

CHAPTER 22

Articles from Christian Renewal

Putting “Reformed” Back Into Our Christian Organizations

1984, Vol. 2, Number 17

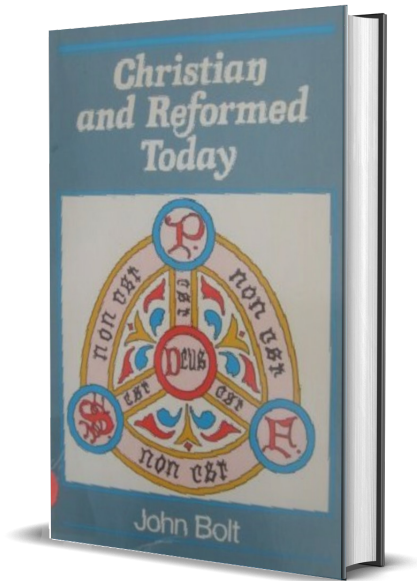
WHY DO SO MANY REFORMED people go through life offering their apologies for being reformed? Have you ever wondered whether Roman Catholics have difficulty being Roman Catholic, Mennonites with being Mennonite, Lutherans with being Lutheran and Modernists with being liberal?

The difficulty reformed people experience in openly and joyfully living their reformed confession surfaced again at the organizational meeting of the Reformed Christian Business and Professional Association. Objections were raised not only against the inclusion of the word “reformed” in the name of the organization but against a reference to the reformed creedal standards in the basis of the proposed constitution as well. Not so long

ago Redeemer College experienced the same negative attitude in some quarters when it was named Redeemer Reformed Christian College. Ever since the word “reformed” was taken out of the name, *Association for Reformed Scientific Studies*,¹ endless debates have consumed the energies of the reformed community as it attempted to determine whether or not reformed people should publicly own up to the fact that they are indeed reformed.

Why this aversion to any public reference to being reformed? Those who argue strenuously and tirelessly against reformed people calling themselves reformed, argue that it is adequate to call ourselves Christian. But

1. *The name was later changed to Association for the Advancement of Christian Scholarship. Today it is called the Institute for Christian Studies.*



This book is still available from Paideia Press digitally. You should read it.

is it? Roman Catholics, Mennonites, Baptists, Lutherans, Evangelicals and those belonging to other mainline churches all confess to being Christian. What, really, are we saying when we say we are Christian?

Don't misunderstand! Being reformed does not in the first place mean wearing a denominational label. It means much more than that. Nor should we lose sight of the fact that there are millions of reformed Christians of different denominational stripes the world over. Think of the reformed Baptists and Presbyterians for instance who are reformed in bone and marrow.

What then do we consciously intend to convey when we unapologetically state that we are reformed? What characterizes reformed thought and a reformed lifestyle?

The cornerstone of reformed Christianity has always been unconditional surrender to

the authority of Scripture. Its precepts are binding. Scripture is confessed to contain the full-orbed revelation of God's dealings with man in his role as steward in His creation. Scripture may not be reduced to a booklet containing a few ethical guidelines. All forms of higher criticism are rejected out of hand. Scripture does not contradict itself. If there are apparent contradictions in our understanding of Scripture then it is our understanding that is faulty. Fundamental to reformed Christianity is the acknowledgment that Scripture interprets Scripture. The human factor may not be elevated above the authority of Scripture by rejecting that authority as local, time-bound or culturally conditioned. Subjecting Scripture to man's authority is the trade mark of liberalism, not of the Reformation which placed the emphasis on Scripture alone.

Reformed Christianity emphasizes God's sovereignty as revealed in Scripture. God created heaven and earth, men and angels, moon and stars. He chooses His redeemed from among the peoples of the earth according to His good pleasure. He gives an accounting to no man. He sends His command to the earth, His Word runs swiftly. He exalts men and brings them low, that they may acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men. His deeds testify of His greatness. God, not man, stands at the heart of redemption and sanctification. Faith is God's gift of grace, freely given. It takes on concrete form in the person and work of Jesus

Christ, who is not merely a moral teacher but the source and guarantor of our faith. And He sanctifies us daily through His Holy Spirit.

The Theatre of God's Glory

God acts according to His sovereign will. Reformed Christianity, unlike its many counterparts, acknowledges God's sovereign role in man's journey to faith in Jesus Christ. And it is precisely this high view of God's sovereignty that has motivated reformed Christians to establish not only Christian churches but Christian day schools, universities and a wide range of Christian

organizations as well.

The reformed Christian confesses with Calvin that the world is the "theatre of God's glory." As we do battle against the spiritual chaos of our age we affirm, with Calvin, the goodness of creation, acknowledging its fallen state. Without the spectacles of Scripture, humanity is consigned to live in a state of perpetual darkness and despair.

The glory of God comprises the heart of Reformed Christianity. Man, fallen and depraved, is redeemed through God's great work in Jesus Christ. Christ calls the Christian out of the cultural Babylon to hallelujah the



Redeemer University stands in the line of Abraham Kuyper and his profound insight expressed in his book: "The Stone Lectures."

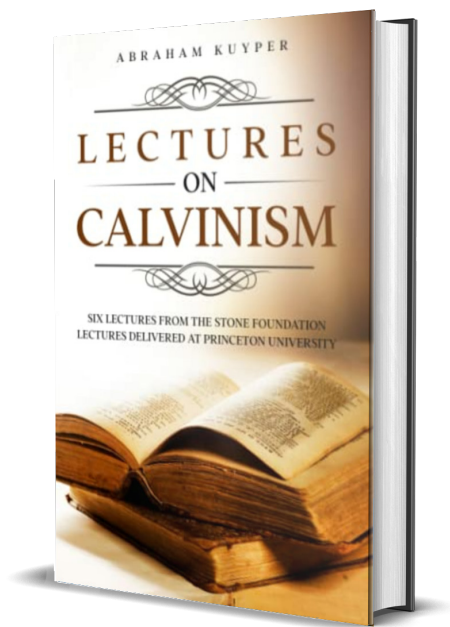
salvation and glory and power that belong to God.

For these reasons it is self-defeating to place Roman Catholics on the board of curators of a reformed institution of higher learning. For these reasons also it is the height of disobedience to exchange our reformed cultural witness as it is made through Christian organizations established especially for that purpose, for a seat on the social gospel taskforce band wagons of the mainline churches. There are many ways in which reformed people can work together with other Christians, but relinquishing the reformed distinctiveness of our cultural witness is not one of them.

Forty years ago, tens of thousands of reformed Christians began leaving Europe to establish their roots in a land where “mainline”

Christians years before had voluntarily handed over their institutions of learning to a secular state. These reformed Christians came to a land where evangelical Christians were still placing greater emphasis on personal testimony and witness within the public school system, than they placed upon reforming that system or building their own Christian day schools. Before long these reformed immigrants laid the basis for a network of reformed Christian day schools that reached from the Atlantic to the Pacific, schools built out of a deep sense of covenant responsibility.

The establishment of a Christian labor organization, an institute of higher learning, a committee for justice and liberty, Salem, a Christian farmers federation and a host of related organizations followed in rapid succession. Why? Because the founders were motivated by a deep belief in the sovereignty of God. They recognized the need to articulate and practice our reformed faith in harmony with the teaching of Scripture. The desire underlying this activity was to shape and develop a distinctively reformed Christian mind equipped to address the educational, social, economic and political issues of our times. In recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of our reformed forefathers such as Calvin, Da Costa, Bilderdyk, Groen van Prinsterer, Kuyper, Bavinck and a great host of contemporary Christian thinkers, the hope flamed high that God would give us the wisdom and courage to serve Him in



Satan hates this book. You should love it by reading it.

an uncompromising and socially relevant way. The spiritual welfare and future of a young generation in a new land lay close to their hearts. With Calvin they confessed that creation, in spite of the Fall, is the theatre of God's glory. And that glory must also come to obedient expression in one's cultural life.

Blurring the Vision

So why this aversion to any public reference to being reformed? It is a question that can in good conscience no longer be avoided. For there is a reason, a very unhappy one.

The vision of the founders of some of our reformed organizations is, at least in part, no longer shared by some of those in positions of leadership today. There is a blurring of vision. The strength of a reformed cultural vision built over many generations is being synthesized with points of view which are neither reformed nor biblical.

It is significant that the change of direction within some Christian organizations has taken place without any meaningful involvement of the supporting communities. Because fundamental changes in purpose and direction have taken place over a number of years, the membership is hardly knowledgeable of these new developments. This situation is unacceptable and the likelihood of it happening would have been reduced considerably if the name "reformed" had been solidly entrenched in its name or in its constitution.

The name "reformed" does not stand for a narrow, divisive point of view. It is a word that is filled with centuries of human struggle to live obediently as God's children in a sinful world. It is a word that resonates with meaning. "Against revolution, the Gospel," said Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer. In the midst of a world that confesses to live by the light of its own reason and claims the earth as man's domain, the young Abraham Kuyper, recently converted from the stranglehold of modernism in the Christian church confessed: "There is not a square inch of life of which Christ does not say, 'It is mine.'"

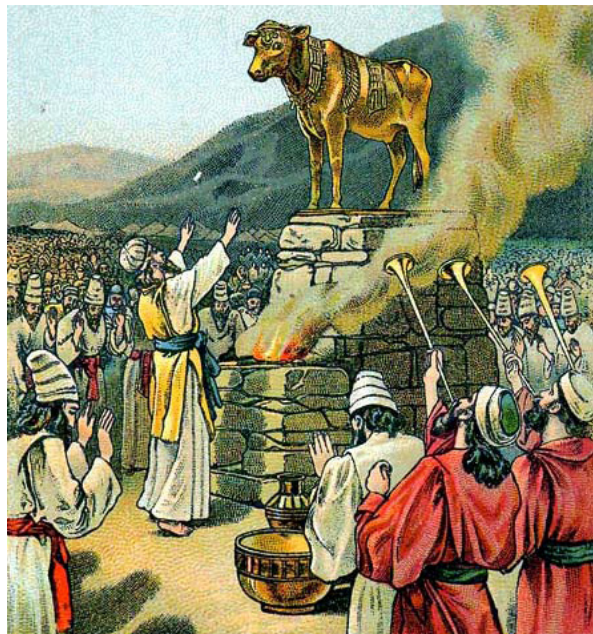
That is what it means to be reformed. And that is why no apologies are necessary when the name appears in one of our Christian organizations.

From Idolatry to Blasphemy

1984, Vol. 2, Number 18

LIBERALISM, EVOLUTIONISM, the social gospel, demythologizing the Bible, higher criticism, the death of God theology and the theology of liberation have all systematically torn away at the fabric of Christianity in one short century. Millions have fallen victim to these snares of Satan. It is fashionable today to

declare that one is a “Marxist” Christian or a “Christian” humanist or a “Christian” feminist. In all instances, Marxism, humanism, and feminism take the heart out of Christianity and



Look at them! These are the people God recently delivered out of slavery in Egypt. Aren't we just like them?

transform it into an empty shell suitable only as a vehicle for promoting a man-centered style of life.

The latest theological fad in “Christian” circles is feminism. Born out of a spirit of rebellion it wishes to turn the established order upside down. Feminism is a movement aimed at radically and fundamentally liberating the woman from her created state of being a woman. It is intent on destroying creation as ordered by God; the place of man and woman in contemporary society must be made identical. A revolution must take place which overturns all norms established by God.

The role of man and woman must become interchangeable. Once again Christianity must be harnessed into a “theology of feminism” to further this secular goal.

There is nothing cute or progressive or liberating about the present-day feminist movement. Its spirit is the spirit of the father of lies. The church rejected the heresies of Pelagius and Arminius. It must also reject, without compromise or apology, the present-day feminist heresy which blasphemes the name of a holy God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“There is only one true God. All other gods are products of our human fantasy. And applying our human fantasy to God or to the revelation of God, is a great sin,” wrote Dr. Praamsma in the March 5, 1984 issue of *Christian Renewal*.

Dr. Hendrik Hart, senior member in philosophy at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto disagrees. Why is it that so often the academics stand in the vanguard of promoting new but unbiblical ideas? In an article which appeared in a fall issue of *The Banner*, Hart gave free rein to his fantasy when he wrote: “I’m pretty well convinced that thinking of God as mother is not wrong... So I’m fairly convinced that we *have* to make room, also in our worship service, for those who are growing up with the wonderful message of God as their mother.”

Is the one point of view merely traditionalistic while the other view is more progressive? Dr. Praamsma does not believe so. In his article he warns that “idolatry



Above is the Institute for Christian Studies, which used to be located at 229 College St., Toronto, ON. Jesus referred to His Father in heaven as “Father.” Why would we create institutions of higher learning that refer to Him as mother?

throughout the ages has always been a he-she business... The newest form of this age-old idolatry,” he warns, “is the application of the he-she distinction behind which our Father in heaven disappears behind a feminist screen.”

The Maundy Thursday services at the Episcopal Cathedral of St. John the Divine in Manhattan shockingly underscored Dr. Praamsma’s warning. In this church, to the audible amazement of the audience, feminists put a four-foot, 250-pound bronze statue on display depicting Jesus Christ as a woman.

Human fantasy has been elevated to the status of revelation. A new revelation which rejects God’s Word and elevates human folly

and arrogant blindness has won the day. The truth of God has been exchanged for a lie and Christians are urged to worship a thing of their own creation rather than the Creator (Romans 1).

The haze is lifting. Intentions are becoming more discernible. Feminists are intent on nothing short of revolutionizing the Christian faith and in the process, destroying it.

Idolatry is the worship of a man-made object or ideal in place of the one true God.

Blasphemy is the act of mocking and reviling the living God. God came to earth in His Son Jesus Christ. That Christ was a man, about that there is absolutely no doubt. To represent



"The prophet Isaiah", Gustave Doré. Isaiah warned Israel that God will not be mocked without consequences.

Christ in the form of a woman is blasphemy. It shows that even those who call themselves Christian have discarded the Word of God in favor of their own fantasizing. As a result God's name is mocked among the peoples of the earth (Romans 2:24).

The words of Isaiah 37:23 which were directed against the haughty and arrogant king of Assyria apply no less to the proud and godless feminists of today:

Who is it you have insulted and
blasphemed?
Against whom have you raised your
voice
and lifted your eyes in pride?
Against the Holy One of Israel!

That night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death a hundred and eighty-five thousand men in the Assyrian camp.

God will not be mocked.

Slavery, Charles Hodge, Women in Office and a Forced Argument

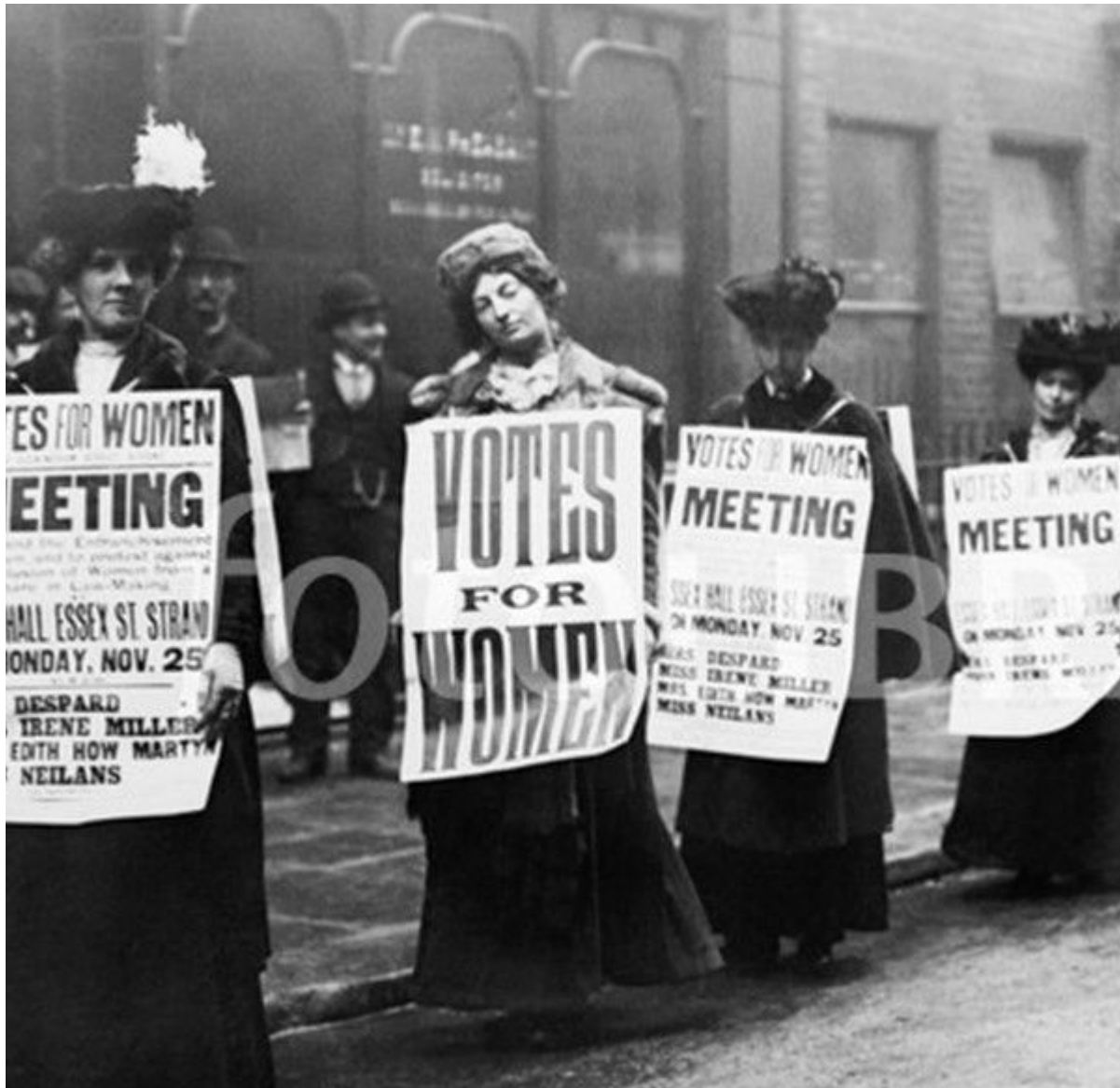
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THERE WERE SINCERE Christians during the nineteenth century who spoke up in

defense of slavery. Charles Hodge (1822-77), professor at Princeton Theological Seminary, was one of those Christians. He based his defense of slavery on 1 Timothy 6:1 where Paul states: "All who are under the yoke of slavery should consider their masters worthy of full respect, so that God's name and our teaching may not be slandered."

If professor Hodge had not made the tragic error of isolating this text from the rest of Scripture, he would never have made the mistake of defending slavery in his lifetime. Only if one falls into the trap of treating the Bible as a collection of unrelated "propositions" can one ever arrive at such an unbiblical conclusion. And the number of sincere Christians who have fallen head first into that snare of Satan is legion. We are all guilty of this from time to time.

Recently something equally disturbing happened. In the May 14 editorial of *The Banner*, Andy Kuyvenhoven argues that the question of slavery in the nineteenth century and its support among some Christians has everything in common with the question in the twentieth century of women in office and its support among some Christians. The central thrust of Kuyvenhoven's argument is that temporal principles were mistakenly viewed as everlasting principles. According to Kuyvenhoven the exclusion of women from ecclesiastical office is a temporary biblical principle as was slavery. (Slavery was a biblical principle?) It just takes some Christians longer



Should a woman have a right to vote? Or are a husband and a wife commanded to be one at a point where they can discuss and vote as one?

than others to realize this. According to Kuyvenhoven.

How the exegetes (interpreters of the Bible) have fallen if they must stoop to these great depths to validate their point of view.

Charles Hodge misunderstood Scripture and supported slavery. Seriously misunderstanding the Bible in certain specific instances has plagued Christianity throughout the centuries. Luther had no use for the book of James. John Calvin was implicated in the death of Servetus and Hal Lindsey is leading millions astray with his futuristic interpretation of the Bible. In each of these instances, Scripture was misunderstood even as Charles Hodge misunderstood 1 Timothy 6:1. Furthermore, Hodge was no doubt under pressure to conform to the wishes of the rich

landowners who owned slaves, even as today some ministers are under pressure to conform to a feministic interpretation of Scripture.

But surely we don't propose to canonize errors of the past in order to justify the errors of the present? God's Word, not our misunderstanding of that Word, is normative for our lives. Any case made for women in office will have to be argued on the basis of Scripture, not our cultural adaptation of the Scriptures.

In conclusion it should be pointed out that it is not unusual for professors to err while the common people readily understand the simple teachings of Scripture. Charles Hodge as a Christian defended the abominable practice of slavery. But in his lifetime there were thousands of Christians who did not. To name but two: There was Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-1896), daughter of a staunch Calvinist preacher and author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. And there was Anthony Ashley Cooper (1801-1885), Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, who out of a profound Christian concern for the poor and friendless, dedicated his life to their cause. Their numbers could be multiplied a thousandfold.

The Bible is its own best interpreter, also as it relates to the question of women in office. And that is why the majority report on headship makes such a valuable contribution to the present discussion.

The Power and the Love of God

1985, Vol. 4, No. 2

IT IS POPULAR in our post-Auschwitz age to tuck God safely away in the far recesses of Heaven and to claim that He has nothing to do with the affairs of men on earth. This overwhelming desire to remove God from the scene of human conflict, misery, suffering and death is occasioned by an unbiblical understanding of love and a fundamental failure to understand the judgments of God upon the earth as these are described, often in great detail, in Scripture.

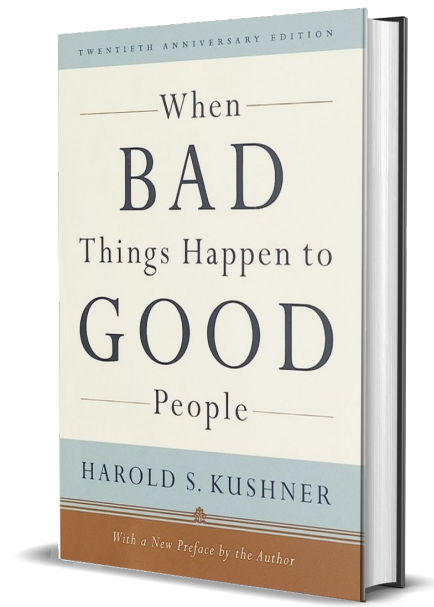
It is true that the Nazi's practiced their satanic craft on the Jewish segment of the European population in a most vicious and gruesome fashion. Surely the hand of *their* father, the devil, a murderer from the beginning, was everywhere present in their activities. But was the Nazi holocaust such a unique manifestation of the brutal destructiveness of the great murderer that people today feel obligated to strip God of His power?

The human race has been witness to the brutality of Satan since the day Cain killed Abel. Think of the indescribable horror caused by marauding soldiers as these raided and plundered the cities and villages of Israel, ripping open the bellies of pregnant women and raping young girls. Think of the barbarous act described by Amos when the Syrians forced the people of Gilead to lie on the ground

and then drove their chariots equipped with iron knives over this living field, turning it into a bloody mass. Think of the days of Egyptian and Babylonian captivity. Children torn out of the arms of their screaming mothers and thrown as food to crocodiles. Think of the rape, the mutilation, the destruction, the horrors caused by the great siege when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Roman general, Titus. As many as two million people died violently in that assault. Think of the times when the pangs of hunger arose to such gnawing heights that mothers ate their own children.

And finally, reflect for a few moments upon that time in the history of the human race, only a few short years after Christ's victorious ascension into Heaven, when His followers fell prey to that satanic madman known as the emperor Nero. It was a time when thousands of men, women and children were cast into underground dungeons and subjected to the most horrendous brutalities then imaginable to the human mind. In a circus atmosphere and in the presence of tens of thousands of so called civilized people, those who confessed the name of Jesus Christ were tied to wooden crosses and turned into human torches. They were sawed in half and many, as they sat huddled on the unprotected ground of the arena floor, were viciously torn to pieces by wild animals.

It is simply not true that the twentieth century holds a monopoly on human suffering. Dorothy Soelle is dead wrong when she says,



After Adam made a covenant with Satan, there are no longer any "good people."

"And since Auschwitz I also do not know how one can praise a God 'who o'er all things so wondrously reigneth....' Such a God should surely be at Nuremberg and condemned as a war criminal." Dorothy Soelle should realize that the human race has groaned in travail at the murderous hand of Satan from the very time that it made a covenant of death with Satan. The horrors of Satan have worn many masks before they exhibited themselves in our twentieth century.

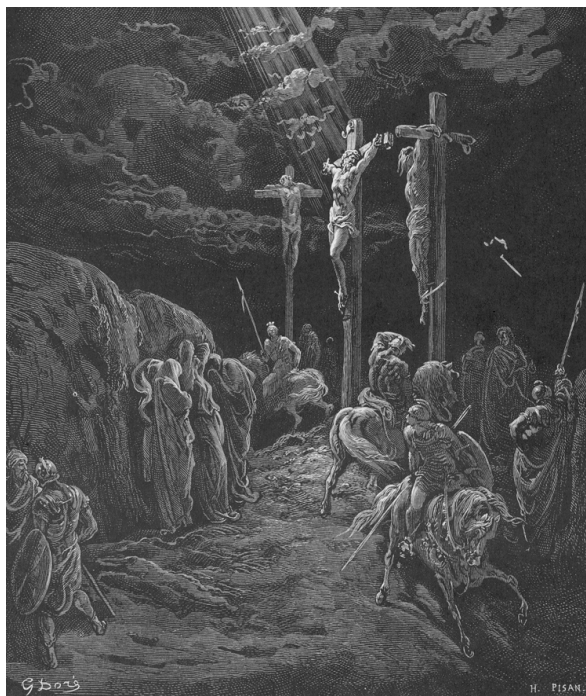
God is love! And God's love is so overwhelming and so encompassing that it knows no boundaries. God is also omnipotent. His power is so total and so unrestrained that He can pulverize the power of Satan and create new life where Satan has sown death.

Is God indeed omnipotent? Is He all powerful? Is there no power in Heaven or on

earth or under the earth that is not subject to Him? No! There is no power which is greater than the power of our God! And this God who is so powerful that He can bind Satan and eternally cast him into an everlasting pit is at the same time the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who loved us with such an all encompassing love that the world has never seen its equal.

Does God love those who fear and serve Him? What a question. How is it possible that Rabbi Kushner in his terrible book, *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, and Dorothy Soelle in her blasphemous utterances, and the millions of evangelical Christians who imitate them in their blasphemies, have so sadly misunderstood God's great power and love?

When God had made a covenant with Abraham. He commanded Abraham to go up on Mount Moriah. There He commanded Abraham to sacrifice his only living heir. When Abraham obeyed with a heavy heart, God issued a stay of execution. It is not good for us mortals to dwell on these matters too long. But imagine for just a moment that God came to you and said, Give Me your firstborn and sacrifice him or her as a testimony of your love for Me and as payment for your sins. Horror of horrors! How could God expect such a thing of any human being? Yet He exacted such a sacrifice from His Son. That Son exhibited to the astonishment of Israel and peoples of the surrounding nations how great and majestic His Father really is. He gave hope to



"The crucifixion of Jesus", Gustave Doré. God's sacrifice of His Son marks the turning point in history (Gen. 3:15). It marks the return of Paradise.

the hopeless, strength to the weak, food to the hungry. He broke the bonds of those who were demon possessed. He reached into the very recesses of death's domain and brought its captives back to life.

And most remarkable of all, when the time came when God commanded Him to go up to Golgotha and there to die a miserable death upon a cursed tree, He went without argument or dispute like a lamb led to the slaughter.

Does God love us? What a question! Oh, there is so much we cannot understand. Satan has placed blinders over our eyes and blame for the death and destruction and the hell and the misery of which he is the father, he has cast at the feet of God Himself. But then Satan is



Many have asked, Where was God in World War II? Where was God in the Holocaust? If we knew our Bibles, we would have the answers, and it would bring us comfort and assurance.

and has been a liar from the beginning.

God often uses Satan's evil for His own purposes and that I think, more than anything else, has caused such great confusion among Christians. But Christians must never lose sight of the biblical revelation that those who separate themselves from God have forfeited their lives and have become dead men. Think of the song of Moses and the Lamb that is recorded in the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy. Obedience to the Word assures life but those who separate themselves from God have willingly and willfully become the dupes of Satan.

All this does not make us any the wiser when it comes to *understanding* the suffering of the early Christians, as they were sawed in half, torn apart by vicious beasts and burnt

on crosses. But let us not forget that Satan's moment of great triumph, when he had the powers of the Roman empire at his beck and call, when he had whipped Nero and his henchmen into a murderous frenzy—that this triumph became an exhibition of great defeat because the ascended Son gave unto His children in the moment of their need the power to witness to His love.

Is God, creator of Heaven and earth, who has revealed Himself in Jesus Christ, love? Ask those who died at the brutal hands of Satan's henchmen in that arena of great human suffering. Ask the early Christians who were persecuted for their faith but died with a song of praise on their lips. Ask the Apostle Peter who deemed himself unworthy to die on a cross like his Savior. Ask the Apostle Paul who

considered it a joy to be able to participate in some small way in the suffering of his Lord.

Is God love? Ask Jesus Christ whom God raised from the dead. His witness is true and reliable.

There has been untold suffering in our twentieth century. And the potential for universal suffering is great for all of us who live under the shadow of a nuclear umbrella. But this knowledge must not be permitted to drive us to the desperate conclusion arrived at by the Kushners and the Soelles of our age. God is omnipotent. God is love. Satan alone is the father of death, misery, destruction and the horrors witnessed throughout the centuries. But the Bible testifies that God can turn Satan's evil to our good for our correction. Scripture also teaches us that God Himself will inflict judgment and punishment, as in the days of Pharaoh, upon those who oppose His Kingship. Read again that powerful testimony found in Lord's Day 10.

God *is* love—even in times of great suffering and His power is without limitation.

On that great day when He summons all His creatures to stand in judgment before Him, when the power of Satan will eternally be destroyed, we shall be able to understand fully the power and the love of God.

Back to School: Education in God's Creation

1984, Vol. 3, Number 1

COVENANT CHILDREN of God-fearing parents will soon be returning to school to learn their ABC's. God's world, even as man himself, is fearfully and wonderfully made. Greatest among teachers this year will not be those who convey only the essentials of factual insight into the alphabet and teach children their primary numbers. Greatest among teachers will be those who instill in their students a biblical awe and reverence for the God who created it all.

Students returning to more advanced levels of learning in high school and college will not merely be adding information to



God is the author of ABC and 1, 2, 3 (see Isaiah 28:23-29). All normative knowledge comes from God.

their existing pool of knowledge. They will be wrestling with the spirits of our age as they attempt to better understand the cosmos and how it all hangs together. “Objective” or “neutral” knowledge is the myth born of godless minds which have willfully removed God from the center of His creation. Christians know better. The question remaining is: How well do they know?

One of the miracles in our century is God’s gift of a Calvinistic worldview developed earlier in this century by several scores of committed Christians who in their scholarly activities attempted to break with the pagan, man-centered understanding of reality. In the forefront of this movement stood such men as Dooyeweerd and Vollenhoven who in turn benefited greatly from the work of predecessors such as Kuyper, Bavinck, Groen van Prinsterer, Bilderdijk, da Costa and many others. Through the tireless and faithful efforts of these men, God has given educators today a tool unequalled and unsurpassed in the history of Christendom.

Every one of these men set his mind and heart to the task of breaking with the many unbiblical understandings of God’s creation. They developed a worldview that placed the emphasis upon God’s creative activity, man’s fall into sin, man’s subsequent redemption through the work of Jesus Christ and the promise of a new heaven and a new earth where God’s perfect truth and justice will prevail. Within the context of this confession

these men developed a worldview in which the concept of law is emphasized. Law is here understood as the will of the sovereign Creator for His creation. It is not possible for us to deal in any detail with this concept in this article. *Christian Renewal* will do that in subsequent issues. What needs emphasizing now is that those standing in front of the classrooms of our covenant youth have been given an education tool second to none.

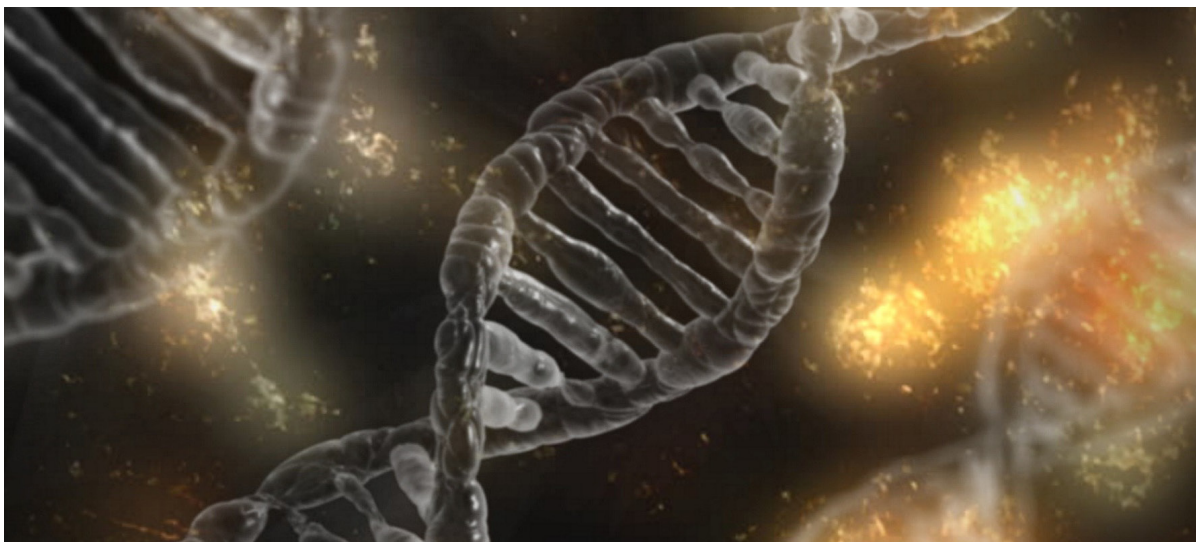
The many pagan views of life such as materialism, historicism, pragmatism, Marxism, capitalism, nihilism, evolutionism, socialism, liberalism and countless other pagan views of life need to be brought into submission to the Word of God.

As our children, young and old, return to school, may we thank God for a comprehensive Christian worldview which He, by means of His faithful servants, has placed at our disposal. As the year progresses and as our children grapple with the essence and meaning of life, may many make use of this gift.

Evolution Condoned in the CRC

1986, Vol, 4, Number 11

THE FIRST HUMAN BEING may have lived as long as 3.5 million years ago. And that wasn’t Adam.



Evolutionists believe that genetic mutations gave rise to consciousness, but how this happened, and from where this consciousness emerged is a total and complete mystery.

It was a young lady whom the academics dug up only twelve years ago. Her remains had been quietly resting for the past 3.5 million years in some remote corner of Africa. Please note: evolutionism teaches that the first earthly being considered human was a woman, not a man. And this woman may have lived millions of years before Adam saw the light of day.

This point of view is openly taught by Dr. Clarence Menninga in the classrooms of Calvin College which are under the supervision of ministers of the Christian Reformed Church. This point of view was openly published in *The Banner*, the official publication of the CRC, more than a year ago and to date nothing has been written in *The Banner* to challenge Menninga's views. His point of view is known to the secretary of the board of Calvin College and Seminary, who writes letters to disturbed constituents assuring them that Dr. Menninga's views are in all things biblical and reformed.

How official can a point of view be? It is taught at Calvin College, published in *The Banner* and vigorously defended by the secretary of the board of Calvin College & Seminary.

Yet not one convincing shred of evidence has ever been produced to support the highly speculative theory of evolution. Let Dr. Menninga write an article in *The Banner* explaining where human consciousness comes from. How did the ability to think, to dream, to fantasize and to believe evolve? It is not part of Menninga's collection of bones so he doesn't know. But he believes. That is enough. He believes. And that is what he would like teachers in our Christian school system to do. He would like them to believe—to believe in his incredibly speculative and theoretical insight that those bones found a mere twelve years ago in Ethiopia belong to a woman whose origin dates back to the beginning of

the human race.

Such nonsense now parades across the pages of the official publication of the CRC as gospel truth.

It is ironic that this is happening in the CRC at a time when leading personalities within the secular community are rejecting the theory of evolution out of hand.

Colin Patterson, senior paleontologist at Cambridge University, was an outspoken and ardent evolutionist until he began to brush shoulders with other scientists. By 1981 his doubts about evolutionary theory were finding their way to the public.

In the fall of 1981, Patterson addressed the Systematics Discussion Group at the American Museum of Natural History. In his address titled “Evolutionism and Creationism,” Patterson told his audience:

“I think always before in my life when I’ve got up to speak on a subject I’ve been confident of one thing—that I know more about it than anybody in the room, because I’ve worked on it. Well, this time it isn’t true. I’m speaking on two subjects, evolutionism and creationism, and I believe it’s true to say that I know nothing whatever about either of them... One of the reasons I started taking this anti-evolutionary view, or let’s call it a non-evolutionary view, was that last year I had a sudden realization. For over twenty years I had thought I was working

on evolution in some way. One morning I woke up and something had happened in the night, and it struck me that I had been working on this stuff for more than twenty years, and there was not one thing I knew about it. It’s quite a shock to learn that one can be so misled for so long. Either there was something wrong with evolutionary theory... or something was wrong with me. Naturally I know there is nothing wrong with me, so for the last few weeks I’ve tried putting a simple question to various people and groups. The question is: Can you tell me anything you know about evolution? Any one thing, any one thing that is true?

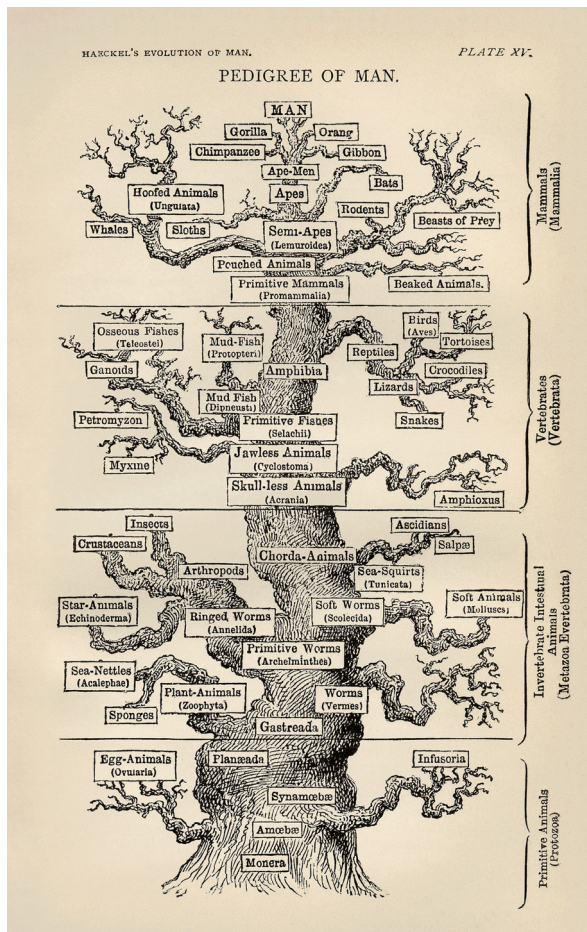
So we ask you, Dr. Menninga, is there any one thing you can tell us about evolution that is true?

In the next issue of *Christian Renewal*, in “Table Talk”, we will discuss whether the way Dr. Menninga talks about God’s creation does not in fact border on blasphemy.¹

God of Order

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ANYONE speak about a living corpse? Why even ask, you say. That’s impossible. A corpse, by definition, is a dead

1. See *TableTalk*, *Christian Renewal*, Vol. 4, No. 12, 1986, in this book.



Ernst Haeckel's (1834-1919) "Tree of Life" based on Charles Darwin's theory of evolution. A figment of Haeckel's overproductive imagination.

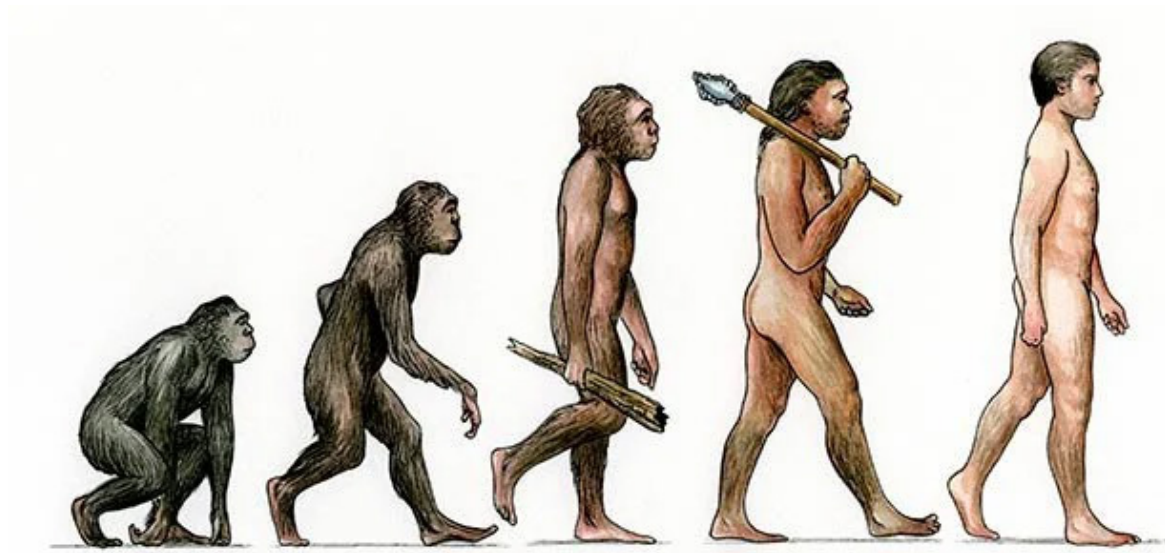
body. Speaking of a "living-dead" body is nonsensical, meaningless. It is like speaking of a square circle. One cannot meaningfully communicate that way. We don't talk about "living corpses" or square circles because it simply doesn't make sense.

Why then, pray tell, do we speak of theistic evolution? Evolution is the belief that the natural world operates as a vast and complex mechanism without any goal or purpose. Theism, on the other hand, is the belief in one God as the Creator and ruler of

the universe. How, then, does it make sense to talk about theistic evolution? Are theism and evolution not mutually exclusive in much the same way that life and death having nothing in common? And that there is no such thing as a square circle?

Evolutionism teaches that all living creatures share a common ancestor, not that they were created after their kind. All life, according to this view, developed spontaneously as a result of chance over billions of years. This evolutionistic worldview reduces all existence to natural selection and the survival of the fittest. From the very beginning of life forms, there has been a relentless struggle for survival, with the fittest emerging victorious. Evolution portrays life as a system driven by chance and chaotic behavior.

A theist, on the other hand, is someone who believes in one God as the Creator and ruler of the universe. Everything that can be known about this God is revealed in Scripture, including all knowledge about the origins of life. Life did not come into existence by chance or through a big bang over billions of years. God called life into being with His Word: "Let there be," and it was. No more, no less. Humanity is not merely a higher or more developed form of animal existence. Man is a *unique* creation, and the forces of chance and chaos have *not* governed the universe for billions of years. Furthermore, according to Genesis 2:7 man is a union of dust (immanent) and the breath



The theory of man's evolution is total, unscientific speculation. Darwin's hope of finding "transitional forms" has never been realized. And yet this lie has been taught as unquestionable truth.

of God (transcendent). God is a God of order, and His entire created universe is subject to the lawfulness of His spoken Word and will. Order and design originating from God as an expression of His will, instead of chance and chaos originating of its own accord.

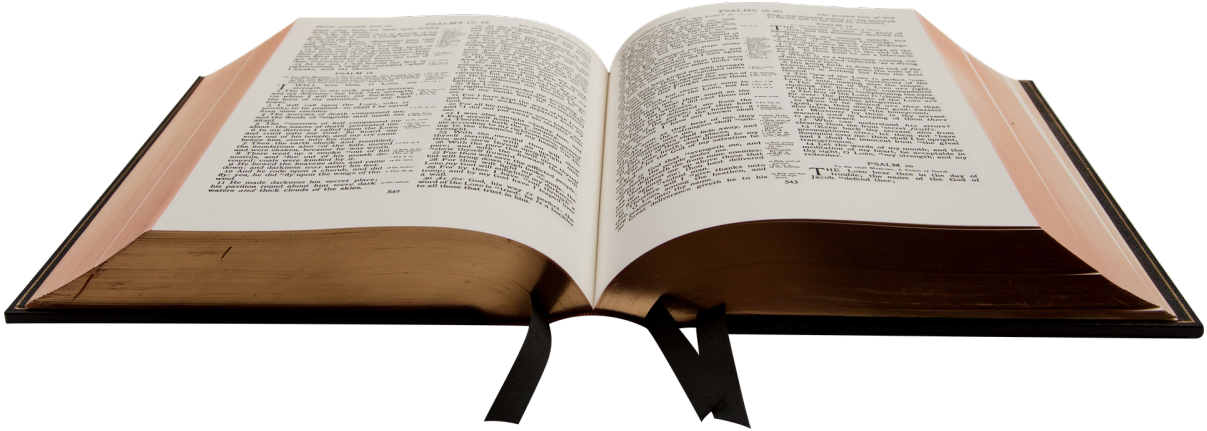
For anyone who makes even the slightest effort to understand the basic tenets of an evolutionistic worldview and contrasts them with the biblical belief in God and creation, it becomes evident that theism and evolutionism are polar opposites. They have nothing in common. One view entirely excludes the other, irreconcilably.

Why, then, do Christian professors at Christian institutions of higher learning talk about theistic evolution? Why do they pretend to meaningfully combine two points of view that stand in a life-and-death struggle against each other? Why do they act as if they

can meaningfully speak of a "living corpse"? A square circle?

The phrase "theistic evolution" is a misnomer, a freakish invention. It was the "invention" of Christian professors who are deeply ashamed of the offense of the gospel. These professors consider it naïve and ignorant to speak of the Garden of Eden as if it really existed. They tremble with shame at the thought of telling their students that Adam and Eve were historical figures. They blush with embarrassment when confronted with the idea of viewing the flood and the biblical account of the confusion of tongues at Babel as history.

Some Christian professors would rather profess belief in a "living corpse" or a "square circle" and many have done just that. They have constructed the imaginary "living corpse" of theistic evolution, thereby creating



While it is true that the Bible is not a science textbook, it is nonetheless scientifically reliable because it is God's inspired Word revelation.

a monster that makes Frankenstein's creature look like Cinderella. Theistic evolution—how absurd! A contradiction in terms. The Creator of heaven and earth is supposedly in charge of a chaotic process that resulted in various life forms emerging through natural selection and the survival of the fittest. And all of this, they claim, originated by a big bang.

Some professors take pride in believing they have resolved the tension between creation and evolution. They think they have successfully created what may be referred to as a “living corpse.” But for those who take Scripture at its Word, the stench of their rotting corpse is already becoming unbearable. This stench has deeply penetrated the classroom. The casualties of theistic evolution are becoming apparent, and the greatest of these casualties is the reduction of God's revelation in the first 11 chapters of Genesis to the status of “imaginative illustration” to accommodate theistic evolutionistic schemes. It requires that the entire God-given revelation in Genesis

1-11 be reduced to an “imaginative illustration.” Whatever that means.

In The Netherlands, a professor has devised another phrase to reduce Genesis 1-11 to ashes: Adam is not seen as a man who actually lived, but as a “teaching model.” It is not clear what Adam as a model is supposed to teach Christians. Strange isn't it? Today, Christian parents send their children to Christian institutions of higher learning only for them to be taught that Adam was not a flesh-and-blood human being but merely an “imaginative illustration” or some kind of a “teaching model.” And after dismissing the Genesis account of origins in this “scholarly” way, these Christian students are then served the full menu of an evolutionistic worldview—with God in charge, of course.

A living corpse. Theistic evolution. A square circle. These *concepts* all function on the same level of impossibility. Theistic evolution is a stinking corpse. It's a view that attempts to combine God's truth with Satan's

lie, equating life with death. It gives rise to ideas so nonsensical and so contrary to the plain teachings of Scripture that even a sixth-grader could point out the basic fallacies. But not Christian college professors. No, not the professors. Some have become so confused and muddled in their attempts to reconcile Scripture with evolution that they've articulated views bordering on the absurd.

For example, a professor at Calvin College teaches that at the same time Adam and Eve lived, there were also other man-like creatures on earth, supposedly living prior to Adam and Eve. It appears that on the basis of these beliefs Adam and Eve had ape-like ancestors. About 35,000 years ago, God supposedly gave these more developed creatures a soul and called them Adam and Eve. For reasons unclear to anyone, God then inspired Moses and others to record the creation story as we find it recorded in Genesis. Why? To teach us higher truths.

I challenge Christian students attending the classes of professors who teach this nonsense to ask them such penetrating questions during the coming semester that these professors will be forced to confront the consequences of their absurd views. Let Howard Van Till, Clarence Menninga, and Davis Young provide clear answers to the following questions:

1. How did the universe originate?
2. How did life begin on earth?
3. What is the difference between

living and non-living matter? Can non-living matter spontaneously evolve into living matter?

4. Where does the stuff we are made of originate?
5. Is it possible for one form of living matter to evolve into another?

Let these professors answer a few fundamental questions. Let them explain how man became a living soul, a creature made in the image of God. Let them account for the origin of sin, evil, and death based on their theistic evolutionary view. Better yet, let them explain not only the evolution of the earth but also the evolution of heaven. Angels are also creatures. Ask these professors how angels came into being and how we should understand the relationship between heaven and earth. Ask them what we are to make of all the New Testament references to events recorded in the first 11 chapters of Genesis.

Don't sit in these classes like a bunch of dummies who are hearing a profound revelation. What you are hearing is not profound. Stand up and challenge the views of professors who teach evolution.

Challenge them with everything you have learned from Scripture and the creeds you confess. Resist the temptation of being led down the primrose path of "theistic evolution," for it is a pathway that leads to death. Can a corpse live?

God's Word is true and reliable. While

Scripture is not a science book, it is scientifically reliable. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are history, not mere myth or allegory. Don't let any professor—especially a Christian professor at a Christian institution—convince you that the accounts of Adam and Eve, the fall, the flood, and Babel are merely “imaginative illustrations” of some greater truth. And don't buy into the nonsense about primitive people existing before Adam and Eve.

Theistic evolution? God at the helm of a chaotic, lawless universe? One might as well teach about “living corpses.”

