurrent themes in saying 1) the Bible is not a scientific textbook, 2) revisionism regarding Galileo, and 3) taking what seems on the surface to be prose narrative in the creation narrative and relabeling it as poetry. Such spin can be found throughout NEE.

A BRIEF CAVEAT REGARDING THE FALL: NEE wants to make Christianity more relevant, but relevancy at the price of truth is not acceptable. With the nose of scientism now under the tent, a blanket of doubt has been cast over Gen 1-11 (Giberson's subversive tactic), and it seems only a matter of time before the other doctrinal dominoes fall. Doctrinal entropy and shedding religious convictions is a gradual, step-by-step affair.

The battle over "day" is worthwhile, but shouldn't distract us from what's really going on: at stake is our New Testament soteriology that has always been buttressed by the ontological scaffolding of the opening chapters of Genesis. Christ as "eschatological Adam" makes little sense without a historical Adam or fall.

-Thane Ury

Editor's Note: **A Memo to Daniel G. Reid, Editorial Director, InterVarsity Press Academic:**

InterVarsity Christian Fellowship/USA, an interdenominational, evangelical Christian campus ministry founded in 1941, determined in 1947 to develop its own publishing arm: InterVarsity Press. Thank you for all the wonderful books you have published across the years which have helped college students embrace and defend their Christian faith. We need evangelical publishers who will defend Scripture, not undermine it.

Yet in recent years you have given BioLogos a huge boost by publishing material which supports evolution – even if it is never defined. Why would you publish a

title like *Evolution and Holiness* by Matthew Nelson Hill (2016) or *How I Changed My Mind About Evolution,* edited by Kathryn Applegate and J. B. Stump (2016)?

While the genre of testimonial memoir has a long history, never before has an evangelical publisher celebrated a conversion to Darwinism. At least five of the twenty-five testimonies are hardly conversions to Darwinism, though. In some cases the author later professed Christian faith while having always accepted Darwinistic faith. In the case of all twenty-five testimonies the author has a connection with BioLogos, which promotes evolutionary creation.

Adam Hamilton. *Making Sense of the Bible: Rediscovering the Power of Scripture Today.* HarperOne, 2014. 352 pages. ISBN: 9780062234964

Hamilton pastors one of the largest mainline United Methodist churches in the world, The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Leawood, Kansas. Many mainline churches look to Hamilton for leadership as they face mass losses of people leaving their churches. Hamilton comes across, at times, much like an evangelical while holding to his mainline theology. This has led pastors of United Methodists to flock to hear Hamilton speak because they see in him a hope for mainline churches.

I have an old friend who pastors a mainline United Methodist church. He is liberal. He wasn't always that way and comes from a strong Wesleyan family who holds to conservative theology. He himself turned apostate years ago for sin (in this case, an immoral relationship with a woman). From there he had a "conversion" back to Christ after 9/11/2001 but decided to attend the very liberal Chandler School of Theology at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. This led to his complete rejection of what he saw as "fundamentalism," and he embraced mainline theology (liberalism). Hamilton became his hero. My friend viewed Hamilton as he viewed Rob Bell or other liberals. He found in Hamilton, though, an evangelical passion that he missed but was not willing to return to. My friend loved that Hamilton preached from the Bible and preached the Bible as if he actually believed it, but my friend knew that Hamilton rejected the Bible.

Now let me state here that Hamilton probably would not say that he rejects the Bible. He would state that he rejects the "fundamentalist" view of the Bible. For example, in this book Hamilton builds a case for the Bible while trying to argue that the Bible is not the "inerrant and infallible Word of God." Hamilton holds that the Bible is only faithful as it relates to salvation. So where the Bible disagrees with modern science (Genesis 12) or where the Bible disagrees with modern culture (homosexuality, genocide, slavery, women) then we reject the Bible. God allowed the human beings who wrote the Bible to record these events as if God did them but He did not. When it comes to Darwinian evolution for example, Hamilton holds that the Bible is wrong about creation in Genesis 12 and he holds that the writer of Genesis 12 (whoever that may be) is not writing science but allegory. Modern science (in Hamilton's worldview) has proven evolution and the Bible is just wrong about creation. Hamilton goes on to write that there are countless errors in the Bible and even fundamentalists know this. He points to the various resurrection accounts as proof of this.

Yet Hamilton wants to have his cake and eat it too. After all, Karl Barth saw what happened in Europe when liberalism won the day. He saw the mainline churches dying, the world turning toward evil, and the rise of Nazi Germany out of the ashes of liberal theology. Barth wanted to save the Bible while rejecting the Bible. Hamilton wants that as well. He wants to hold to the good stories in the Bible, the morals that it teaches (especially about peace and love) while rejecting much of the Bible. He wants to preach the Bible as if it's true while holding that it is not. So while trying to tear up the "fundamentalist" views of the Bible, he wants his own liberal friends to still read the Bible and respect the Bible though don't take it too seriously.

There are so many holes in Hamilton's views. First, Hamilton fails to deal with Jesus' view of the Bible. What view did Jesus have? Liberals love Jesus, but they love the Jesus they have created in their own images. They want a "hippy" Jesus who loves everyone, is all about peace and love, and wants nothing more than for people to find purpose and happiness in life. They want to reject the Jesus who affirms the authority of the Bible. Hamilton never points out that Jesus said His Words were true (John 17:17) and His Word cannot be broken (John 10:35).

Hamilton never points out that Jesus affirmed that God created all things, including Adam and Eve (Matthew 19:45). Hamilton never points out that many of the stories that Hamilton would see as made up, such as Jonah and the great fish, Jesus affirmed (Matthew 12:40). Hamilton never deals with Jesus' affirmation of the authority of the Bible nor with His affirmation of its timelessness (Matthew 5:17-19 which would include the issues of homosexuality within the law of Moses).

Secondly, the Bible affirms its inerrancy. Texts such as Psalm 12:6; 18:30; 19:8; 119:140; Proverbs 30:5; Isaiah 45:19 affirm this. I highly recommend Dr. Vic Reasoner's *The Importance of Inerrancy.* He deals with the biblical arguments as well as the Wesleyan historical issue here.

Thirdly, Hamilton places himself as the judge of Scripture. This happens over and over again, not just in Hamilton's book but with others who reject inerrancy. How do we decide what is from God and what is from man? Who knows? Like others before him, Hamilton can pick and choose what he regards as "Scripture" or not. In fact, he could reject the entire thing (and many liberals do). Yet he holds that the Bible is true about salvation. Why? Because he believes that this is the bottom line issue for the Bible. The Bible is not a science book or a history book per se. It is all about Jesus and His work in saving us. He applauds those evangelicals who see the inerrancy issue as separate from salvation (in other words, one can be saved while rejecting inerrancy). He wants his own people to accept what the Bible says about salvation while ignoring what it says about creation or about homosexuality or about slavery.

Yet who is the judge here? Why accept what John 3:16 says if Genesis 12 is wrong? Why accept what God said in John 5:24-25 if the story of the Exodus is full of errors? Why even believe in the resurrection of Jesus if in fact the four Gospels record four different views of the resurrection as Hamilton states? Why should a person accept Hamilton's view of salvation if the Bible is full of errors?

Hamilton could not say why. I suppose he would argue that he has experienced salvation (sort of the Karl Barth view of salvation and Scripture) and this makes it true (pragmatism). But if salvation is not based on a historical truth (in this case the resurrection of Jesus, which Hamilton believes in while saying that the Gospels are full of errors), how can we know?

John states that we can know (1 John 5:13). John states that the resurrection is based on the truth of God's Word (John 20:31) as does Paul the apostle (1 Corinthians 15:17). Hamilton would affirm all this while rejecting the inerrancy of the Bible all because it doesn't equal his worldview.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 states clearly that all Scripture is inspired by God or breathed out by God as the ESV states. God is truthful (Titus 1:2) in all His ways (Deuteronomy 32:4; 2 Samuel 7:28; Psalm 33:4; 146:6; Isaiah 65:16; Romans 3:4; Hebrews 6:18). If Hamilton is willing to affirm the goodness of God, the truthfulness of God, why reject His Word which 2 Timothy 3:16 states He breathed out by His Spirit? 2 Peter 1:16-21 is clear that Peter did not regard his experience as the foundation for truth but the sure foundation of God's Word. I again point to Jesus who said that God's Word is truth (John 17:17), but Hamilton would say that only some of it is true and that only with regards to salvation. This is not logical.

In conclusion, Hamilton offers nothing for mainline churches. Nothing. He gives the same old answers liberals have always been giving for the Bible. Keep reading it! Keep studying it! But reject it! Because of pragmatism, Hamilton's voice is listened to even by some who would say they believe the Bible is the inerrant and infallible Word of God. If I could have five minutes with Adam Hamilton I would want to talk about his Bible. Does he read it? Does he study it? Why? How does he determine what is true in it or not? How can you trust that God will save you if you can't trust that He will preserve His Word?

My prayer is that Arminians would reject Hamilton's views. Let us remain faithful to the Word of God. As John Wesley stated about the Bible,

> This is that Word of God which remaineth forever: of which, though heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass away. The Scripture therefore of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of Divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess.

Dr. John MacArthur is correct when he writes:

> The most important lessons we ought to learn from church history seem fairly obvious. For example, in the two thousand year record of Christianity, no leader, movement, or idea that has questioned the authority or inspiration of Scripture has ever been good for the church. Congregations, denominations, and evangelical academic institutions that embrace a low view of

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Scripture invariably liberalize, secularize, move off mission, decline spiritually, and either lose their core membership or morph into some kind of political, social or religious monstrosity.

May that not happen to true disciples of Jesus. May we embrace the Bible as the inerrant and infallible Word of God the same as our Savior held. May we be willing to die for its truths. ***-Roy Ingle***

Newest Publication

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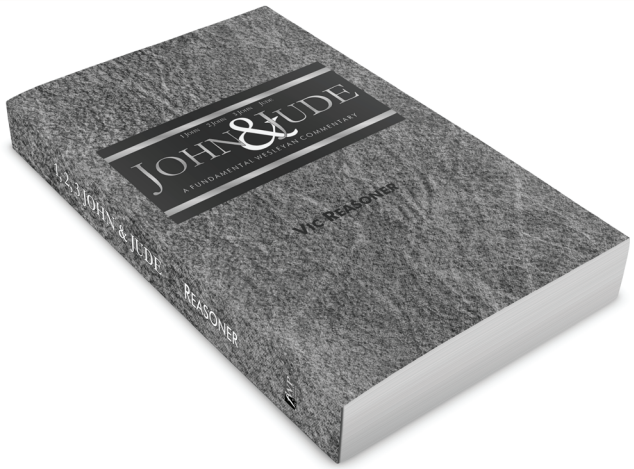

I had time to go though your work on John and was blessed by the insights. I think you are doing with direct success what you outlined in your prefatory note. Your faithful work in bringing the Wesleyan theological heritage to life will bear much fruit. —*Dr. Eddie Beaver*

I spent a fruitful morning reading through parts of a Commentary on the Letters of John and Jude, written by a friend of mine of more than 25 years. I especially note areas of the text which consider the crucial questions of doctrine in the Wesleyan Arminian tradition of faith. The treatment of the text of Scripture is honest and challenging. The bibliography list alone is valuable. Vic usually reads hundreds of volumes in the course of his writing. He makes just over 500 reference notes in this 200 page volume.

Reasoner's goal is to help preachers in general, and the busy bivocational pastor in particular, to both preach the Word and defend the faith. He achieves his goal. As is customary in his writing, Reasoner wastes no words, but fills his writing with both exposition and citings of notable works by other authors from the earliest church fathers through the current day. The resultant work is giving readers access to materials they might not otherwise encounter in a lifetime. Even those who hold vastly different theological views of truth will find resource material for their teaching and preaching. Finally, were a pastor/preacher of a mind to do so, she/he could take the titles and subtitles offered in the book, orient them toward action and application, and preach a significant series of sermons from the books. —*Dr. William H. Sillings*

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