

BOOK REVIEW

of

W. Gary Crampton, *The Scripturalism of Gordon H. Clark*,
The Trinity Foundation, 1999.

This book is a recent addition to the Evangel Library,
and this review is presented by Larry D. Paarmann.

W. Gary Crampton, ordained in the PCA, holds two doctorates, one in theology from Whitefield Theological Seminary, and one in philosophy from the Central School of Religion in Surrey, England. Gordon H. Clark was ordained in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, which he had helped J. Gresham Machen organize. Dr. Clark had a doctorate in philosophy, which he obtained from the University of Pennsylvania, where he also taught for a number of years. He also taught briefly at the Reformed Episcopal Seminary. He also taught for a few years at Wheaton College, but for most of his career he was chairman of the Department of Philosophy at Butler University in Indiana, a post he held for some 28 years. For some ten years after retirement, until his death, he taught philosophy at Covenant College, and taught during the summers at Sangre de Cristo Seminary in Colorado. He is known mostly for his books (more than 40), published articles, teaching, and speaking engagements.

This book by W. Gary Crampton, while specifically concerned with Gordon Clark's approach to Scripture, is also an excellent introduction to the life and work of Gordon Clark. This little book includes a relatively complete bibliography of Clark's work: in addition to his books, it lists essays and articles, book reviews, and published letters. While relatively complete, more and more works are being discovered as time goes by. It is interesting that at the present time there more of Clark's books in print than at any given time during Clark's life on earth.

This book by Crampton, while having a total length over 150 pages, is even smaller than what that may imply, because of Clark's bibliography, two indices, and other materials. The length of the actual text is only 81 pages. Also, not only is Clark a very clear, consistent, organized writer, free from jargon, who gives the impression that his sincere desire is to communicate, this can also be said of Crampton. On the other hand, this short length and clear writing should not suggest you can absorb the contents of this book in a short time. It deals with very fundamental issues of one's approach to reality and truth. It is not light reading.

The book only has two chapters (or, two parts, as Crampton labels them), of about equal length. Part 1 is concerned with knowledge. How do we know what we know? What is the difference between knowledge and opinion? How does revelation enter into this issue? What can we know of God apart from Scripture? What do we really know about the world around us? What is the basis of that system of apologetics known as "presuppositionalism"?

Part 2 is concerned specifically with Scripture. What do we mean by the "inspiration" of Scripture? How was the "canon" of Scripture determined? What do we really believe about the authority and sufficiency of Scripture? What is our understanding of the relationship between Law and Gospel?

If you take the time to read this book, you will likely come to a much better understanding of the issues that concerned the Reformers and the writers of the Westminster Standards. You will also likely see more clearly how far the Church, in general, has been influenced by the surrounding decadent society, and has not held closely its own fundamental principles. You may even come to the full "Scripturalism" of Gordon Clark, and see "all of life as theocentric. All of life is sacred and to be lived unto God, in accordance with His Word."