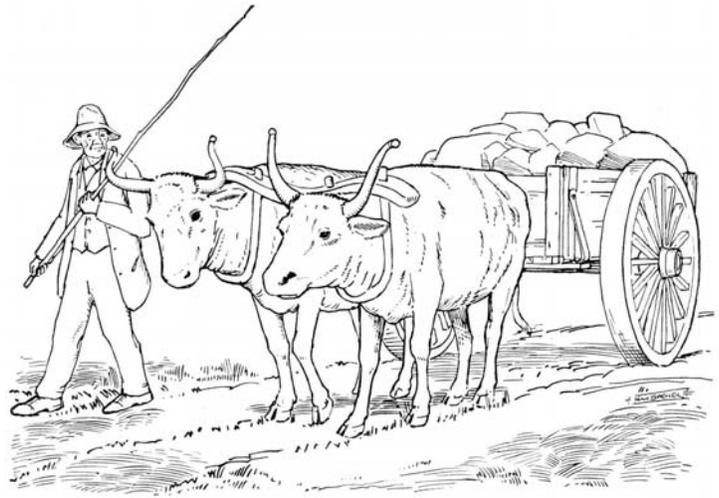


Prick of the Goad



In the book of Ecclesiastes, the Teacher writes: “The words of the wise are like goads, their collected sayings like firmly embedded nails—given by one Shepherd” (Eccl. 12:11, NIV). In the ancient world, “goads” were staffs embedded with sharp nails, used to “guide” animals along a path. The visual image of a long waving stick and occasional sensorimotor pricks were adequate reminders to keep a pair of domesticated and trained oxen pulling their load along a pathway. In a similar fashion, wise words not only bring pleasure and pain but also shepherd us along appropriate paths.

The scientific enterprise progresses in proportion to the published word of its practitioners and interpreters. An important aspect of science is the dialogue that results from reflecting on the ideas and insights of others. Consequently in this issue, we feature a dialogue format to “goad” us along as we ponder the very nature of our scientific endeavor.

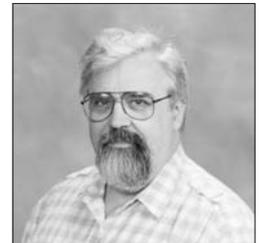
The focus of this issue of *PSCF* is the nature of science. Is naturalism an appropriate way to explore the handiwork of the Creator? Walter Thorson, a retired physical chemistry professor, argues that a redefined “naturalism” guides scientists to fulfill the Creator’s intentions. God’s proclamation, “cultivate and keep the garden,” gives the descendents of Adam both motivation and legitimacy to engage in scientific inquiry and discovery.

The four peer reviewers of Thorson’s initial manuscripts, while critical at some

points, were lavish with appreciation for Thorson’s insights. Following a reviewer’s suggestion, the editor invited a group of philosophers, theologians, and scientists to write short responses to Thorson’s ideas. In the pages that follow Thorson’s two-part article, twelve respondents give both affirmations and critical objections to varied aspects of “naturalism’s” role. Concluding the dialogue section of this issue, Thorson responds to the respondents by acknowledging their contributions and by challenging some of their assumptions. Depending upon reader interest and involvement, the dialogue may continue in subsequent *PSCF* issues via contributions to the Letters to the Editor section.

Following the dialogue section, we feature a regular paper by Donald Yerxa who gives us a historical perspective on the early events that ushered in the Intelligent Design movement. The listings of financial donors to ASA and peer reviewers of submitted manuscripts to *PSCF* highlight our attempt to acknowledge the contributions of many persons, who have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment and loyalty to our society and our journal. We thank them. Finally, we conclude the issue with sixteen book reviews in various categories, seven letters that continue dialogue on ideas raised by articles published in prior *PSCF* issues, and an index to the preceding three volumes of our journal. ◇

Yours for “goadly” reading,
Roman J. Miller
Editor



*In this issue,
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dialogue format
to “goad” us
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scientific
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