



## PREFACE

This book began life as a series of Sunday School lectures for the adults in my church. At the time, there were significant debates surrounding the length of the days of creation in the Reformed community and I thought that a study on Genesis 1–3 would be helpful for the congregation.

In my lecture preparation I continually found myself turning back and forth between the books of Genesis and Revelation in an effort to understand what was occurring in the seemingly straightforward but nonetheless mysterious first three chapters of the Bible. The more I studied these chapters the more I realized the importance of interpreting them as the New Testament authors did – with a view to Christ and eschatology. In other words, – why is Christ called the ‘last Adam’? That he is the ‘last’ is most assuredly connected with the end, with eschatology, and that he is called ‘Adam’ ties Jesus to the first man. I would soon tell my Sunday School class and later my RTS students that Genesis 1–3 is the most familiar but ironically unfamiliar terrain in all of Scripture.

Many come to the chapters thinking they know what occurs therein – creation, man, fall – and they then move along never realizing that they have entered the shadowlands, the land of the types of Christ and his work. This book represents my efforts to explain Genesis 1–3 in the light of Christ and eschatology.

Hopefully this book, which is ultimately a work of biblical theology, will be a contribution towards





## LAST THINGS FIRST

demonstrating that, as Geerhardus Vos once wrote, ‘Dogmatics is the crown which grows out of all the work that Biblical Theology can accomplish.’ Hopefully this book will help to ‘demonstrate that the fundamental doctrines of our faith do not rest, as many would fain believe, on an arbitrary exposition of some isolated proof-texts. It will not so much prove these doctrines, as it will do what is far better than proof – make them grow out organically before our eyes from the stem of revelation.’<sup>1</sup> In other words, the case made in this book will demonstrate the validity of the systematic theological constructs of the covenants of works and grace, a common staple of historic Reformed dogmatics. To this end, this book is not intended as a replacement for but an aid to systematic theology, to be read in tandem with a theological work like that of Louis Berkhof.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to recent trends, biblical studies is not antithetical to systematic theology.

Books are never written in a vacuum, and to that end I have many people to thank for their assistance in seeing its publication. I want to thank many friends and colleagues who read early drafts of portions of this book and provided helpful comments: John Muether, Bill Dennison, and Samuel Bray. I also want to thank those who were willing to allow me to bludgeon them with the entire manuscript and who provided me with helpful comments and interaction: Bryan Estelle, Dick Gaffin, Wally King, and Dave VanDrunen. I am also grateful to the adult Sunday School class at Geneva OPC for their attentiveness over nine months of Sunday mornings going through this material, to my RTS-Atlanta hermeneutics class in the Spring of 2004 and several

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<sup>1</sup>Geerhardus Vos, ‘The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline,’ in Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., ed., *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1980), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: New Combined Edition* (1932-38; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996).



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classes of systematic students. I want to thank my session, Wally King and Bud Winslow, both for their encouragement to pursue the project and for the church's financial support through a generous book allowance. Geneva's generosity saved me countless hours of sitting in Atlanta traffic where I could instead research in the quiet confines of my study and mark up the books that I had purchased. I want to thank Malcolm Maclean, my editor, and the editorial staff at Christian Focus for all of their hard work in getting this book to press. None of these people deserve the blame for any of the deficiencies in this book; the credit for any deficiency belongs to me alone. Their help, nevertheless, is greatly appreciated.

This book was originally titled *Protology*, but my wife thought it sounded too much like 'proctology', and my editor also thought it was too technical. I therefore enlisted the help of my mother-in-law, Linda Jones, who surveyed Sunday lunch-time guests for ideas and was able to come up with the much better title of, *Last Things First*, from WTS student Jason Kirklin. So, I owe thanks to my mother-in-law for that valiant effort in rescuing my book from an obscure and boring title! I would also like to thank my parents and my brother and his wife for their love, prayers, and support. I would like to thank my wife, Anneke, for helping me socialize many of the ideas in the book and who is a constant source of encouragement, love, and much joy. It is to you, wife, that I dedicate this book. I pray that this book edifies the church, the bride of Christ, and brings glory to the eschatological Adam, Jesus Christ. *Soli Deo Gloria*.