# BOOK REVIEWS

*Job: A Practical Commentary* by A. Van Selms. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 160. (A translation by John Vriend from the Dutch edition *Job: Een praktische bijbelverklaring*, part of the "Tekst en Toelichting" series. Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1984.)

The book of Job is a very useful revelation for ministering in a world which includes real pain and perplexity. This is especially true in a Calvinistic context because the prologue of the book makes clear that none of Job's problems happen outside of the providence of God. Indeed a good friend of the present reviewer moved from an Arminian theology into Calvinism during a serious study of the book of Job. However, the book of Job goes farther in that it also includes a great deal of help in facing the very large question which is seldom answered just by the fact of divine sovereignty, that is the question, "Why?"

Thus it is that the serious student of Scripture will approach a new commentary on Job with a good deal of anticipation and appetite, even though the title contains that very overworked word "practical," at least as it is overworked in English. Assuming that "practical" means "useful" in this instance, we will attempt to give some judgment as to the overall usefulness of this new commentary on Job for help in facing the above-mentioned pain and perplexity often found in this life. As one gets into Van Selms' commentary, one soon finds himself in a mixed situation where there is some really useful information but at the same time real weaknesses in the approach which produce several misleading conclusions. In this review we will look first at the weaknesses, not only because some of them are foundational, but also because we believe that the strengths of this particular commentary ought to be evaluated in light of those weaknesses rather than vice-versa.

It is with a self-consciously high view of Scripture that we approach this task. It would be dishonest to hide that fact, which also

colors a great deal of what we will say below. As we consider the material presented in the commentary by Van Selms, we find two problem areas, those which deal with matters of introduction and then those also which concern matters of interpretation of the content of Job. While the two are, of course, interrelated, there is a natural progression from the one to the other, as will become apparent.

In reading Van Selms' discussion of the origin, unity and date of the book of Job, it becomes apparent that he is of that range of Old Testament interpreters who today might be called "mildly" critical. We say this not to legitimatize the so-called "higher critical" method, but to point out that there are many who use even more destructive and rationalistic presuppositions in dealing with the Old Testament than does Van Selms. At the same time, few who hold a high view of Scripture will find his arguments on these matters convincing.

Van Selms' version of the origin of the book of Job is that while it probably has some roots in actual history, Job itself is the literary production of a wisdom writer during the post-exilic period, who wrote the book to oppose the moralistic thinking of his own day. Thus while he argues cogently against the "parabolic" interpretation of the book as a whole, his own conclusions make the historical matters related in Job to be the product of the imagination of a post-exilic writer who himself is the product of Van Selms' imagination. It is this kind of "logic" that makes it difficult for those who take Scripture seriously to give much heed to "higher criticism."

In discussing the date of the writing of Job, the commentary under review concludes that it must be post-exilic because of the notion that Job 12:9 is a quotation of Isaiah 41:20 which is from that part of Isaiah which is post-exilic (Deutero-Isaiah?). This is said in spite of a parallel recognition that the "exceptionally fine form of the Hebrew" language of Job militates against late dating, and in the words of Van Selms, "restrains us from coming down to a period after the fifth century B.C." (p. 7). This amounts more to a revelation of Van Selms' own ideas than it does to a useful date for the book, for the form of the Hebrew indeed militates against a post-exilic date, since Hebrew before the Babylonian exile would more likely be fine in form. Were the language of Job to be more similar to Nehemiah or Ezra, rather than to that of Isaiah 40-55, Van Selms might have a real point. Furthermore, the question of

why similar sentences, particularly of the general kind found in Job 12:9 and Isaiah 41:20, must be seen as quotations is never raised. Nor is the possibility that Isaiah may be quoting Job rather than Job citing Isaiah entertained.

In discussing the unity of the book of Job, Van Selms comes to somewhat more reasonable conclusions when he argues strongly for the unity of the prose-form prologue and epilogue with the poetical form speeches found between them. Nevertheless, he does find a large interpolation in chapters 32-37 which he takes to be a later addition to the basic work from a different writer. Since we find neither Job nor God answering the discourses of Elihu and since these discourses show some difference in richness of vocabulary from the others, Van Selms says, "We may therefore assume that Elihu's discourses do not derive from the poet of Job's history and dialogues; . . . ." Why should this be assumed since the book of Job itself presents these discourses otherwise? Is it not possible that the writer of Job simply reported in poetic form the speeches of actual men who would naturally use different vocabulary and forms of expression? It seems that these possibilities are not open to the "higher" critic.

Along with these matters of introduction we find some important weaknesses in interpretation. Van Selms is first of all not one to break the tradition of interpretation of Job by recognizing one of the basic and amazing points found in the prologue. This point is that it is not Satan who challenges God concerning Job but God who challenges Satan, and that twice (Job 1:8 and 2:3). This throws light on the whole matter of why Job is so tried in his faith by casting it into the wider biblical teaching of "whom the Lord loves, He chastens." Job himself understands throughout the book and never wavers from the idea that God is responsible for his sufferings, just as God is responsible for his earlier prosperity. It must be observed that this knowledge of God's personal involvement in that which is painful and perplexing and that God's involvement includes control of Satan himself is of the utmost strength and comfort to Christians. Daniel can walk into the lions' den in complete confidence, not because he knows that he will walk out alive, but because he knows that God is in control and that therefore whatever happens to him will be good. (Cf. Romans 8:28ff where Paul's theme is the comfort of predestination.)

A further example of interpretational weakness in Van Selms' commentary is the rejection of the idea that Job 19:25-27 speaks of the future at all, much less of the resurrection of the body and of

the afterlife. The rather gymnastic interpretation which arrives at this conclusion seems to rest most fully on Van Selms' assured "knowledge" that belief in the resurrection of the body grew up during the inter-testamental period and so could not have been part of Job's faith.

Considering Van Selms' exegetical work on these verses in Job raises a general problem with at least the English edition of his commentary. A good deal is made of the author's own translation of the book of Job and often the exegesis is said to rest on that translation; yet that translation is *not* presented in the commentary.

With flaws of the above character, one might be moved to inquire if it is superfluous to look for strengths in this commentary on Job. However, there are strengths to be found in it. Van Selms, who until his death was Professor of Semitics at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, shows himself capable of helpful commentary when he is sure of the text and his rationalist presuppositions do not get in the way. While we have picked out a number of weaknesses on this score and the following must be taken in their light, he does conclude that "the text of many Bible books, also that of Job, deserves much more confidence than earlier generations of Bible scholars tended to repose in them."

In our opinion, by far the strongest aspect of *Job: A Practical Commentary* is found in the very clear and accurate outlines of the speeches of the various personages in the book, including God. These outlines, as well as the more detailed comments on the speeches, which are basically summaries of them, will be quite useful in preaching or teaching the book of Job. This is true whether one is preaching through the book or, as is often and legitimately done, one is preaching the theme of the whole book in one sermon or in a brief series of sermons.

A second strength of this commentary is the fact that the very important distinction is clearly made between recognizing that while on the one hand man's suffering in general is the result of sin, on the other hand it is impossible and wrong to therefore try to connect particular suffering with particular sin. Failure to realize this is the mistake made by Job's would-be comforters. Thus they are of no comfort to him at all and are rebuked for that by God Himself. Job also does not realize this clearly and so questions the righteousness of God in bringing this suffering upon him. Unfortunately, Van Selms does not see the deeper point that sometimes the righteous do suffer for nothing in themselves, but for the glory

of God. For this the righteous should be ready to suffer, no matter what the situation.

A final strength of Van Selms' Commentary lies in his pointing out that several of the themes of Job find a continued discussion in the New Testament epistle of James. This is rather interesting in light of the fact that otherwise there is very little interpretation of Scripture with Scripture in the body of the commentary. Nevertheless, his point is well taken and should serve as a starting place for a number of studies of other Scriptures which handle the problem of man's pain and perplexity.

Robert Grossmann

*Joy in the New Testament*, by William Morrice. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1984. Pp. 173.

Books about faith, love and hope are plentiful; about joy as set forth in the Bible quite non-existent. To fill that void the author, New Testament Tutor and Librarian at St. John's College, Durham, Eng., has penned these pages.

After urging the need for presenting the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ as "good news of great joy" also for our age, he divides the material into two sections. The first consists of an analysis of the several terms for joy, happiness, blessedness, etc.; beginning with classical Greek and the Septuagint and then in greater detail the New Testament itself. The second section shows how each of the New Testament writers used these terms to describe an essential ingredient of Christian faith and experience. Particular attention is given to the writings of Luke, Paul and John to demonstrate that "from beginning to end, the message of the New Testament is one of joy; for it declares the 'good news' of the Christian gospel."

The point is well taken. Today ours is a world of increasing darkness and distress even to the point of despair. Much of the "joy" peddled even from some pulpits fails to meet men's needs because it is not rooted in God's great work of salvation. But the

joy which springs from faith in God and his Word triumphs over pain and persecution, strengthens for service to others and fills the heart with anticipation of the fulfilment of joy in the world to come.

That message needs to be preached with conviction and confidence. It must reverberate, so the writer himself insists on the basis of the materials he presents, first in our worship and then in our witness in word and deed. And this can be done because of the fulness of grace poured out in Christ Jesus. That makes "the New Testament . . . the most joyful book in the world." Although no detailed exegesis is found on these pages, they will stimulate to vibrant sermon-making which glorifies God and strengthens his people. Appropriately, also for these times, the book concludes with a quotation from St. Francis of Assisi: "Let us leave sadness to the devil and his angels. As for us, what can we be but rejoicing and glad?"

Peter Y. De Jong

*Het Wonder van de Negentiende Eeuw*, by H. Algra. Franeker: T. Wever, 1977 (6th impr.). Pp. 363.

Only a book of compelling interest and solid worth deserves a review nearly twenty years after its first appearance. Such is this volume.

It tells the story of the revival of Reformed faith in the Netherlands during the nineteenth century, the story of the struggle of common folk ("de kleine luyden") for free churches where God's Word could be preached, applied and practiced without constraint by government agencies and/or synodical boards. Because the story is told with such a wealth of facts, scrupulous fairness to all parties involved and fascinating sketches its warm welcome by many demanded no less than six printings in eleven years.

To the author what happened during that period was no less than a "wonder," a miracle of God's grace among a people largely indifferent to truth and godliness.

By 1800 the Reformed faith with its evangelical emphases was held in low esteem. Supernaturalism, child of 18th century Deism, was in the saddle. Soon thereafter it began to be replaced by a romanticized moralism or a cold modernism. Only a few calls for reformation and revival were heard, then to be dismissed except among the poor and despised of the land. In education and politics as well as in the churches an aristocratic liberalism held sway. Outward respectability was regarded as the hallmark of religion.

The story is largely that of the Secession of 1834 with some of its offshoots. Their struggles, even to the point of being persecuted in a land which long had prided itself on being tolerant, are rehearsed in detail. From such despised beginnings, however, sprang also schools and charitable institutions, evangelistic and ecumenical enterprises, a labor movement and political parties which revolutionized under the banner of faith-obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures life in the Netherlands. The story ends with two chapters on the second revival in 1886 (the "Doleantie") and the union of the two church groups in 1892. The "Epilogue," written after the first printing, explains why despite the urgings of many readers the author refused to write a similar account of the Reformed faith in that land during the 20th century. For him the disruption of the churches in 1944 was too painful and perplexing.

No one can begin to know the history of the churches in the Netherlands together with their contributions to education, politics, theology, etc. without careful reading and reflection on this volume. Regrettably, it is available only in the Dutch language.

Peter Y. De Jong

*Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development*, edited by David F. Wells. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 317.

Are you looking for an up-to-date historical and critical study of Reformed theology in America? If not, you should be, and that

search will now be rewarded rather handsomely if it ends with the volume that is the subject of this review. While our subject volume does not purport to be a detailed study of the nooks and crannies of Reformed theology in recent American history, it does follow an even more important purpose, that of tracing the background and nature of the main streams present in Reformed theology as it is manifested in this last quarter of the twentieth century.

This book is very competently done. It could not be otherwise. The contributors to what amounts to a thorough symposium on Reformed theology are generally well-known for their positions in and contributions to the various traditions of the Reformed community they discuss. This is true with respect to all except the contributions on neo-orthodoxy, which were produced by members of the conservative Reformed community in a more critical vein than the others. Of course, the question of whether this phenomenon should be included at all in a volume on Reformed theology arises. Yet Reformed thinkers have seen fit to expend a good deal of effort analyzing and criticizing neo-orthodoxy, not least of all because it often uses the language of classical Calvinism in expressing some of its ideas.

The present reviewer can find a number of reasons for recommending this book to those seriously interested in maintaining a Reformed perspective in theology. First and foremost, this work fulfills the need for an overall view of the subject at hand. In order not to cut down the wrong trees in a forest, or plant in the wrong places, one needs to see the proverbial woods as a whole. This object has been quite hard to get in focus for many of us in the Reformed community because of the wide theological and geographical diversity that exists in the American Reformed "melting" pot. Perhaps those of us in the smaller and less self-contained communions in the Reformed movement have been more apt to get a taste of the flavor of our sister communities. However, in the case of this reviewer, who is a native of the remnant Eureka Classis of the old German Reformed Church in the U.S. with theological training at Westminster Seminary in the early 1960s, such exposure to a number of streams in American Reformed theology explains the keen appreciation felt for just such a volume as is under review here. Further benefits of a work like our subject volume are those of gaining a real insight into the background and thinking of our Reformed contemporaries in other parts of the community, and of therefore finding more accurately our own position in the same. If nothing else, we will be able to choose our enemies

more wisely, having digested the contents of this book. A final and crucial benefit of this study should be that of looking to the future with more sense of direction and connection with past history.

The plan of *Reformed Theology in America: A History of Its Modern Development* is that of presenting essays on the various traditions in the Reformed community. Traditions covered are: The Princeton Theology, The Westminster School, The Dutch Schools, the Southern Tradition and Neo-orthodoxy. In connection with each tradition chapters are added on chief exponents of their schools. Titles for these chapters form a veritable who's who of Reformed theology. Theologians from Berkhof to Warfield, including Dabney, Dooyeweerd, Van Til and Niebuhr, are covered. The whole is introduced by a very useful chapter by George Marsden, who is well-known for his analyses of evangelical thought. According to Marsden, the main streams of Reformed thought in America are the "confessional," as represented by old Princeton and carried on by Westminster Seminary, the "culturalist," epitomized by Abraham Kuyper and carried on by various followers, and the "Pietist," or main-stream evangelical, carried on at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Fuller Theological Seminary. These three streams are, of course, seen as carrying a good bit of each other's water under the bridge and are not meant to be hard and fast categories, the various traditions embodying more or less of all of them.

It is a pleasure to be able to recommend a volume on this subject, not only for its subject matter but also for its excellent treatment of the same. The essays included form a very adequate, though necessarily brief (which is often a virtue), introduction to the lives and thought of the main American Reformed thinkers and their immediate forbears. The competence of the contributors has been mentioned above. The quality of analysis and breadth of historical material is very high throughout, although there are, of course, some differences due to the great number of authors.

The only caveat in regard to usefulness respects the concluding chapter on "The Future of Reformed Theology." While the present reviewer has no doubt as to the intellectual abilities of its author, James Montgomery Boice has produced several competent works and his ideas on the future of Reformed theology do deserve some consideration, he seems somewhat out of his element in trying to give a future perspective to the broader Reformed movement. This is because of his rather small acquaintance with life in the various

traditions, particularly those centered outside of the eastern seaboard. Thus we are critical less of Boice than of his choice as author of that particular chapter. A chapter on this subject would be difficult for anyone to produce adequately but there are men with more experience in the wider Reformed community who might have consented if such a chapter were considered necessary. It is this reviewer's conviction that prophecy of this kind is a risky business anyway.

All in all however, as indicated above, this is an excellent work on an important subject which deserves careful study by the whole Reformed community. There is little doubt in the reviewer's mind that a number of these essays will become required reading for seminary courses, particularly in the field of Church History, and particularly in those courses which seek to acquaint their students with Reformed thinkers outside of their own particular traditions.

Robert Grossmann

*The Covenants of Promises* by Thomas E. McComiskey. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985. Pp. 259.

*The Covenants of Promise* is not only, as its author accurately claims, the presentation of a unique way of looking at the covenant concept in Scripture; it is exegetically the most careful and serious attempt on the part of a baptistic writer to produce a theology of the covenant(s) that we have thus far seen. The subtitle of the book, "A Theology of the Old Testament Covenants," reflects the main focus of the book on understanding the Old Testament covenantal arrangement God makes with His people. However the author uses throughout the book the proper exegetical method of attempting to understand the Old Testament also through its New Testament fulfillment, so that the discussion of New Testament Scripture bearing on these matters is also quite thorough. This is not to say that the present reviewer is in agreement with the main thesis of the book, but indeed that its message needs to be carefully considered by those who find themselves either in agreement with

historical Reformed covenant theology or those who disagree with the same.

This latter point perhaps needs a little more elucidation. First of all, it should be said that while the present reviewer cannot agree with the main thesis of the book and therefore there will be negative criticism below, he finds the book very valuable for its careful exegetical work. There is a good deal of material in it that will be quite useful to people seriously interested in what the Bible says no matter what their present position on covenant theology. Therefore the reviewer wishes the criticisms given below to appear in the light of his own positive appreciation for the book because of its author's very apparent commitment to the Bible as God's written word. Theology is only useful if it attempts to be true to the content of Scripture and that is what Mr. McComiskey is doing.

The main thesis of *The Covenants of Promise* is that the covenants of the Old Testament ought to be separated into the categories of "promissory" and "administrative." The author argues at length that those covenantal revelations which deal with "promissory" covenants do not at the same time deal with "administrative" covenants. These are, he says, two distinctive kinds of covenants which have differing natures and purposes and therefore are misunderstood if the elements of one are confused with the other or if their elements are combined. Mr. McComiskey is well acquainted with the literature of Reformed covenantal theology and he states clearly his differences with what is said in it while maintaining that his own understanding of the structure of the biblical covenant(s) is more true to the biblical material itself. In this book the "promissory" covenants are seen as embodying the unity of covenant which is often clear in the biblical narrative. These "promissory" covenants are seen as sovereign administrations of grace without condition and especially without the condition of obedience on the part of the men who receive them. They are made with the elect and are received by trust in God as the giver of the promises. Examples of "promissory" covenant are those made by God to Abram in Genesis 15 and David in II Samuel 7. Indeed, the latter is but a refinement of the former since it is argued that there is one "promissory" covenant throughout Scripture. There is in the book a very strong and well founded argument for the unity of the "promissory" covenant in Scripture, which is helpful even if one does not agree with the separation of "promissory" from "administrative" covenants per se. The "administrative" covenants on the other hand are viewed as ad-

ministrations of obedience which are distinct from each other historically and in the obedience required. Not, as the present reviewer understands it, that the same requirements for obedience might not be found in successive "administrative" covenants, but that the covenants themselves are separate administrations of obedience. Examples of "administrative" covenants are those of circumcision made with Abraham, the Sinai covenant and the "New Covenant" spoken of in Jeremiah and Hebrews.

A review such as this cannot make a detailed presentation of the material presented in a book to bolster its position, neither can it engage in a detailed criticism of that material. On the other hand some assessment of the main theme of a book is very much in order and we hope that our criticisms will be useful to the author in pursuing his theme as he continues to work out his position. We will leave it to our readers to obtain the book and interact with it in a detailed way. There is no doubt in this assessment that the reviewer is writing from a particular position, as is Mr. McComiskey, and he wishes to state clearly that he is convinced that the covenantal position held in Reformed theology is biblical. There should be no embarrassment about this on either part, or about the corollary fact that what one sees in Scripture is seriously affected by his presuppositions as to what the overall message of the Bible is.

As indicated above, our main criticism is that the thesis of the book is not valid. There is certainly value in looking for distinct parts of the various covenantal administrations in Scripture, and the book is helpful in doing this, but to elevate these distinct aspects of covenant into separate kinds of covenant does not seem tenable. The author comes close to admitting this when he says on page 140, "they (promise and administration) are so inseparably bound that the inheritance cannot be successfully administered if the structure is bifurcated." Indeed, the statement of Calvin (Book II, Chapter X, Section 2) about the overall unity of the Covenant of Grace historically also speaks well to internal unity of the covenant. Concerning the resemblance and difference between OT and NT covenant Calvin says, "It is possible to explain both in one word. The covenant made with all the fathers is so far from differing from ours in reality and substance, that it is altogether one and the same: still the administration differs."

That the aspects of the covenant(s) cannot in reality be separated into different kinds of covenants can be seen from the way the Scriptures deal with the different administrations in whole rather

than piecemeal fashion. Christ, for example, treats the whole Old Testament as inviolable, not just the promise covenant (Matthew 5:18). According to the apostle Paul in Romans 2-3, circumcision is a covenant of justification by faith (see especially chapter 3:3) and yet obedience is the proof of personal participation in it (Romans 2:25). Saying there are two covenants here just does not do justice to Paul's discussion. To hold, as does our writer, that the covenant between the Father and the Son is promissory and therefore unconditional (obedience being separated out of it), does injustice to the whole argument of the book of Hebrews that Christ has once-for-all fulfilled the conditions of the covenant for "those that are being sanctified." The implications for an artificial separation of faith and works in biblical theology also need to be considered by our writer. Certainly Scripture calls for an inseparable relationship between them, a relationship which this reviewer does not believe can be maintained if they are responses to two different covenants.

Other questions must also be raised from the Reformed covenantal point of view. The author does not face the genealogical nature of the biblical covenant administrations and does not even comment on one of the main New Testament statements concerning it, that is Acts 2:39. That he begins his discussion of a theology of covenant(s) with Genesis 15 seems arbitrary. No doubt he disagrees with the idea that the elements of a covenant are inherent even before the Fall. Nevertheless he cannot fail to see that the "seed," individually and collectively, of Genesis 3:15 is the same as the "seed" of Abraham as the Bible itself views them. That the book can spend a total of two brief paragraphs in discussion of Genesis 3:15 is telling as to the position of its writer.

The reviewer takes as an honest disclaimer the author's wish that his work not be taken as an attempt to find a "moderating position between dispensationalism and covenant theology." Nevertheless, it is still clear that the incipient dispensational character of baptistic theology is a presupposition of his work. This does not mean that the book should not claim a good many Reformed readers; indeed, as has been indicated above, just the opposite should be true. Here is a true attempt to deal with the covenantal nature of the biblical revelation by one whom we do see as fully within the Reformed camp. It is a work of excellent quality, which by its very quality demands our attention.

Robert Grossmann

*Lectures in Systematic Theology* by Robert Lewis Dabney. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1972 (First published, 1878).

It has often been the case in Church History, that the value of a particular contributor to its life and theology goes through several stages of assessment. This truism is especially valid in the case of Robert Lewis Dabney. During the height of his own career as professor of Systematic Theology at Union Seminary in Richmond, Virginia, Dabney was recognized throughout American Presbyterianism as one of the princes of Reformed theology. He was on several occasions offered opportunities for other important posts, including that of teaching Systematics at Princeton Seminary, which was then the Presbyterian school of schools of theology. Yet, with and following his participation in the cause of the South in the Civil War, he became a theologian known only to a few. By the end of his own life in 1898, the theological world thought it had passed him by for good. He too felt himself to be a teacher "without an audience" during much of his post-Civil War life. However, in the 1960s interest was rekindled in this great Reformed theologian and has grown to require the republication of many of his works. We have before us for this review the most comprehensive of Dabney's theological writings. These lectures were first of all gathered by his students and then edited and published, after his own alteration and approval, in the form we now have them.

The utility of studying the writings of the great theologians of the past is hard to overestimate. Whereas there are some who claim to be in the Reformed camp today who think that "semper reformata" means starting from theological scratch in every generation, quite the opposite is true. How can one reform what he does not understand in the first place? There are some also who think that because one aspect of the approach of a theologian from the past has been rightly found wanting, the whole of his work can be dismissed. For example with Dabney, there is a good deal of time in Theological Introduction spent with "natural theology," the philosophical inquiry into what the unbeliever can validly know before he hears God's special revelation. Furthermore, Dabney's particular philosophical approach is that of the Scottish Common Sense Philosophy school, which is in well-deserved disfavor among Reformed thinkers today, particularly among those who are heirs of the Kuyperian understanding of the antithesis in epistemology. Nevertheless, Dabney's theological reflections and constructions

are often very biblical and far better than one might expect if only his philosophical ideas are taken into account. Indeed, one could wish that many today who have rejected the philosophy of human autonomy might have as sound a theology as did Dabney. What this means is that Dabney did not rise above his contemporaries philosophically while he did often rise above them in his systematizing of the teaching of God's word.

The very fact that Dabney's *Lectures on Systematic Theology* present a well worked out "natural theology" makes them worth our study. Not only should we be aware of the weaknesses of such a position first hand, we should also realize that Dabney's position is no mere rationalism and his discussion of the relationship of faith and reason has real points of contact with the Dutch presuppositionalist school. Biblical faith is not irrational as the liberals and neo-orthodox would have us believe; Christians believe what they think is true, not what they think is untrue. Dabney speaks very clearly against a "war between faith and reason" and declares that reason "is not to be the measure, nor the ground, of the beliefs of revealed theology" (pp. 139-144). That we find self-contradictory principles at work in Dabney's discussion, just at the point when he is moving from "natural" to revealed theology, will not surprise us when we become acquainted with the very great faithfulness to Scripture and the Confessions that characterize his constructions in "revealed theology." When it comes to theologizing from Scripture, "The interpretation is never to presume to make reason the measure of belief, but the mere handmaid of Scripture." To a generation that needs to pay more attention to what the Scriptures really teach, Dabney has much to say.

Following the matters of Introduction, Dabney's "Lectures" follow the usual outline of the loci of Systematic Theology with a few interesting differences. Additions to the usual content of the loci are found in the inclusion of a section on the Decalogue at the end of Anthropology and a brief section on the Covenant of Grace as an introduction to the person of Christ as the "Mediator of the Covenant of Grace." An interesting omission in the Systematic Theology of Dabney is the whole locus of Ecclesiology, which is ignored except for a brief denial of apostolic succession under the doctrine of the Sacraments. Interesting additions to the outline of Systematics are two brief chapters on "The Civil Magistrate" and "Religious Liberty and Church and State" at the end of the book following Eschatology. While these latter subjects were certainly a

part of the Reformation creeds, they find little elucidation in American systematic theologies.

On the whole, Dabney's "Lectures" are penetrating and able discussions of both the teaching of Scripture and of the historical questions facing the theologian. His considerable balance in treating the questions that have historically been most important evidently flows from his very high view of the Reformed creeds. He is often found, particularly in the sections on Christology and Soteriology, very completely setting forth the doctrines of the "Calvinists, Pelagians, Papists and Arminians" so that his students will have a comprehensive picture of where they ought to stand theologically. That he is Reformed in the most essential sense goes without question, and yet he is very careful not to treat his Calvinism as though predestination were the beginning and end of every doctrinal matter. He is at pains to hold forth a non-hyper Calvinism which does real justice to the reality and responsibility of man's acts.

While it is outside of the purview of a book review to list a great many particular discussions, a few might still be noted. Professor Dabney lived during the first great onslaught upon Christianity by evolutionary thought and his discussion of creation vis-a-vis geologic theories is helpful even today. He raises the rather intriguing question of why God would spend ages evolving a world in which only the last few thousand years of history have any spiritual meaning for man or God. Dabney also discusses a basic matter often passed over lightly in modern theologies, namely, that of the covenant between the Father and the Son as the basis for the covenant of grace offered to man in the Son. His discussions in Soteriology are particularly detailed and complete as he seeks to maintain the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man as coordinate truths rather than allowing one to dominate the other. Notable are his inclusion of chapters on the "Assurance of Grace and Salvation" and on "Prayer" as a part of Soteriology. His is a theology for the church, not just for the classroom.

Most disappointing among these Lectures on Systematic Theology are those on the Sacraments. The general discussion on them consists of a refutation of the Roman Catholic "ex opere operato" teaching and little more. The explanations of the Lord's Supper and Baptism contain a fair amount of discussion of some of the questions raised historically but nevertheless come off more as refutations respectively of the Roman Catholic and Baptist doc-

trines than as positive statements of their use and efficacy as means of grace. However, even in these sections our author shows himself to be an adept adversary to those whom he opposes.

Dabney's systematics can be characterized as being neither purely exegetical nor purely historical. There is a legitimate balance between the two non-contradictory methodologies. Some will consider this balance enough to satisfy the requirements of a systematic theology. What one fails to find, however, is exegetical work that might really be called original. Certainly there is danger in too much originality, but a first-rate mind like Dabney's must have found things in Scripture that he considered to be new and powerful, whether establishing or questioning the standard views of his time. That his known declensions from established Reformed wisdom include mainly a misguided defense of slavery and of the inferiority of the black man are a sad footnote to an otherwise productive life. Again, this should not be used as an excuse to dismiss his work, for it is a solid theology worthy of study by all in the Reformed camp today. For a more detailed and yet brief introduction to Dabney, this reviewer recommends the chapter on him in *Reformed Theology in America*, a review of which is also to be found in this issue of the *Mid-America Journal of Theology*.

To really be involved in the business of Systematic Theology one needs to become familiar with the great theologians of the past. Only by understanding them, can we hope to progress solidly without cutting loose from our historical foundations. For this purpose, we live in a blessed age as many of the great theological works of the past are being republished. Some important work in this respect remains to be done however; for example, the indexing of Warfield's major works would be very helpful, as would the republishing of the Covenant Theology of the greater Netherlander, Herman Witsius. Dabney's *Lectures in Systematic Theology* take a rightful place among republished classics.

Robert Grossmann

*The Westminster Dictionary of Worship*, by J.G. Davies, ed. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1978 (3rd. impr.). Pp. 385.

Worship is at the very heart of every religion, also of the Christian faith. As such it deserves far greater attention than usually it receives even from those called upon to give guidance in this expression of life. To assist in overcoming a glaring deficiency this volume has been meticulously prepared. It deserves a place in every church library, hopefully to be consulted again and again not only by pastors but church leaders of all kinds.

It is a dictionary, not an encyclopedia. Hence none of the articles attempts to be exhaustive.

The material ranges widely. Not only are the many Christian traditions represented; we find here articles (brief at times) on Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish worship. But the concentration is on Christian patterns. The writers have been carefully selected, ranging from Eastern Orthodox to Jehovah Witnesses and Pentecostals. Often not only the *what* and *how* but also the *why* of various kinds of worship are indicated, yet without entering into all the biblical and theological bases. For these the editor calls attention to other basic volumes published by Westminster. The contributors, quite without exception, are recognized authorities in the field, including such well-known names as J.M. Barkley, F.F. Bruce, J.H. Crichton, P. Hinchcliff, W.D. Maxwell, to mention no more.

Much attention has been given to materials from patristic times, as well as to details of Roman Catholic and Anglican worship. Surprisingly, next to nothing is said about Scripture readings and sermons, referred to only incidentally, while the article on "Vestments" takes up no less than eighteen full pages! On such controversial subjects as "Baptism" and "Ordination" the varying positions are well presented. Anyone interested in church architecture and music finds in these pages fine introductory materials, supplemented as with other articles by an up-to-date and useful bibliography.

The preoccupation with liturgical change and renewal so characteristic of our time receives, in the nature of the case, its due. Again and again contributors make reference to it, indicating that while worship must be and become meaningful to the worshippers it bodes ill when Christian congregations and their leaders choose patterns which are purely subjective. Articles on "Experimental forms in Worship," "Indigenization," "Mission and Worship" and "Secularization and Worship" may well serve to correct some growing abuses in this field.

Far too often Liturgics is still a step-child in the theological curriculum. At best the patterns for one's own church may be dealt with; not much attention is given in many an instance to the biblical and theological foundations or to the historical developments which demand attention if we are to be true to our confession of the catholicity of the Christian church and its faith. The judicious use of this volume may be of some service in avoiding the kind of sectarianism which also Calvin sought to resist at all costs.

Peter Y. De Jong

*Anthropological Insights for Missionaries* by Paul G. Hiebert. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1985. Pp. 315, price $13.95.

Written by a Mennonite missionary with many years of field experience, this book reminds Christians of the obligation to bring the Gospel to people everywhere and that, without any compromise of the divine message, in a meaningful way lest all the baggage of our westernized and largely secularized culture is imposed to the detriment of the Gospel itself.

It is written, indeed, "to provide young missionaries with some basic tools for understanding other cultures and for understanding themselves as they enter these cultures." (10) It is no substitute, of course, for a personal call from God to this work or for sound biblical and vocational training; rather, a supplement "to the third area in which they need expertise, namely, cross-cultural relationships and communication." As such it is invaluable, not only for those entering the various fields but fully as much for every pastor, every member of mission committees and boards and for anyone vitally interested in fulfilling the Great Commission which our Lord has laid upon the churches for all ages. This area of studies, indeed, is not entirely new; many books and articles on similar materials have been written during the past seventy to one hundred years. But within relatively brief compass and in compact form all the "essentials" are brought together here from a distinctively

evangelical perspective. Biblical and theological foundations, while not set forth in systematic form, are present throughout to safeguard against compromising the faith once-for-all delivered in the Word of God.

The book is superbly organized and interestingly written, often with illustrations and examples from the writer's own missionary experience.

The four main divisions evidence the author's breadth of acquaintance with "problems" to be faced by both the missionaries and the churches which send them: (1) The Gospel and Human Cultures, (2) Cultural Differences and the Missionary, (3) Cultural Differences and the Message and (4) Cultural Differences and the Bicultural Community. Helpful also are the many charts which clarify the presentation, e.g. on pp. 25, 26, 31, 42, 99, 145, etc. The author is a gifted teacher; no reader is left in the dark on his convictions.

These are unambiguously expressed. There is only one Gospel, one way of salvation, one true religion. Yet the message must be brought in such a way that it becomes, under the Spirit's guidance, meaningful to peoples whose lives are steeped in a historically-formed culture so radically different from that of the messenger. Therefore the author begins with the "problems" facing the missionary. Unless he understands himself rightly, he cannot hope to begin to understand others well. He, too, has been culturally-conditioned and that far more than often he is aware. Pleading for "a wholistic view of humanity," he warns against any kind of reductionism which fails to recognize the many dimensions of human life as well as against the prevalent bifurcation of theology (faith) and science. On a stratigraphic approach to theology and science he remarks:

> Here again, missionaries from the West must be on guard, for we grow up in a society that draws a sharp line between religion and science, between the supernatural and natural. This distinction is Greek, not biblical. It has led us to a stratified approach and explains material order in terms of autonomous natural laws and relegates God's activities to the miraculous. It separates human spirits from their bodies and makes a sharp distinction between evangelism and social concern. Evangelical missionaries too often see themselves as ministering to one or the other of these spheres. Doctors, teachers, and agricultural workers often

> see themselves as dealing with physical needs, and preachers too often limit their concern to eternal salvation. (25)

Also the church at home in its ministry may well take warnings such as these to heart.

The Gospel message for the author is always one and the same. Repeatedly, however, he illustrates how it can be easily misunderstood by the hearers unless the missionary takes great pains "to sit where his hearers sit." The Gospel will stand antithetically to many aspects and expressions of human cultures, including our own; what it seeks to do, however, is not eradicate but transform them by a faith-obedience which seeks in all things to live according to God's will in Christ. The author is by no means oblivious to the dangers of syncretism and compromise; against these he warns again and again. But he does insist—and rightly we believe—that second- and third-generation believers in each culture are called upon to develop a theology which in modes of expression will often differ markedly from those of the Western churches. Here mistakes will be made. Yet if this process is resisted or stifled, the onward march of God's truth unto salvation may well be seriously hindered.

How this can be done not only effectively but obediently to the Gospel is dealt with in some depth. Both uncritical rejection and acceptance of any given culture are opposed in favor of what Hiebert calls "critical contextualization." This he elaborates in some detail under four steps, so that the church(es) may become "'an authentic Christian community' a hermeneutical community that strives to understand God's message to it and bears witness to the world of what it means to be a Christian not only in beliefs but also in life." (192) Thus to the three goals (long advocated for the mission enterprise) of self-propagation, self-support and self-governance, the writer adds that of "self-theologizing." Fully conscious that such a process may lead to growing estrangement and isolation of the developing churches, Hiebert does have much to say about "bridging" such possible gaps.

Here is a book not afraid to raise and ask penetrating questions. Refusing to face them—by missionaries, by churches at home and by mission boards as well as by theological seminaries—is the sin of hiding our heads in the sand. Contextualization is going on everywhere, especially since World War II with the emerging of third-world nations. Some of it is very bad; much of it may well be good even for the Western churches in demonstrating how the

Gospel transcends all linguistic, national and cultural boundaries when by the power of the Word and the Spirit all of us, at home and abroad, seek "to grow up in all things into him who is the Head, that is, Christ."

Peter Y. De Jong

*The Reformed Church in America: Structures for Mission* by Marvin D. Hoff. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. $11.95. Volume 14 of "The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America."

The Historical Series of the Reformed Church in America was commissioned by the General Synod of the RCA through its Commission on History. The purpose of this series is to promote historical research and provide a medium for publishing the results for the RCA membership and for the academic world. General editor for this series is Donald J. Bruggink of Western Theological Seminary.

As part of this series, *Structures for Misson* is an in-house study and assessment of the history of the various structures developed in the RCA to carry out its mission in the world. Of course, the very concept of the Church's mission in the world has undergone dramatic changes in the centuries since its 1628 beginnings on the North American continent. Thus a tracing of structures means also a tracing of the concept of mission as that too developed. Since this study is the work of a man very much involved in the structure of the Church himself, it is important for us to get to know something about him in order to appreciate his perspective.

Marvin Hoff reached what is at least the present culmination of his work in the Reformed Church in America when in 1985 he became President of Western Theological Seminary in Holland, Michigan. Mr. Hoff's life and service go back in the RCA and include degrees from Northwestern College in Orange City, Ia., and Western Seminary. While he has also a master's degree from

Princeton Seminary and has done doctoral work in Holland, his ministry has been completely within the RCA. It is worthy of note in this regard that Mr. Hoff has not only served three pastorates in RCA congregations, he has also served for twelve years on the national denominational staff. Thus Mr. Hoff has not only had a long and loyal service to this church; he has also served in capacities which give him special insight into the subject of this book.

As one reads this book and reflects on its contents it becomes apparent that we are dealing not with a broad history of the mission work of the RCA but with the history of the supporting structures for mission. This is, of course, in direct line with the book's title, but it should be pointed out that there is a narrowing of the focus as the history proceeds. At the beginning of the book there is a more general history of the concept and work of mission as well as of support structures. However, as the history is followed into modern times the focus becomes more and more on the structures established for raising money for mission and the dollar amounts raised. This is not to say that concepts for mission are forgotten, but they are seen more and more in terms of their impact on support.

The plan of the book follows the rather conventional and useful method of taking the reader back to the beginnings of the work being described and then bringing him up to the later history which is the specific focus of interest. In this case we have the history of missions in the RCA from 1628 to 1945 covered in one lengthy but useful chapter. This introductory history is followed by a study of the various cultural and economic forces which worked in the United States and thus in the RCA between 1945 and 1980 under the fascinating title, "A Troubled Feast." In 1946 the Church began its history of attempting to unify its giving and spending for mission by adopting the "United Advance" approach recommended by the staff members responsible to the several mission boards of the Church. The following chapters of the book detail the various reorganizations of structure designed to further implement this unity of the stewardship of the Church for mission. The final chapter in this series is about the General Program Council which is seen by the author as a step backwards in unified stewardship. The final chapter of the book, entitled "Epilogue," seeks to understand why the General Program Council failed economically.

The thesis of the book is that mission support structures within the RCA were created pragmatically to fulfill a perceived need

without much recourse to theological or ecclesiastical reflection. There is plenty of evidence given to support this thesis as being valid; indeed, such evidence can probably be found in the histories of the several Reformed denominations in the United States, as well as in those not of particularly Reformed stripe. This pragmatism is apparent not only in the later history of the church as it organized and reorganized its unified receipt of the church's giving for mission, but it is also apparent right back to the beginnings of the church.

This book will have its main readership in its intended audience, the members and leaders of the Reformed Church in America. At the same time the lessons it holds are also in large measure applicable to those of us in other Reformed denominations. Which of us can say that we have not most often gone about the business of mission in a pragmatic fashion, trying to meet perceived needs without much theological reflection on our task as servants in God's kingdom? To dismiss this study simply because it concerns only one Reformed denomination, and one that has not maintained as strict an adherence to the Three Forms of Unity as have others, would be a mistake. Indeed, just the opposite is true. The more we can learn of the history of other churches of similar background, the better off we will be in facing the future.

Robert Grossmann

*The Seeds of Secularization* by Gary Scott Smith. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985. Pp. 239.

*The Seeds of Secularization* is another of several very helpful volumes published in recent years which focus on an essential problem, namely, how should we as Christians seek to relate biblical principles to government in the society in which we live. Gary S. Smith, who works as an Assistant Professor of Sociology at conservative Grove City College in Pennsylvania, has given us a very careful history of what he sees as the reasons for the triumph of secularism in American culture and government. The book is ob-

viously the result of a tremendous amount of research by its author, who is reformed-calvinist in his perspective, and its text is copiously supported with 54 pages of endnotes which have no fewer than 886 separate notes, many of them referring to two or more sources.

This book focuses on the years between 1870 and 1915 as being in the author's mind those in which the battle against the seeds of secularism in American culture was waged and lost by Calvinists and their allies. These seeds having been successfully planted, Smith contends, could not help but produce the flower of secularization which present day Calvinists find so ugly. Smith's thesis for this work is that this battle against the beginnings of secularism was lost, not because the Calvinists did not see the dangers inherent in changed thinking, but because the Calvinists fought the battle on the basis of a flawed view of the relationship between Christianity and government. The very serious and important purpose of the book is to alert the modern-day resurgent Calvinist community to the dangers of repeating the mistakes of their spiritual fathers, which mistakes Smith believes doomed to failure their attempts to stem the tide of secularism.

The concrete problem author Smith sees in the attempt among Calvinists in the late-19th and early-20th centuries to fight the various forces which led to our present secular society, is that they did so on the basis of the idea that Christian ideals ought to rule in a society without leaving room for competing systems of thought. He not only finds historically that this was an impossible position to implement, but he concludes that it is unbiblical and therefore wrong. The alternative to be promoted is hinted at in the subtitle of the book before us, namely, "Calvinism, Culture and Pluralism in America 1870-1915." It is the idea of "pluralism" which the author maintains should have been promoted and which he thinks would likely have won the day, thus insuring that Christian principles would have had a place in American culture and politics, even after the numbers of serious Christians had long since sunk into their present minority status. Smith claims that by taking the position 100 years ago that competing ideologies should not have a voice proportional to the numbers of their adherents in our nation, the Calvinists themselves insured that their voice would be pushed out of a hearing within society and government when the secularists became more numerous.

The solution to our present-day problem is argued to be that of

consciously using the resurgent strength of Calvinism in particular and evangelical Christianity in general to promote a pluralism in which each competing system of thought in society might have complete liberty to carry out its own agenda and to promote its ideas politically and culturally without seeking to impose them on those in the society who are adherents of other systems of thought. The author finds in the Netherlands and in Switzerland the kind of pluralism he thinks would solve the cultural bind in which we Americans now find ourselves.

While the above description might seem to indicate that this book is one of biblical or philosophical argument on the issue described, such is not the case. The book is a very careful historical study of the statements and positions of the leaders of the Calvinist community, especially during the period of focus, but also in subsequent history. Our purpose here has been to point out that our author is working at a very crucial question for Calvinists today and that he takes a particular stand in answering that question. His position is well stated in the last two sentences of his introduction to the book. "According to this view, all ideologies should be recognized in public life, and public policies should be hammered out by compromise among various groups. All groups should not have to live under a public order controlled by one worldview, as Christians sought to mandate in earlier American history and humanists strive to accomplish today."

As we have noted, the method used to make the point that the Calvinists used a particular idea of the place of systems of thought in public life is that of historical research and reporting. It should be noted further that the historical study is done systematically by examining the various challenges and struggles Calvinism faced between the Civil War and World War I. Such a study of course demands that one be concerned with the right issues, that is with issues which truly did challenge Calvinism and lead the public into a secularized worldview. This reviewer has little doubt that the author of *Seeds of Secularism* focuses on some of the right issues in a very crucial period of our history. Thus the book is a useful addition to the debate on the main issue at hand.

Following a scene-setting first chapter on the place and strength of Calvinism in the various U.S. denominations in 1870, the author relates to his readers the main challenges to this worldview from theological liberalism and from secularism. He then notes the Calvinist reaction of attempting to enforce its basic worldview on public life through constitutional amendment and law, and follows

that with a description of the Calvinist part in the debate about public education which ended when secularism won the day after 1915 by first taking over the public colleges. This is followed by chapters on the challenges to Calvinism from "scientific naturalism," from the rise of a very secular "morality", and from the development laissez-faire capitalism and various emerging competing economic systems. A further chapter discusses the relationship of Calvinistic thinkers to the growing social improvement ideologies and a final one seeks to evalute what has happened to Calvinists through all of these struggles.

In attempting to evaluate this book the present reviewer finds a great deal to commend it. It is thoroughly researched and well-written. The historical material is indeed very illuminating as to what has happened in America with respect to Calvinism and especially as to how Calvinists reacted to the challenge of secularism. Nevertheless, one could wish that the author had not side-stepped a theological and philosophical discussion of his own position favoring pluralism. It cannot simply be assumed that since the Calvinists fought a battle for a particular ideal and lost, that that ideal was and is therefore wrong, any more than we can perhaps assume that since mostly orthodox Calvinists fought it, they were naturally right. Indeed, one of the most important tasks we Calvinists face today is that of working toward a unified understanding of the Biblical teaching of how their worldview ought to function in public life. The spiritual heirs of John Calvin, the Elector Fredrick and their later followers should not dismiss our fathers' ideas of a covenantal responsibility for the state uncritically. Pluralism may indeed be the teaching of the New Testament; if so, that should be demonstrated from the New Testament, not from the fact that an alternative view suffered defeat in a crucial period in American history.

Robert Grossmann

*Separation of Church and State: The Myth Revisited*, by Norman De Jong in collaboration with Jack Van Der Slik. Jordan Station, Ontario: Paideia Press, 1985. Pp. 229.

This book fills a necessary place in the current debate on the relationship of Church and State. The debate has too long been carried out in a vacuum of real and detailed information about the historical involvement of State and Church with each other in early U.S. history. While all sides of the debate have tacitly agreed that the Puritans and their contemporaries sought not freedom from religion but freedom to practice the same, the presumption has been that by the time of the Revolutionary War, religion had lost its vitality and effective separation of Church and State had become a fact. The purpose of this book is to honestly examine the historical evidences which would confirm or contradict that construction. The thesis of the book is that State and Church were so involved with each other up into the 19th century that "separation" in the current sense is nothing more or less than a myth. This is seen to be especially true at the time of the writing of the Bill of Rights which contain the U.S. Constitution's anti-establishment clause. It is the reviewer's opinion that no one ought to take part in this now universal debate who does not know and honestly deal with the history reported in this book.

*The Myth Revisited* is a history book. As such it seeks to determine the actual situation in which the anti-establishment clause of the Bill of Rights was written. At the same time its primary author, Norman De Jong, Professor of Education at Trinity Christian College, frankly confesses that his purpose is to uncover the Christian involvement in politics and government which was so much an integral part of early United States history. It is important to note this confession of purpose because those who claim neutrality in the study and writing of history simply seek to perpetuate a myth of their own. The question then is not, does the writer betray a purpose, but, is the writer's purpose fulfilled honestly, that is without twisting the factual material available or ignoring major portions of it. In this, Messers. De Jong and Van Der Slik prove exceptionally able and honest, and herein lies a great part of the value of their book.

As a history book, *The Myth Revisited* abounds with heretofore ignored material. Material, it should be noted, that author De Jong points out has been systematically ignored by those historians who would build a "wall of separation" contrary to history while claiming neutrality in writing history. For example, what American history course taught recently in any school or university tells us the rather stunning truth that the Northwest Ordinance passed by the Congress of the United States in 1787 required that section 29 in

each township was "to be given perpetually for the purposes of religion," so that churches might be established and ministers paid? Where do we learn that the practice of this requirement continued well into the 19th century? Again, which historian proclaims that the majority of the original thirteen states had established state churches at the time the establishment clause was written and that that these too lasted into the next century? Or, that almost every original State required an oath of belief in God, eternal punishment and reward, and the truth of the Holy Scriptures as a qualification for state office?

The material in our subject title is well organized to get at the basic questions needing answer for the present debate on the Church-State issue. After a pair of introductory chapters which set the stage by referring to the present confusion on the issue and to basic theoretical considerations, the historical material begins by looking at the fact that the creeds of the mainline Protestant denominations found in North America before the Revolutionary War were written by assemblies called by State governments for national churches. Thus the very serious Protestant religion of the nation's earliest forbears embodies a concept of Church-State relationship quite contrary to the Anabaptist tradition of a private religion unconcerned with "secular" affairs. Careful discussion of the very real religious interest and the actual taking of clearly Christian positions by the several state Constitutions drafted during and after the Revolution follows. Then the religious and moral leadership exerted by the Congress of the new nation is recounted.

Following these investigations into State and Federal activities in the new United States, the authors dwell on the development of ideas of separation in Virginia where the State Anglican Church was more and more opposed by a growing number of Baptists who wished to restructure things more to their own liking. This fascinating period in Virginia stands in our authors' thinking as a precursor of the later battle for the presidency in the election of 1800 where the Deist Jefferson won with the support of these same Virginia Baptists in an election that Jefferson himself later characterized as a second "revolution."

Before the pivotal election of 1800 however, the Constitution of the United States was written, adopted and modified by the Bill of Rights in the very pluralistic, yet very Christian, fabric of a society in which established churches, fundamental Christian confessions by state officers and state financing of Christian education were the rule and not exceptions. Thus the authors infer that the establish-

ment clause cannot be taken strictly to be inimical to any of those practices. Indeed, its purpose must far more accurately in those circumstances be seen as that of keeping the national government from interfering in state or local practices, many of which were quite specifically contrary to the modern idea of a "wall of separation."

The picture is, of course, far more involved than the simple one given here. Nevertheless, it is hoped that this brief summary will whet the reader's appetite to investigate for himself the real story of the establishment clause of our nation's Bill of Rights. There is a great deal of material in the book not even referred to in this review. The point is that this reviewer agrees heartily with authors De Jong and Van Der Slik that it is very important for everyone who wants to speak intelligently about this issue to have some good understanding of how a post-campaign letter phrase from Jefferson to some of his Baptist supporters could become the law of the land without benefit of consideration by the elected Congress of these United States.

The present consternation in the United States on both sides of this controversial issue of Church-State relationships comes from attempting to insert the square peg of a "wall of separation" into the round hole of the historic practice of "one nation under God." *Separation of Church and State: The Myth Revisited* goes a long way toward explaining how we got here from there. It ought to be must reading for serious Christians of every persuasion. It should also find a place in college and high school American History courses, for it can easily be understood by students at those levels. It will even help any lawyers who can be persuaded to read it.

Robert Grossmann