

CALVIN STUDIES VII

The Vocation of a Reformed Scholar

Arthur S. Link, Historian and Editor

"I fancy myself an intellectual," he says, "but I have never encountered anyone in history with such a mind as Wilson. That mind of his was always challenging me — to stretch my mind to meet his. I've read a lot of history in my life, and I think that aside from St. Paul, Jesus and the great religious prophets, Woodrow Wilson was the most admirable character I've encountered in history, and the most wonderful person. A man of complete integrity."

Comparing Woodrow Wilson to Jesus Christ is likely to raise eyebrows, not to mention hackles, in academic circles, but such juxtapositions come naturally to Mr. Link, the son of a minister who remains, like Wilson, a devout and unabashed Presbyterian. In his epilogue to the final volume of the Wilson papers, he thanked his colleagues, his wife, and "Him who gave me the strength for labors through the years."

Asked if he feels destiny may have played a part in his having been chosen to edit the Wilson papers, he answers unhesitatingly: "I believe God created me to do this, and it's just as simple as that. Not many people in this day and age would think there was such a thing as a divine call, but I do, and I had it." Looking at the 69 volumes of "The Papers of Woodrow Wilson," still the only comprehensive set of Presidential papers to have been published in its entirety, even the most chronic of scoffers is likely to wonder if Arthur Link might just be on to something.

"35 Years with Woodrow Wilson: The Journey of a Long-Distance Editor"
Terry Teachout in the *New York Times Book Review*, October 31, 1993

Papers Presented at a Colloquium on Calvin Studies
Davidson College
Davidson College Presbyterian Church
Davidson, North Carolina

John H. Leith
January 28 – 29, 1994

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PREFACE

The Seventh Colloquium on Calvin studies, held at Davidson College Presbyterian Church and at Davidson College on Friday and Saturday, January 28–29, 1994, was characterized by conviviality as well as spontaneity and joy in discussing issues of Christian faith. Members of the Colloquium had a good time because of the great work of Dr. and Mrs. Richard Burt in planning for the Colloquium and in providing refreshments. The deeper joy belonged to a community who shared a common faith and rejoiced in a common Christian confession. All who were present were there because of their respect for and commitment to Calvinism, but the joy was deeper than the common Calvinist orientation.

It is worth remembering that Calvinism began as a label to embarrass people and that Calvin himself objected to the word. His joy, as was the joy of the Colloquium, was in the evangel. These sentences from Calvin's preface to his commentary on Jeremiah are worth reading again. Prince Frederick had been attacked as a Calvinist. In response Calvin writes these words:

...they so busily labour to provoke you, and at the same time bring in my name to create an ill-will to you, I have thought it my duty, in refuting these calumnies, to set up as a shield against them the very name which they wish to make so odious; for certainly they are wholly unworthy that your Highness should raise your little finger against them, or utter the smallest word. Were I indeed disposed to expostulate with them on account of their madness in hating so much a man who has done something for the Church of God, and of whose labours they avail themselves with the unlearned, though they acknowledge it not, they would have no plea for their gratitude. While, then, they endeavour, by bringing forward CALVINISM, to affix to your Highness some mark of infamy, they do nothing more than betray their own perversity, and also their folly and disgrace. But if they think that they gain something among those who are like themselves; my voice, on the other hand, in speaking of your just praises, will, I hope be attended to by the godly, the well-informed, and men of calm minds and sound judgment.

The papers that were presented at the Colloquium are printed in this collection along with other papers to which reference was made or which were the basis of discussion.

Many people contributed to the success of this Colloquium.

Charles Raynal, minister of the Davidson College Presbyterian Church, and the session of that church provided support that was indispensable. Carol Barber of the church staff cared for numerous secretarial details. She has also kept the financial records of the Colloquium and the funds of the Colloquium in a Davidson College Presbyterian Church account.

Richard and Annamarie Burt have now managed the details of three colloquiums. The care with which they have planned and arranged the conferences has been outstanding. They have made life easy for all of us who attended in addition to providing excellent refreshments. Davidsonians George Abernathy, Malcolm Lester, Alexander McKelway, and Robin Barnes were also good hosts.

John Kuykendall, president of Davidson College, supported this as well as other colloquiums with his presence. Davidson College provided the guest house and the Fine Arts Auditorium for the programs and the Commons for the Friday evening banquet.

Trinity Presbyterian Church of Richmond, Virginia, Michael Bush minister, provided the secretarial work necessary in the mailing of the invitations to the Colloquium.

Michael Bush and William T. Stuart have read the papers in preparation for printing.

Angela Basmajian has typed the papers and arranged for their printing.

Financial contributions that have made this Colloquium possible and encouraged us to plan for another in January 1996 have been provided by Louise Whitehead of Dalton, Georgia; Robert and Virginia Callahan of Fair Hope, Alabama; William Cockrell of Fair Hope, Alabama; Douglas Harper of Houston, Texas; Frank Harrington and Peachtree Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Georgia; The First Presbyterian Church of Gastonia, North Carolina; William Stuart of Richmond, Virginia and the division of theology and worship of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A.

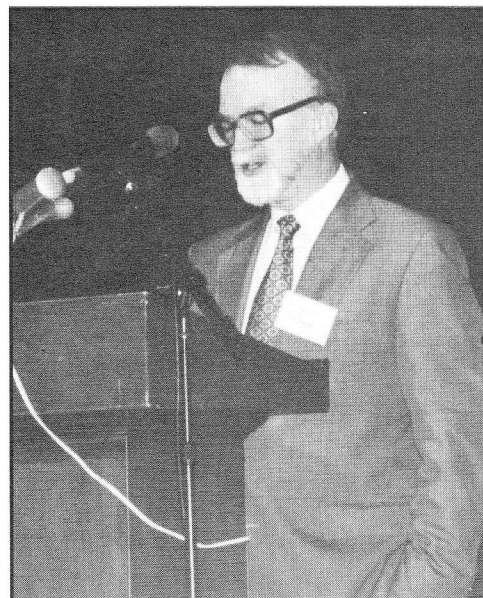
Joel Mattison, whose pictures of Albert Schweitzer have hung at the United Nations, participated in the Colloquium and provided the pictures printed here.

Plans are being made for a colloquium in January of 1996 that will feature the role of the Westminster Assembly in the development of Reformed theology, liturgy and polity as well as in the ethos and piety of Reformed Christians.

John H. Leith



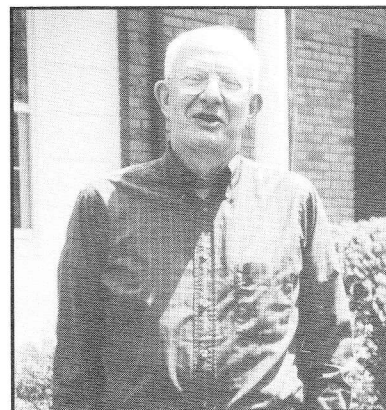
John Leith and Mark Achtemeier



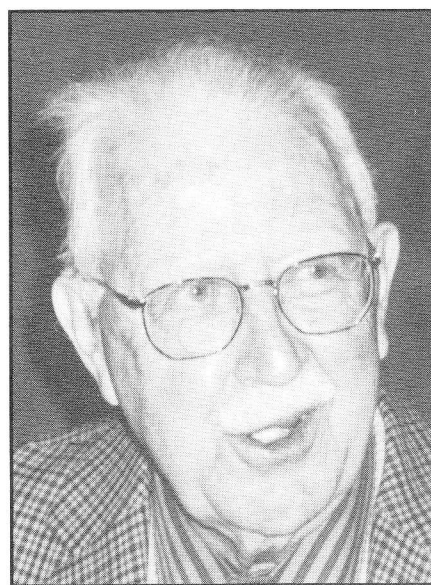
Timothy George



Reception at Sandy and Barbara McKelway's



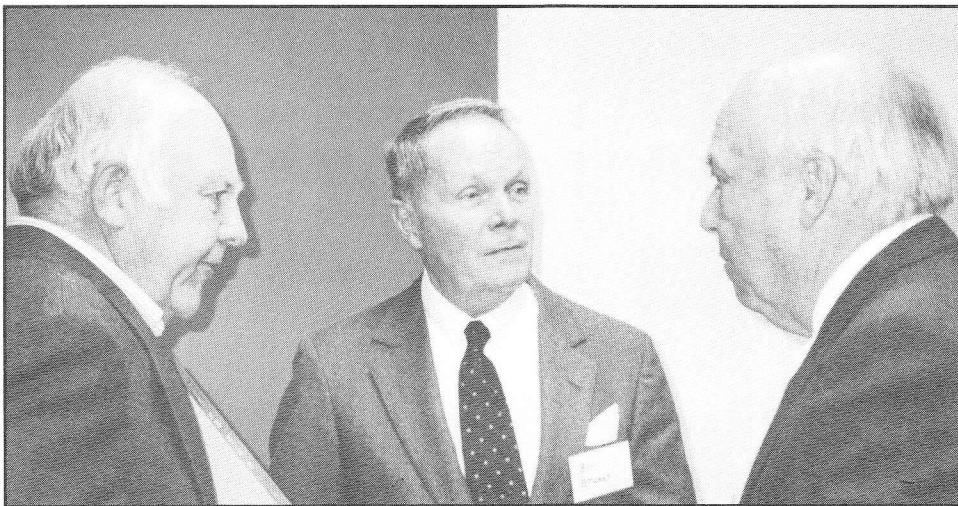
Malcolm Lester



George Abernathy



David Wright, Douglas Harper, Brian Armstrong, William T. Stuart, Philip Butin, and George Stroup



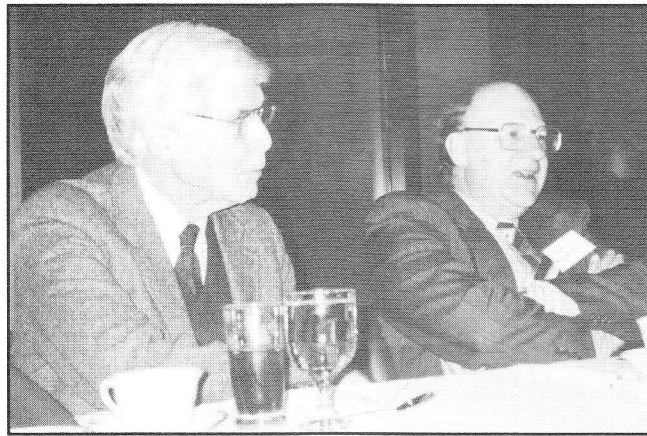
Brian Armstrong, William T. Stuart and Douglas Harper



Bruce McCormack, William Klempa, Hughes Old, Joe Small, Stacy Johnson and Timothy George



John Kuykendall and John DeBevoise



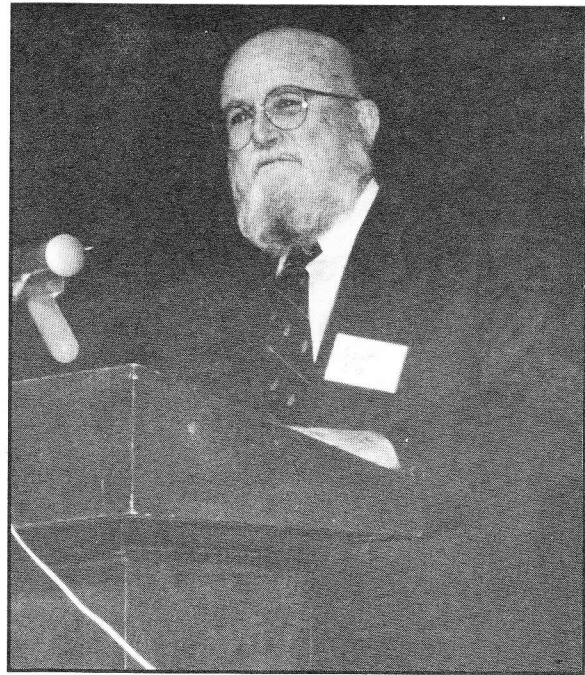
Edward Dowey and David Wright



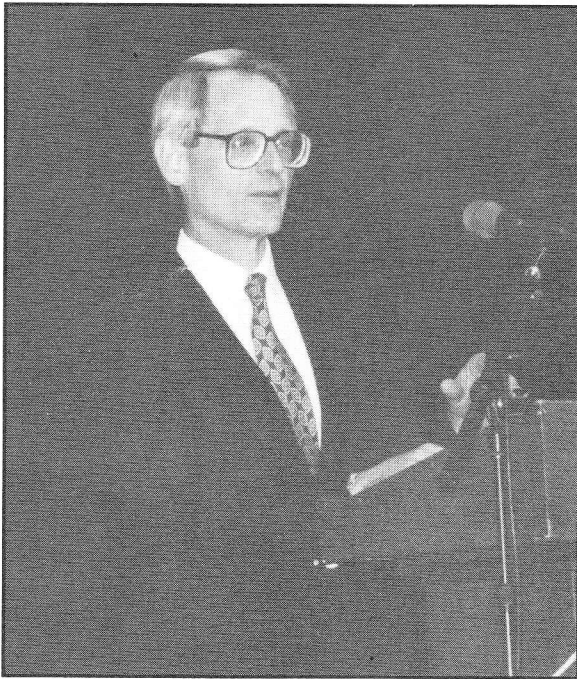
Rosemary and Charles Raynal



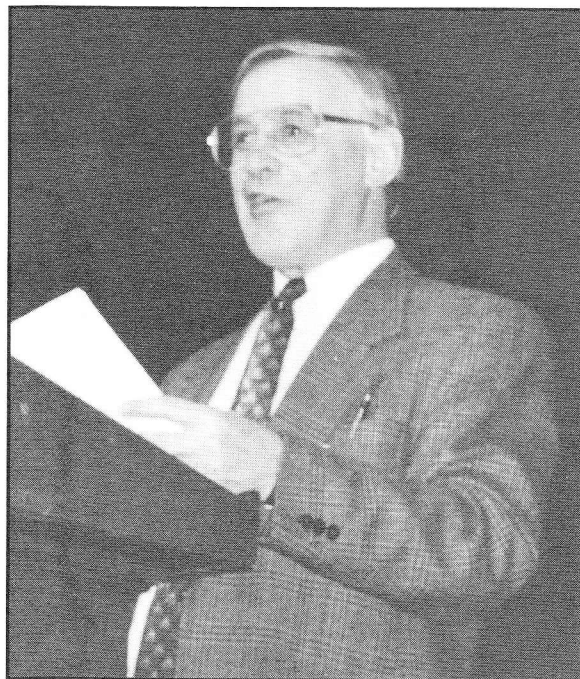
David Wright



Hughes Old



Charles Raynal



William Klempa