



Reflections

A BRI Newsletter

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Biblical Research Institute

PURPOSE

Reflections is the official newsletter of the Biblical Research Institute of the General Conference. It seeks to share information concerning doctrinal and theological developments among Adventists and to foster doctrinal and theological unity in the world church. Its intended audience is church administrators, church leaders, pastors, and teachers.

NEWS AND COMMENTS

BRI NEWSLETTER AND PASTORS IN THE NORTH AMERICA DIVISION

The North American Division has started to prepare a CD-ROM and a DVD called "The Pastor's DVD" which will be sent out four times a year to all the pastors of this Division. The CD-ROM will include the BRI Newsletter Reflections. We appreciate having this opportunity to reach all of our pastors in this Division.

GEOSCIENCE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (GRI) VIDEO

The Biblical Research Institute and the Geoscience Research Institute (GRI) work together in a committee called BRISCO (Biblical Research Institute Science Council). Therefore, our News and Comments will also contain valuable information provided by GRI.

The work on the GRI video on fossils has been completed. Entitled "Evidences II: The Tale of a Trilobite", the video focuses on four trends in the fossil record: Design, Complexity, Polyphyly and Mass Mortalities. The run time for the video is approximately 45 minutes. Hundreds of fossils found around the world and photographed from locations in Colorado, Utah, Washington, Arizona and from numerous museums star in this educational film. We trust this video will be a valuable teaching tool for schools and churches and will strengthen faith in

the creation account. The GRI webpage is <http://www.grisda.org>.

FLYING SERPENTS AND FOUR-WINGED DINOSAURS

The Bible only mentions flying serpents twice, both times as prophetic beasts in Isaiah (Isa14:29; 30:6). Despite the apparent paucity of Biblical evidence, Seventh-day Adventists have embraced the idea that snakes flew until God cursed them after the fall (PP 53). It would seem that evidence of flying reptiles would be attractive to traditional Bible believing Adventists. Despite this, since the recent publication of a paper describing four-winged dinosaur fossils from China, correspondence containing confident predictions that the fossil in question must be a forgery has piled up in my mailbox.

It is true that forgery is a concern when it comes to feathered dinosaurs. During 1999 National Geographic published an article based on a fraudulently constructed fossil, then had to retract it in humiliating fashion (C. P. Sloan, "Feathers for T. Rex?," National Geographic 196/5 (1999): 98-107). The possibility of forgery should be investigated as a normal part of good science. However, predicting that all feathered dinosaurs are forgeries as if the Genesis creation requires this is disturbing. The Biblical account of creation makes no such prediction. Insisting that the Bible requires fakery in the four-winged dinosaur fossils from China has potential to cause serious

confusion.

Sometimes Christians in their zeal to fight “the enemy” get drawn into positions that ultimately hurt our cause. In reality, we as believers in the Biblical creation can view the data with greater objectivity than our evolutionist friends because we have no need for “missing links” to bolster our belief that life was created. Our interest in nature stems from an interest in the gift our Creator gave us, and what it can tell us about Him. Creationists don’t need nature to confirm a theory about the origin of life; nature is studied as a revelation of the Creator we already know. When this is forgotten, our motivation becomes reactionary and those who have a different view of life and our place in it suddenly drive the agenda for discussion.

So, is the four-winged dinosaur from China real? Authors of the paper describing it in *Nature* give some reason for caution (X. Xu, Z. Zhou, X. Wang, X. Kuang, F. Xhang, X. Du, “Four-winged dinosaurs from China,” *Nature* 41 (2003): 335-340). The best examples were purchased in an area where forgery of feathered dinosaur fossils has occurred in the past. Data for evaluating the fossil’s validity is provided in the *Nature* article. These particular fossils came from rocks containing fossil birds exhibiting all the major traits of birds today (L. M. Chiappe, “The first 85 million years of avian evolution,” *Nature* 378 (1995): 349-355; E. N. Kurochkin, “Synopsis of Mesozoic birds and early evolution of class Aves,” *Archaeopteryx* 13 (1995): 47-66); in fact, even earlier bird fossils may have been found (S. Chatterjee, “The Triassic bird Protoavis,” *Archaeopteryx* 13 (1995): 15-31). If birds lived before and at the same time as feathered dinosaurs, they cannot be missing ancestral links between dinosaurs and birds. Unfortunately, many scientists feel under significant pressure to declare them “missing links” and this complicates the task of evaluating what has actually been found. Scientists who believe in Biblical creation are under no such pressure and may even see fossils of this type fitting perfectly with the first three chapters of Genesis.

Timothy G. Standish, GRI

SAMUELE BACCHIOCCHI’S THEOLOGICAL VIEWS

Last year Dr. Samuele Bacchiocchi distributed through his website a series of studies dealing with prophetic events, the role of Islam in prophecy, and the role of E. G. White as a prophet, that raised questions in the mind of many of his readers with respect to his commitment to the Adventist views on those subjects. We received so many letters that we decided to ask Dr. Bacchiocchi himself for clarification in order to rep-

resent him correctly when answering the queries. He addressed the issues and provided a short letter to be made available to those interested in his reaction to the concerns expressed by many. We have abridged the letter and obtained his approval to make it available to church administrators and those interested in the subject.

November 23- 2003

Angel Manuel Rodríguez, Director
Biblical Research Institute of the GC
12501 Old Columbia Pike
Silver Spring, MD 20904-6600

Dear Dr. Rodríguez:

Thank you for your gracious letter of October 29 where you reply to my lengthy 13 page letter of October 15. You suggested that I prepare a shorter letter, summarizing my previous lengthy letter, for the following stated purpose: “I will be delighted to send it to those who are inquiring about you and circulate it among our church administrators interested in this issue.” In accordance with your suggestion, I am submitting this shorter response.

Before replying briefly to your concerns, I wish to reassure you and our church administrators, that I am not drifting away from Adventist teachings. On the contrary, I am a deeply committed Adventist and through the years I have paid a high price for standing for our traditional Adventist beliefs and practices. For the sake of brevity and clarity, I will briefly respond to the concerns you have expressed, following your listing.

1. THE HOLY DAYS. I have never observed or promoted the literal observance of the ancient Feasts of Israel. The documentation I submitted in my previous lengthy letter satisfied you, since you wrote: “Thank you for clarifying beyond any reasonable doubt that you are not promoting the observance of the Israelite feasts in any way. This is helpful to those of us who are dealing with churches divided over this issue.” The aim of the two volumes on GOD’S FESTIVALS is simply to show how the feasts of Israel reveal the unfolding of the Plan of Salvation. All that I have proposed is to remember in our church calendar the major events of the Plan of Salvation typified by the annual Holy Days. In accordance with your suggestion, I have placed a disclaimer in the reprint of the FALL FESTIVALS, saying: “This book does not promote the literal observance of the Feasts of Israel. Rather, it proposes to remember during the course of the year the redemptive acts of the Plan of Salvation

typified by the Feasts.” I will place a similar disclaimer in my next ENDTIME ISSUES newsletter.

2. THE DAY OF ATONEMENT. I firmly believe that the investigative judgment began in 1844 and that it is clearly connected with the typology of the Day of Atonement. This is what I have taught for 32 years in my college classes. My suggestion to broaden the typological basis of the investigative judgment, by including the Feast of Trumpets, is intended not to weaken, but to strengthen our doctrine of the investigative judgment.

The fact that throughout Jewish history to this very day, the trumpets have been blown on the Feast of Trumpets, known today as Rosh Hashannah, to announce the beginning of the judgment process that terminates 10 days later on the Day of Atonement, suggests the possibility that the judgment process begins with the Feast of Trumpets and terminates on the Day of Atonement. Support for this suggestion can be found in Revelation 11:18-19, where the blowing of the seventh trumpet, which corresponds to the Feast of Trumpets, ushers in the time of judgment.

3. THE 1260 DAYS PROPHECY. I fully accept the Adventist church’s interpretation that the three and one half times/1260 days dominion of the Little Horn in Daniel 7 and of the Beast in Revelation 13, applies primarily to the prophetic role of the papacy in promoting false worship and persecuting God’s people. The issue is not the prophetic role of the papacy, but whether all the seven prophecies of the three and one half times/1260 days/42 months apply EXCLUSIVELY to the period of papal supremacy between 538 to 1798 or do they include also other anti-god powers, like Islam, that have persecuted God’s people and promoted false worship? Furthermore, Do the dates of 538 and 1798 really support the respective establishment and downfall of papal supremacy, as taught in our Adventist literature?

My recent preliminary study of the seven texts (Dan 7:25; 12:7; Rev 11:2; 11:3; 12:3; 12:6; 13:5) mentioning this prophetic period, has been very informative. For example, I was surprised to note that the termination point of these seven prophecies is the judgment and the establishment of God’s Kingdom—events that transcend 1798. Similarly, the historical events associated with 538 make it difficult to attribute to this date the establishment of papal supremacy. The problems associated with our traditional biblical interpretation and historical application of this prophetic period cannot be addressed by one or two independent scholars. Only a commission duly appointed by the General Conference can undertake such a task.

4. THE PROPHETIC ROLE OF ELLEN WHITE. There is no doubt in my mind that Ellen White fulfilled

a unique prophetic role in the origin and development of our Adventist church. We are indebted to her for the uniqueness of our message and mission. Her prophetic gift, manifested especially through her writings, continues to enrich spiritually the lives of millions of fellow believers around the world. The issue is not whether or not Ellen White had the gift of prophecy. To me it is abundantly clear that she was the recipient of this divine gift. Rather, the issue is, How do we deal with the inaccuracies found in her writings? While she was alive, she supervised the revision of *The Great Controversy* in 1911. She specifically asked people to point out any correction that needed to be made. The problem is that there are still corrections that need to be made.

In closing, let me express my gratitude for the opportunity you have granted me to clarify some questions that have been raised regarding my writings. Let me reassure you, Brother Rodríguez, that I fully share your commitment and concern for the unity of our Adventist church. We must work together to protect our church from divisive teachings and influences, but at the same time we must strengthen the biblical and historical credibility of our teachings. May God grant us the wisdom and grace to accomplish this task.

Warmest Christian regards,

Samuele Bacchiocchi

Comments:

The letter by Samuele Bacchiocchi is quite clear and each reader would have to decide whether he or she is fully satisfied or not. Since the letter does include some elements of disagreement with traditional Adventist teachings it would be useful to make some comments on its content.

A brief comment on point 3. According to Adventist prophetic interpretation the little horn of Dan 7 *exclusively* represents the papacy. The problem of the dates for the beginning and ending of the 1260 years—538 and 1798 respectively—was studied by the Daniel and Revelation Committee and the dates were re-affirmed (see, C. Mervyn Maxwell, “Roman Catholicism and the United States,” *Symposium on Revelation*, vol. 2, edited by Frank B. Holbrook [Silver Spring, MD: Biblical Research Institute, 1992], pp. 67-132). Nevertheless, we have recently asked one of our scholars to look once more at the historical evidence.

We should also mention that in Dan 7 the exact date for the beginning of the judgment is not given. The text indicates that at some point after the end of the 1260

years the court was to sit in judgment. Concerning the Feast of Trumpets, the connection of this Feast—a one day feast—with the Day of Atonement is not clearly stated in the Bible. One can only suggest that during the Feast of Trumpets the people were alerted to or reminded of the fact that in ten days the day of atonement as a day of judgment and cleansing would arrive.

The role of E. G. White and the possibility of factual errors in her writings have been satisfactorily addressed by the E. G. White Estate, and documents dealing with those issues can be found on their website (<http://www.whiteestate.org>).

Angel M. Rodríguez, BRI

FOCUS ON SCRIPTURE

WHY DID THE SPIRIT OF GOD LEAD JESUS INTO THE WILDERNESS (MATT 4:1)?

The first verse of the temptation narrative contains the strange remark that Jesus was led by the Spirit into the wilderness in order to be tempted by the devil. Obviously the Spirit is the same “Spirit of God” who had just been mentioned in Matthew 3:16 and who descended on Jesus when he was baptized. This is puzzling. Why would God’s Spirit lead Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted, and did God use Satan as his instrument to tempt Jesus?

The following suggestion is made: In order to understand Matthew 4:1, one has to recognize that Jesus was not just a kind of second Moses repeating to a certain degree the experience of Moses (Deut 18:15; Acts 3:17-26; John 6:1-15). Jesus also had to cover the ground where Israel had walked. He had to repeat Israel’s experience to gain the victory where historical Israel had failed. The Spirit of God led Jesus in the desert for forty days (4:2) in order for him to experience what Israel had experienced in the wilderness for forty years.

Evidence for this conclusion is provided by Jesus’ response to the first temptation. When Satan demanded from Jesus to prove his divine sonship by turning stones into bread, since he was hungry (4:2-3), Jesus replied: “Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” (4:4, NASB). Jesus in quoting Deuteronomy 8:3 referred to the context of Deuteronomy 8. Deuteronomy 8 is located between the proclamation of the Decalogue (Deut 5) and the report on the rewriting of the two tablets of the Decalogue (Deut 10). At issue are the covenant, obedience, faithfulness, and love towards the Lord. Deuteronomy 8:1-6 refers back to Israel’s wilderness experience:

“All the commandments that I am commanding you today you shall be careful to do, that you may live and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the LORD swore to give to your forefathers. You shall remember all the ways which the LORD your God has led you in the wilderness these forty years, that He might humble you, testing you, to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not. He humbled you and let you be hungry, and fed you with manna which you did not know, nor did your fathers know, that he might make you understand that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the LORD. Your clothing did not wear out on you, nor did your foot swell these forty years. Thus you are to know in your heart that the LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son. Therefore, you shall keep the commandments of the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him.” (NASB)

The correspondence between Matthew 4:1-4 and Deuteronomy 8:1-6 is interesting. Not only are Deuteronomy 8:3b and Matthew 4:4 identical but additionally, a number of common words are found in both records, namely “to tempt/test,” “desert,” and “forty.” The idea of being hungry is also present. Obviously, Jesus quoted from Deuteronomy 8 in order to point to the similarity between his and Israel’s experience. Israel was tested by God in order to prove its commitment, obedience, and love to the Lord. Israel failed. Jesus took its place and succeeded.

The responses to the second and third Matthean temptation are taken from Deuteronomy 6 and also remind us of Israel. First, although God may test his people, humans are not supposed to test God (Mt 4:7; Deut 6:16). Reference is made to the incident at Masah. Furthermore, God offers the promised land to Israel (Deut 6:10-11). Israel is called not to forget the Lord and to “fear only the LORD your God” and “worship him” (Deut 6:12-13). Satan offers the kingdoms of the world to Jesus (Mt 4:8-9). Jesus responds with Deuteronomy 6:13 and decides to worship and serve God alone.

The temptation narrative seems to emphasize that Jesus represents Israel. Moved by the Holy Spirit he went over the same ground that Israel had covered previously. When he passed the test it was evident that Jesus was totally committed to the Lord and rightfully called “My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased”

(Mt 3:17). Even in difficult times his love toward the Father surpassed the gratification of physical needs, emotional desires, and rational deliberations. In his perfect obedience he was the real servant of the Lord who would not only set a perfect example to be imitated by his followers, but even more so was the lamb without blemish that was able to take away humanity's sins.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

SCRIPTURE APPLIED

This is our second Bible study. It can be used by pastors and lay persons when meeting with people who are interested in studying Scripture.

WHO IS THIS MAN JESUS?

Many people have heard about Jesus. Some believe that he was a good man, others that he was a prophet, still others that he was the founder of a new religion. And some accept him as their Savior and Lord. Already in the times of Jesus the opinions varied (Mt 16:13-14).

I. Jesus' Claims

In the New Testament many amazing claims about Jesus are found. But Jesus himself made also some interesting statements about himself.

- (1) John 5:25-27 – He is the Son of God and the Son of Man and will raise the dead.
- (2) John 6:47-48 – He provides eternal life for those who believe in him.
- (3) John 10:30-33 – Jesus is one with God the Father.
- (4) John 14:6 – Jesus is the only way to God, truth personified, and life.
- (5) John 17:5 – Jesus lived with God before creation.
- (6) John 18:37 – Jesus is King.
- (7) Mk 14:61-62 – Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. He sits at the right hand of God and will come back on the clouds.
- (8) Mt 28:19-20 – Jesus is with us always, even to the end of the age.

This is not a comprehensive list. But it tells us: Although Jesus was a human being, he claimed to be God's Son, who became man in order to save us. He is God and creator (John 1:1-3), judge and king, and will come again.

II. Reactions of His Audiences

While Jesus and his claims were rejected by a num-

ber of his contemporaries (John 7:46-49), there were others who believed in him:

- (1) Mk 15:39 – A Gentile, namely a Roman centurion.
- (2) Mt 16:16 – Peter, one of his disciples.
- (3) John 11:27 – Martha, a woman who followed him.
- (4) John 20:25-28 – Thomas, a sceptic.
- (5) Rom 9:5
Col 2:9 – Paul who had persecuted the Christians and denied the Lordship of Jesus.

Jesus has shaped this planet and has changed the life on it in a remarkable way. He has influenced it more than all armies that ever marched, all kings and rulers that ever reigned, and all inventions that were ever made. He left us his commandment of love, his exemplary life, and above all he saved us. More books are written about him, more pictures and sculptures manufactured portraying him, more music composed to honor him than any other person that walked on this planet. Even time is reckoned from him.

III. Evidences for the Validity of His Claims

Centuries before his birth Old Testament prophets made detailed predictions about the Messiah to come. It is said that there are more than 300 such predictions which were fulfilled in Jesus. Most of them Jesus could not have fulfilled himself even if he had wanted to. The predictions include his genealogy, place of birth, year of the beginning of his public ministry, triumphal entry in Jerusalem, speaking in parables, performing miracles, his rejection, betrayal, being abused and mocked, his crucifixion, year of death, his death in our place, burial, and resurrection. Here are some examples:

- (1) Micah 5:1; –
Prediction: 8th century B.C., Bethlehem as the place of birth.
Mt 2:1,5,6;
Lk 2:1-7 –
Fulfillment: God used the Roman emperor Augustus for the fulfillment of the prophecy, because shortly before her delivery Mary and Joseph were still in Nazareth.
- (2) Zech 9:9: –
Prediction: 6th century B.C., triumphal entry.
Mt 21:1-9;
Mk 11:7 –
Fulfillment: Jesus enters Jerusalem.

- (3) Zech 11:12-13 –
 Prediction: Thirty shekels of silver to be paid for the Lord.
 Mt 26:15;
 27:3-7 –
 Fulfillment: Jesus is betrayed for exactly thirty shekels of silver, Judas threw the money into the temple.
- (4) Ps 22:16-19 –
 Prediction: 10th century B.C., crucifixion.
 John 20:25;
 19:23-24
 Fulfillment: Jesus was crucified, and his clothes were distributed.
- (5) Ex 12:46 –
 Prediction: c. 16th century B.C., no bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken.
 John 19:31-36 –
 Fulfillment: Jesus' bones were not broken. The Passover lamb was a symbol for Jesus (John 1:29)

IV. Jesus and I

The Old Testament prophecies were fulfilled in Jesus and in him alone. He is what he had claimed, the Messiah, the Son of God, but especially our Savior (John 3:16). We are asked to recognize him as such and believe in him.

Ekkehardt Mueller, BRI

BOOK NOTES

Stefanovic, Ranko. *Revelation of Jesus Christ*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2002. 654 pp. \$39.99.

Ranko Stefanovic is an associate professor of New Testament at Andrews University. His commentary on the Book of Revelation is the first serious attempt to exegete the text of the book from an Adventist perspective since the publication of the SDA Bible Commentary in 1957. Volumes 6 and 7 of the Daniel and Revelation Committee Series (published by the Biblical Research Institute) deal exegetically with several chapters of the book of Revelation, but Stefanovic has undertaken to exegete the text of the whole book. In this respect his commentary is a milestone in the history of Adventist biblical scholarship.

As is common to many scholarly commentaries, the lengthy introduction (50 pages) deals with such topics as authorship, place and date of writings, the purpose

of the book, methods of interpretation as well as guidelines for interpreting the book. The introduction also has a section on the symbolic nature of the book and deals quite extensively with the literary arrangement of Revelation.

Apart from the prologue (1:1-8) and the epilogue (22:6-21) sections, Stefanovic divides the book into three parts: The messages to the seven churches (1:9-3:22); the opening of the sealed scroll (4:1-11:19), and the content of the seven-sealed scroll (12:1-22:5). As can be seen from this outline, the seven-sealed scroll plays a major role in Stefanovic's understanding of the book. He compares it with the OT book of the covenant that was stored next to the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:24-26) and says, "Only a portion of the sealed scroll was revealed to John in Revelation 10 in the symbolic form of the little scroll. John now [in chaps. 12-22] passes on to the churches the contents of the sealed scroll that were disclosed to him" (p. 367).

The organization of the commentary follows the major thematic sections of the book. Each section has an introductory chapter dealing with general matters important for the interpretation of that particular passage. The analysis of each section begins with the author's own translation of the Greek text followed by notes, including scholarly discussions, on key words and phrases. The verse-by-verse exposition of each chapter is rounded out by a concluding "retrospect" section which summarizes the findings and explains the relationship each chapter has to what follows.

Adventist and non-Adventist readers will greatly benefit from the exegetical insights this commentary provides on the text of Revelation. However, many Adventist readers will be disappointed by some of the conclusions Stefanovic reaches in his interpretation, and by the fact that some traditional Adventist interpretations are missing. For example, like S. Bacchiocchi, Stefanovic (p. 93) believes that the "Lord's day" in 1:10 is the eschatological day of the Lord rather than the Sabbath day as Seventh-day Adventists, based on Ellen White's statement in *Acts of the Apostles*, page 581, have traditionally held. In the interpretation of the 1260 days and 42 months Stefanovic follows H. LaRondelle and applies this prophetic time period of 1260 years to the persecution of God's people during the Middle Ages without "being dogmatic about precise date-fixings in church history" (p. 338). Readers, therefore, will not find the traditional Adventist dates 538 A.D. or 1798 A.D. in the book. Neither will they find a clear statement that the sea beast in 13:1 is the papacy, though there are several references to the "political-religious" or "Medieval ecclesiastical power" (pp. 407, 411, 412) which can only refer to the papacy. Yet, he does say that "applying the

seventh head of the sea beast to the Medieval ecclesiastical power alone is inadequate” (p. 412). Hence he applies it also to the “Protestant orthodoxy in the Western world during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, characterized by religious intolerance” (ibid.). The land beast, however, is clearly identified as the United States (p. 423), with the caveat that “the full disclosure of the meaning of the land monster still awaits us” (p. 424). At times, Seventh-day Adventist views are introduced with phrases like “some suggest” (p. 132), “some understand” (p. 143), or “Seventh-day Adventist Christians have seen” (p. 331) which makes one wonder whether the author himself believes what follows or whether he is simply reporting the Adventist position.

Nevertheless, despite some interpretative weaknesses, Stefanovic’s volume fills a long standing need for a good exegetical Seventh-day Adventist commentary on Revelation. It will remain the standard Seventh-day Adventist work on Revelation for many years to come, and will be a help to all who are serious in their endeavor to understand the book of Revelation. For Seventh-day Adventists such an understanding is important, because “when the books of Daniel and Revelation are better understood, believers will have an entirely different religious experience. They will be given such glimpses of the open gates of heaven that heart and mind will be impressed with the character that all must develop in order to realize the blessedness which is to be the reward of the pure in heart” (TM 114).

Gerhard Pfandl, BRI

Goldstein, Clifford. *God, Gödel, and Grace*. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 2003. 111 pp. \$ 11.99.

If the maxim is true that good things come in small packages, then it will be reinforced by this latest in Clifford Goldstein’s series of publications. Multiplied thousands have appreciated Goldstein’s writings, and

here he leads us into what will be new territory, even uncharted waters for some.

With this book he exposes us for the first time to the extraordinary depth that underlies his understanding and his special gift for expression. Tapping levels of thought rarely explored in Adventist publications, and with chapters averaging only about 10 pages’ length, he challenges a jaded generation to face up to the real core questions of existence that underlie all that we are in everyday life. What should we think about God, life, death, and eternity? Here he uncovers the germinal level of how we think that gives form to all knowledge, whether gained from our environment or from the Scriptures themselves.

This book is not designed for the superficial skimmer, for virtually every sentence carries a gem of understanding worthy of attention. It is rich in insights and well worth the time invested in reading carefully. With allusions and illustrations drawn from literary, philosophical, and scientific figures he leads us through the chief questions in the search for meaning. He wrestles with the world that shapes what we see constantly in print, our educational systems, the electronic media, and entertainment.

As a guide coming from the land of faith, Goldstein leads us through a minefield of dead ends to cope with that giant generator of all doubt, the brooding presence of evil in a world made by a God who presents Himself as altogether good. Goldstein’s answer well surpasses the pallid solution offered in Rabbi Kushner’s best selling *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*. This new book from Goldstein will enrich its readers, both believing Christians with a depth of thought and seekers looking for a reason to believe even in a world filled with contradictions.

George W. Reid, BRI

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