

# God's Not-So-Ordinary Providence: Evaluating the Framework Hypothesis "Because It Had Not Rained Argument" from Ordinary Providence

By Zachary Groff

## INTRODUCTION

In Presbyterian and Reformed theological discourse, innovative readings of the opening chapters of Genesis have become increasingly prevalent in recent decades. One proposed interpretation of Genesis 1–2 is known as the Framework Hypothesis (FH), which includes several variations of a common theme: these chapters present a figurative literary framework of God's work of creation, as opposed to a strictly sequential chronology of the same. The FH as-such was conceived of by Meredith Kline in his seminal article "Because It Had Not Rained"<sup>1</sup> and subsequently developed by Mark Futato in his complementary article "Because It Had Rained: A Study of Gen 2:5–7 with Implications for Gen 2:4–25 and Gen 1:1–2:3."<sup>2</sup> Since the publication of the *Report of the Creation Study Committee*<sup>3</sup> of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) in 2000, the FH has enjoyed status as one of four recognized interpretations with some legitimacy in the largest conservative Presbyterian denomination in the United States.

A central feature of the FH reading of Genesis 1–2 concerns the operation of "ordinary providence" during the creation week. The overall coherence and plausibility of the FH interpretation rests upon the soundness of its defenders' interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 as describing "ordinary providence." In this article, I demonstrate how it is that FH proponents misconstrue the relationship between God's works of creation and providence during the creation week itself. If successful, this article disproves the FH as a viable interpretation of the biblical account of creation.

This article proceeds in three parts to demonstrate FH proponents' faulty understanding of the relationship between creation and providence and to offer an alternative proposal of said relationship. The first part opens with a presentation of the FH understanding

of "ordinary providence" and its interpretive import, grounded as it is in Kline's and Futato's exegesis of Genesis 2:5–6. The first part then concludes with a brief consideration of two additional scholars' understandings of the operation of "ordinary providence" in the same verses. The second part furnishes a literature review of critiques of the "ordinary providence" feature of the FH reading of Genesis 1–2. The third and final part proposes an alternative understanding of the operation of God's works of providence in the creation week. This alternative interpretation in fact supports the classic<sup>4</sup> reading of Genesis 1–2.

Before proceeding further, it is important to define providence, and to distinguish it from what FH proponents mean by "ordinary providence." Fundamentally, providence is the work of God in actively preserving and governing His creation. Though distinguished from God's unique work of creation executed by fiat in the six days described in Genesis 1, God's works of providence run concurrently with His work of creation.

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1. Meredith G. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20 (1958): 146–57.

2. Mark D. Futato, "Because It Had Rained: A Study of Gen 2:5–7 With Implications for Gen 2:4–25 and Gen 1:1–2:3," *Westminster Theological Journal* 60 (1998): 1–21.

3. Samuel J. Duncan, et al., "Report of the Creation Study Committee," *Minutes of the 28th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America* (2000), pp. 119–212.

4. By "classic" is meant the calendar-day view, six-day view, or what Kline referred to as the "traditional interpretation," excepting the day age view which he has subsumed under this same moniker. By "classic" is not meant certain idiosyncratic views promulgated throughout history, such as instantaneous creationism, Neo-platonism, and other patently non-biblical views that nevertheless possess some measure of vintage in the Christian theological tradition.

Herman Bavinck has captured the dynamic well in writing, “Creation immediately and instantly passes into preservation and government.”<sup>5</sup> For example, God spoke light into existence on the first day in Genesis 1:3, and thereupon began actively to preserve and govern that which He had created. The closeness of the relationship between God’s works of creation and providence is something of a theological commonplace, having been enshrined in biblical commentaries, dogmatic treatises, and creedal statements for centuries. The juxtaposition of treatments of God’s works of creation and providence are frequent in the Reformed creeds, confessions, and catechisms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, for example.<sup>6</sup> More recently, Vern Poythress has noted analogical correlations in the Bible’s language describing God’s works of creation and providence.<sup>7</sup>

God’s works of providence may be understood as operating in two modes. God works to uphold and govern His creation both through instrumental means and by direct intervention into the created order apart from instrumental means. Thus the doctrine of divine providence necessarily involves the utmost regard for both observable predictability in God’s created order and an unembarrassed supernaturalism. Taken together, these twin implications redound to God’s glory as Creator and Ruler of all that ever was or ever shall be in the created order. When FH proponents speak of “ordinary

providence” in relation to Genesis 2:5, they intend a more limited meaning than God’s duplex work of preservation and government by both instrumental means and direct divine intervention. Rather, they specify the natural, observable, repeating, and familiar mode of God’s providence by which His creation regularly operates, apart from His miraculous intervention. By the term “ordinary providence,” FH proponents describe the divinely established and regularly occurring processes of nature which are familiar to human observers. By the same token, FH proponents distinguish “ordinary providence” from miraculous, extraordinary, or otherwise uncommon modes of divine preservation and governance of the created order. With these definitions in place, this article can proceed to engage with FH proponents’ interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6.

#### “ORDINARY PROVIDENCE” IN THE FRAMEWORK HYPOTHESIS INTERPRETATION OF GENESIS 1–2

Proponents of the FH interpret Genesis 2:5–6 as demonstrating that God worked through ordinary means alone to preserve vegetation during the creation week because it had not yet rained upon the earth. Assuming that God worked through ordinary means during the creation week, FH proponents deny the possibility of the creation in time of vegetation before the creation in time of the sun. On the basis of this denial, they argue from inference that God would not have created light before creating the sun, would not have set the planet Earth in space before bringing the solar system into existence, and various other implications which follow the synthesis of natural revelation (i.e., observational science) and their interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6. They argue that therefore the six days of Genesis 1 must be topical and non-sequential.

As mentioned in the introduction above, Meredith Kline first set forth his version of the FH interpretation of the creation account in the mid-twentieth century. The second paragraph of his seminal article opens, “At the heart of the issue, though its crucial character appears to be generally overlooked is the question of whether the modus operandi of divine providence was the same during the creation era as that of ordinary providence now.”<sup>8</sup> In answering that question, Kline proposed an innovative interpretation of Genesis 2:5 to prove that the “traditional assumption of supernatural providence for the creation era”<sup>9</sup> is unfounded. Lee Irons and Meredith Kline later named this interpretation of Genesis 2:5 the “because it had not rained argument,”<sup>10</sup> after Kline’s groundbreaking 1958 article.<sup>11</sup>

5. Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2: God and Creation*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend, vol. 2, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004 [1896]), p. 479.

6. See James T. Dennison, Jr., ed., *Reformed Confessions of the 16th and 17th Centuries in English Translation*, 4 vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2008–2014).

7. Vern S. Poythress, “Correlations with Providence in Genesis 1,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 77 (2015): 71–99; Vern S. Poythress, “Correlations with Providence in Genesis 2,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 78 (2016): 29–48; Vern S. Poythress, *Interpreting Eden* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), pp. 137–212.

8. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 146.

9. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 148.

10. Ironically, this rendition of the relevant clause in Genesis 2:5 misses the agency aspect of the verb הִקְטִיר. The verb is in the Hifil stem, which typically communicates causative action. The emphasis of the clause is not on the absence of rain as much as it is on the fact that someone or something had not yet caused rain to water the land in-question (namely, the Garden of Eden). Who did not yet cause it to rain? The subject of the verb is אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה (YHWH God). The attention of the reader is not on the absence of rain, but on the fact that the Lord God, Maker of heaven and earth, who was preparing an enclave for man with whom He would enter into covenant relationship, had not yet completed His work of preparing the Garden – a work which involved providing a source of water (to be supplied in the following verse).

11. Lee Irons and Meredith G. Kline, “The Framework View,” in

Kline embedded his interpretation of Genesis 2:5 in his contribution to *The New Bible Commentary: Revised Edition*<sup>12</sup> in 1970. He further developed the argument in his 1996 article “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,”<sup>13</sup> and he reiterated it in a posthumous volume published in 2016, *Genesis: A New Commentary*.<sup>14</sup> In these publications, Kline has characterized God’s works of providence within the creation week as “ordinary,”<sup>15</sup> “normal,”<sup>16</sup> “natural,”<sup>17</sup> and “secondary.”<sup>18</sup> Mark Futato likewise utilized the phrase “ordinary providence”<sup>19</sup> in his 1998 article in which he developed a fuller exegesis of Genesis 1–2 to serve as a complement to Kline’s prior work. Both Kline and Futato proceeded in their respective developments of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2 on the assumption that God’s works of providence operative at the time of God’s original work of creation did not possess a supernatural or extraordinary element, though they could have if and only if Genesis 2:5 had not cited a lack of rain as the cause for an absence of flora in the land.

Kline’s interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 insofar as it has bearing on the days of creation described in Genesis 1 involves two pertinent hermeneutical considerations. First, Kline’s interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 involves an idiosyncratic reading of 2:5, “And no plant of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for Jehovah God had not caused it to rain upon the earth: and there was not a man to till the ground” (American Revised Version). In exegeting Genesis 2:5, Kline focused intently on the fact that it had not yet rained on the earth as the cause of the lack of plant growth. In Kline’s understanding,

The Creator did not originate plant life on earth before he had prepared an environment in which he might preserve it without by-passing secondary means and without having recourse to extraordinary means such as marvelous methods of fertilization. The unargued presupposition of Gen. 2:5 is clearly that the divine providence was operating during the creation period through processes which any reader would recognize as normal in the natural world of his day.<sup>20</sup>

Anticipating the objection that the passage concerns only a specific locality which God designated as a sacral dwelling place on the earth, Kline remarked, “The text would still affirm that at a point prior to the creation of man and, therefore, within the creation era the absence of certain natural products was attributable to the absence of the natural means for their providential preservation.”<sup>21</sup> To put the matter simply, the growth of

vegetation ordinarily requires rain. Because it had not yet rained, there was no vegetative growth. This condition of ordinary providence was as true in the “creation era” as it is today, which is why the divinely inspired author of Scripture remarks on the lack of rain. The final clause in Genesis 2:5 then serves to strengthen Kline’s understanding of the operation of providence alongside of God’s work of creation by highlighting the absence of the only alternative instrumental cause—artificial irrigation by human ingenuity and labor—allowing for the conditions of vegetation growth.

The second pertinent hermeneutical consideration of Kline’s interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 is its bearing on Genesis 1. On Kline’s reading, Genesis 2:5 is the hermeneutical key to understanding the creation account of Genesis 1 on its own terms. In fact, if his reading of Genesis 2:5 is sound, then “Genesis 2:5 forbids the conclusion that the order of narration is exclusively chronological.”<sup>22</sup> Kline more forcefully reiterated the same point in a later article.

What was the nature of divine providence during the creation “week?” More specifically, by what means did God preserve such things as he had brought into existence? Embedded in Gen. 2:5 is an answer to that question that has decisive implications for the interpretation of the chronological framework of the creation account... Gen. 2:5 tells us that God did not produce the plants of the field before he had established an environment with a watering system, the natural, normal precondition for plant life. The assumption underlying Gen. 2:5 is clearly that a natural mode

*The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), pp. 230–236.

12. Meredith G. Kline, “Genesis,” in *New Bible Commentary: Revised*, ed. Donald Guthrie et al. (London: Inter-Varsity Press, 1970), pp. 79–114.

13. Meredith G. Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith* 48 (1996): 2–15.

14. Meredith G. Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, ed. Jonathan G. Kline (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2016).

15. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” pp. 146, 153; Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” p. 13.

16. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 150; Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” p. 13.

17. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” pp. 150n8, 153; Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” p. 13; Kline, “Genesis,” 83; Kline, *Genesis: A New Commentary*, p. 18.

18. Kline, “Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony,” p. 13.

19. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” p. 1.

20. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” pp. 149–150.

21. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 150n8.

22. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 154.

of divine providence was in operation during the creation “days.” ... This unargued assumption of Gen. 2:5 contradicts the reconstructions of the creation days proposed by the more traditional views. The scenario conjured by the literalists’ solar-day interpretation is, in fact, utterly alien to the climate and tenor of Gen. 2:5.<sup>23</sup>

Kline flatly denied the plausibility of a chronological reading of the creation week as presented in Genesis 1. From this point of departure, Kline has advanced a theologically imaginative, innovative, and sophisticated interpretation of Genesis 1–2. Mark Futato further developed Kline’s interpretation with insights drawn from a structural analysis of Genesis 2:4–25 and a consideration of the Canaanite Baalism which contested the claims of Yahweh in the biblical narrative.

Futato’s development of Kline’s argument is largely concerned with substantiating Kline’s initial claims. Whereas Kline provided the skeleton consisting of initial ideas, observations, and a hermeneutical framework, Futato intentionally set out to supply the flesh consisting of in-depth grammatical and linguistic analysis, biblical theological considerations, and comparison of extrabiblical literature relevant to the original Canaanite *Sitz im Leben* (i.e., *setting in life*) of the Pentateuch. Two of Futato’s observations are particularly germane to Kline’s conception of “ordinary providence” in Genesis 2:5. First, Futato’s article challenges the notion that נָחַם in Genesis 2:6 means “stream,” suggesting in its place the meaning “rain cloud.”<sup>24</sup> After factoring in linguistic and contextual considerations, Futato concludes that only a rain cloud could address the problem of no rain as described in Genesis 2:5b.<sup>25</sup> Thus, on Futato’s reading, a rain cloud is the only plausible providential means of watering the ground to bring forth the vegetation described in Genesis 2:5a.

The burden of proof rests squarely on the one who would wish to argue that something other than a precipitation-fed river is in view in the use of the word *nahar* in Gen. 2:10, since the word is never used for anything other than a precipitation-fed river in the

Hebrew Bible. But ultimately the resultant illogical text when ‘*ed*’ is taken as “stream” outweighs all other considerations and precludes understanding ‘*ed*’ as a reference to a river or stream.<sup>26</sup>

This point dovetails into the ancillary support provided by Futato’s second observation.

In the second place, Futato considers the comparative literature of the Ancient Near East (ANE), and of Canaan in particular. Reading נָחַם in Genesis 2:6 to be referring to a God-ordained rain cloud to address the lack of precipitation highlighted in Genesis 2:5b, Futato then addresses the question of why there is such a concern in the creation account with rain and vegetation in the first place. The answer he proposes relates to the ANE (and especially Canaanite) context of the biblical creation account in Genesis 1–2. The heathen inhabitants of the land of Canaan worshiped a panoply of Gods, none of which threatened the Israelite religion more than Baal, the local “storm god whose rain was considered absolutely necessary for the growth of crops and hence for life itself.”<sup>27</sup> In opposition to Baal and the pagan cult which grew up around the false god, the Israelites were called to remain faithful to Yahweh as the one true God, maker of heaven and earth. “The ubiquitous threat of Baalism provides the theological context in which Genesis 1–2 is to be read... The God of Israel is the Creator. From the beginning the God of Israel, not Baal, has been the provider of the rain that is the prerequisite of life.”<sup>28</sup> This second observation supports Futato’s proposed solution to the lack of rain in Genesis 2:5b, namely, the providential “rain cloud” in 2:6. On his proposal, the divinely ordained and provided “rain cloud” in 2:6 functions as a feature both of God’s “ordinary providence” and of Israelite polemic against Canaanite Baalism.

Other proponents of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2 highlight the importance of Kline’s conception of “ordinary providence” for the argument that the biblical creation account arranges God’s work of creation according to topical rather than chronological concerns. For example, Henri Blocher argued vigorously against the classic reading and in favor of a literary framework interpretation of the biblical creation narrative. Blocher claimed, “The hypothesis of the literary procedure gives sufficient explanation of the form of the text; anything further would be superfluous.”<sup>29</sup> To support his presentation of the argument, Blocher drew on Kline’s understanding of ordinary providence based upon the latter’s interpretation of Genesis 2:5.

23. Kline, “Space and Time,” p. 13.

24. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” pp. 5–6.

25. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” pp. 6–8.

26. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” p. 9.

27. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” p. 19.

28. Futato, “Because It Had Rained,” p. 20.

29. Henri Blocher, *In the Beginning: The Opening Chapters of Genesis*, trans. David G. Preston (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), p. 53.

[Kline's] explanation presupposes the normal activity of the laws of nature for the growth of plants (an operation of divine providence), and a sufficient length of time for the absence of rain to be able to constitute the cause of the absence of plants. That does not fit the hypothesis of a literal week for the creation of the whole cosmos... It is a necessary implication that in Genesis 2:5 Scripture supplies the proof that the week of the Genesis prologue is not literal; this proof has not been refuted.<sup>30</sup>

Scholars who reject the classic reading of Genesis 1–2 without adopting the FH interpretation likewise appeal to Genesis 2:5 to formulate similar proposals for how best to understand the interplay between God's works of creation and providence in the creation week.

As a proponent of the "analogical days position,"<sup>31</sup> C. John Collins has interpreted Genesis 2:5 to militate against the classic plain reading of Genesis 1–2 on the basis of the operation of "ordinary providence" in the rain cycle of the "climate of the Western Levant."<sup>32</sup> Collins' position requires an assumption that the climate of Eden was identical to the climate of ancient Israel.

We are then able to understand just what Genesis 2:5–8 means: in some land, at the end of the dry season, when the "mist" (or rain cloud) was rising to begin the rains, God formed the first man; he then planted a garden in Eden and moved the man there... [This way of reading Genesis 2:5–8] has a strong impact on the amount of time that must have been involved. If the time of year and the absence of man are the reasons for why the plants were "not yet in the land," then this means that the familiar seasonal cycle was in effect; and for this to be so, the seasonal cycle must have been in operation for some number of years.<sup>33</sup>

To his credit, Collins elsewhere has acknowledged, "the climate implied in Gen. 2:5–6 is like that of the western Levant, notably of Israel. It is not clear whether this is a strong claim of the historical location of the event or simply a literary device that recounts the event in terms familiar to the audience."<sup>34</sup> Whether or not one takes Genesis 2:5–6 to be referring precisely to what would eventually become the territory of ancient Israel, the point Collins expressed regarding the operation of "ordinary providence" in seasonal rain cycles remains problematic for any who might otherwise adopt the classic reading of Genesis 1–2. In Collins's judgment, the classic reading "does not allow us to take the causal explanations of Genesis 2:5 seriously: it does not allow enough time for the climate cycle to be relevant."<sup>35</sup> In

this regard, Collins's interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 bears fundamental similarity to Kline's original "because it had not rained argument" insofar as both deny the plausibility of the classic reading of Genesis 1–2. The next section of this article reviews critiques of Kline's original argument and—by extension—of all similar arguments from others who deny the plausibility of the classic plain reading of Genesis 1–2.

#### CRITIQUES OF THE "BECAUSE IT HAD NOT RAINED ARGUMENT"

Over the past thirty years, scholarly pushback against the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2 has been earnest and increasingly frequent. Not surprisingly, most of the pushback has come from proponents of the classic reading of Genesis 1–2. Though common in their commitments and concerns regarding Genesis 1–2 and the FH, the authors surveyed below represent a diverse—even eclectic, perhaps—sample of conservative Presbyterian, Evangelical, and Reformed voices. What follows is a necessarily selective literature review of recent critiques of the "because it had not rained" argument from ordinary providence described in the first section above. Rather than proceed topically, the following literature review takes a chronological approach, beginning with a brief article published in 1987.

Writing for the *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, Robert Grossman argued "that Gen. 1:4–5 deserves a great deal more serious attention than it has usually received from Scripture commentators,"<sup>36</sup> particularly with regard to defining the word "day" in the immediate context of Genesis 1:1–2:3. Rather than considering the account's presentation of the creation of light before the creation of luminaries as a problem, Grossman affirmed that "normal providential law"<sup>37</sup> could

30. Blocher, p. 56.

31. C. John Collins, *Genesis 1–4: A Linguistic, Literary, and Theological Commentary* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2006), p. 126; for a concise presentation of the analogical days position, see C. John Collins, "Reading Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Act of Communication: Discourse Analysis and Literal Interpretation," in *Did God Create in 6 Days?* ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2005), pp. 131–150.

32. Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, p. 111.

33. Collins, *ibid.*

34. Collins, *ibid.*, 253n6; see also C. John Collins, *Reading Genesis Well: Navigating History, Poetry, Science, and Truth in Genesis 1–11* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), p. 147.

35. Collins, *Genesis 1–4*, p. 128.

36. Robert E. Grossman, "The Light He Called 'Day,'" *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 3, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 9.

37. Grossman, p. 11.

perpetuate light without luminaries for three earth days. Grossman demonstrated the importance of God's initial separation of light and darkness for "the subsequent development of the earth under the creating hand of God."<sup>38</sup> In fact, Genesis 1:4–5 records God's work of establishing "a fundamental measure of time"<sup>39</sup> which would continue through the creation week and beyond into man's daily experience.

Though Grossman briefly addressed Kline's original "because it had not rained" argument in the body of his article,<sup>40</sup> and he cited Old Testament scholar O.T. Alis in giving serious consideration to supernatural acts of providence during the creation week,<sup>41</sup> he reserved his most direct critiques of Kline's FH interpretation for a brief appendix to the article. Grossman addressed a logical fallacy that later critical readers of Kline have likewise noted, namely that evidence of God working through ordinary providence does not exclude His working concurrently through extraordinary providence.<sup>42</sup> Even if Genesis 2:5 reports on God's working through ordinary providence during the creation week, "Every creative act of God in Genesis 1 is presented as an extraordinary act of God."<sup>43</sup> That is, extraordinary acts of God may be considered as operative alongside of the operation of His works of ordinary providence. Furthermore, Grossman cited commentators E.J. Young and G. Ch. Aalders to argue that Genesis 2:5 refers forward "to the preparation of the Garden of Eden"<sup>44</sup> rather than backward as an interpretive lens for Genesis 1, an exegetical insight that later proponents of the classic plain reading of Genesis 1–2 have explored further. Along the same lines, Grossman anticipated Futato's development of Kline's argument by pointing out a related problem in Kline's understanding of Genesis 2:5. "If Kline is right, plants followed man on the face of the whole earth... Gen. 2:5 proves too much if it is applied to all of creation, because in that case it proves that there can be no plants where there are no men."<sup>45</sup> Though Kline himself

sought to preempt this objection by arguing that the precise geographical extent indicated in Genesis 2:5 is irrelevant to his main point,<sup>46</sup> this same objection has repeatedly returned to haunt Kline's interpretation, and for good cause, as demonstrated below.

Old Testament scholar Noel Weeks directly addressed Kline's argument from "ordinary providence" in multiple publications, the first of which has been cited repeatedly by subsequent critics of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2. In *The Sufficiency of Scripture*, Weeks expressed agreement with Kline in stating, "Whether Kline's view is convincing or not depends on the way we see the information given in [Genesis] 2:5."<sup>47</sup> However, Weeks strongly rejected Kline's position on what Genesis 2:5 is describing. According to Weeks, "there is nothing which clearly indicates that normal providence was functioning during the creation period."<sup>48</sup> Rather, what is clearly indicated is the direct role God played in preparing an environment in which man would experience His presence. In a chapter entitled "Providence and Scripture,"<sup>49</sup> Weeks emphasized the theological observation that regularity in nature is contingent upon God's involvement. Thus, the chief feature of ordinary providence is not inherent to creation itself. Creation once created in its fullness is nevertheless not self-sufficient. This point is crucially important for maintaining the connection explicated above between providence in-general and ordinary providence in-particular. Fundamentally, providence—be it ordinary or extraordinary—is descriptive of God's active involvement. He is not the detached artificer imagined by philosophical Deism. To be clear, no critic of the FH has claimed that proponents of the FH are functional Deists—and neither should any critic be so uncharitable as to regard them as such. However, the "because it had not rained argument" does not emphasize God's intimate involvement in the ordinary providence of employing means to preserve and to govern all which He has created.

In Weeks's following chapter on "The Bible and Technical Precision,"<sup>50</sup> he observed that the Bible authoritatively uses ordinary, everyday language to describe even momentous events. "This means that the Bible can generalize, can use approximation, and at times fail to specify detail. Yet it is still authoritative."<sup>51</sup> In other words, the Bible uses familiar and perhaps frustratingly non-specific language without sacrificing its authority. Readers of Scripture are not to approach biblical narrative expecting something matching the style of a scholastic disputation, a modern scientific magazine or study, or a journalistic newspaper article. Such being the case, the Bible is nonetheless absolutely authoritative.

38. Grossman, p. 12.

39. Grossman, p. 14.

40. Grossman, p. 20.

41. Grossman, p. 25.

42. Grossman, pp. 28–29.

43. Grossman, p. 28.

44. Grossman, p. 29.

45. Grossman, p. 30.

46. Kline, "Because It Had Not Rained," p. 150n8.

47. Noel Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture* (Edinburgh; Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth, 1988), p. 108.

48. Weeks, *ibid.*

49. Weeks, pp. 26–32.

50. Weeks, pp. 30–32.

51. Weeks, p. 32.

This heuristic principle has direct bearing on how best to interpret potentially difficult and ambiguous texts such as Genesis 2:5 (and demands from readers the humility which should attend any interpretation of Scripture). Students of Scripture must not read the Bible as one would examine a textbook on hydrology or meteorology. Rather, humility and submission to God's truth as received always marks the sanctified use of the Word of God.

Presenting to the West Coast meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society on April 26, 1996, Dr. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. laid out a careful and thorough critique of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2. He later incorporated that material into a longer presentation and published book chapter dealing with several non-literal interpretations of Genesis 1:1–2:3.<sup>52</sup> In that piece, Pipa echoed Grossman in arguing, “Just as extraordinary providence works alongside regular providence in history, we may assume God operated the same way during creation.”<sup>53</sup> Further, “Dr. Kline’s reasoning involves a logical fallacy. One may not prove the truth of a universal from the truth of a particular... Therefore, particular evidence of ordinary providence during creation may not be used to prove universal ordinary providence during creation.”<sup>54</sup> By “universal,” Pipa means “exclusively.”<sup>55</sup> Pipa added positive features to Grossman’s primarily negative objection to Kline’s argument from “ordinary providence” by noting two teachings—one implicit and one explicit—drawn out of Genesis 1.

First, God’s miraculous upholding of His incomplete creation is necessitated by the very fact that the environmental creation was incomplete until at least day four. “Only if God created everything fully at once, would there be no place for supernatural preservation.”<sup>56</sup> Pipa’s contention should be extended at this point to state that no mere man can imagine how the created order could hold together by exclusively ordinary natural means before God called any one of the parts of His total creation into existence. As Weeks so poignantly put it, “Everything has been made ready for [man]. He may need to do things in the world but he enters a made world, not a world under construction.”<sup>57</sup> Having been made for a complete creation, man cannot imagine any partially created order in place of what God has made in its entirety. Second, the activity of the Spirit of God recorded in Genesis 1:2 is the very description of extraordinary providence. Taken together with later passages of Scripture (e.g., Deut. 32:11; Isa. 31:5), this description of the Spirit of God hovering over the waters in an avian manner suggests God’s intimate care and dominion over

primordial created matter at each step of the creative process.

Additionally, Pipa demonstrated that the consideration of geographic scope in Genesis 2:5 does affect Kline’s attempt to read “ordinary providence” back into God’s work of creation. “Even if there were a two-fold deficit [described in Genesis 2:5], its reference is to the garden and not to the creation as a whole... Therefore, one ought not apply the reference to providence to the entire time of creation.”<sup>58</sup> Significantly, in levying this critique, Pipa referenced Kline’s correct observation that Genesis 2:4 introduces a narrative focused on the Garden of Eden. Subsequently in his critique, Pipa appealed to Job 38:19–20 to argue for the creation of light and darkness as “separate ontological entities” on day one before the creation of the luminaries on day four, thus proving that “ordinary providence was not the *modus operandi* in sustaining and governing creation during the six days of creation.”<sup>59</sup> In answering the claim of FH proponents that they are simply comparing Scripture with Scripture by reading Genesis 1 in light of Genesis 2:5, Pipa contends, “The problem with this example is that a problematic interpretation of one passage is the interpretive qualifier for a very clear passage.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, it is not simply the case that proponents of the FH understand Genesis 1 in light of Genesis 2:5–6. Rather, it is the case that they read into Genesis 1 certain tendentious conclusions drawn out of an idiosyncratic reading of a notoriously difficult text. One proponent of the FH seems to have conceded Pipa’s point to some degree by admitting the difficulty of determining whether to read Genesis 1 in light of Genesis 2:5 or to read Genesis 2:5 in light of Genesis 1.

If ordinary providence was operating during the creation period for the process of filling the earth with vegetation, then we must revise our understanding of Genesis One as providing a chronological account of creation within one calendar week. Equally, if Genesis

52. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos: A Critique of the Non-Literal Interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Did God Create in Six Days?*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2005), pp. 151–96.

53. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 161.

54. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*

55. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 160.

56. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*

57. Noel Weeks, “The Completed Creation and Its Implications,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology* 28 (2017): 109.

58. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos,” p. 159.

59. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 176.

60. Pipa, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 194.

One is taken according to its natural reading as a chronological reading, then we must revise our first-impression understanding of Genesis Two. Lord, to whom shall we go?<sup>61</sup>

Ross demonstrates admirable humility in admitting the difficulty, but his proposed answer in favor of the FH interpretation is not satisfying. Neither are any of the answers attempted by Kline, Futato, Irons, or others.

One key feature of Kline's "because it had not rained argument" is the correlation drawn between Genesis 2:5 and day three (rather than day six) of the creation week described in Genesis 1. Building on Pipa's and Grossman's aforementioned work, Michael Kruger has pointed out, "The only reason Kline sees ordinary providence as the only *modus operandi* is because he thinks Genesis 2:5 is referring to Day Three (Tuesday) in the creative process and thus applicable to all the earth."<sup>62</sup> Kruger's argument against Kline agrees with earlier critiques that Genesis 2:5 cannot possibly refer to all plant life on the planet. The key difference is that Kruger's argument focuses on Kline's application of his reading of Genesis 2:5 to the wrong day, whereas other objections have focused more particularly on Kline's false understanding of the geographical scope (i.e., entire world vs. Garden of Eden) involved in the verse. Interestingly, immediately before addressing this issue, Kruger had (seemingly) collapsed the distinction between God's works of creation and providence while affirming Grossman's argument that God concurrently used ordinary and extraordinary providence in the creation week. Kruger asserted, "In fact, every creative act of God within the Creation Week would constitute an example of extraordinary providence."<sup>63</sup> Though perhaps lacking theological precision, Kruger's statement suggests an important consideration of the dynamic between God's works of creation and providence within the creation

week itself. Each creative act of God certainly involved in it the operation of extraordinary providence until the creative work as a whole was complete, at which point God rested from His special work of creation and has since normally maintained His works of ordinary providence in preserving and governing the cosmos.

In a book-length defense of the classic reading of Genesis 1–2, James Jordan set forth several arguments that contribute to the ongoing debate. Aside from those arguments and objections which have already been recorded above, Jordan argued that the first of the terms used to describe the vegetation in Genesis 2:5 (שִׁיחַ הַשָּׂדֶה) was not included in the plants described in Genesis 1:11–12.<sup>64</sup> Rather, this first term introduced in Genesis 2:5 refers to the plants that grow up only after God curses the ground in Genesis 3:17–19.<sup>65</sup> As for the second of the terms used to describe the vegetation in Genesis 2:5 (עֵשֶׂב הַשָּׂדֶה), Jordan's reading of the text correlates the plants included in this term to אֲשֵׁר in Genesis 1:11.<sup>66</sup> These grains had been caused to shoot up (אֲשֵׁר) as per the description given in Genesis 1:11, but they had not yet sprouted (קָמָץ) as per the description in Genesis 2:5. Jordan's interpretation brings the relevant details together in a manner that avoids the problem of contradiction originally alleged by Kline to be unavoidable on the classic reading of Genesis 1–2. On Jordan's reading, "Genesis 2:5 does not say that there were no plants in the earth at the time under consideration. Rather it says that the remaining plants that would exist in the world had not been created and that the grains had not yet sprouted."<sup>67</sup> Furthermore, Jordan's argument summarily dispatches the "because it had not rained argument" in two moves by first pointing out the obvious and by then reasserting his conclusion regarding the plants described in Genesis 2:5. "While Genesis 2:5 may look just like today's "ordinary providence," it does not have to be such. But since Genesis 2:5 is not on the third day anyway and has nothing to do with the third day, the argument is nugatory to start with."<sup>68</sup>

Jordan appended to the main body of his book a critical review and evaluation of Futato's article defending the FH. In this appendix, Jordan critiqued Futato specifically on the question of the source of the water (78) described in Genesis 2:6. Noting that Futato relies heavily on extrabiblical context (i.e., the geography and climate of ancient Israel, facts about the original author and audience, local agricultural practices, and the specter of Baalism), Jordan levelled critiques at each discreet element of Futato's case for interpreting Genesis 2:5–6 in the manner that he does. In so doing, Jordan

61. Mark E. Ross, "The Framework Hypothesis: An Interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2:3," in *Did God Create in Six Days?*, ed. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall (White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2005), p. 128.

62. Michael J. Kruger, "An Understanding of Genesis 2:5," *Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 11, no. 1 (1997): 109.

63. Kruger, *Ibid.*

64. דָּשָׂא עֵשֶׂב מְזֻרֵעַ וְרֵעַ, עֵץ פְּרִי עֵשֶׂה פְּרִי לְמִינוֹ. James B. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days: A Defense of the Traditional Reading of Genesis One* (Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 1999), pp. 53–54.

65. Jordan, p. 54.

66. Jordan, *ibid.*

67. Jordan, *ibid.*; see also, p. 184.

68. Jordan, *ibid.*, p. 57.

made a compelling case for understanding 78 to refer to “water emerging from the ground or from a river, not from rain.”<sup>69</sup>

First, if Moses is the original author, then it must be important to consider that he himself never lived in Canaan. More importantly, the original audience of the Pentateuch did not resemble the characters described in the opening chapters of Genesis (e.g., Israelites did not live for hundreds of years), and thus there is no good basis for imagining that the environment of Genesis 1–2 somehow matched the environment of ancient Israel. The original readership of the Pentateuch might not have been very familiar with either the agricultural practices appropriate to the land of Canaan or with the prevalent idolatries extant in the land which they were about to conquer. On this last point, Jordan claimed, “Neither Moses nor the wilderness Israelites had had any experience with Baalism at the time [Futato] says the text was written.”<sup>70</sup> A second internal evidence bolsters Jordan’s critique of Futato’s position.

In the conclusion to this appendix, Jordan presented a brief biblical theology in which he sought to answer the question, “what is going on in Genesis 2:5–7?”<sup>71</sup> Jordan’s answer seems to be building on a foundation laid by David Tsumura in *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2*,<sup>72</sup> in which Tsumura argues for understanding 78 to be referring to a ground water source (e.g., a subterranean spring) which then generated the river which flowed out of and down from the Garden to water the whole surrounding country of Eden as a result of God’s subjugation of chaotic primordial waters. Developing this line of interpretation of Eden as the elevated mountain of God, L. Michael Morales subsequently described the garden of Eden as “resting upon the summit” with Genesis 2:6, 10–14 describing “a spring-fed river that runs through the garden and then flows down from Eden, branching out into four riverheads to water the rest of the earth, suggesting a high locale that corresponds well with a mountain summit.”<sup>73</sup> On this foundation laid by Tsumura’s linguistic reading, Jordan offered a biblical theology of earth and heaven, culminating in a contrast between the first Adam who is of earth and the last Adam who is of heaven.<sup>74</sup> Notwithstanding the risk of indulging in interpretive maximalism, Jordan’s biblical theological presentation is more convincing than Futato’s argument in that Jordan has interpreted Genesis 2 in light of the clear meaning of Genesis 1 and 3 which frame it as immediate prologue and narrative *telos*, respectively.

Shortly after the turn of the century into the new millennium, the General Assemblies of the Presbyterian

Church in America (PCA) and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) formed study committees to address the issue of divergent positions on creation being adopted by men constituting the ordained leadership of each denomination. The OPC General Assembly study committee was subsequent to a more focused study committee of the OPC Presbytery of Southern California handling the FH in particular. The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) had previously ruled all views other than the classic reading of Genesis 1–2 as out of accord with its doctrinal standards in the mid-1980s. In 2001 and 2002, pastors in each of these three denominations published critiques of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2 to defend the classic understanding of the creation week. Each critique has made contributions to the developing evaluation of the “because it had not rained argument.”

Pastor Frank Walker, Jr. of the RCUS claimed that proponents of the FH interpretation commit the *petitio principii* (begging the question) fallacy by treating Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 as two independent creation accounts that need to be harmonized. “But a discrepancy appears only if we treat the other [sic] creation accounts as if they were independent of each other. In other words, we must assume the problem in order to find one.”<sup>75</sup> The solution to this problem is twofold. First, readers must recognize that only one account (that which is contained largely in Genesis 1) is entirely chronological in nature. Second, Genesis 2:5ff does not constitute a separate account of the creation week, but rather a specified account of the creation of Adam, Eve, and their habitat (the Garden of Eden).

Kenneth L. Gentry Jr. and Michael R. Butler produced an overview and evaluation of the FH interpretation of

69. Jordan, *ibid.*, p. 236.

70. Jordan, *ibid.*, p. 239.

71. Jordan, *ibid.*, p. 240.

72. David Toshio Tsumura, *The Earth and the Waters in Genesis 1 and 2: A Linguistic Investigation*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series 83 (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989).

73. L. Michael Morales, *Who Shall Ascend the Mountain of the Lord? A Biblical Theology of the Book of Leviticus*, New Studies in Biblical Theology 37 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2015), p. 52. For a more detailed discussion of the biblical theological significance of connections between Genesis 1:9–10 and Genesis 2:6, see L. Michael Morales, *The Tabernacle Pre-Figured: Cosmic Mountain Ideology in Genesis and Exodus*, Biblical Tools and Studies 15 (Leuven, Belgium: Peeters, 2012), pp. 61–68.

74. Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, p. 245.

75. Frank Walker, Jr., “A Critique of the Framework Hypothesis,” in *Creation According to the Scriptures: A Presuppositional Defense of Literal, Six-Day Creation* (Vellecito, CA: Chalcedon Foundation, 2001), p. 69.

Genesis 1 out of personal papers drafted during the aforementioned OPC Presbytery of Southern California study of the FH in 1999. In their treatment of the FH, Gentry offered a “Rebuttal of the Framework Hypothesis”<sup>76</sup> and Butler produced a more in-depth examination of “The Question of Genesis 2:5.”<sup>77</sup> Gentry noted the historical novelty and exegetical idiosyncrasy of reading Genesis 2:5–6 in the manner proposed by proponents of the FH.<sup>78</sup> After having admitted the difficulty and ambiguity of Genesis 2:5–6 divorced from its context,<sup>79</sup> Gentry remarked, “Erroneous systems often flow from difficult passages—when needed to prove a point. Kline’s exegesis develops a *difficult* passage in a *unique* direction for dealing with a *contemporary* debate.”<sup>80</sup> Gentry offered a biblical theological critique similar to Jordan’s in that he reads Genesis 2:5 as setting the stage for the Fall (and subsequent curse), and not as providing an interpretive lens for reading Genesis 1 topically rather than chronologically. In arguing in favor of the “supernaturally miraculous”<sup>81</sup> effects of God’s divine fiat in the creation week, Gentry mistakenly equated God’s other miracles with God’s work of creation, that is as somehow “non-providential.”<sup>82</sup> This error on Gentry’s part is the opposite of what was noted above regarding Kruger’s imprecise formulation. Whereas Kruger seemed to collapse God’s work of creation into His works of extraordinary providence, Gentry collapsed God’s extraordinary providences (miracles) into the same category as God’s work of creation. In spite of the imprecision on this point, Gentry has provided a strong critique of the FH interpretation reading of Genesis 2:5. Rather than taking it to be the key to understanding Genesis 1, Gentry has echoed others

in rightly understanding the verse to communicate a simple fact of the world before the curse resulting from Adam’s first transgression: “After the Fall futility befalls man’s environment (Ro 8:20–23). But it was not always so, according to Genesis 2:5.”<sup>83</sup> Again, Genesis 2:5 anticipates the Fall narrative more so than it somehow reinterprets the events of the creation week.

Butler’s contribution takes an even closer look at Genesis 2:5 along three lines of inquiry. He identified contextual, argumentative, and chronological problems with the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5. Along contextual (i.e., exegetical) lines, Butler’s particular contributions include unique critiques of both Kline and Futato. Butler criticized Kline’s reading of Genesis 2:5 as making the phrase “because it had not rained” to be an *obiter dictum*, that is, “a few words thrown in the text that are not germane to the narrative.”<sup>84</sup> For Moses to have included at this point a statement on God’s creational *modus operandi* makes little to no sense. It certainly does not integrate smoothly with the narrative context of Genesis 2–3. The critique which Butler levelled against Futato’s development of Kline’s thesis is more substantial.

First, Futato has been too vague in his outline of the two-fold problem presented in Genesis 2:4–25. In particular, the terms describing vegetation in Genesis 2:5 do not constitute a merism.<sup>85</sup> Second, Futato has wrongly read Genesis 2 as presenting a problem-explanation-solution framework when, in fact, the chapter is evidently and emphatically anticipating the curse of the ground in Genesis 3:17–19.<sup>86</sup> This critique has direct bearing on the place of Genesis 2:5 within Genesis 1–3. The verse, as with the rest of the chapter, primarily looks ahead to the curse pronounced on the ground and the man. Butler further observed that Futato has read a description of the world before the Fall as a problem in need of a solution.<sup>87</sup> On that same problem-explanation-solution reading of the text, Futato has introduced unnecessary and incoherent redundancy into the text. The two supposed problems in Genesis 2:5 are met with two solutions each (a total of four solutions for two problems) later in the chapter, thus negating the sufficiency of the first presented solution for each problem.<sup>88</sup>

Another of Butler’s unique contributions to evaluating the FH proponents’ understanding of Genesis 2:5 and ordinary providence is a barrage of textual and biblical theological arguments against Futato’s translation of 78 as “rain-cloud.”<sup>89</sup> Two arguments are worth highlighting as advancements on previously articulated critiques. The first is a compelling external argument from Genesis 13:10.<sup>90</sup> In this passage, Lot compares the plain

76. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., “A Rebuttal of the Framework Hypothesis,” in *Yea, Hath God Said? The Framework Hypothesis/Six-Day Creation Debate*, by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. and Michael R. Butler (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), pp. 67–99.

77. Michael R. Butler, “The Question of Genesis 2:5,” in *Yea, Hath God Said? The Framework Hypothesis/Six-Day Creation Debate*, by Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr. and Michael R. Butler (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2002), pp. 101–31.

78. Gentry, Jr., “A Rebuttal of the Framework Hypothesis,” p. 70.

79. Gentry, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 85.

80. Gentry, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 86.

81. Gentry, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 88.

82. Gentry, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 89.

83. Gentry, Jr., *ibid.*, p. 92.

84. Butler, “The Question of Genesis 2:5,” p. 102.

85. Butler, pp. 103–104, 109–110.

86. Butler, p. 105.

87. Butler, p. 106.

88. Butler, pp. 108–109.

89. Butler, pp. 110–119.

90. Butler, p. 117.

of the Jordan to both the Garden of Eden (“garden of the Lord”) and the land of Egypt. Lot’s comparison strongly favors the position that the Garden of Eden was watered by ground water produced by an underground spring. On this reading, the plain of the Jordan is “fertile in the same kind of way”<sup>91</sup> that Egypt and Eden were fertile. The second argument notes analogical correspondence between Ezekiel’s vision of the temple in Ezekiel 47:1–12, the description of Eden in Genesis 2, and John’s vision of the heavenly Zion in Revelation 22:1–2. “The point is that these parallel passages all speak of a river that has its source in a spring (literal or figurative) and not in rain clouds. Using the analogy of Scripture, the way to understand *ed* is not as a rain cloud, but as a spring.”<sup>92</sup> Not to do so, Butler has pointed out, “would be tantamount to saying that Ezekiel and the Apostle John misinterpreted Scripture for clearly they believed that Eden’s water was supplied by a spring and not rain clouds.”<sup>93</sup> Butler’s employment of the *analogia scriptura* to critique Futato’s rendering of the term  $\tau\epsilon$  constitutes a devastating hermeneutical corrective to Futato’s reading.

In closing his chapter on Genesis 2:5, Butler noted a problem called “Creation Product Conflation.”<sup>94</sup> In essence, Butler claimed that proponents of the FH equate effects with causes. For example, by arguing that light could not exist without the Sun, proponents of the “because it had not rained argument” seem to collapse the distinction between the Sun and (sun)light. As highlighted above by Pipa,<sup>95</sup> the Bible specifies an ontological distinction between light itself and the source of light. Biblical statements of God’s creation of light apart from the Sun (Gen. 1:3–5; Job 38:19–20) necessitate such a distinction. However, to read ordinary providence back into the creation week, proponents of the FH must deny the possibility of light being created apart from the Sun, thereby identifying as one the two separate acts of creating light and creating the luminaries. Butler’s argument against such reasoning proceeds, “The eight creative acts, thus, stand or fall together. If two are really just one described from different perspectives, the exegetical equivalent of Pandora’s box is opened on Genesis 1.”<sup>96</sup> The danger is that such an approach to reading the text of Genesis 1 will terminate in one of two speculations: that of theistic evolution (or progressive creationism, a position which Kline vigorously rejects,<sup>97</sup> though on exegetical grounds apart from the “because it had not rained argument”) or that of instantaneous creation (the position that God created all things *ex nihilo* in one instant). To be clear, the FH does not demand either of these conclusions. The point

Butler sought to make at this juncture is that neither does the FH rule them out of the realm of plausibility.

In emphasizing the historical novelty of the FH, J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall have pointed out that the overwhelming majority of commentators down to the present day do not adopt Kline’s reading of Genesis 2:5. Echoing what other critics have repeatedly observed, Duncan and Hall understand Genesis 2:5–6 to “refer to the sixth day and [to] set the stage for explaining man’s obligation to care for the garden.”<sup>98</sup> Though interpreters may put more or less emphasis either on Adam’s place in the Garden or on his imminent Fall, Duncan and Hall have done justice to the consensus position that “Moses writes these verses to remind us that the world was not ordered and full in its initial form: the paradise of Eden was God’s gift.”<sup>99</sup> “Initial form” here is to be understood as the form of the world between the beginning of day six of the creation week and God’s creative preparation of the Garden of Eden. In presenting the positive case for the classic plain reading of Genesis 1–2, Duncan and Hall cautioned against imposing “normalcy” on the text, for “creation begins *atypically*, as compared to our own experience.”<sup>100</sup> Rather than forcing the exclusive operation of ordinary providence into the creation week, careful readers of the Bible must give appropriate consideration to the special nature of the situation pertaining to the creation week. Because the acts of God involved in His work of creation “are by nature miraculous, [they] did not operate under normal providence.”<sup>101</sup> Like Kruger, Hall and Duncan may have collapsed God’s work of creation into His works of extraordinary providence, but the point they make—that God miraculously upheld the various features of His creation as He brought them into existence—is sound. Perhaps the most significant advancement that Duncan and Hall made in critiquing FH proponents’ reading of Genesis 2:5–6 is in how they pointed out that the “because it had not rained argument” is indispensable to

91. Butler, *Ibid.*

92. Butler, *ibid.*, p. 118.

93. Butler, *ibid.*

94. Butler, *ibid.*, pp. 126–131.

95. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos,” p. 176.

96. Butler, “The Question of Genesis 2:5,” p. 130.

97. Kline, “Because It Had Not Rained,” p. 146.

98. J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall, “The 24-Hour Response (to the Framework View),” in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), p. 262.

99. Duncan III and Hall, *ibid.*

100. Duncan III and Hall, p. 53.

101. Duncan III and Hall, *ibid.*

the FH as a whole. They observed, “the framework view of what it sees as ordinary providence in Genesis 2:5–6 is a *sine qua non* for the interpretation. If its advocates are wrong on that point, the whole theory fails.”<sup>102</sup> The FH understanding of “ordinary providence” in Genesis 2:5–6 is a historical novelty and hermeneutical eccentricity which threatens the perspicuity and coherence of the Bible’s account of God’s creation of the world. This appraisal of the FH reading of Genesis 2:5–6—though variously expressed—is held in common by all the authors surveyed as part of this literature review.

Because the FH finds its most insistent proponents in Reformed and Presbyterian circles, it is unsurprising that most of the critiques have come out of the same academic and theological milieu. The final two critics included in this review come from different settings. Writing for the *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society*, Walter Booth has sought to refute the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5–6 in three steps.<sup>103</sup> In so doing, he has self-consciously drawn on the exegetical labors of Umberto Cassuto, Randall W. Younker, and James Jordan. First, Genesis 2:5–6 refers ahead to conditions which would obtain only after Adam’s Fall and God’s subsequent curse of the man and the ground in Genesis 3:17–19. Second, the vegetation described in Genesis 2:5 does not include all the plants of the world. Rather, the terms in Genesis 2:5 correspond to the desert-inhabiting thorns and thistles described in Genesis 3:18, and to the grain-bearing plants requiring cultivation implied in Genesis 3:18. Third, Genesis 2:5 does not describe conditions in which rain would eventual

emerge. “Rain had not fallen, and would not fall for some time, because the conditions required to produce it, especially the presence in the atmosphere of particles required as condensation nuclei for the formation of raindrops, were not all present. Because the earth was watered by a “mist,” rain was unnecessary.”<sup>104</sup> In conclusion, Booth addressed the supposed contradiction between Genesis 2:5 and the account of creation found in Genesis 1 by showing that Genesis 2 indicates dissimilarity between the environment of the Garden of Eden and the environment of ancient Israel.

The immediate difficulties which attend Booth’s conclusion may be answered adequately by appeal to two observations about the nature of the language of the biblical narrative. First, it is helpful to recall at this point Weeks’s observation that the Bible authoritatively uses ordinary language to describe events which actually took place.<sup>105</sup> Second, Vern Poythress analyzed the use of analogical language in Genesis 1<sup>106</sup> and 2<sup>107</sup> to describe God’s work of creation in the familiar terms of God’s works of providence. As Poythress has labored to demonstrate, “God’s acts of creation cannot be equated with his later acts of providence, but there are analogies between the two, which enables [sic] us to understand the acts of creation. The analogies deal with aspects of providence that can be observed by ordinary people.”<sup>108</sup> Though Poythress favors a form of the ‘analogical days’ position on creation days articulated by C. John Collins,<sup>109</sup> his observations regarding the correlations which exist between biblical descriptions of God’s works of creation and providence can be marshalled to support arguments like Booth’s mentioned above. Poythress noted, “Since the events of providence occur in time and space today, the many analogies with providence confirm that Genesis 1:1–3:24 is likewise giving us real events in space and time.”<sup>110</sup> Further, echoing Weeks’s point above, “Because any analogy involves both similarity and dissimilarity, it may not provide us with detailed technical information unless we artificially force such detail into our interpretation.”<sup>111</sup> Readers of Genesis 1–2 should expect to encounter descriptions of a completely unfamiliar world in familiar language used analogically to highlight the fact that there exists both similarity and dissimilarity between that world and the current world. Far from promoting brash confidence in interpretive speculation, such an expectation should inspire humility, care, and discretion in the exegetical task.

The most thorough critique of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2 has come from the pen of Robert V. McCabe writing for the *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*<sup>112</sup> and Master Books.<sup>113</sup> Since the chapter which

102. Duncan III and Hall, “The 24–Hour Response (to the Framework View),” p. 263.”

103. Walter M. Booth, “Days of Genesis 1: Literal or Nonliteral?” *Journal of the Adventist Theological Society* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 118.

104. Booth, *ibid.*

105. Weeks, *The Sufficiency of Scripture*, p. 32.

106. Poythress, “Correlations with Providence in Genesis 1.”

107. Poythress, *ibid.*

108. Poythress, *ibid.*, p. 29.

109. Vern S. Poythress, *Christian Interpretations of Genesis 1* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing; Westminster Seminary Press, 2013); Poythress, *Interpreting Eden*.

110. Poythress, “Correlations with Providence in Genesis 2,” p. 43.

111. Poythress, p. 47.

112. Robert V. McCabe, “A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account (Part 1 of 2),” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 10 (2005): 19–67; Robert V. McCabe, “A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Account (Part 2 of 2),” *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal* 11 (2006): 63–133.

113. Robert V. McCabe, “A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Week,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), pp. 211–49.

McCabe contributed to the edited volume published by Master Books is a summary of the two articles he previously published with the *Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal*, the comments included in this literature review are reserved to his second journal article in which he has dedicated over forty pages to challenge the “because it had not rained argument.”<sup>114</sup> McCabe’s critique of the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2, including his treatment of Genesis 2:5, is a *tour de force* of exegetical and theological insight. In challenging the argument that the creation account is controlled by ordinary providence, McCabe posed a series of exegetical questions<sup>115</sup> and considered three levels of the context surrounding Genesis 2:5: immediate (2:4–7),<sup>116</sup> surrounding (2:4–25),<sup>117</sup> and wider (Genesis 1:1–2:3, progressive revelation, and *analogia scriptura*).<sup>118</sup>

In discussing the context set by Genesis 1:1–2:3, McCabe made the familiar point that “if there is any supernatural intervention, extraordinary providence, this calls into question this thesis of the framework [hypothesis].”<sup>119</sup> In light of the exegetical support McCabe marshaled for a refutation of Kline’s original interpretation of Genesis 2:5 to be making a point about conditions which obtained during the creation week, the familiar contention in favor of the operation of extraordinary providence during the creation week becomes a decisive theological conclusion against the FH interpretation of Genesis 1–2. Thus, McCabe’s conclusion is altogether justified on the following page: “A closer reading of the creation account in Genesis 1:1–2:3 reveals that it is more accurate to say that the creation week is governed by extraordinary providence while, concomitantly establishing the conditions in the created order so that it could begin to operate according to normal providence.”<sup>120</sup> Further, McCabe has rightly characterized the utter uniqueness of the creation week. “With God’s use of normal secondary causation in providence, every part of a multifaceted universe must be in place so that it can function without God’s continual miraculous intervention.”<sup>121</sup> Finally, McCabe noted, “during this week the conditions for the earth to operate according to normal providence were being established in such a way that at the end of this week the earth would be ready to effectively operate in ordinary providence.”<sup>122</sup> It is God’s establishment of an ecosystem of ordinary providence that the third section of this article considers.

#### THE CREATION OF AN ECOSYSTEM OF ORDINARY PROVIDENCE

Building upon the definition of providence presented

in the introduction above, I proceed in this section first to develop several additional features of the doctrine of providence. I then propose a doctrine of the progressive inauguration of God’s works of providence during the creation week terminating in the completion of God’s work of establishing an ecosystem of ordinary providence. In the conclusion of this article, I offer an argument for why the doctrine of a progressive inauguration of God’s works of providence supports the classic reading of Genesis 1–2. As stated above, included in the term “providence” is all God’s works of actively preserving and governing His creation. God’s providential works may be classed as either ordinary or extraordinary, typical or atypical, regular or irregular, normal or miraculous. The essential element in God’s works of providence is the concern with either government or preservation of the created order and its constituents. Scripture clearly testifies to both God’s government over creation (e.g., Dan. 4:34–35; Ps. 135:6; Acts 17:25–28) and God’s preservation of creation (e.g., Neh. 9:6; Heb. 1:3).

The inextricably interwoven features of preservation and government distinguish God’s works of providence from His work of creation (either *ex nihilo* or *ex materia*) uniquely and exclusively contained within the first six days of the creation week. Unlike God’s work of creation, His works of providence are ongoing, unremitting, constantly active, ordinarily operational through means, and occasionally manifest in miracles. Thus, the doctrine of providence is directly opposed to the detached understanding of God articulated in Deism, which denies God’s active involvement or intervention in the created order. Shedd’s devastating critique is helpful on this point, “The deistical theory, consequently, implies that matter, after its creation, is self-sustaining and self-governing. But self-subsistence and self-sustenance are incommunicable properties. They can characterize only the Creator.”<sup>123</sup> In other words, God alone is—and necessarily is—the sole self-sufficient, non-contingent, and utterly independent Being needing no external power to sustain Him. The Deist

114. McCabe, “A Critique (Part 2),” pp. 63–108.

115. McCabe, pp. 67–68.

116. McCabe, pp. 68–90.

117. McCabe, pp. 90–101.

118. McCabe, pp. 101–108.

119. McCabe, p. 102.

120. McCabe, p. 103.

121. McCabe, p. 103.

122. McCabe, p. 104; see also pp. 107–108.

123. William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, ed. Alan W. Gomes, Third Edition (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003 [1894]), p. 412.

theory not only immanentizes a necessarily unique and incommunicable attribute of God, but it functionally confuses the contingent creation with the God whom Deists admit created all things.

Perhaps in response to Deism's denial of God's active involvement in the work of preserving and governing all that which He has made, the occasionalism of Jonathan Edwards conflates God's works of creation and providence. Edwards argued, "God's *preserving* created Things in Being is perfectly equivalent to a *continued* Creation, or to his creating those Things out of Nothing at *each Moment* of their Existence."<sup>124</sup> By arguing such, Edwards denied the reality of secondary—or instrumental—means. In place of secondary means, Edwards claimed that God creatively acts directly and immediately on His entire creation at each and every successive moment of time. As Letham has remarked, "This is not providence but only creation repeated on a continuous basis."<sup>125</sup> To collapse the distinction between creation and providence in this manner is to evacuate the meaning of both as well as to rob Genesis 2:2 of all significance. However, God's works of creation and providence are not without commonality. Scripture presents them as sharing common objects and—as outlined above with reference to the work of Vern Poythress—language. Like God's work of creation, His works of providence extend to and bear on all things seen and unseen, visible and invisible, on earth and in heaven.

The objects of God's works of providence include each of His creatures individually and corporately, together with all of their discreet and collective actions

124. Jonathan Edwards, *The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin Defended* (Boston; London: J. Johnson and Co. & G. Keith, 1766), p. 419; cf. William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, trans. John Dykstra Eusden (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 109; and Johannes Maccovius, *Scholastic Discourse: Johannes Maccovius (1588–1644) on Theological and Philosophical Distinctions and Rules*, trans. Willem J. van Asselt et al. (Apeldoorn, The Netherlands: Instituut voor Reformatieonderzoek, 2009 [1661]), pp. 142–143.

125. Robert Letham, *Systematic Theology* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019), p. 293.

126. Francis Turretin, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, Volume 1: First Through Tenth Topics*, ed. James T. Dennison, Jr., trans. George Musgrave Giger, vol. 1 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 1994 [1679]), p. 498; see also Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2*, pp. 604ff.

127. Turretin, *ibid.*

128. Ames, *The Marrow of Theology*, p. 109.

129. Herman Witsius, *Sacred Dissertations, On What Is Commonly Called the Apostles' Creed, Vol. 1*, trans. Donald Fraser, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: A. Fullarton & Co.; Khull, Blackie & Co., 1823 [1681]), pp. 193–194, 211–213.

130. Johann Heinrich Heidegger, *The Concise Marrow of Christian Theology*, trans. Casey Carmichael (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2019 [1697]), pp. 50–51.

and activities. Turretin highlighted the total coverage of God's providence in writing, "we believe that all things without exception are under divine providence: whether heavenly or sublunary, great or small, necessary and natural or free and contingent. Thus nothing in the nature of things can be granted or happen which does not depend upon it."<sup>126</sup> Nothing escapes the direction and care of God's providence. The created order consists of all non-divine physical (e.g., the earth, heavenly luminaries, animals, mankind), immaterial (e.g., time, creaturely consciousness) and spiritual things (e.g., angels, demons, the highest heavens). Physical creation further divides into inanimate and animate creation. God preserves and governs them all by His works of providence. In particular, the actions—"necessary and natural or free and contingent"<sup>127</sup>—of God's creatures are subject to His providential government. Ames expressed the significance of the operation of God's providence in the actions of His creatures in writing, "This government shines forth in the operation of all things."<sup>128</sup> Thus, by His providence, God upholds His creatures and governs their individual and collective activity. He is sovereign over all creation and history.

Just as the discreet stages of God's work of creation are either *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) or *ex materia* (out of pre-existing matter)—immediate or mediate, respectively<sup>129</sup>—God's works of providence operate by one of two means. God's works of providence operate either immediately or mediately.<sup>130</sup> By the first term are to be understood all those works of providence described as extraordinary, atypical, irregular, and miraculous. By the second term are to be understood all those works of providence described as natural, ordinary, typical, regular, and normal. Regarding either means, God is nonetheless immediately involved as the First or Primary Cause of whatsoever comes to pass insofar as providence is the outworking of His eternal decrees. Such being the case does not rule out God's employment of secondary means or causes, but rather establishes it. Aquinas explained this dynamic, as follows.

Two things belong to providence—namely, the type of the order of things foreordained towards an end; and the execution of this order, which is called government. As regards the first of these, God has immediate providence over everything, because He has in His intellect the types of everything, even the smallest; and whatsoever causes He assigns to certain effects, He gives them the power to produce those effects. Whence it must be that He has beforehand the type of those effects in His mind.

As to the second, there are certain intermediaries of God's providence; for He governs things inferior by superior, not on account of any defect in His power, but by reason of the abundance of His goodness; so that the dignity of causality is imparted even to creatures.<sup>131</sup>

In other words, God's providence includes His foreknowledge and foreordination of causes and effects as well as His government of "certain intermediaries of [His] providence,"<sup>132</sup> namely secondary causes. Bavinck summarized the traditional Christian construal of the relationship between causes and providence in writing, "Christian theology teaches that the secondary causes are strictly subordinated to God as the primary cause and in that subordination nevertheless remain true causes."<sup>133</sup> As the primary cause, God by His providence works by means of secondary causes without destroying or negating them. This is referred to as *concursum dei*, or divine concurrence. Heidegger explained, "God governs all things mediately or immediately. He governs *mediately* through the *ministry of secondary causes*. . . . God's *concursum* or rather the *work* whereby "He works all things" (1 Cor. 12:6) pertains to this, as immediate and predetermining cause."<sup>134</sup> Bavinck likewise expressed the relationship in writing, "With his almighty power God makes possible every secondary cause and is present in it with his being at its beginning, progression, and end. . . . But this energizing activity of the primary cause in the secondary cause is so divinely great that precisely by that activity he stirs those secondary causes into an activity of their own."<sup>135</sup> God's judicious and righteous establishment and active employment of secondary causes is the typical mode of preserving and governing the created order and all which it contains.

The doctrine of divine concurrence operative in God's works of providence is a mystery. God decrees the existence and divine use of necessary, free, and contingent<sup>136</sup> second causes to accomplish His holy will in providence. Nevertheless, He is actively and immediately involved in their execution. Thus, He is immediately involved in second causes of His mediate works of providence. Dabney insightfully remarked,

Thus, yet in a manner never fully revealed to us, the Almighty Providence employs the powers which reside in created things, to effectuate all His special purposes. The fact that no regular law is infringed does not imply that His superintendence is excluded: it is by means of that very regularity that He works. He guides with His skillful but invisible hand to just those combinations which release the powers of the second causes he needs

for His purpose, and reduce to potentiality those whose tasks are for the time completed. It is thus that perpetual providence enters.<sup>137</sup>

Of course, God is not bound to such second causes and mediate means of providence. He is at all times able to preserve and govern His creation without, above, beyond, or against second causes.

When God works apart from secondary causes operating in ordinary providence, He employs extraordinary providence or miracles. It is important to note that while all extraordinary works of God's providence are by their very nature supernatural, not all supernatural works of God's providence are necessarily extraordinary. In his treatment of the doctrine of providence, Letham distinguished between ordinary, extraordinary, and supernatural providence.<sup>138</sup> However, his treatment seems rightly to suggest an overlap between supernatural providence and each of the other two mutually exclusive classifications. Letham wrote regarding the supernatural ministry of angels, "Angels are deployed in the service of the elect (Heb. 1:14). It follows that particular aspects of God's providential care of the church are delegated to the creaturely agency of angels."<sup>139</sup> Insofar as angels are creatures, the works of providence manifested in their ministry are ordinary. Insofar as angels are immaterial beings (i.e., spirit creatures), the works of providence manifested in their ministry are supernatural. But the supernatural feature of angelic ministry is not necessarily extraordinary. The feature of extraordinary providence which makes it at all extraordinary is the direct (miraculous) intervention of God Himself apart from the employment of means, angelic or otherwise. It is precisely this kind of providence (supernatural and extraordinary) which is progressively enacted and employed during the creation week before the completion of the interconnected created order (i.e., an ecosystem of ordinary providence) indicated

131. St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica, Volume One*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Christian Classics Reprint (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1948 [1485]), p. 124.

132. Aquinas, *ibid.*

133. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2*, p. 613.

134. Heidegger, *Concise Marrow*, p. 50.

135. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 2*, p. 614.

136. For an explanation of these terms, refer to Turretin, *Institutes, Volume 1*, pp. 499–500.

137. Robert L. Dabney, *The Sensualistic Philosophy of the Nineteenth Century Considered*, ed. Christopher Coldwell (Dallas, TX: Naphtali Press, 2003 [1876]), pp. 261–262.

138. Letham, *Systematic Theology*, pp. 297–299.

139. Letham, p. 299.

in Genesis 2:2, when “God completed His work which He had done, and He rested.”

What follows is a theological explication of the operation of God’s providential work during the creation week as recorded in Genesis 1. As noted in the introduction above, Bavinck argued that each subsequent phase of creation within the creation week “already anticipates the works of preservation and government. . . . Creation immediately and instantly passes into preservation and government.”<sup>140</sup> Into what kind of providence (preservation and government) did creation pass at each subsequent phase? Using Letham’s taxonomy of God’s works of providence, was it ordinary and natural, ordinary and supernatural, or extraordinary and supernatural? As cited in the literature review above, Pipa argued, “Only if God created everything fully at once, would there be no place for supernatural preservation.”<sup>141</sup> In fact, it is impossible to imagine a multistep creation progressing by means of ordinary providence alone, apart from God’s working extraordinarily to preserve and govern His creatures before the completion of creation as a whole. The implications of a multistep creation account militate against any interpretation of the first two chapters of Genesis that demands that ordinary providence was the exclusive mode of God’s work of preserving and governing the incomplete created order during the creation week. Whether the sequence described in the creation account is strictly chronological or topical has no bearing on the matter at this point. The creation account’s description of a progressive creational process over six ordinary days implies a corresponding progressive inauguration of God’s providential work during the same time.

God’s works of providence—ordinary or otherwise—must have commenced in stages corresponding to His discreet acts of creation during the creation week itself. The progressive enactment of God’s works of providence is inferred first from the fact that the discreet features and objects of God’s creation persist beyond the instant of their creation. The perpetuation in space and time of created things is possible if and only if God preserves and governs them by His providence. Due to the fact that natural (and ordinary) providence requires a completed cosmos in order to function, the providence operative during the creation week must have been supernatural. Being closely linked to God’s work of creation as exclusive Creator, it is most plausible that

God’s creation-week works of providence were also extraordinary (i.e., above and beyond all secondary causes and instrumental means, such as angels). Nonetheless, as God created each new feature and object of His creation, He brought it into providential relation with the other extant features and objects of creation. In so doing, the Creator knit together His providential ecology in stages, culminating in a completed cosmos which He pronounced to be “very good” on the sixth day (Gen. 1:31). Throughout the creation week, God upheld the incomplete providential ecology primarily by means of extraordinary providence operating concurrently with His multistage work of creation by the Word of His power. If ordinary providence functioned at all during the creation week, it was in a manner beyond the grasp of human experience and understanding, necessarily in conjunction with God’s extraordinary providence as the Creator progressively inaugurated various relations of ordinary providence throughout the week. It was only after God rested from His work of creation on the seventh day (Gen. 2:2) that an ecosystem of ordinary providence was established and the operation of ordinary providence came into full effect. The fact that the seventh day is included in the creation week (Gen. 2:1–3) though God performed no additional creative work on that day requires the conclusion that God enacted His complete providential ecology within the week itself.

The precise outworking of God’s providence at any particular point of the creation week itself (other than on the seventh day) is entirely beyond the scope of human understanding or imagination. Such conditions are beyond us, shrouded in the mysterious counsels of God’s unfathomable mind and ways. No degree of divine accommodation of language or gracious condescension to our creaturely frame of reference can make known to us the details of how exactly God’s providence operated in an incomplete cosmos during the creation week. By affirming such to be the case, this article goes beyond the more reserved statements from Grossman and Pipa about the operation of “normal providential law” in the creation week.<sup>142</sup>

However, redemptive history testifies to God’s extraordinary works of providence through the use of miracles in other contexts. For example, God miraculously preserved the Israelites by miraculously parting (governing) the waters before them and subsequently bringing those same waters crashing back down on the pursuing Egyptian army in Exodus 14:13–31. In the Gospel accounts of Matthew 8:23–27, Mark 4:35–41, and Luke 8:22–25, Christ miraculously preserved the disciples by miraculously calming (governing) the raging

140. Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Volume 2, p. 479.

141. Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos,” p. 160.

142. Grossman, “Light Called ‘Day,’” p. 11; Pipa, Jr., “From Chaos to Cosmos,” p. 160.

storm on the Sea of Galilee. In John 18:6, Christ likely worked a miracle to floor the men who had come to arrest Him in the Garden of Gethsemane. Even if not miraculous, the incident involves an unusual manifestation of God's governance over the wills and actions of men. Of course, further examples of God's extraordinary preservation and governance of His creation could be multiplied far beyond the scope and limitations of this article.

The progressive inauguration of God's works of providence during the creation week supports the classic interpretation of Genesis 1–2, against the FH interpretation of the same. To reiterate here that which has already been stated above, two insurmountable difficulties with the FH are worth highlighting. First, Kline's novel reading of Genesis 2:5 is neither necessitated nor warranted by the text. On both exegetical and theological grounds, Kline's reading of Genesis 2:5 to demand the exclusive operation of ordinary providence during the creation week as reported in Genesis 1 is implausible. Not only does it lack coherence with the surrounding context, but it reflects an unsound application of the *analogia scriptura* hermeneutical principle by interpreting a clear text (Gen. 1:1–2:3) by a potentially unclear and ambiguous text (Gen. 2:5). Second, what Kline's reading accomplishes does not solve the problem of a supposed contradiction between the opening chapters of Genesis. On the contrary, Kline's attempted solution introduces even more problems. Kline's interpretation of Genesis 2:5 simply demands the rearrangement and amalgamation of certain of God's discreet creative acts. However, rearranging the acts does not permit the exclusive operation of ordinary providence apart from extraordinary works of providence during a multistage process of creation (i.e., the creation week), as the exclusive operation of ordinary providence requires a sufficient providential ecology, which is nothing short of a completed cosmos as reflected in Genesis 2:2.

#### CONCLUSION

The doctrine of providence is crucially important for interpreting the creation account given in the narrative presentation of Genesis 1:1–2:3 and poetic accounts elsewhere (e.g., Job 38–40; Ps. 104). The inspired author of Scripture employs the language of providence both in the account of the creation of all things in Genesis 1 and in the focused account of mankind's creation in Genesis 2. For exegesis to be faithful, it must be able to distinguish between texts which refer directly and transparently to God's works of providence and texts which

utilize the familiar language of providentially maintained conditions to describe something otherwise impossible to understand from the limited human vantage point. This article has proposed that the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5 fails to recognize this distinction, resulting in an exegetical blunder in the formulation of a fundamentally flawed understanding of Genesis 1–2.

The implausibility and superfluous nature of the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5 fatally weakens the FH as a whole. Without the supposed contradiction between plain readings of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2:5, there is no warrant to reject the classic interpretation of the Bible's opening chapters. In fact, proponents of the FH have created the very problem they have claimed to be aiming to solve—a problem which is without basis in the Scripture itself. By presenting a theological and derivatively exegetical case against the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5, this article has advanced the classic reading of Genesis 1–2 as a more plausible understanding of how God's works of providence function within the context of the creation week. Contrary to the core assumption of the FH interpretation of Genesis 2:5, God's works of preservation and government of the created order during the creation week are not-so-ordinary after all. Such being the case, the following practical application by William Perkins seems only fitting to bring this effort to a close.

Some may ask in what space of time did God make the world? I answer, God could have made the world and all things in it in a moment; but He began and finished the whole work in six distinct days... and that especially for three causes. (1) To teach men that they ought to have a distinct and serious consideration of every creature... (2) God made the world and everything therein in six distinct days to teach us what wonderful power and liberty He had over all His creatures... (3) He made the world in six distinct days and framed all things in this order to teach us His wonderful providence over all His creatures, for before man was created He provided for him a dwelling place and all things necessary for his perpetual preservation and perfect happiness and felicity... And if God had this care over man when as yet he was not, much more will God have care over him now when he is and has a being in nature.<sup>143</sup> ■

143. William Perkins, "Exposition of the Symbol or Creed of the Apostles," in *The Works of William Perkins, Volume 5*, ed. Ryan Hurd (Grand Rapids, MI: Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), pp. 50–51.

*In Brief: Division, the Great Enemy of Edification and Reformation.* James Durham, “A Sermon on Ephesians 4:11–12,” in *Collected Sermons of James Durham: Sixty-one Sermons* (Naphthali Press & Reformation Heritage Books, 2017), pp. 933–935.

If we might speak a word more particularly from the words, in reference to the way of healing, we trust it shall be the mind of Christ and not ours, and therefore consider for the promoting of edification and union there are two things which we may get some rules from to make up a breach and strife, what may edify and unite and what not.

1. If union be the great step to edification as dissention and strife are the door that lets in distraction, then division and separation cannot be the cure, but union is the first and great step of edification. Therefore separation cannot be the cure. Separation has ever been the greatest enemy of edification and reformation. God’s way is the uniting way and not a separating way. If ministers could get the whole body of Christ bruised, it should be condescended to [ ], such a thing were spoken that everyone should sunder and keep their mea [ ] with their own judgment, I will not say what comparatively to the condition we are in, it might be, but let me ask this, if ever we will find such a mean as division and separation commended and approved of Christ for the edifying of the body? [In Psalm 133] the blessing is promised to brethren that dwell together in unity. There the Lord commended the blessing. It were a cure to bring on the disease and for fear of a schism to make one, as for fear such a hand should do the arm wrong, we should cut the arm off, and looks to be like the word of the woman that was not the mother of the living child [who was for] [dividing it]. Yea, by following this divided way, instead of having two churches, we may put ourselves to have none. For let us once divide, we will not hold there, and when the bands of unity are loosed, [it] is just with God it should be so. Therefore, it is not Christ’s way of edification to divide.

2. Upon the other side, if we would attain to union, it must be by that which edifies, or to attain to union, edification must be studied, and not that which destroys.

And 3. Shall give a rule or two for this also.

**RULE ONE.** The breaking or undoing of any one side or party will not be the way to the edification of the church, there being many faithful and eminent men on both sides; therefore neither the way to right union. I speak not only of breaking and undoing by censures and the like, but whether it be by censures or by bringing them or their ministry into contempt, or any other way, it is all one. And by the way, ministers would beware of these things that lead to this.

**RULE TWO.** And consequently, we think no violent way, nor solid authoritative way will do it. How many have followed that gate {who} found it to tend to union with edification?

**RULE THREE.** If union be necessary and union with edifi-

cation, then the kindest and speediest way is best; for if it be not kindly, it cannot unite, and if it be not speedy, it cannot but be worse with us. That which I mean, is a way that may not lay hard personal reflections on men that have been instrumental in the work of God or such things are not kindly that reflects on such and looks not to the main end, but stand in the way rather both of edification and union. It is known among natural men, when they would make up firm union, the less remembrance of faults be the better and it is the more conducing to that end.

**QUESTION.** Seeing then there is a difference, a query may be, wherein may or can we agree? **ANSWER.** There is a difference in judgment, affection and practice, and if we cannot agree, let us stand where we are and grow not worse. (2) If we cannot agree in all these three, yet let us agree in some of them, for this may be done if there be not a union in judgment. If it cannot be in judgment and affection let it be in practice. [In] 2 Corinthians 13:11, the apostle has two words to this purpose: “Be of one mind, live in peace.” Folks may live in peace though they be not of one mind. As also 1 Corinthians 1:12, the new notes on the Bible has a word on this place that is (say they), though {there} were differences in judgment and had different doctrines, yet they would not have doctrines contrary one to another or the truth [see Westminster Annotations (1645)], and so they should be of one mind, and this chapter the rather seems to be the way. Because, Philippians 3:15, 16, the apostle having to deal with a people among whom were divisions, he says, “Let us therefore as many as be perfect be thus minded,” keep our judgment and go not back, and what follows, “if in anything ye be other ways minded God shall reveal this unto you.” And for practice, “nevertheless whereunto we have attained already, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same things.” If we cannot in all things agree, let us follow a common rule, and agree in that, and these that cannot come up to us in some things, we may expect God’s mind to be revealed to them. But in a way of division and strife there is not a promise that the mind of God shall be revealed; and who knows but if we might come to this, to forbear some things wherein we differ, and take one common way in practice, God might reveal some things to us, and upon the one side some might be made to say, we have not minded edification in things, nor been so tender of authority as was meet, and upon the other side others may be made to say, we have not been tender to keep the work of God in clean hands, and the ordinances pure and from being wronged?

And I would have you to consider, what good have all your debates done? How many have they changed or mollified? They have embittered spirits more, but whose condition have they bettered? And it cannot be otherwise if edification and unity be linked together, and nothing will unite, but that which is edifying. ■