

THE TRINITY REVIEW

For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare [are] not fleshly but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. And they will be ready to punish all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled.

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Copyright 2003 John W. Robbins Post Office Box 68, Unicoi, Tennessee 37692

Email: Jrob1517@aol.com

Website: www.trinityfoundation.org

Telephone: 423.743.0199

Fax: 423.743.2005

The Shroud of Turin

John W. Robbins

Editor's Note: This essay is the Introduction to Gordon Clark's book, Three Types of Religious Philosophy.

Three Types of Religious Philosophy may be a forbidding title to most Americans, including many American Christians, who are not interested in philosophy. Perhaps they think that philosophy is for scholars, those sheltered residents of ivory towers who do not have to deal with the "real world." Perhaps they simply feel overwhelmed by the difficulty of the arguments.

Still worse, they may ask, What has Christianity to do with philosophy? Does not the Apostle Paul warn us not to be deceived by philosophy? Surely we have better things to do than read about philosophy, let alone three different types. Why, then, a book by this title?

To reply: Just as all men speak prose whether they know it or not, so all men, not simply philosophers, have a philosophy. There is no possibility of a rational being not having a philosophy. And if all men speak prose, the question is not prose or no prose; the only question is whether they shall speak it correctly or not. Similarly the question is not philosophy or no philosophy; the only question is whether a man's philosophy shall be correct or not.

Second, Paul warns us very strongly, not against all philosophy – that would be even more absurd than urging men not to speak prose – but against unbiblical philosophy: "Beware lest anyone cheat

you through philosophy and empty deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ." Paul is warning us, not about all philosophy, but about non-Christian philosophy. Philosophy means the love of wisdom. Christ is the Wisdom of God, according to John and Proverbs, and true philosophy consists in the love of God.

There is, however, much confusion among both ordinary Christians and their leaders about philosophy. Many Christian leaders, in fact, teach philosophies according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.

Examples abound. Let me suggest just one: the belief that the shroud of Turin is the burial cloth of Christ. Many Protestants share Roman Catholicism's religious philosophy, empiricism, the notion that truth comes through the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, and perhaps a few more. (The empiricists have not yet furnished us with a complete list of the senses.) This empiricism, with its emphasis on the importance of experience, has led to a growing acceptance of relics and rituals, which appeal primarily to the senses. There is a great and growing abandonment of the intellectual Word in worship in favor of the empirical smells and bells of Roman, Episcopal, and Orthodox liturgy. Ritual and rote are fast replacing sermons and study in church.

One indication of the growing Protestant affinity for Rome's religious philosophy is the sympathetic reception the Catholic Church's claims about the shroud of Turin have received from certain Protestants. The Chairman of the Department of Philosophy at the Baptist, fundamentalist Liberty University, Gary Habermas, published a book in 1981 (actually a Roman Catholic publisher, Servant Books, published it) arguing that the shroud was, in fact, the burial cloth of Christ. He solemnly declared that "there is no practical possibility that someone other than Jesus was buried in the shroud."

Nor is Mr. Habermas' statement the only example of philosophical incompetence supporting religious superstition. A leader of the scientific team that investigated the shroud in October 1979, Thomas D'Muhala, a "born-again" Christian, also asserted, "Every one of the scientists I have talked to believes the cloth is authentic. Some say, maybe this is a love letter, a tool he left behind for the analytical mind."

In 1979, after a team of scientists had examined the shroud, a leading conservative lawyer in the "pro-family" movement had this to say about the shroud of Turin:

At long last, we have the proof demanded by the doubting Thomases. The proof is the Shroud in which the body of Jesus was wrapped, and is now preserved at Turin, Italy, in the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist.

A recent movie called *In Search of Historic Jesus* shows the Shroud and details its proof. The Shroud bears many scourge marks from the back of the body it wrapped. It shows marks of thick, tightly compressed long hair, gathered at the back of the neck, in the unique fashion of young Jewish men of the first century.

Even while he was announcing the results in the latest scientific tests showing that the shroud could be dated only to the fourteenth century, Cardinal Ballestro of Turin assured his audience that "the holy Shroud has produced miracles and continues to."

The front of the Shroud shows the wound in the side and the prints of the nails on both wrists – not through the hands, as portrayed on most crucifixes....

The thumbs are pulled tightly into the palms of the hands, in accordance with the reflex which medical science tells us would result from the nail wounds in the wrists. The knees appeared severely damaged as if from repeated falls.

Close examination reveals abrasions on the shoulder which could come from carrying the cross, The nose is broken and the beautiful face is disfigured by violence.

The body shown by the Shroud is muscular, and devoid of any excess weight. The body is estimated to have weighed 170 pounds and to have a height of 5 feet 11 inches. The man's age appears to be between 30 and 36 years, and the appearance is majestic.

There are eight independent puncture wounds of the scalp which could have been caused by the crowning of thorns....

The evidence of the murder of Jesus Christ is far greater than of Julius Caesar's murder by Brutus and others. We have no modern proof of the wounds which killed Caesar. We don't have the Shroud in which Caesar was buried.

We cannot match the accounts of Caesar's murder with his Shroud, as the accounts of the four Gospels perfectly match the body marks on the Holy Shroud....

The Shroud provides overwhelming proof of the accuracy of the Gospel's history of the crucifixion of Jesus.

Likewise, the Shroud gives proof of the Resurrection. The numerous experts who examined the Shroud within the last year, including all varieties of Christians, Jews, agnostics, and atheists, have concluded

that the body suddenly left it with a great burst of radiation-like energy....

The Shroud proves the most remarkable miracle in history.

Now the writer of those words, Phyllis Schlafly, is a well-educated lawyer and quite famous. She is a Roman Catholic who has preached at Thomas Road Baptist Church -- Jerry Falwell's church -- in Lynchburg, Virginia. She knows -- or rather, she ought to know -- that the shroud does not and cannot provide "overwhelming proof of the accuracy of the Gospels," and that it certainly does not "give proof of the Resurrection." But she is an empiricist, and thus is blind to the logical gaps in her argument. It is precisely such logical voids between premises and conclusions that characterize superstition.

But we need not restrict our charges of incompetence and superstition to lawyers and philosophy teachers. The infallible popes themselves have expressed their belief in the authenticity of the shroud. Nineteen popes have expressed their confidence in the authenticity of the shroud. Pope Paul VI called the shroud "The most important relic in the history of Christianity." Between 1472 and 1480, Pope Sixtus IV issued four bulls indicating that he believed the shroud to be worthy of the highest veneration. In 1506 Pope Julius II proclaimed the Feast of the Holy Shroud. In 1950, Pius XII addressed the First International Shroud Congress and expressed his wish that the participants at the Congress contribute even more zealously to spreading the knowledge and veneration of so "great and sacred a relic."

What has all this to do with religious philosophy? The case of the shroud of Turin graphically illustrates some of the matters at issue between empiricism, which is the dominant religious philosophy of the twentieth century, and Scripturalism, which is the Christian view.

A Scripturalist, that is, one who assumes what the Bible says is true as an axiom, a first principle, would have known from the start that the shroud of Turin was a fake. The Bible says quite clearly,

After this Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly, for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus; and Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took the body of Jesus. And Nicodemus, who at first came to Jesus by night, also came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred pounds.

Then they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in strips of linen with the spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury.....

Then Simon Peter came, following him, and went into the tomb; and he saw the linen cloths lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around his head, not lying with the linen cloths, but folded together in a place by itself.

A Scripturalist should not have been fooled by the shroud, and many were not. Christ's body was not covered by one strip of cloth, but wound with several (note the plural *cloths*), together with 100 pounds of spices. Furthermore, his head was wrapped separately from his body.

But an empiricist, one who believes that the evidence of the senses is more certain than the statements in the Bible, one who chooses the authority of the senses rather than the authority of God, might have been fooled, and many were. Some felt the shroud offered "overwhelming proof" of the death and resurrection of Christ. They have been embarrassed by the latest scientific tests -- empirical tests -- which seem to show that the shroud dates only to the fourteenth century, not the first. Liberty University's Department chairman, even after the latest scientific findings were made known, asserted that "if the shroud is authentic, it offers incredible[!] further proof of the Crucifixion, and possibly the Resurrection." This statement offers credible further proof that Mr. Habermas simply does not know what proof is.

The case of the shroud of Turin brings into focus the central issue in philosophy: the source of our knowledge. How do we know? Do we trust the authority of our senses (and of science)? Do we

trust the authority of the unaided human mind? Or do we trust God? Many professing Christians would agree with Aristotle that knowledge comes through the senses. That is the official position of the Roman church, and the unofficial position of most Protestant churches. Some of those Christians have been avidly promoting the shroud of Turin as empirical evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the evidence that "proves" the Gospels. But the Scripturalist must ask: What is proof? Are the Gospels documents the truth of which needs to be proved? Can science and religious relics prove the truth of the Bible? Even more fundamentally, can science or sense experience prove anything at all? *Three Types of Religious Philosophy* answers these questions, and the answers turn the secular philosophical world upside down.

In 1982 *National Review*, the conservative magazine of opinion edited by William F. Buckley, Jr., commented:

The fact now appears to be that the famous Shroud of Turin has been accurately dated. High-contrast photography reveals a coin placed on the right eye of the figure. The coin can be identified. It depicts a *lituus*, or astrologer's staff, and the letters UCAJ can be discerned, part of an inscription referring to Tiberius Caesar. This coin was minted during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate. Pilate went out of office in 36 A.D., but coin specialists assert that he had coins minted only between 30 and 32 A.D.

Well, that pretty much does it. The Shroud is in fact a kind of photograph of Jesus Christ. The coin pins down the dating.

One intelligent *National Review* reader replied to this asinine argument with these words:

I have, hermetically preserved between the pages of an old *National Review*, a picture of my Labrador Retriever, revealing a coin placed on the right eye of the dog. The coin can be identified as a zinc penny, minted during the Presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Roosevelt went out of office

in 1945, but coin specialists assert that such coins were minted only in 1943.

Well, that pretty much does it. My Labrador was in fact Sergei Rachmaninoff, who died March 28, 1943.

Absurd, you say? But this argument is no more absurd than the arguments purporting to prove that the shroud of Turin is the burial cloth of Christ. In two clever paragraphs the writer exposed a few of the many logical fallacies that the empiricists commit every time they argue. Gordon H. Clark does far more. He demonstrates that empiricism, and rationalism as well, though hardly anyone is a disciple of Anselm these days, is a tissue of logical fallacies.

The result is a classic introduction to religious philosophy that avoids the errors of empiricism and rationalism and presents the Biblical view, which Clark calls dogmatism. One ought to believe the Bible simply because it is the Word of God; there is no greater authority. Empiricism, the belief in the authority of the senses, is a form of philosophy "according to the principles of the world." To try to prove the Bible by relics and science is more absurd than trying to find the sun with a flashlight, and those who do so open themselves not merely to refutation, but to ridicule as well. Those who think themselves wise, as well as humble laymen, would do well to read this book, for until Christians, especially university professors, get their philosophy straight, the superstitions of the twentieth century will continue to grow, and we shall continue our rapid retreat into the Dark Ages.

An Open Letter To My Neo-Pentecostal Friends

Peter J. Herz

You may be surprised, but I am not really gloating over the scandal that has rocked the Pentecostal broadcasting world. I have the sort of personality that does not enjoy seeing people publicly

humiliated or embarrassed. Further, the influence of the charismatic movement in Evangelicaldom is so pervasive that, in the eyes of the world, the whole Evangelical world, and not just its Pentecostal portion, has received a black eye.

I know that many of you will reject what I am saying in this paper, for I am a Reformed Elder who has little use for modern tongues and prophecy. Many of you have received the catechetical instruction of my church, and now see it as a church that is "asleep" or even "dead."

But I also know that many of you are neo-Pentecostal for the same reason I am Reformed. Against the trendy mainline denominational hierarchies that allowed the world to set the church's agenda, we both believed that only God had the right to give His church's marching orders. Against those who preached an undefined works righteousness and called it "love," we both sought forgiveness of our sins and reconciliation with God through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. Against those who declared God dead, we both confess the Living God who speaks through the Holy Scriptures. I am also in full sympathy with your desire to experience victory over indwelling sin.

The Failure of Pentecostalism

But it is now very apparent that the neo-Pentecostal movement has not delivered on its promise of quick spiritual maturity through the exercise of certain gifts which Protestantism (the Biblicist, confessional, 16th and 17th century kind, not modern religious trendiness) saw as temporary features of the apostolic age. And it is unlikely that it ever will. While proclaiming victorious, Spirit-controlled Christian living, Jimmy Swaggart and Jim Bakker were guilty of adultery. While touting a wholesome lifestyle over the airwaves, Tammy Bakker was in the grip of drug dependence and a number of other unwholesome compulsions. Pat Robertson's presidential campaign has brought his record under public scrutiny, revealing a "cooked" resume and failed prophecies. Oral Roberts has used the crassest psychological manipulation to get his fundraising over the top, and in spite of American Protestantism's long-standing condemnation of

gambling as sin, Roberts has taken over a million dollars from a Florida dog-racing kingpin.

At the top, Pentecostalism has revealed a world of hypocrisy, cover-up, and cupidity. We ought to ask why.

The Third Commandment

Long before any of the televangelists lusted after women and wealth, the neo-Pentecostal movement was caught up in a persistent pattern of taking the Lord's name in vain. The worst violator of the third commandment isn't the man who blurts out "Jesus!" when he hits his thumb with a hammer: That dubious honor, according to Scripture, belongs to the man who pretends to have a direct word from the Lord when he really doesn't, the man whose prophecies do not come to pass and the corrupter of the Word and worship of God.

False prophecy is not new. The ancient church had a "Jezebel" at Smyrna, and the early medieval world had Muhammad. Mormons regularly prophesy in the name of a glorified Adam. Neo-Pentecostalism seems to be inundated with the phenomenon. In 1972, David Wilkerson prophesied that the Berlin Wall would be down within a year and there would be free access to the various Iron Curtain countries of Europe. Pat Robertson prophesied that the Soviet Union would make a major military move into the Middle East in the early 1980's. As a college student, I heard an earnest Pentecostal quote Jesus – apparently speaking of a face-to-face encounter, because I couldn't find it in the New Testament – as saying that he would return in 1975.

But it is now 1988. The Berlin Wall and Iron Curtain are still in place, *Glasnost* notwithstanding, the Soviet Union has not intervened in the Middle East, and Jesus has not returned. Yet the Bible clearly teaches that one test of a prophet's genuineness is whether or not his utterances come to pass. If he prophesies and his prophecy does not come to pass, then "that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him [the prophet]."

Modern glossolalia and its "interpretation" provide more examples. Seminary students and faculty sometimes attend charismatic meetings, quote passages of Scripture in Hebrew or Greek, then compare notes afterward on how the "interpreters" explained them. I have known of one who was so bold to quote the twenty-third Psalm in Hebrew, got an exhortation on tithing by way of "interpretation," called the error to the attention of those present, and then got thrown out of the meeting instead of hearing anyone admit his error.

Healing meetings are a further source of corruption. Look at the despairing faces of the wheelchair-bound as they leave a faith healer's meeting unhealed. In the early '70's, a pretended "healer" influenced the parents of a diabetic boy to withhold insulin. The boy died, and his parents went to prison for manslaughter. In fairness to the family, the parents repented and wrote a book about the affair, and charity compels me to accept their repentance as genuine, since I lack any compelling evidence to the contrary. But once again, God's name was taken in vain, resulting in tragic consequences.

Once I attended a healing service in Taiwan. Simple persons with minor ailments were called to the front, hands were laid upon them, prayers uttered, and the people were said to have been healed "in Jesus' name." Those "healed" were then exhorted to testify. But instead of bold, confident affirmations, people gave the Chinese equivalent of "Yeah, I guess so," afraid to let the American healer lose face when he had come so far to help them. Yet on the sidelines, a mountaineer carrying a crippled friend or relative on his back was skillfully managed to the back of the line. As the meeting broke up, an old veteran hobbling painfully with the aid of a cane complained that he was still just as sick as ever.

You may say that those who went away without healing lacked faith. But if they lacked faith, why would they have gone through the trouble of going to the meeting when they could have scoffed in greater comfort on their beds at home?

In the Old Testament economy, false prophecy was a capital offense. The New Testament also warns us

to stay away from false prophets like the woman who plagued ancient Thyatira. We may no longer live under the Mosaic economy, and we may no longer possess living Apostles in our midst to guide us, but we do have the Scripture that warns us that God will not be mocked. I sincerely hope that the current shaking of what was once hailed as the "Third force in Christendom" will wake us up to blatant violations of the Third Commandment that go uncorrected in our midst, and worse yet, parade as spiritual power and light.

The Futility of Management Reform

Some say that governing boards and open account books in Pentecostal ministries will solve the problem. I, however, doubt it. Doctrinal and spiritual agreement are necessary preconditions for a board and a minister to work together. But what happens when a member of the overseeing board doesn't accept his preacher's self-styled "prophecy"? He will probably be bounced from the board as a troublemaker and scoffer, and the spineless yes-men who remain will be unable to prevent their man from creating a new scandal.

I know from sad experience that habitual violation of the Third Commandment has distorted expectations and encouraged lying to God and others. At one point in my career, I knew some wonderful brothers and sisters who claimed to possess those gifts, and exhorted others to seek them. I wanted a better walk with God and the fellowship of those whom I believed to be better Christians than I. It took a mini-scandal in our fellowship (I shall not give details lest I bring shame on people who have already suffered enough) to make me realize that we had been claiming gifts that we did not possess, and we were too proud in our shame to admit it. The faith of many suffered, and non-believers close to us mocked. In spite of the hard lessons we were learning, some persisted in claiming direct communications from God or being misled by people who claimed such gifts.

It was with a great sense of relief that I discovered that the New Testament saw the work of the Holy Spirit as the creation of faith in men, rather than the distribution of extraordinary gifts. Further, *Hebrews* 2:3-4 taught me that such signs and wonders were given to authenticate the message of the Apostles and their circle, just as miracles were given to Moses and Joshua to authenticate the Law, and to Elijah and Elisha to authenticate Old Testament prophecy.

Supernatural Gimmicks

Devout, Bible-believing people have done very well without pretended supernatural gimmicks. In the 16th century, an age which lacked our own age's animus against the supernatural, John Calvin defended the early French Evangelicals against the charge that their lack of miracles proved them heretical. Writing to his sovereign, Francis I of France, he stated that the miracles which proved Biblical doctrine true were performed by Christ and the Apostles, so no more miracles were needed. (We recommend the English translations of either Battles or Beveridge). And this was said in the face of an age in which friars claimed the ability to fly, unhealthy girls claimed ecstatic visions, and images of Mary and the saints were often made with hollow heads, that they might "weep" for the benefit of superstitious and credulous folks and the covetous spiritual Disneyland that had bamboozled them.

But what of modern missionaries who have discovered that modern charismata are effective in combating rampant demonic activity in nations long steeped in ancient idolatries?

Having lived among Buddhists, Animists, and Taoists in Taiwan, I do not doubt that demons act through idolatrous media to ruin human personalities. I've heard reports from sources I consider reliable (although usually second and third-hand by the time they reached me). But most of the non-Christian Chinese I have known personally, including many who regularly worshiped idols, have been normal, responsible people, good neighbors, diligent students, and sometimes good prospects for conversion to Christ. I personally know of one woman who claims that

the prayers of her neo-Pentecostal Christian friends delivered her from demonic possession and brought her to Christ: I am still praying that the Holy Spirit would, through the Word, move her on to show due respect for her husband and grown sons, overcome the greed of gain and immaturity that has given her a bad name among many, and refrain from the manipulative behavior that has poisoned many of her interpersonal relationships.

Any movement that gains prominence among older Christian communities will sooner or later crop up in newer ones. Taiwanese Christians' expectations have been as distorted by neo-Pentecostal beliefs as those of their American brethren. They also want to see powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit and hear fresh words from God, and usually get the same sort of vague, bland, trite, and hedged messages heard elsewhere. Knowing that a command of English (a very difficult language for Chinese-speaking people to master) is necessary for Taiwanese students' academic advancement, I can sympathize with young people's desire to have the gift of tongues!

Isolated in an alien culture, even highly gifted missionaries who ought to know better are sometimes caught up in a misdirected search for extraordinary gifts. More so than Christians in the West, who have dozens of fellowships and support systems to choose from should their original church home go bad, missionaries get their emotional support from the very limited circles of believers to whom they minister. Thus, rather than permit a split (and lose most of their friends to boot) when the church is infected by distorted beliefs, many missionaries (and others) will choose the path of least resistance and go along with the new movement as far as they possibly can. It usually requires more than the ordinary dose of courage, spiritual authority, tact, and cross-cultural sensitivity for a missionary to successfully confront and root out an error in a foreign congregation, especially if it is an error with which his home church has not successfully dealt.

Nor is neo-Pentecostalism's role as a modern "martyrs' faith" impressive. History shows that these are especially prone to distortion, and that we

should daily thank God that we do not live under a new Nero or Domitian. After the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the Reformed Churches of France were plagued not only by persecuting Romanist authorities without, but by fanatical self-styled "prophets" within, people who discarded the Bible and claimed various miraculous powers. The "wonder-working" underground churches of mainland China have produced such superstitions as the belief that a Bible placed on a sufferer's chest can bring healing. Communist persecution in northern Korea produced much charismatically oriented expectation between 1945 and the end of the Korean War. It just so happened that among the prisoners rescued by American and South Korean forces during that conflict there was a certain Reverend Sun Myung Moon who went on to become a pseudo-Messiah in America.

Spiritual Decadence

The modern charismatic movement represents decadence, not health, in the body of Christ. Its greatest sin has been the cavalier way in which it treats the name of God, and this sin has come home to roost in the form of widespread lying and false doctrine. The lies and cover-ups in Pentecostal broadcasting have given the enemies of Christ a field day. But these are only the tip of a vast iceberg of people taught to lie to themselves, to others, and to God.

The charismatic movement possesses devout and seeking persons who deserve charity, not condemnation. But if these people are honest, they cannot but be bothered by the mess their leaders have made. They deserve to know that other fellowships of Christians treat the name and Word of God with greater respect, and that they are welcome elsewhere if they are uncomfortable with their current associations – as they ought to be, if they indeed seek to honor God.

The time has also come for non-Charismatics to take a long, hard look at the growing rapprochement between the charismatics and the rest of Evangelicaldom. The Pentecostal heresy needs confrontation, and its spectacular successes need to be recognized as a temporary aberration – a corrupt

church attracting multitudes of immature and gullible people, along with a number of honest souls who sooner or later leave.

Unpublished Letters

August 24, 1988

Mr. Richard Knodel

Journey Magazine

Lynchburg, Virginia 24504

Dear Mr. Knodel:

A friend recently showed me the review of *Pat Robertson: A Warning to America* that you had published in your May-June issue. Since the reviewer issues a challenge to me, let me take this opportunity to respond.

His challenge is as follows: "I would challenge Dr. Robbins to clearly, concisely, and openly proclaim *his source* [italics his] of civil law and political ethics."

Now this challenge indicates that the reviewer has carefully read neither *Pat Robertson*, nor any of my previous books, nor the many publications of The Trinity Foundation. Had he done so, he would have known quite well what "my source" is. For example, in *Pat Robertson*, the book under review, I wrote: "Christianity is, first of all, belief in the sixty-six books of the Bible as the Word of God. These books, this Bible, are, in the words of the first chapter of the *Westminster Confession*, 'given by inspiration of God to be the rule of faith and life.' Not a rule. Not one rule among several. *The rule*. The *only rule*" (9; emphasis in the original). If that is not clear and concise enough, I explain further on page 23, "The Bible claims to have a monopoly on truth." Indeed, the reviewer himself acknowledges that "Robbins is to be commended for reminding the Church – and even as prominent a figure as Pat Robertson – of the absolute necessity of 'sola scriptura.'" If the reviewer understands that – and I do not see how anyone could read *Pat Robertson* and not understand that – then why does he

challenge me to "clearly, concisely, and openly proclaim" my source of ethics?

But that is not the only confusion displayed by the reviewer. He asserts that Robertson "is not a part" of Reconstructionism, and that "Robertson has been moving in a 'reconstructionist' direction." Which is it? Does Robertson advocate some Reconstructionist ideas or not? I have supplied quotations in my book to show that he does, and indeed, the reviewer himself insists that he is moving in that direction.

The reviewer, moreover, seems to want to go further and assert the notion that Robertson is not a charismatic. He writes: "I am not convinced that Robertson still sincerely holds to his previous charismatic theology." In view of the plethora of quotations that I have furnished from Robertson's books, including books published as recently as 1987, this assertion is both unsubstantiated and preposterous. Any reviewer who thinks that Robertson is not a charismatic is likely to be an incompetent judge about anyone's views. Perhaps, however, the reviewer is basing his judgment on "inside" information. After all, he did use the word "sincerely." Is he saying that Robertson is now lying about what he believes? If so, I urge him to furnish evidence for the lie.

Furthermore, the reviewer asserts that I have not furnished a "real argument" for Robertson's heterodoxy. Apparently the reviewer had forgotten what I wrote in my book by the time he wrote his review. I furnished arguments for Robertson's anti-Christian views of (1) revelation; (2) the Bible; (3) God's sovereignty; (4) miracles; (5) tongues; (6) man; (7) logic; (8) salvation; and (9) politics. The reviewer, who himself professes some interest in Christian theology, thinks that Robertson is "generally an orthodox Christian." Is one generally an orthodox Christian if he believes in continuing revelation, twentieth century miracles, the insufficiency of the Bible, the free will of man (Robertson goes beyond even Arminianism in his assertions), if he denies predestination and the sovereignty of God, and perverts the Gospel of Christ? I think not.

Your reviewer also wonders why I have not called Jesse Jackson and other politicians false prophets. The reason is simple: I am not aware that any other national politician has written books in which he claims to get messages directly from God and to perform divine miracles. If your reviewer knows of any, he should write a book about them. If he is a Christian, he should not criticize me for writing a book about a false prophet like Pat Robertson. After all, which is more important, electing a man president or witnessing to the truth? I think it is clear that many Robertson backers who claim to be Reformed have decided that electing a man president is more important than witnessing to the truth.

Finally, I must point out the serious threat that Reconstructionism poses to religious freedom. Your reviewer apparently considers himself a Reconstructionist or at least a sympathizer. He writes: "In a society where the Lord Jesus Christ would be pervasively obeyed, we could expect to see many 'better' political candidates than Pat Robertson; or we might (if he truly were a false prophet) execute a man like Pat Robertson."

Reconstructionists are serious about executing false prophets and teachers. That is why I raised the question in my book. If Reconstructionism is true, then men like Pat Robertson ought to be executed, not elected to office. We can thank God, however, that Reconstructionism is not true, and that we live in a country in which freedom of speech, the press, and religion are still respected. The Reconstructionists seem to want to execute people for what they think and teach. But, as the *Westminster Confession* says, the ceremonial and judicial laws of Israel expired with the nation of Israel. No government today has the right, much less the duty, of executing heretics and false prophets. Yet the Reconstructionists seem to be bent on a new Inquisition as they struggle to take dominion over men and nations. I find it appalling that your reviewer, who is Chairman of the Government Department at a university named Liberty, seems to be sympathetic to such a New Inquisition.

Sincerely,

John W. Robbins