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I evaluated my own recent work on causation and discovered that although my intent was more Type 3, I ended up perhaps closer to Type 4! It will be interesting to see how others apply Messer's typology.

Although I appreciate its brevity, I would have read this book even if it were longer! I do wonder if some topics could have been addressed with greater detail, and if other topics, such as technology, creation care, or astrobiology could have been included. Nevertheless, *Science in Theology* offers a very helpful new framework for conceptualizing the dialogue between the two subjects as well as providing an excellent introduction to some contemporary issues, suitable for students or for the nonspecialist looking to further his/her education on the topic.

Reviewed by E. Janet Warren, Past President of the Canadian Scientific and Christian Affiliation.

THE DOCTRINE OF CREATION: A Constructive Kuyperian Approach by Bruce Riley Ashford and Craig G. Bartholomew. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020. 366 pages, appendix, bibliography, index. Hardcover; \$50.00. ISBN: 9780830854905.

This book is a welcome addition to our need for more work on the doctrine of creation. The authors, one Baptist (Ashford) and one Anglican (Bartholomew), offer what they term a "Kuyperian" or Dutch neo-Calvinist perspective (perhaps more properly, neo-Reformed?). They seek to be exegetical, not merely creedal, in their exposition. In 366 pages of text, they offer a doctrine of creation that comprehends the classical loci and add some of more recent concern.

The authors cover the classical loci in a systematic, well-organized way. In the first, creedally based, chapter, they lay out their approach and orient readers to their exposition of the doctrine. The following two chapters provide a brief but very well-done history of the doctrine. In the chapter from the early church up to the modern period, they survey the teachers of the church, with Irenaeus holding pride of place. This survey touches on the right people and draws out the constructive contributions that each makes. The only group that is treated almost entirely negatively is, predictably, the Anabaptists (pp. 66–68). The authors select negative examples, confuse an Anabaptist doctrine of the world with a doctrine of creation, and make tendentious use

of selective quotes. It's hard to credit Anabaptists with a denigration of creation (or earthly matters) when they have well-formed practices of communal life, the sharing of goods, and, to be anachronistic, a thoughtful political theology rooted in particular practices of pacifism. Anabaptists are far from perfect, but they do not lack a doctrine of creation. It's just not one that's discernible through Dutch neo-Calvinist eyes.

The following chapter is an insightful tour of some highlights of the Modern Period with welcome attention to the wrongly neglected Johann Georg Hamann (pp. 75–80). In a clear and concise account of interpretations of Genesis 1 and the entanglement of God, creation, and science, Ashford and Bartholomew describe five positions that depend on "the conclusions of modern science" (p. 98). They then espouse a "literary framework theory" represented by Lee Irons and Meredith Kline, which argues that Genesis 1 reveals "three creation kingdoms" (days 1–3) and "three creation kings" (days 4–6). The picture is completed on day 7 when "God establishes himself as King on the Sabbath" (p. 98). This is filled out in the authors' later chapter on Genesis 1: the three creation kingdoms are "light; sky/seas; land/vegetation;" the three creation kings are "luminaries; sea creatures/winged creatures; land animals/men" (*sic*, pp. 155–70). This chapter concludes with a foundational assertion:

In the twenty-first century, a full-orbed Irenaean doctrine of creation presents itself as a salient remedy for the ills of our modern and postmodern eras ... Among Christian traditions in the modern period, the Dutch neo-Calvinist tradition is, in our opinion, particularly fruitful in providing resources for a recovery and renewal of the Irenaean doctrine of creation. (p. 99)

Following from this, the authors "outline the broad contours of the neo-Calvinist view of creation in seven propositions ..." (p. 103). Most of these propositions are familiar and commonplace within Christian orthodoxy. But two require further comment. The sixth proposition states that "*sin and evil cannot corrupt God's good creation structurally or substantially*" (p. 102; italics theirs). There may be profound truth in this, but the question of corrupt structures must be clarified. How does a "Kuyperian approach" empower a critique of injustice and oppression in, for example, the over-familiar case of apartheid?

The concept of incorruptible structures cries out for further elucidation and glaring warnings against its abuse. The seventh proposition states that “*God’s restoration of creation will be an elevation and enhancement of creation in its original form*” (p. 102). Here the language seems to fall short of a full-orbed Irenaean doctrine of creation. Isn’t God’s restoration the *fulfillment and completion* of creation?

After these first chapters that establish the direction and tone for the book, the following chapters are remarkably comprehensive in doctrinal coverage and practical import. Most of the ground covered is traditional, but the authors’ discussions are lively and well argued. They proceed mostly by engaging the works of others, so readers of these chapters will receive an education in the scholarly world of the doctrine of creation. One welcome contribution, among others, is an entire chapter devoted to “The Heavenly Realm,” which retrieves this inescapable biblical teaching and guards against “over-spiritualizing” (pp. 202–22).

Throughout the book, the authors maintain their commitment to biblical exegesis. They do this through engagement with the work of other scholars, which occasionally threatens to overshadow the biblical text itself. Like the rest of us heirs of modernity, they struggle to achieve what Oswald Bayer says of Hamann: “Scripture interprets me and not I scripture” (p. 77). Still, their determination to be faithful to the biblical narrative as they “do theology” is one to emulate.

Their commitment to exegetically grounded theology is fully displayed in a chapter devoted to Genesis 1. As they engage critically with other scholars, they lay out the foundations of their doctrine of creation. The chapter concludes with an exposition of creation order in the Kuyperian tradition. For the authors, “Creation order is good news!” (p. 173), allowing for the flourishing of life. Injustice only appears against the backdrop of this order. They conclude the chapter with one of their many in-text excurses, asserting that “at the heart of the biblical metanarrative stands the cross, which alerts us to the grace of the biblical story and its resistance to violent coercion” (p. 174).

Here, a number of questions arise. How can the crucifixion of a Galilean peasant on a hill outside Jerusalem sometime around AD 33, be part of a

metanarrative? Doesn’t its particularity preclude that? Don’t we need some other language? Would “Christ is Lord” suffice? How might their account of creation order change if the crucifixion was indeed at the heart of their account? Are there forms of coercion that are not violent? If so, does the biblical story resist those? Is “resistance” strong enough to represent the relationship between the story and violence?

The following chapter, “Place, Plants, Animals, Humans, and Creation,” covers a wide range of topics grounded in exegetical theology that leads to changed disposition. This excellent chapter brings together all the strengths of the book: its biblical exegesis, theological maturity, and practices grounded in the first two.

In the chapters that follow, Ashford and Bartholomew cover a lot of ground and give direction from “the Kuyperian tradition.” This is evident in their discussions of sin, common grace, culture making, and providence, among other things. Culture making (in chapter 9, “Creation and Culture”) takes on particular importance in their account. It occurs in “spheres” that “have their own integrity and function according to unique, God-given principles” (p. 267). But like some of their earlier accounts of creation order, true relationality is mostly missing. Culture doesn’t occur in spheres; it occurs in messy, boundary-crossing relationships between God, humans, nonhuman creation, and self. Yes, God is sovereign over all of life, but it is a relational sovereignty, not a spherical and principled sovereignty. Moreover, one could easily conclude that culture making, as in the Kuyperian tradition, is the main calling of human beings. Missional witness to Jesus Christ by the body of Christ is offstage. It is possible to see the so-called cultural mandate of Genesis 1:26–31 as our missional mandate, in which case the wholistic calling envisioned by a “cultural mandate” is really a full, biblical practice of the missional mandate of Genesis 1. The calling is lived out in the healing of relationships under the condition of fallenness through the crucifixion of the one “through whom and for whom all things have been created,” and in obedience to the Great Commission and Great Commandment.

Perhaps one striking indication of the absence of a robust account of relationality is the rare appearance of the Holy Spirit in the book, especially a book that aspires to be trinitarian. This may also account for

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the relatively minor role that the people of God play in the authors' exposition.

Even in a lengthy review such as this, I have not adequately represented the breadth and depth of this book. The authors manage to comment, often at length and in depth, on an enormous range of life, which, of course, the doctrine of creation comprehends.

My criticisms of this book (I have more!) are a sign of my deep respect for and learning from Ashford and Bartholomew. Critical matters for the life and witness of God's people are at stake in the development of a mature, robust conversation about the doctrine of creation and living it out. Bruce Ashford and Craig Bartholomew articulate a mature, robust, Irenaean doctrine of creation reshaped by Dutch neo-Calvinism that should be a part of a larger conversation and urgent action as we seek to bear witness to the One Creator and Redeemer in these times.

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RAMIFIED NATURAL THEOLOGY IN SCIENCE AND RELIGION: Moving Forward from Natural Theology by Rodney Holder. New York: Routledge, 2021. 244 pages. Hardcover; \$160.00. ISBN: 9780367373191.

"Natural theology" is the study of what can be learned about God from a consideration of the universe of nature, and it has often been used to support claims of God's existence. The theologian Richard Swinburne applied Bayesian probability theory to various aspects of natural theology in order to present a justification for God's existence that could be evaluated numerically. Such a method has a certain objectivity about it, he felt. Moreover, it can be applied further to support the specific claims of the Christian faith through a similar treatment of historical facts given in the Bible. This latter effort he called "ramified natural theology," and it is the subject of the present book by Rodney Holder, who held a DPhil from Oxford in astrophysics before being ordained into the Anglican ministry.

This approach to Christian teaching is to be contrasted with those that are based on taking the scriptures as doctrinally authoritative in themselves, as exem-

plified by the position of Karl Barth. With ramified natural theology, the scriptures must be regarded as historical documents written in good faith by the authors of the time—just as any historian would normally assume about any historical documents—but with the proviso that supernatural events such as miracles are to be accepted as possible. That is something that academic historians will not allow, and it marks a key difference between the two disciplines. Arguing from a historic basis of the scriptures is, of course, not new. What is more innovative is to combine this with a consideration of natural theology, and to use a common analytical technique such as Bayesian theory to assign overall probabilities to the truths of central Christian beliefs.

Bayesian probability theory is a well-established technique. A good illustration would be of a doctor who is visited by a patient displaying symptoms that could come from one of several diseases. But which one? It is known from published statistics what is the a priori probability for a given citizen to have each of these diseases, and the probability for each of them to give the reported set of symptoms. From this information, the doctor can multiply the numbers together to obtain the relative probabilities that the patient has each of the possible diseases. The Bayesian formula allows the doctor to quantify the relative importance of each symptom and find the most likely diagnosis.

This approach can also be used to give believability estimates for more-abstract propositions. For each alternative proposition under consideration we must propose an a priori believability, taken to resemble a probability. We then consider the likelihood that each of the propositions could give rise to a set of given observations, and we finally apply the Bayesian formula. This may persuade us that one initial proposition is much more believable than another, but it does depend on the formation of numerical estimates of believability. These might be objective numbers that we do not know very well, or they may be intrinsically subjective in nature. It seems to me that the most important cases are unavoidably subjective, but quantifying one's degree of belief may be helpful in order to make progress.

Holder applies this type of analysis to the philosopher David Hume's skeptical evaluation of miracles.