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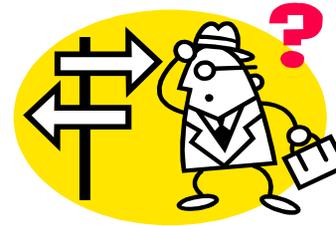
WRS Journal

Western Reformed Seminary, Tacoma, Washington

Volume 12, Issue 1

February 2005

This issue: *The Openness of God Controversy*



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EDITOR'S NOTES: FROM JOHN A. BATTLE

For about the last ten years a new movement, the theology of open theism, has rocked the evangelical world. Actually, this idea is not new, having been bandied about among philosophers and theologians for hundreds of years. But only recently has the evangelical church been infected with these ideas to any noticeable extent. In brief, this doctrine teaches that God limits himself to be more like us—he has feelings like ours, and does not know what the future will bring—he only hopes for the best, and tries hard to see that Good will win in the end. He limits his power to this extent so that we will be able to exercise our free and unfettered wills. While this idea seems to resemble Arminianism, it goes far beyond Arminianism. In our times this new doctrine finds a willing audience among many who have “itching ears,” and want a God they can limit and approve of.

Dennis Jowers, a new faculty member at WRS, opens this issue with a helpful account of this movement's beginnings, history, and at least one major flaw. In the exegesis section Chris Lensch shows how the OT covenants disprove the openness view; I discuss three major exegetical and theological errors of the doctrine; and Timothy Prussic, soon to be a WRS graduate, offers a study of the important word for “God's repentance.” And there is a practical side to this conflict. Another upcoming WRS graduate, Eric S. Lasch, a certified biblical counselor, shows some of the devastating practical consequences for Christians who are taught such a view. Finally, we offer you our faculty reviews of some of the major books in this controversy. Two of them are leading books promoting openness theology, and two of them are written by orthodox defenders of the traditional and biblical theology of God, refuting this view.

May God use this modest effort to encourage us all to trust in him who is all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-sovereign!

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