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ABOUT

American Theological Inquiry (ATI) was formed in 2007 by Gannon Murphy (PhD Theology, Univ. Wales, Lampeter; Presbyterian/Reformed) and Stephen Patrick (PhD Philosophy, Univ. Illinois; Eastern Orthodox) to open up space for Christian scholars who affirm the Ecumenical Creeds to contribute research throughout the broader Christian scholarly community in America and the West broadly.

PURPOSE

To provide an inter-tradition forum for scholars who affirm the historic Ecumenical Creeds of Christendom to constructively communicate contemporary theologies, developments, ideas, commentaries, and insights pertaining to theology, culture, and history toward reforming and elevating Western Christianity. ATI seeks a *critical* function as much or more so as a quasi-ecumenical one. The purpose is not to erase or weaken the distinctives of the various ecclesial traditions, but to widen the dialogue and increase inter-tradition understanding while mutually affirming Christ's power to transform culture and the importance of strengthening Western Christianity with special reference to Her historic, creedal roots.

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• Theological, cultural, philosophical, and ecclesial trends in the Western world.

• Perspectives on history/historical events from an orthodox viewpoint.

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1. Include your full name, title and/or affiliation, and a brief (i.e., one sentence) statement affirming the Ecumenical Creeds of Christendom (Apostles', Athanasian, Nicæno-Constantinopolitan, Chalcedonian). Exceptions are permissible with reference to the filioque clauses and Athanasian anathemas.
2. The work has not been submitted elsewhere, or, permissory documentation is provided by the previous publisher indicating approval for publication in ATI.
3. Submit MSS or book reviews in a Microsoft Word, RTF, or text format.

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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

On Nepsis and the Spirit of the Age

Gannon Murphy

From day one, *American Theological Inquiry* has distinguished itself as a journal committed to the perennial tenets of the ancient Christian creeds. In a past issue, I spoke of the storied triad of *praxis*, *theoria*, and *nepsis* traduced to us by the great spiritual Fathers of the East—a framework for living an authentic Christian life, hallmarked as it is by *struggle*. "In this world you will have trouble," the Lord reminds us, "But take heart! I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33, NIV). A new year is upon us and, no doubt, there will be troubling times ahead—many opportunities to take heart!

I wish for a moment to focus on the third term in our triad—*nepsis* ("watchfulness"). In the Hesychastic sense, *nepsis* is both an internal and external discipline. One is to be watchful of both that which one allows to "enter into" the soul (internal), while also remaining vigilant and discerning concerning how our world seeks to supplant the Spirit of Christ around us (external). These are two sides of the same coin, and also have an apologetic dimension.

There are certain issues that will always attend the kerygmatic ministry of the Church and inform her apologetic: how we can have true knowledge of God, how we are to understand the *divinus absconditus*, the matter of theodicy, religious pluralism, and so on. These questions have, and will always, be asked and—awaiting the Parousia—apologists will have to continually weave together a creative *apologia* in contemporary dress. What is more important even than these, however, are the particular idols of the day. The neptic Christian is a student of the age and its undulating cultural and philosophical currents. But more importantly, the Christian must understand the *spirit* of our time—that which drives these currents and cultivates them at root. We ought to compare our own times with other times similar or dissimilar to it—especially as it is reflected in literature, philosophy, religion, public discourse, movies, music, and so on. What *spirit* is being caught?

It is a commonly-held notion among many, perhaps most, Christian theologians that what principally confronts Christianity today is *secularism* (whether in modern or postmodern form), and that this is where her battlefront is. This is an artless mistake. "Secularism" denotes the *temporal*, but connotes a *rationalist* or *skeptic* disposition. Certainly the latter are veridical constituents of the secular. But this is precisely the problem. There's hardly anything rationalist or skeptic about Western culture today. Also underlying this description is an implicit assumption of humanity as perfectly autonomous, that is, humans are not "under the influence" so to speak on any particular spirit, but move through their lives according to the dictates of their own unaided reason and will. None of this meshes with historic Christian teaching, much less is it Biblical. There is no such thing as autonomous human beings free of some sort of prior, spiritual allegiance or proclivity. There is no such thing as spiritual neutrality as Jesus underscores when He taught that no one can serve two masters. The apostle John puts this into sharp relief saying that "every spirit that confesses

that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the spirit of the antichrist…" (1 Jn 4:2-3, NAS).

Paraphrasing something Glenn Siniscalchi, one of ATI's editors, recently said to me: we ask what people *think* and write papers and theses about their ideas, but we rarely seem to ponder *what spirit they're in*. Consider, for example, the immensity of attention afforded Elaine Pagels over the years and her hideously ill-researched, rump-fed book, *The Gnostic Gospels*. We may debate the curiosities and complexities of the "competing orthodoxies" and "winner/loser" thesis, but would it not also benefit us (not to mention those over whom we may be teaching) to consider what might be *motivating* Pagels to so strenuously advance her theories? Is it not a helpful piece of background that Pagels has long been associated with the egregiously boil-brained Lindisfarne Association? Lindisfarne is one of the most extreme (and extremely flakey) New Age outfits which sets forth as first among its goals: "The Planetization of the Esoteric." At least we have the benefit of a rare piece of perspicuity from David Spangler, Lindisfarne's founder, who writes, "Lucifer works within each of us to bring us to wholeness, and as we move into a New Age. …He is the light-giver, he is aptly named the Morning Star because it is his light that heralds for man the dawn of a great consciousness."[1] When I was in the seminary, we were accustomed to discussing the works of Pagels and others like her as though these were merely "scholarly" matters, never once considering the *spirit* that supplies the "energy" lurking behind such works.

Take another example. While we bandy around Paul Tillich's "method of correlation" and its attending Heideggerian appropriations of "being over against non-being" and so on, we do not hesitate to call it "Christian theology." But is it not worth knowing a little something about how the eminent theologian liked to spend his time? According to wife Hannah, he abandoned her on their wedding night to enjoy a night on the town, had a nasty little habit of sleeping with their maids, and was fond of "hiding" pornographic pictures in places where she was sure to find them. Upon arrival in a new city, Paul would also take special pains to acquaint himself with the location of the nearest red-light district. He was particularly fond of the 1930s and 1940s underground scene in Harlem. On one occasion, Paul and Hannah went to a secluded basement dance together. As the latter describes: "A nude Negress painted gold, having danced with a Negro twice her size, leaned her body against a post and masturbated with violent snakelike movements, while her former partner and another girl unmistakably performed the acts of intimate sex. It did not seem vulgar or fleshy. It was filled with the natural vivacity of these beautiful black people."[2] Tillich relished discussing these experiences which I can classify as nothing short of demonic.

Numerous other "tales from the crypt" could easily be marshaled concerning those theologians and scholars of religion who continue to occupy our time and of whom we are all accustomed to calling "great." No doubt, I will be accused by some of mere venomed tabloidism here. But should we not, as Paul Johnson rather neptically puts it, engage in "an examination of the moral and judgmental credentials of certain leading intellectuals to give

[1] David Spangler, *Reflections on the Christ* (Everett, WA: Lorian Press, 1981), 45.
[2] Hannah Tillich, *From Time To Time* (New York: Stein and Day, 1973), 177.

advice to humanity…"?[3] Are we not to recognize others by their fruits? Do we pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? (Mat 7:16, NIV). Of course, none of this is to say that fresh drops of dew cannot occasionally fall to us from broken urns. To think so about *anyone* would be a fine example of the simpleton's favorite piece of illogic—the "genetic fallacy"—which some have built their entire careers on. But one should not reward a broken urn with a prominent place in the foyer. But we do. Indeed, the Academy trains us to serve dung on silver dishes.

Meanwhile, we stroke one another's egos with praise for our published works, especially if those works quote as many "great" thinkers as possible (more Hegel!, more cowbell!).[4] Alister McGrath, refers to one such candied work (as I see it) as "Another important contribution to theological reflection by this rising star."[5] Christianity has rising stars? Is a televised talent competition, "American Theology Idol" next? This is utter vanity—the same pernicious vanity I can feel coursing through my own blood and bubbling to the surface whenever I too desire to be a known entity, honored among my peers, and a "rising star."

We're missing where the wind blows. Apart from the unending drip of froo-froo, woo-woo "correlative theologies" that continue to seep through the Academy, right now the lion's share of attention within the world of Christian apologetics is attending to the vociferous baby spit-up of the "New Atheists"—Dawkins, Hitchens, Harris, *et al.* Now certainly this is a "challenge" of sorts and I don't impugn those who have taken the time to craft a thoughtful response. But the fact is that most people who oppose Christianity, or perhaps just simply find it distasteful, are *not* atheists and couldn't care a fig for the sort of quasi-scientific, religion-purged, utopian society that the New Atheists are henpecking everybody about. Most people recognize all this "atheism-is-proven" business for the clack-dish, cognitive shortcut that it is. The reason for this is quite simple, though seminal: human beings have a living soul and share a mutual spiritual longing. We might even, as the otherwise alchemical creepo Carl Jung did, define human beings roundly not as *homo sapien*, but *homo religiosus*. Human beings, naturally and rightly, recoil at the notion that they are nothing more than walking sacks of physico-chemical fizz, born from nothing, heading toward nothing—as the few, vocal atheists in every age would have us believe. But, if on the other hand, a culture (*our* culture) perceives Christianity to be an untenable artifact of a stupider age, then it is caught on the horns of a dilemma. Our culture naturally shuns the crass reductionism of the atheist, but also eschews what they take to be the outmoded, uncomfortable strictures of a dead or dying Christianity. Science, they suppose, has

[3] Paul Johnson, *Intellectuals* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), ix.

[4] Speaking of Hegel, it doesn't seem to concern very many "great" theologians today—while scores of them continually rope his fantasies into their "Christian" doctrines of God and humanity—that the core of Hegel's philosophical thought is one gigantic rip-off and adaptation of occultist Jakob Böhme, et al., and hermetic theosophy is general. Indeed, I would argue that one cannot even begin to understand Hegel until his occult influence is made circumspect. See, for example, Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (1840), trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1995), 188-216; John W. Cooper. *Panentheism: The Other God of the Philosophers* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 106-119; and Glenn Alexander Magee, *Hegel and the Hermetic Tradition* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

[5] Back cover to F. Leron Shults, *Reforming the Doctrine of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005).

effectively rendered Christianity moot; but what that same science has offered as an alternative for living one's life, or as a new cultural narrative or myth, is stultifyingly worse.

Thus what we have is a culture that is becoming more and more steeped in *mythical* thinking. This is an attempt to split the difference between the horns of the dilemma and embrace science on one hand, while finding different ways to meet the deeply-felt needs of the soul on the other. And, perhaps the biggest irony of all is that one of our biggest myths is that we're among the first people in the history of the world to be free of myths and myth-makers.

How did we get here? Historically, both rationalism and empiricism as cultural movements and philosophies failed miserably. Rationalism placed its emphasis on unaided human reason trying to unlock the secrets of the universe (like a little-necked clam pondering the sea), while empiricism restricted the pursuit of knowledge solely in terms of what could be fondled. But neither of these philosophies could tell us anything about right or wrong, love and hate, nobility or ignobility, meaning or meaninglessness. These philosophies logically impelled us to silence our hearts—the best part of us—and thus cripple ourselves. In turn, what rationalism and empiricism both eventually led to is an unbridled skepticism of *everything*. Everything can be doubted. Next, this led to an irrational mysticism which is truly what defines our day, *not* secularism.

We are caught airlessly between Max Weber's duality of "disenchantment" and "re-enchantment". We are experiencing "a reaction against an increasingly rationalized, scientific world."[6] This disenchantment "has meant that the rational scientific worldview of modernity had emptied the world of the mysteries…once believed to have controlled it. The spiritual and ethical meanings offered by religion, then, fell in the face of a rational rejection of the supernatural."[7] Dutch theologian, Herman Bavinck, noted that "the only outcome [of such a situation] will be that people will seek the satisfaction of their metaphysical needs in other ways…in one way or another—including even spiritism, magic, or theosophy—they all seek compensation for what science cannot give them. And religion, along with all spiritual knowledge, having first been shamefully dismissed through the front door, is again admitted through the back door but now in the form of superstition." Bavinck then quotes Horace: "You may expel nature with might and main; it will always nevertheless come bounding back."[8]

We see a cycle throughout history where atheistic rationalism or empiricism eventually gives way to skepticism which then ultimately leads to mysticism—complete with every age's own forged and shared mythologies. We are no exception. In fact, we're quickly becoming the archetype. Consider this: writing of the emergence of a influential occult sect known as the Order of the Golden Dawn, fueled mainly by the occultic writings of the notorious Alister Crowley, historian Francis King wrote that: "Its foundation came at a time when many people were beginning to be dissatisfied with the pathetically over-confident

[6] Mark Morrisson, *Modern Alchemy: Occultism and the Emergence of Atomic Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 34.

[7] Ibid, 28.

[8] Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2003), 222.

materialism of the nineteenth-century science on one hand, and the fatuous pietism of fundamentalist religion on the other."[9] Science moving beyond its cognitive bounds and proper toolset, and religion retreating to a falsely pious, anti-intellectual (or political) sandlot, creates a culture of spiritual fools and hungry wayfarers looking for scraps.

What we have today is a pagan form of various scientific mythologies. These mythologies far outweigh the prevalence of atheism. A 2005 Gallup poll showed that only 5% of the US population subscribes to atheism. Now contrast that with these numbers: A 2002 Roper Poll indicated that two-thirds of Americans believe there are other forms of intelligent life in the universe and nearly half say they believe that UFOs have visited the earth in some form over the years (48%) or that aliens have monitored life on earth (45%). In fact, more than one in three Americans believe that humans have already interacted with extraterrestrial lifeforms. 56 percent believe that "space aliens will be discovered," and most people in this group believe that these aliens will be both superior to humans and friendly." Concerning other phenomenon, a 2005 CBS News poll indicates that nearly half of Americans believe in ghosts or that the dead can return in certain places and situations, and more than one in five Americans say they have seen a ghost, or have felt themselves to be in the presence of one.

Meanwhile, in 2007, Department of Defense and NASA researcher, Dr. Travis Taylor, along with other scientists authored a paper titled, "An Introduction to Planetary Defense: A Study of Modern Warfare Applied to Extra-Terrestrial Invasion" The only difference between this so-called "scientific" paper and the beliefs of mass culture are that the ETs we are to encounter will not be friendly, but malevolent. NASA has also set up a separate Astrobiology Institute which has, among its other initiatives, the search for habitable environments and life in the universe. This, in part, explains why we are being inundated with TV programs on such channels as Discovery and History that showcase the inevitable doom of the earth and how science will surely save us, coupled with some expected magic from the cosmos—whether from aliens or discovering some earth-like simulacrum. Space cooties will save us.

Writing in Boston University's *Existenz*, a truly bizarre "international journal of philosophy, religion, politics, and the arts," sponsored by the Karl Jaspers Society, one scholar provides us with this precious analysis: "The cultural impact of increased extraterrestrial contact and subsequent media coverage represent a shift in cultural context, what was once viewed as abnormal is now increasingly perceived as normal. An analysis of Earth culture in galactic solitary confinement: weaponized space, singularity void of consciousness resources, and the limited sustainability of Earth life-forms, leads to the conclusion that the reclassification of the UFO extraterrestrial experience as normal behavior offers possible solutions to planetary sustainability."[10]

Paganism and occultism are on the rise. We even have the first "pagan seminary" open for business in South Carolina called Cherry Hill Seminary. Most of the faculty have graduate degrees from reputable universities. Meanwhile, in Europe this past summer, the London-

[9] Quoted in Morrison, *Modern Alchemy*, 34.

[10] Rebecca Hardcastle, "Exoconsciousness and Psychopathology" in *Existenz*, Volume 3, No. 2, Fall 2008. Online: http://www.bu.edu/paideia/existenz/volumes/Vol.3-2Hardcastle.html.

based newspaper *The Guardian* ran a story titled, "'Everyone's a Pagan Now." The story chronicles how "paganism is going mainstream." Countless other examples could be cited, but essentially what we're witnessing today is a scientific mythology, or better yet, a *spiritualized science* that tells us to "Look to the skies. Look to the stars for your salvation!" Everyone is being affected (or infected) by this—not merely the people who are happily *declaring* themselves pagan. Many churches too have become hotbeds for New Age practices such as contemplative prayer, not to mention the creedless, gutless, yeasty, quasi-Gnostic "Emergent Church" movement.[11]

Coupled with this is the reinforcement of this newfangled myth by movies, TV shows, and music which are riddled with themes and memes, whether implicit or explicit, that add insult to injury by also tossing in a deluge of occult symbolism, Gnostic philosophy, and alchemy. Most of these center around either human debasement, or some sort of mystical transformation—drawn from crypto-Masonry, Rosicrucianism, theosophy, and related occult movements. In fact, if you do your research, you'll find that some of these occult messages are even carried out in *ritual form* in such places as the MTV music awards and films such as the recent remaking of *The Wicker Man* or the garbagey *Da Vinci Code* books and movies.

Our culture's shared metaphysic, rooted earlier in generally Christian notions concerning our origin, meaning, morality, and destiny, has now lost itself in a mystic trance on the heels of a soul-murdering scientism. We once turned to unaided human reason, but then abandoned its attending rationalism, diffused into sophism, and have now transmuted into mysticism and spiritualized science. In what I take to be the best, most well-researched book on this vital topic to date, James Herrick writes that:

> Western culture has been trained to place its trust in science. As a result of our turn toward science, other enterprises have sought to borrow from the credibility of the laboratory and the lecture hall, the most unexpected example being religion. Why should the supernatural and transcendent look to the natural and particular for its authority? Our long history of religious criticism and our equally long witness to the remarkable accomplishments of science perhaps suggest an answer to this question. Ultimate authority has shifted, and the shift has been toward nature and away from what claims to stand above nature. As a result, we have now entered the age of scientific religion.[12]

"Gnosis is still gnosis," Herrick adds, "whether possessed by an ancient mystic or a modern scientist."[13] By my dim, neptic lights, this is where our culture stands today. It is pagan, not secular, and the historic Christian church of today needs to wake up to the fact,

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[11] Theologian F. Leron Shults, mentioned earlier, offers some particularly saccharine thoughts in favor of the "Emergent Movement" and it's anti-creedalism here:
http://www.emergentvillage.com/weblog/blast-from-the-past-i
http://leronshults.typepad.com/my_weblog/2008/08/reforming-eccle.html

[12] James A. Herrick, *Scientific Mythologies: How Science and Science Fiction Forge new Religious Beliefs* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 248.

[13] Ibid, 252.

be watchful, and stop pretending we can just keep on eating oranges in our quaint academic grove while the fields around us are scorched and bear soul-sucking thorns.

One final note. I cannot claim that *American Theological Inquiry* is, or has always been, free of some of the very elements I've just ranted against. But neither am I taking the side of Tertullian who deemed philosophy and speculative reason pure poison and then later embraced one of history's most fantastical heresies. The fact of the matter is, what many of the "great" philosophers and theologians have to say is just plain interesting, regardless of their orthodoxy. Plus, ATI is a place for disagreement, though hopefully within the unitive bond of each writer's commitment to the ancient Creeds. Ergo, I would rather take the side of Aquinas who believed that "those who use philosophical texts in sacred teaching, *by subjugating them to faith*, do not mix water with wine, but turn water into wine."[14] The key, of course, is whether the water has truly been transubstantiated. I leave it to the neptic reader to discern which of ATI's various articles have done so, versus those that mix together a diluted brew or, worse, turn what once was wine to water.

[14] Thomas Aquinas, *Expositio Super Librum Boethii De Trinitate*, 2.4, ad 5. Emphasis mine.

PATRISTICAL READING

EPISTOLARY SELECTIONS[1]

St. Ignatius of Antioch[2]

I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless you hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Allow me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep [in death], I may be no trouble to anyone. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God]. I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man: they were free, while I am, even until now, a servant. But when I suffer, I shall be the freed-man of Jesus, and shall rise again emancipated in Him. And now, being a prisoner, I learn not to desire anything worldly or vain (*Rom*, 4).

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries [to act as a disciple of Christ]; yet am I not thereby justified. May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me [in this]: I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ (*Rom*, 5).

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth.

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[1] Selections made by the General Editor.

[2] St. Ignatius of Antioch (d. c. 107), also called Theophorus, was second bishop of that great city. On his journey to Rome to be martyred by the wild beasts of the amphitheater, he wrote seven letters—one to Bishop Polycarp in Smyrna, and six to the churches in Ephesus, Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Smyrna, and Rome. Included here are selections from these latter six epistles. The reader will quickly note repeating theological themes. These are included not in the service of needless redundancy, but to underscore the high premium Ignatius placed on these themes as he imparted his final words to the universal church. It should be noted, however, that a recurring theme absent from this particular set of selections was the utmost importance the saint placed upon the faithfull's continual communion with their local bishop. For Ignatius, as with all the Fathers of the ancient church, this was among the highest marks of catholicity.

For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul? Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not give me over to the world. Allow me to obtain pure light: when I have gone there, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If anyone has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am straitened (*Rom*, 6).

The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my disposition towards God. Let none of you, therefore, who are [in Rome] help him; rather be on my side, that is, on the side of God. Do not speak of Jesus Christ, and yet set your desires on the world. Let not envy find a dwelling-place among you; nor even should I, when present with you, exhort you to it, be persuaded to listen to me, but rather give credit to those things which I now write to you. For though I am alive while I write to you, yet I am eager to die. My love has been crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed; but there is within me a water that lives and speaks, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life (*Rom*, 7).

I no longer wish to live after the manner of men, and my desire shall be fulfilled if you consent. Be willing, then, that you also may have your desires fulfilled. I entreat you in this brief letter; give credit to me. Jesus Christ will reveal these things to you, [so that you shall know] that I speak truly. He is the mouth altogether free from falsehood, by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray for me, that I may attain [the object of my desire]. I have not written to you according to the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, you have wished [well] to me; but if I am rejected, you have hated me (*Rom*, 8).

…some are in the habit of carrying about the name [of Jesus Christ] in wicked guile, while yet they practise things unworthy of God, whom you must flee as you would wild beasts. For they are ravening dogs, who bite secretly, against whom you must be on your guard, inasmuch as they are men who can scarcely be cured. There is one Physician who is possessed both of flesh and spirit; both made and not made; God existing in flesh; true life in death; both of Mary and of God; first passible and then impassible— even Jesus Christ our Lord (*Eph*, 7).

Nevertheless, I have heard of some who have passed on from this to you, having false doctrine, whom you did not allow to sow among you, but stopped your ears, that you might not receive those things which were sown by them, as being stones of the temple of the Father, prepared for the building of God the Father, and drawn up on high by the instrument of Jesus Christ, which is the cross, making use of the Holy Spirit as a rope, while your faith was the means by which you ascended, and your love the way which led up to God. You, therefore, as well as all your fellow-travelers, are God-bearers, temple-bearers,

Christ-bearers, bearers of holiness, adorned in all respects with the commandments of Jesus Christ, in whom also I exult that I have been thought worthy, by means of this Epistle, to converse and rejoice with you, because with respect to your Christian life you love nothing but God only (*Eph*, 9)

And pray without ceasing in behalf of other men. For there is in them hope of repentance that they may attain to God. See, then, that they be instructed by your works, if in no other way. Be meek in response to their wrath, humble in opposition to their boasting: to their blasphemies return your prayers; in contrast to their error, be steadfast in the faith; and for their cruelty, manifest your gentleness. While we take care not to imitate their conduct, let us be found their brethren in all true kindness; and let us seek to be followers of the Lord (who ever more unjustly treated, more destitute, more condemned?), that so no plant of the devil may be found in you, but you may remain in all holiness and sobriety in Jesus Christ, both with respect to the flesh and spirit (*Eph*, 10).

None of these things is hid from you, if you perfectly possess that faith and love towards Christ Jesus which are the beginning and the end of life. For the beginning is faith, and the end is love. Now these two, being inseparably connected together, are of God, while all other things which are requisite for a holy life follow after them. No man [truly] making a profession of faith sins; nor does he that possesses love hate any one. The tree is made manifest by its fruit; so those that profess themselves to be Christians shall be recognised by their conduct. For there is not now a demand for mere profession, but that a man be found continuing in the power of faith to the end (*Eph*, 14).

It is better for a man to be silent and be [a Christian], than to talk and not to be one. It is good to teach, if he who speaks also acts. There is then one Teacher, who spoke and it was done; while even those things which He did in silence are worthy of the Father. He who possesses the word of Jesus, is truly able to hear even His very silence, that he may be perfect, and may both act as he speaks, and be recognised by his silence. There is nothing which is hid from God, but our very secrets are near to Him. Let us therefore do all things as those who have Him dwelling in us, that we may be His temples, and He may be in us as our God, which indeed He is, and will manifest Himself before our faces. Wherefore we justly love Him (*Eph*, 15).

Do not err, my brethren. Those that corrupt families shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If, then, those who do this as respects the flesh have suffered death, how much more shall this be the case with anyone who corrupts by wicked doctrine the faith of God, for which Jesus Christ was crucified! Such an one becoming defiled [in this way], shall go away into everlasting fire, and so shall every one that hearkens unto him (*Eph*, 17).

For this end did the Lord allow the ointment to be poured upon His head, that He might breathe immortality into His Church. Be not anointed with the bad odour of the doctrine of the prince of this world; let him not lead you away captive from the life which is set before you. And why are we not all prudent, since we have received the knowledge of God, which

is Jesus Christ? Why do we foolishly perish, not recognising the gift which the Lord has of a truth sent to us? (*Eph*, 17).

Let my spirit be counted as nothing for the sake of the cross, which is a stumbling-block to those that do not believe, but to us salvation and life eternal. Where is the wise man? Where the disputer? Where is the boasting of those who are styled prudent? For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by His passion He might purify the water (*Eph*, 18).

Now the virginity of Mary was hidden from the prince of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord; three mysteries of renown, which were wrought in silence by God. How, then, was He manifested to the world? A star shone forth in heaven above all the other stars, the light of which was inexpressible, while its novelty struck men with astonishment. And all the rest of the stars, with the sun and moon, formed a chorus to this star, and its light was exceedingly great above them all. And there was agitation felt as to whence this new spectacle came, so unlike to everything else [in the heavens]. Hence every kind of magic was destroyed, and every bond of wickedness disappeared; ignorance was removed, and the old kingdom abolished, God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life. And now that took a beginning which had been prepared by God. Henceforth all things were in a state of tumult, because He meditated the abolition of death (*Eph*, 19).

Seeing, then, all things have an end, these two things are simultaneously set before us— death and life; and every one shall go unto his own place. For as there are two kinds of coins, the one of God, the other of the world, and each of these has its special character stamped upon it, [so is it also here.] The unbelieving are of this world; but the believing have, in love, the character of God the Father by Jesus Christ, by whom, if we are not in readiness to die into His passion, His life is not in us (*Magn*, 5).

Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. For the divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him (*Magn*, 8).

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death— whom some deny, by which mystery we have obtained faith, and therefore endure, that we may be found the disciples of Jesus Christ, our only Master— how shall we be able to live apart from Him, whose disciples the prophets themselves in the Spirit did wait for Him as their Teacher? And therefore He whom they rightly waited for, having come, raised them from the dead (*Magn*, 9).

Let us not, therefore, be insensible to His kindness. For were He to reward us according to our works, we should cease to be. Therefore, having become His disciples, let us learn to live according to the principles of Christianity. For whosoever is called by any other name besides this, is not of God. Lay aside, therefore, the evil, the old, the sour leaven, and be changed into the new leaven, which is Jesus Christ. Be salted in Him, lest any one among you should be corrupted, since by your savor you shall be convicted. It is absurd to profess Christ Jesus, and to Judaize. For Christianity did not embrace Judaism, but Judaism Christianity, that so every tongue which believes might be gathered together to God (*Magn*, 10).

These things [I address to you], my beloved, not that I know any of you to be in such a state; but, as less than any of you, I desire to guard you beforehand, that you fall not upon the hooks of vain doctrine, but that you attain to full assurance in regard to the birth, and passion, and resurrection which took place in the time of the government of Pontius Pilate, being truly and certainly accomplished by Jesus Christ, who is our hope, from which may no one of you ever be turned aside (*Magn*, 11).

I have great knowledge in God, but I restrain myself, lest, I should perish through boasting. For now it is needful for me to be the more fearful; and not give heed to those that puff me up. For they that speak to me [in the way of commendation] scourge me. For I do indeed desire to suffer, but I know not if I be worthy to do so. For this longing, though it is not manifest to many, all the more vehemently assails me. I therefore have need of meekness, by which the prince of this world is brought to nought (*Tral*, 4).

Am I not able to write to you of heavenly things? But I fear to do so, lest I should inflict injury on you who are but babes [in Christ]. Pardon me in this respect, lest, as not being able to receive [such doctrines], you should be strangled by them. For even I, though I am bound [for Christ], yet am not on that account able to understand heavenly things, and the places of the angels, and their gatherings under their respective princes, things visible and invisible. Without reference to such abstruse subjects, I am still but a learner [in other respects]; for many things are wanting to us, that we come not short of God (*Tral*, 5).

I therefore, yet not I, but the love of Jesus Christ, entreat you that you use Christian nourishment only, and abstain from herbage of a different kind; I mean heresy. For those [that are given to this] mix up Jesus Christ with their own poison, speaking things which are unworthy of credit, like those who administer a deadly drug in sweet wine, which he who is ignorant of does greedily take, with a fatal pleasure leading to his own death (*Tral*, 6).

Be on your guard, therefore, against such persons. And this will be the case with you if you are not puffed up, and continue in intimate union with Jesus Christ our God, and the bishop, and the enactments of the apostles. He that is within the altar is pure, but he that is without is not pure; that is, he who does anything apart from the bishop, and presbytery, and deacons, such a man is not pure in his conscience (*Tral*, 7).

Not that I know there is anything of this kind among you; but I put you on your guard, inasmuch as I love you greatly, and foresee the snares of the devil. Wherefore, clothing yourselves with meekness, be renewed in faith, that is the flesh of the Lord, and in love, that is the blood of Jesus Christ. Let no one of you cherish any grudge against his neighbour. Give no occasion to the Gentiles, lest by means of a few foolish men the whole multitude [of those that believe] in God be evil spoken of. For, Woe to him by whose vanity my name is blasphemed among any (*Tral*, 8).

Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with Jesus Christ, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who was truly born, and ate and drank. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead, His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life (*Tral*, 9).

But if, as some that are without God, that is, the unbelieving, say, that He only seemed to suffer (they themselves only seeming to exist), then why am I in bonds? Why do I long to be exposed to the wild beasts? Do I therefore die in vain? Am I not then guilty of falsehood against [the cross of] the Lord? (*Tral*, 10).

Flee, therefore, those evil offshoots [of Satan], which produce death-bearing fruit, whereof if any one tastes, he instantly dies. For these men are not the planting of the Father. For if they were, they would appear as branches of the cross, and their fruit would be incorruptible. By it He calls you through His passion, as being His members. The head, therefore, cannot be born by itself, without its members; God, who is [the Saviour] Himself, having promised their union (*Tral*, 11).

Keep yourselves from those evil plants which Jesus Christ does not tend, because they are not the planting of the Father. Not that I have found any division among you, but exceeding purity. For as many as are of God and of Jesus Christ are also with the bishop. And as many as shall, in the exercise of repentance, return into the unity of the Church, these, too, shall belong to God, that they may live according to Jesus Christ. Do not err, my brethren. If any man follows him that makes a schism in the Church, he shall not inherit the kingdom of God. If any one walks according to a strange opinion, he agrees not with the passion [of Christ.] (*Phil*, 3).

Take heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to [the will of] God (*Phil*, 4).

But if any one preach the Jewish law unto you, listen not to him. For it is better to hearken to Christian doctrine from a man who has been circumcised, than to Judaism from one uncircumcised. But if either of such persons do not speak concerning Jesus Christ, they

are in my judgment but as monuments and sepulchres of the dead, upon which are written only the names of men. Flee therefore the wicked devices and snares of the prince of this world, lest at any time being conquered by his artifices, grow weak in your love. But be all joined together with an undivided heart. And I thank my God that I have a good conscience in respect to you, and that no one has it in his power to boast, either privately or publicly, that I have burdened any one either in much or in little. And I wish for all among whom I have spoken, that they may not possess that for a testimony against them (*Phil*, 6).

The priests indeed are good, but the High Priest is better; to whom the holy of holies has been committed, and who alone has been trusted with the secrets of God. He is the door of the Father, by which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the prophets, and the apostles, and the Church. All these have for their object the attaining to the unity of God. But the Gospel possesses something transcendent [above the former dispensation], viz., the appearance of our Lord Jesus Christ, His passion and resurrection. For the beloved prophets announced Him, but the Gospel is the perfection of immortality. All these things are good together, if you believe in love (*Phil*, 9).

[Christ] suffered all these things for our sakes, that we might be saved. And He suffered truly, even as also He truly raised up Himself, not, as certain unbelievers maintain, that He only seemed to suffer, as they themselves only seem to be [Christians]. And as they believe, so shall it happen unto them, when they shall be divested of their bodies, and be mere evil spirits (*Smyrn*, 2).

For I know that after His resurrection also He was still possessed of flesh, and I believe that He is so now. When, for instance, He came to those who were with Peter, He said to them, Lay hold, handle Me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit. And immediately they touched Him, and believed, being convinced both by His flesh and spirit. For this cause also they despised death, and were found its conquerors. And after his resurrection He ate and drank with them, as being possessed of flesh, although spiritually He was united to the Father (*Smyrn*, 3).

I give you these instructions, beloved, assured that you also hold the same opinions [as I do]. But I guard you beforehand from those beasts in the shape of men, whom you must not only not receive, but, if it be possible, not even meet with; only you must pray to God for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance, which, however, will be very difficult. Yet Jesus Christ, who is our true life, has the power of [effecting] this. But if these things were done by our Lord only in appearance, then am I also only in appearance bound. And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] he who is near to the sword is near to God; he that is among the wild beasts is in company with God; provided only he be so in the name of Jesus Christ. I undergo all these things that I may suffer together with Him, He who became a perfect man inwardly strengthening me (*Smyrn*, 4).

Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the

law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection (*Smyrn*, 5).

Let no man deceive himself. Both the things which are in heaven, and the glorious angels, and rulers, both visible and invisible, if they believe not in the blood of Christ, shall, in consequence, incur condemnation. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it. Let not [high] place puff any one up: for that which is worth all is faith and love, to which nothing is to be preferred. But consider those who are of a different opinion with respect to the grace of Christ which has come unto us, how opposed they are to the will of God. They have no regard for love; no care for the widow, or the orphan, or the oppressed; of the bond, or of the free; of the hungry, or of the thirsty (*Smyrn*, 6).

Knowing as I do that you are full of God, I have but briefly exhorted you…Fare well in the harmony of God, you who have obtained the inseparable Spirit, who is Jesus Christ (*Magn*, 14-15).

THE CHURCH FATHERS AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST[1]

W. Berry Norwood[2]

The Church Fathers, especially those considered ante-Nicene (teaching before the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325), are a valuable source of biblical knowledge and interpretation. John Wesley calls them "the most authentic commentators on Scripture . . . being both nearest the fountain, [and] eminently endued with that Spirit by whom all Scripture [is] given."[3] This project focuses on the input of these defenders of the faith with respect to the subject of the deity of Christ.

In the first four centuries—a time of intense persecution by the Roman Empire—the Church Fathers counter the attacks of heretics and formulate amazingly accurate human wording for many of the divine doctrines (especially those related to the Trinity and the Person of Christ). Christopher A. Hall presents a study on those whom he calls "the eight great doctors or preeminent teachers of the church."[4] These Fathers include: Athanasius of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 295-373), Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. A.D. 329-390), Basil the Great of Caesarea (ca. A.D. 330-379), and John Chrysostom of Constantinople (ca. A.D. 344/354-407), all in the East; Ambrose of Milan (ca. A.D. 339-397), Jerome of Stridonium (ca. A.D. 342-419), Augustine of Hippo (ca. A.D. 354-430), and Gregory the Great of Rome (ca. A.D. 540-604), all in the West. His examination of these particular theologians reveals the answer to why the early church is so successful in grasping and communicating the Bible's greatest truths. Hall declares that "the fathers are united in their insistence that the text of Scripture opens itself to those who approach it reverently and receptively,"[5] and this is especially true with respect to the doctrines.

This article collates information from and about the Church Fathers that supports their belief that Jesus Christ is God. The Fathers make it clear that Christ's deity is revealed by specific Old Testament material, by Christ's identification as a member of the Trinity, and by Christ's role and attributes as the Logos or Word.

Christ in the Old Testament

The Church Fathers are often accused of seeing Christ in the Old Testament where He is not really present or revealed. Actually, their christological or logocentric hermeneutic allows

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[3] John Wesley, "The Fathers of the Church," Wesley Center for Applied Theology, *Wesley Center Online*, http://wesley.nnu.edu/biblical_studies/noncanon/fathers.htm (accessed July 1, 2007).

[4] Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998), 8.

[5] Ibid., 9.

them to learn about Jesus through Old Testament theophanies and prophetic allusions, even though lesser scholars may not see Christ there.

Special Hermeneutic

Regarding the interpretive approach of Hilary of Poitiers (ca. A.D. 315-367), Hall says, "His reading of the Bible is guided by its central christological and soteriological events."[6] Hilary illustrates the Fathers' special hermeneutic for Old Testament interpretation, an approach that takes seriously all Old Testament passages remotely related to Jesus Christ. Hall notes that, concerning these Old Testament allusions, Jerome "is convinced that the overarching biblical narrative is one piece, inspired by the guidance of the Holy Spirit and continually pointing to God's culminating act in the incarnation and redemptive work of the Son."[7] Quotes illustrating this hermeneutic abound within the extant body of work produced by the Church Fathers. Constance Woods notes that this "whole block of core material is strikingly uniform, a weighty indication of its origin in the teaching of the apostles,"[8] especially since the Fathers lived relatively close to apostolic times.

Hall emphasizes how the Church Fathers, when it comes to Old Testament interpretation, "read Scripture through the prism of Christ's incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension."[9] He speaks of how Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. A.D. 135-202) sees Christ as treasure scattered throughout the field of the Old Testament, how Hilary identifies the Son in many of the experiences of the patriarchs, and how others even extend christological aspects to Christ's Body, the New Testament Church. For example, concerning the connection Ambrose notes between Eve's and the church's sinfulness (based on Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:32), Hall says, "This type of christological/ecclesiological interpretation occurs frequently among the fathers, precisely because they read the entire biblical narrative in light of its fulfillment in Christ."[10]

Regardless of possible christological excesses on the part of a few Church Fathers, their keen insight makes valuable contributions to a general understanding of the Old Testament and especially about the deity of the Son of God. Their logocentrism even has an application to the practical life of Jesus. Earl E. Cairns notes that Justin Martyr of Caesarea (ca. A.D. 100-165) strives "to show that Christ's superior life and morality [are] foretold in the Old Testament prophecies."[11]

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[6] Ibid., 193.

[7] Ibid., 115.

[8] Constance Woods, "The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament: Part One," http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Faith/1998-03-04/trinity.html (accessed June 22, 2007).

[9] Hall, 192.

[10] Ibid., 108.

[11] Earl E. Cairns, *Christianity through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church.* 3d edition. Revised and expanded (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 104.

Finally, regarding the Old Testament, Augustine states simply, "Everything in those Scriptures speaks of Christ, but only to him who has ears."[12] Theologians cannot easily dismiss this early hermeneutic of the Fathers, especially in view of Christ's own statements regarding how He teaches from "all the scriptures the things concerning himself" (Luke 24:27)[13] and how "all things must be fulfilled, which [are] written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms" (Luke 24:44) about Him.

Theophanies

The appearances of God, or theophanies, in the Old Testament are unique phenomena. Augustine denies that saints see the very essence of Yahweh, since people cannot look upon God. But, he notes that such experiences of Moses with Yahweh involve the Second Person himself: "And how [does] God become known to Moses? Because the Lord reveal[s] Himself to His servant. What Lord? The same Christ, that sen[ds] the law beforehand by His servant . . . And whence [does] He appear to that servant as far as he [is] able to receive Him? . . . a cloud . . . an angel . . . a fire."[14] Tertullian of Carthage (ca. A.D. 160-225) represents the Fathers by saying of Old Testament theophanies, "The Son alone knows the Father, and has Himself unfolded 'the Father's bosom.'"[15]

Various Manifestations

Casual readers take for granted the biblical records of the appearances of God to His creatures. For example, Rodney L. Petersen notes that Augustine believes "that God cannot be localized, and therefore cannot be seen with bodily eyes."[16] He says Augustine teaches that "the invisible God can be seen [only] in an invisible manner by the eye of the mind."[17] However, Petersen explains that the Old Testament theophanies lie behind Augustine's concession that occasionally God does "make it possible for himself to be seen by assuming a discernible form."[18]

The Church Fathers consistently view the Old Testament manifestations of Yahweh as visible appearances of the preincarnate Son. Günther Juncker observes that, after the time of Augustine, not all of the Fathers agree, but that Tertullian "categorically and without

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[12] Augustine, *Homily* 2.1 *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* [*Ancient Christian Commentary*], 27 vols. (incomplete), ed. Thomas C. Oden (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998-2009), New Testament IVa: 15.

[13] All Scripture citations are for the King James Version.

[14] Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 3.17, *NewAdvent.org,* http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701003.htm (accessed June 20, 2007).

[15] Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 8, *Readings in the History of Christian Thought* [*Readings*], ed. Robert L. Ferm (New York, NY: Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1964), 123.

[16] Rodney L. Petersen, "To Behold and Inhabit the Blessed Country: Revelation, Inspiration, Scripture and Infallibility—An Introductory Guide to Reflections upon Augustine, 1945-1980," *Trinity Journal* (Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School) 4:2 (Fall 1983): 31; Libronix Digital Library System 2.1c, 2000-2004.

[17] Ibid., 32.

[18] Ibid.

hesitation refers all of the . . . theophanies to Christ."[19] Regarding Moses' vision of Yahweh in Exodus 33, Augustine notes that the great prophet "might be thought to [see] God with bodily eyes, if not only the Wisdom of God which is Christ."[20] Then, Moses speaks "mouth to mouth" or even face to face with Yahweh's "similitude in Numbers 12:8." Similarly, according to Constance Woods, "Tertullian concludes that the face which Moses converse[s] with"[21] is that of the Son.

God makes Himself visible in the Old Testament to Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and others. These experiences are indicative of Yahweh's plan to eventually be visible through the Word in the Incarnation (Jn 1:14). Thus, the Fathers are not hesitant to appoint the eternal Son as the one revealing God beforehand. Commenting on Zechariah 12:10, Augustine notes the following about God's plan to have the same Person fulfilling the Incarnation as appearing before it: "He remains as he ascended; he [comes] to those to whom, before he comes, he want[s] his word to be preached. So therefore he [comes] in a human form."[22]

The Angel of the Lord

The Angel of the Lord is arguably the most powerful indication that God's Old Testament appearances are in the Person of the Son. The Church Fathers identify this special "angel" as speaking *for* Yahweh and *as* Yahweh. Regarding Abraham's experience with the Angel of the Lord in Genesis 22 where the patriarch prepares to offer his son Isaac as a sacrifice to God, Origen of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 185-254) says, "It must be considered that an angel is related to have spoken these words to Abraham, and subsequently this angel is clearly shown to be the Lord."[23] Origen's observation affirms a duality in Yahweh with respect to Yahweh and His Angel (as also exists with Yahweh and His Spirit), thus affirming the deity of the Angel of Yahweh.

In connection with Moses' encounter with the burning bush in Exodus 3, Hilary comments as follows: "The place of the vision and of the voice is one; He Who speaks is none other than He Who [i]s seen. He Who is the Angel of God when the eye beholds Him is the Lord when the ear hears Him, and the Lord Whose voice is heard is recognised as the God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob."[24] Again, the Fathers note the duality within Yahweh as an indication of the deity of the Angel and of His being the Son. Similarly, with respect to the manifestation of "the captain of the LORD'S host" in Joshua 5:15, Origen asks rhetorically, "For who else is chief of the army of the powers of God except our Lord Jesus

[19] Günther Juncker, "Christ as Angel: The Reclamation of a Primitive Title," *Trinity Journal* 15:2 (Fall 1994): 247; Libronix.

[20] Augustine, *The Trinity* 2.15.25, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament III: 120.

[21] Woods, "The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament: Part Two," *Catholic.net*, http://www.catholic.net/rcc/Periodicals/Faith/1998-03-04/trinity.html (accessed July 1, 2007).

[22] Augustine, *Tractates on the Gospel of John* 21.3, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament XIV: 272.

[23] Origen, *Homilies on Genesis* 8.8, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament II: 107.

[24] Hilary, *On the Trinity* 4:32, *NewAdvent.org*, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/ 330204.htm (accessed June 17, 2007).

Christ?"[25] One who represents Yahweh but makes the place of His appearance holy must be the eternal Son.

Interestingly, Juncker's work on Christ as the Angel of Yahweh reveals that "all the church fathers prior to Augustine"[26] view the Son as the Person of Old Testament theophanies. Juncker provides evidence of his claim through Justin Martyr, Theophilus of Antioch, (ca. A.D. 115/118-181), Irenaeus, and Tertullian. Current interpreters are wise to value such important conclusions of the Church Fathers.

Prophetic Allusions

The Fathers readily identify prophetic allusions to the Son of God in the Old Testament as evidence of the Christ's deity when such passages are fulfilled in His life in the New Testament. The Church Fathers' close proximity in time to the Apostles is significant in these identifications.

Predictions of Christ's virgin birth (Is 7:14) and His birth in Bethlehem (Mic 5:2), as well as prophetic representations of His childhood escape to Egypt (Hos 11:1) His resurrection (Jonah 1:17, 2:10), definitely confirm His Godhood. Subsuming all of these and others, according to Cyril of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 370-444), is Christ's transfiguration experience with Moses and Elijah, which reveals Jesus "as being the Lord of the law and the prophets, and as foreshown in them by those things which in mutual agreement they before [proclaim] beforehand."[27]

Moreover, prominent types of Christ appear in the Old Testament such as the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon which indicate His deity. The Fathers identify God's actual presence with both of these, as does Scripture. Thus, the Fathers also connect Christ to the structures and their related appearances of God. For example, Theodoret of Cyr (ca. A.D. 393-457) exclaims, "Why did God command Moses to erect the tabernacle on the first day of the first month? Because at that time [of the year] he created the world. . . . In this same season the Lord Christ underwent his saving passion."[28] Regarding John 2:19-21 (where Jesus compares himself to the Temple in Jerusalem), Theodoret also says, "For he [does] not say 'destroy' this body but 'the temple,' in order to reveal the God who reside[s] within."[29] The Fathers connect the deity of Christ to these symbolic structures, which relate to God's presence.

Indeed, even earlier, Chrysostom notes the role of the Second Person himself in the very instruction to build the Tabernacle: "'As He . . . appointed, that [speaks] unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he ha[s] seen.' Again, it [is] none other than He

[25] Origen, *Homilies on Joshua* 6.2, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament IV: 31.

[26] Juncker, 235.

[27] Cyril, *Sermon 51*, part 228, *Tertullian.org*, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/cyril_on_luke_05_sermons_47_56.htm#SERMON%20LI (accessed June 22, 2007).

[28] Theodoret, *Questions on Exodus* 72, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament III: 161-162.

[29] Theodoret, *Dialogue* 3.61, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 104.

(Christ) that [gives] the fashion itself."[30] The Church Fathers expect references to Jesus Christ to appear throughout God's written Word, which is certainly in line with Jesus' own teaching that the Old Testament is full of allusions to Him and His ministry (Luke 24;27, 44-47).

Prophetic Inferences

The Fathers also take seriously such Old Testament references prophetic of Christ's deity as David's referring to the Messiah's Sonship (Ps 2), Daniel's mentioning the Messiah as "Son of man" (chp. 7) and God's promise indicating Solomon's descendant will serve eternally on the throne as God's "son" (2 Sam 7:14). For example, regarding the first of these, Aphrahat the Assyrian (ca. A.D. 270-350) shares this unequivocal statement: "We must prove that this Jesus was beforehand promised from ancient times in the Prophets and was called the Son of God. David said, 'You are My Son; today I have begotten You.'"[31]

Another way the Fathers present Christ's deity is by identifying passages that indicate plurality in the Godhead. For example, Fulgentius of Ruspe (ca. A.D. 467-532) parses the creation passages in Genesis 1:26 as follows: "When using the singular number, he says 'image,' he shows that the nature is one, in whose image the human being was made. But when he says 'our' in the plural he shows that the very same God in whose image the human being was made is not one in person."[32] Aphrahat speaks similarly about the thrice-holy God of Isaiah 6: "Therefore, where the triple 'holy' is repeated, there is the Trinity of persons; where 'God Lord of hosts' is said but once, we recognize the unity of the divine nature."[33] Woods says these kinds of passages serve as "a marvelous example of a tradition of scriptural interpretation in the Fathers that can be traced to the apostles or apostolic men themselves."[34] Thus, the Fathers not only provide a correct interpretation of Christ's deity and suggested biblical hermeneutic, but may reveal the approach and understanding of Christ's original Twelve.

Christ in the Trinity

One of the primary ways the Church Fathers emphasize the deity of Jesus Christ is by revealing the Scriptures that indicate His constitutive participation in the Godhead. This endeavor enables the Fathers to crystallize Trinitarian language for the Church for two thousand years. Cairns says that "Tertullian, for example, insist[s] upon the unity of essence

[30] Chrysostom *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* 17, *Catholic First: Catholic Information Center on Web*, http://www.catholicfirst.com/thefaith/churchfathers/volume20/chrysostom2005.cfm (accessed June 22, 2007).

[31] Aphrahat, *Demonstration* 17.5, *NewAdvent.org,* http://www.newadvent.org/Fathers/ 370117.htm (accessed June 22, 2007).

[32] Fulgentius, *To Peter on the Faith* 5, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament I: 30.

[33] Ibid., 6, Old Testament X: 50-51.

[34] Woods, "The Holy Trinity in the Old Testament: Part One," http://www.catholic .net/rcc/ Periodicals/Faith/1998-03-04/trinity.html (accessed June 22, 2007).

in three personalities as the correct interpretation of the Trinity."[35] This approach involves the Trinity's affirmations, actions, and appellations found in Scripture.

Affirmations of the Trinity

The Church Fathers make clear that there is not a time throughout the first five centuries of Christianity when Trinitarianism is considered unorthodox by the church. This is particularly significant in view of the assault by heretics on the doctrine.

In the providence of God, early Trinitarian definition is necessary for the Church's long future. Cyril illustrates Trinitarian clarity saying, "For since the Godhead is one in the Father, in the Son, and in the Spirit, every word that comes from the Father comes always through the Son by the Spirit."[36] The burden of accurate language regarding the Trinity seems to be borne consciously by the Fathers. Also, according to Edward Ulback, Didymus the Blind of Alexandria (ca. A.D. 313-398) deems "of supreme religious importance"[37] the naming of all three Persons as equal contributors to salvation.

The Fathers understand biblical Trinitarianism and hammer it out in crystallized language that benefits believers throughout church history, especially as it affirms Christ's deity as God's Son. Larry W. Hurtado speaks of "the struggle to work out doctrinal formulations"[38] of Trinitarianism that occupies the great minds of the period of the ante-Nicene Fathers. He says such a task is forced upon the believers by their own interpretation of Scripture in the "earliest observable years of the Christian movement."[39]

The Fathers affirm the Trinity by showing the deity of each Person individually and of all the Persons collectively. For example, Basil, bespeaking the Trinity's oneness and revealing the Holy Spirit's deity through His titles, says these "names are borne by the Spirit in common with the Father and the Son, and He gets these titles from His natural and close relationship."[40] Then, Chrysostom gives equal glory for all three Persons by speaking of the "Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, with whom be to the Father and the Holy Spirit glory, power and honor, now and forever, world without end."[41]

Critical Times for the Fathers

The Fathers were often forced to grapple with precise wording for the Trinity which, in turn, displays the deity of Father, Son, and Spirit. A good illustration of this is when Basil presses the following orthodox opinion in his challenge to heretics: "Them I charge to

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[35] Cairns, 126.

[36] Cyril, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 9, *Ancient Christian Commentary*: New Testament IVb, 132.

[37] Edward Ulback, "Didymus of Alexandria," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 97:385 (January 1940), 85; Libronix.

[38] Larry W. Hurtado, *Lord Jesus Christ: Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2003), 651.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 19:48, *NewAdvent.org*, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3203.htm (accessed June 17, 2007).

[41] Chrysostom *The Sixth Instruction* 25, *Twenty Centuries of Great Preaching: An Encyclopedia of Preaching—Volume One, Biblical Sermons to Savonarola (A.D. 27-1498)*, ed. Clyde E. Fant Jr. and William M. Pinson Jr. (Waco, TX: Word, 1971), 69.

preserve the faith secure until the day of Christ, and to keep the Spirit undivided from the Father and the Son, preserving, both in the confession of faith and in the doxology, the doctrine taught them at their baptism."[42] Indeed, it is in answering heretics, according to Cairns, that Tertullian is "the first to state the theological doctrine of the Trinity and to make use of that term . . . seem[ing] to emphasize the distinction that must be made between the persons of the Father and the Son."[43] Juncker notes that even earlier, "the writings of Theophilus presuppose a fairly explicit trinitarian understanding,"[44] but Tertullian's more exact wording the threat of heresy.

The heretics especially deny the deity of Christ, eliciting critical responses from many of Church Fathers. Regarding even the earliest of the Fathers, the Apostolic Fathers—such as Polycarp of Smyrna (ca. A.D. 69-155), Clement of Rome (ca. A.D. 30-100), and Shepherd of Hermas (fl. ca. A.D. 139/155)—George Park Fisher says that "no . . . defect appears in their conception of the doctrine of the person of Christ."[45] Fisher displays how these theologians adhere to the complex truths regarding Christ's eternality and incarnation, and he notes that "Ignatius gives to Christ repeatedly the name 'God.'"[46] Then, regarding Christ's distinctiveness through exhibiting deity in the flesh while maintaining his unity within the Godhead, Origen says, "It ought neither to be believed that anything of divinity [is] wanting in Christ, nor that any separation at all [is] made from the essence of the Father, which is everywhere."[47] The Fathers defend the deity of Christ by affirming His inclusion in the Trinity.

Actions of the Trinity

The Church Fathers also deduce the reality of the Trinity (as well as the triunity and deity of all three Persons) from the individual and collective actions of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Commenting specifically on the Spirit's coming in John 14:26, Ambrose accurately traces the Trinitarian doctrine of Scripture: "For he who [comes] in the name of the Son surely also [comes] in the name of the Father, for the name of the Father and of the Son is one. Thus it comes about that the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is one."[48]

This example illustrates how the equality and triunity of the three Persons still allow distinctions among them with respect to their functions. Peter R. Schemm notes how "the Church Fathers [affirm] that, according to Scripture, there is an eternal order in the Godhead, an order of subordination that [is] historically . . . understood in such a way so as

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[42] Basil, *De Spiritu Sancto* 10.26, *Piney.com*, http://www.piney.com/HsBasil2 _10.html (accessed July 6, 2007).

[43] Cairns, 110.

[44] Juncker, 237.

[45] George Park Fisher, *History of Christian Doctrine* (New York, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901; reprint, 1976), 44.

[46] Ibid., 45.

[47] Origen, *Book 4* 31, from *StudyLight.org*, http://www.studylight.org/his/ad/ecf/ant/origen/view.cgi?file=anf04-48.htm (accessed June 17, 2007).

[48] Ambrose, *On the Holy Spirit* 1.13.134, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVb: 150-151.

not to be confused with the heresy of subordinationism."[49] Thus, the Fathers maintain the cooperative elements and perfect equality among the three Persons; as Augustine says, "You have the persons quite distinct and their working inseparable."[50]

The New Testament speaks clearly to God's triune existence. Augustine describes the implications of this fact saying, "Let us believe that the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one God, the Creator and Ruler of the whole creature; and that the Father is not the Son, nor the Holy Spirit either the Father or the Son, but a trinity of persons mutually interrelated, and a unity of an equal essence."[51] Cyril declares the same truth: "He [Christ] is consubstantial with him [the Father], and whatever is said to be done by God the Father, this necessarily is done by the Son in the Spirit."[52] These insightful definitions continue to be used by theologians today.

The Fathers base their Trinitarian convictions upon the Old Testament, as much as they do on the New Testament. Yahweh, His Spirit, and His special Angel all do the works of deity in the Old Testament. With respect to the creative work of Genesis 1:26 ("let us make man in our image"), Hall writes that Basil "is unequivocal in his insistence"[53] regarding the interpretation of the plurality of deity. Though numerous theologians reject as evidence of the Trinity the numerous threefold references to Yahweh in the Old Testament, the Fathers unapologetically disagree regarding such passages (Genesis 1:26, 11:7; Numbers 6:24-27; Isaiah 6:8). Hall notes about the two testaments that, "Basil here illustrates a fundamental patristic hermeneutical principle. The old must be read and interpreted in light of the new."[54]

Appellations of the Trinity

The names, titles, and terms applied to the three Persons of the Godhead carry with them the message that God is a true Trinity, that the three Persons are equal in deity, and that the three are completely distinct one from one another. The names of the Father, Son, and Spirit relate to their differing works, as well as to their unity in the Godhead.

Personal Names

The key names in Scripture for the Persons of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) arise from the relationships and functions of each one. The connections among the Persons and their actual names reveal deity for all three members of the Trinity. The Church Fathers understand these matters clearly and utilize the information in their teaching and definitions related to the doctrine of Christ's deity.

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[49] Peter R. Schemm, "Trinitarian Perspectives on Gender Roles," *Journal for Biblical Manhood and Womanhood* (Louisville, KY: Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood) 6:1 (Spring 2001): 18; Libronix.

[50] Augustine, *Sermon* 52.14 *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVb: 132.

[51] Augustine, *On the Trinity* Book 9.1, *Readings*, 205-206.

[52] Cyril, *Commentary on Luke, Homily 81*, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament III: 194.

[53] Hall, 92.

[54] Ibid.

Jerome views the three titles in Matthew 28:19 as, together, "the name of the Trinity . . . the name of the one God."[55] His emphasis upon the unity of the Godhead reveals his understanding of the doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, the Fathers realize that the different names within the Trinity do not indicate any separation or inequality among the Persons. They see in the differing relationships within the Trinity an underlying purpose for the distinctive names of each Person. Gregory of Nazianzus puts it thusly: "What then, they say, is there lacking to the Spirit, that prevents him from being a Son . . . ? We assert that there is nothing lacking . . . But the difference of manifestation, if I may so express myself, or rather of their mutual relations one to another, has caused the difference of their names."[56]

In other words, the Father and the Son are so called given their unique Father-Son relationship; the Holy Spirit is the "Spirit of Christ" and the "Spirit of God" or the Father (Roms 8:9) because of His unique relationship with each of the other two. The unique names, relationships, and works all combine to distinguish among the Persons—equal Persons, Persons of identical deity. Understanding this fact, Cyril states the following: "For we cannot draw near to God the Father in any other way than through the Son. . . . For as the Son is God, he being one with the Father provides good things for his sanctified people and is found to be generous of his wealth to us."[57] The Father and Son are distinguished by their roles in receiving repentant souls, but each role requires deity for its related functions. For example, 1 Peter 1:2 makes it clear that the salvific work accomplished by "the foreknowledge of God the Father, [the] sanctification of the Spirit, [and the] blood of Jesus Christ," demands the deity of each Person mentioned.

Titles and Terms of Deity

The Doctrine of the Trinity and, thus, the deity of the Godhead's distinctive Persons, are established by Scripture's repeated use of instructive terms in connection with the three Persons. For example, in Psalm 45:6-7, David says to the anticipated Messiah, "Thy throne, O God, is forever . . . therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee." Tertullian argues that "since He here speaks to God, and affirms that God is anointed by God, He must [affirm] that Two are God, by reason of the sceptre's royal power."[58] The fact that two personages are called God requires that the Godhead is characterized by some form of plurality—in fact, that both Father and Son are God, each in His own right.

In Isaiah 6:1-8, God is praised by the Seraphim as being thrice holy. This threefold reference to Yahweh has significance for the Church Fathers. Fulgentius speaks about "the Trinity of persons"[59] in his comments on the threefold holiness of God in Isaiah. Moreover, the deity of the different Persons within the Trinity is reflected by the threefold holiness of Yahweh. Just as the holiness of each Person in Isaiah 6 reveals the unity among the three

[55] Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 4.28.18-20, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament Ib: 313.

[56] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Theological Oration* 2.3, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVb: 188.

[57] Cyril, *Commentary on the Gospel of John* 11.2, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVb: 217.

[58] Tertullian, *Against Praxeas* 13, Christian Classics Ethereal Library, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf03.v.ix.xiii.html (accessed June 22, 2007).

[59] Fulgentius, *To Peter on the Faith* 6, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament X: 50-51.

Persons, Gregory of Nyssa (ca. A.D. 335-394) notes that other Old Testament passages (e.g., Exodus 6:4) suggest God's unity and prove Trinitarianism "without dividing the Unity into a dual signification, so as to call the Father and the Son two Gods, although each is proclaimed by the holy writers as God."[60] The unity and equality among the Persons demands the deity of all three.

In another setting, the Old Testament identifies the Servant of the Lord with the compassionate Messiah, coming Conqueror, and eternal King (Isa 42:1-7; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 53:1-11). Cyprian of Carthage (d. ca. A.D. 258), says the following about this Personage:

> Who is He who says that He . . . will not always be silent? It is surely He who [is] led as a sheep to the slaughter . . . . He is the One who, although He [is] silent in His passion, will not be silent later in the day of reckoning. He is our God, . . . and when He comes manifesting Himself in His second coming, He will not be silent. . . . He will come manifested in power."[61]

Thus, the concept of the Suffering Servant is connected to the deity of Christ.

The Title of Messiah

The term Messiah denotes deity to the Church Fathers, despite the vague Old Testament history of the concept. For example, The Venerable Bede of Wearmouth (ca. A.D. 672/673-735), reveals in the following statement that intertestamental synonyms alone (he cites Christ as the Anointed One in both testaments) provide adequate evidence for biblical messianism and the messiahship of Jesus Christ: "Messiah in the Hebrew language means Christ in the Greek; . . . The Lord is named Christ, that is, the Anointed One, as Peter says, 'God has anointed him with the Holy Spirit and with power.' Hence the psalmist also speaks in his praise, 'God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions.'"[62]

The Fathers affirm this messianic fulfillment by Jesus in other ways, as well as the Messiah's deity. Concerning 2 Samuel 7, where Solomon (David's son) prefigures Jesus (God's Son), Tertullian offers the following rhetorical question and answer: "Is not Christ here designated the seed of David as of that womb . . . derived from David, that is, Mary's? . . . Christ rather than David's son Solomon [is] . . . looked for as the Son of God."[63] Cyril confirms this about 2 Samuel 7:13 ("I . . . establish the throne of his kingdom forever") and Psalm 89:36 ("his throne [endures] before me like the sun"): "Thou seest that the discourse is of Christ, not of Solomon. For Solomon's throne [endures] not as the sun."[64] In other

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[60] Gregory of Nyssa, *That There Are Not Three Gods*, *ReligionFacts.com*, http:// www.religionfacts.com/christianity/library/gregory_nyssa_three_gods.htm (accessed June 17, 2007).

[61] Cyprian, *The Good of Patience* 23, *EWTN—Global Catholic Network*, http:// www.ewtn.com/library/SOURCES/GOODPAT.TXT (accessed June 25, 2007).

[62] Bede *Homilies on the Gospels* 1.16, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament II: 110.

[63] Tertullian, *Against Marcion* 3.20, *Believe* Religious Information Source, http://mb-soft.com/believe/txv/tertulli.htm (accessed June 25, 2007).

[64] Cyril, *Catechetical Lecture* 12:23, *Tertullian.org*, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers2/NPNF2-07/Npnf2-07-17.htm#P1417_386333 (accessed June 27, 2007).

words, Jesus Christ fulfills the messianic prophecy by being God's Son (deity) and his kingdom alone lasts forever (Luke 1:32-33).

The Fathers view New Testament usage of the term Messiah as the fulfillment of Old Testament messianic references. Commenting on how Andrew tells Peter, "We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41), Chrysostom notices the following: "Also see how he adds the article, for he does not say 'Messiah,' but '*the* Messiah'" (emphasis added).[65] Then, with respect to a Mark 1:8 statement in connection with an Old Testament messianic prophecy, Origen remarks about Christ, "The Messiah therefore does not baptize in water, but his disciples do."[66] This identification of Jesus as the Messiah also reveals Origen's belief in Old Testament messianism and the fact that the Messiah is "the Lord" (Mark 1:3) or Yahweh of the Isaiah 40:3 prediction.

Christ as the Word

The Fathers were fascinated with Jesus as the Word, the physical manifestation of the true God. They love this term for Jesus, even though the Apostle John is the only New Testament writer who uses it (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; Rev 19:13). For example, Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 260/263-340) makes his position clear comparing the Angel of the Lord ("the Judge of all the earth," Gen 18:25), who appears to Abraham as one of three men in Genesis 18:1, with the Son's role as the Word (both God and man) in John 1: "Who else could be proclaimed God and the Lord who judges all the earth and judges righteously, appearing in the shape of a man—if it be not proper to call him the first cause of all things—than his preexistent Word alone?"[67] The Fathers trumpet Jesus Christ as the Word in many specific life situations.

Refuting Gnosticism

In the first centuries of Christianity, the Fathers faced two strong enemies—persecution from the Roman government and the heresy of Gnosticism, which rejects the truth that Jesus is both God and man. Athanasius leads early theologians to reject Gnosticism by arguing as follows the Son's position as the Word: "But God is not like humans as Scripture has said. God is, exists and always has existed. Therefore also his Word exists and is forever with the Father as radiance accompanies light."[68]

Similarly, the Fathers proclaim Christ's manhood and Godhood. Origen notes the following regarding the Word's eternal existence: "He does not 'come to be' 'in the beginning,' nor does he pass from not being 'with God' to coming to be 'with God,' for before all time and eternity 'the Word was in the beginning,' and 'the Word was with God.'"[69] Likewise, Augustine says, "We undertake to praise the Son of God as He is with the

[65] Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Gospel of John* 19:1, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 81.

[66] Origen, *Commentary on John* 6.24, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament II: 9.

[67] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.2.7-8, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, Old Testament II: 61.

[68] Athanasius, *Discourse Against the Arians* 2.18.34-36, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 11.

[69] Origen, *Commentary on John* 2.9, 11, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 8.

Father—equal to and coeternal with Him, in whom all things visible and invisible in heaven and on earth have been made, the Word of God and God."[70]

The Fathers also emphasize both Scripture and Christ as the Word—each fully and similarly, but each uniquely. The Bible is the written Word, while Christ is the incarnate or Living Word. Gerald Bray observes that, "For Athanasius, the inspiration of Scripture [is] directly parallel to the incarnation of Christ, . . . Like Jesus, the Bible [is] fully human (though without error) and fully divine."[71] This comparison is not surprising, since Scripture is the source of knowledge about Christ's two natures. In fact, Ambrose notes as follows that the Word's humanity fulfills the prophetic types of the Old Testament animal sacrifices: "Forasmuch as nothing is so emphatically declared in the Law as Christ's Advent, or prefigured as His Passion, consider whether this be not the saving victim which God the Word offer[s] by Himself, and sacrifice[s] in His own body."[72] The Fathers view the written Word and Living Word as affirming each other.

The Fathers labored to develop a definition of the Word. Athanasius expresses this, crystallized and precise, saying:

> Let us follow up the faith of our religion, and set forth also what relates to the Word's becoming Man, . . . Neither fail to know the cause of the bodily appearing of the Word of the Father, . . . The renewal of creation has been the work of the self-same Word that made it at the beginning.[73]

Peter Toon discusses the contribution of the Fathers to the doctrine of God the Son as the Word: "Here we encounter the Greek patristic doctrine that Christ, considered as eternal Son, truly assume[s] human nature."[74] Moreover, Toon notes that Cyril of Alexandria and Leonitus of Byzantium use "the twin concepts of anhypostasia and enhypostasia"[75] to define Christ's humanity. The former, a negative concept, expresses the truth that Christ's humanity only exists as that assumed by the Word by incarnation (it does not exist outside of or apart from the Word). The latter, a positive concept, states that the Logos has one personality within Himself, shared by His humanity and deity.

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[70] Augustine, *Christmas*, *Great Preaching*, 136.

[71] Gerald Bray, *Biblical Interpretation: Past and Present* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 104.

[72] Ambrose, *Letters* 65.8, *Tertullian.org*, http://www.tertullian.org/fathers/ambrose_letters_07_letters61_70.htm (accessed June 22, 2007).

[73] Athanasius, *On the Incarnation of the Word* 1.1-4, *NewAdvent.org*, http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/2802.htm (accessed July 10, 2007).

[74] Peter Toon, "Historical Perspectives on the Doctrine of Christ's Ascension: Part Two—The Meaning of the Ascension for Christ," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 140:560 (October 1983): 299; Libronix.

[75] Ibid., 299.

The Word in John 1:18

The Fathers wrestled with the textual issue related to John 1:18, as to whether the Word is the *only begotten Son* or the *one and only God*; the translation of the adjective is debated, as well, and thus the words *Son* and *God* are presented here with the commonly preferred adjectival translation. Twenty-first century scholars in textual criticism usually acknowledge the internal evidence of the Gospel of John favors the former (Son), with the external evidence of manuscripts favoring the latter (God); thus, the division among interpreters continues over nineteen hundred years beyond the close of the writing of the New Testament. Regardless, the Fathers accept John 1:18 as testimony that the Word is the manner in which the Trinity is revealed to the world (John 1:14).

Joel C. Elowsky reveals the surprising fact that the Church Fathers are "divided, even in their own writings, on whether the text should read 'only begotten God' or 'only begotten Son.'"[76] Elowsky proceeds to quote Hilary of Poitiers speaking of the word *God* and Ambrose discussing the word *Son*, and then mentions how Irenaeus utilizes both readings—one each in two of his own separate writings.[77] Philip Comfort lists the following Church Fathers, among others, as utilizing the word *God*: "Irenaeus, Clement, Origen, Eusebius, Serapion, Basil, Didymus, Gregory-Nyssa, and Epiphanius."[78] He then lists others who are acquainted with the word *Son*: "Irenaeus, Clement, Hippolytus, Alexander, Eusebius, . . . Serapion, . . . Basil, and Gregory-Nazianzus."[79] This dichotomy with respect to John 1:18, illustrating the early existence of both readings, exists into the twenty-first century among textual scholars.

Though the Word presented as God in John 1:18 seems to speak more powerfully to the Son's deity, the Fathers have no problem with Him presented as Son. For example, Eusebius praises the Word as Son with the following description:

> The first and only begotten of God that [i]s before every creature and creation visible and invisible, the commander-in-chief of the rational and immortal host of heaven, the messenger of the great counsel, the executor of the Father's unspoken will, the creator, with the Father, of all things, the second cause of the universe after the Father, the true and only begotten Son of God, the Lord and God and King of all created things.[80]

Athanasius emphasizes how the Father-Son relationship strengthens the argument for Christ's deity: "He is the eternal offspring of His substance; . . . For such as is the parent, such of necessity is the offspring; and such as is the Word's Father, such must be also His

[76] Joel C. Elowsky, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture*, New Testament IVa: 54 (footnote 47).

[77] Ibid. (footnote 43).

[78] Philip W. Comfort, *Early Manuscripts and Modern Translations of the New Testament* (Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House, 1990), 106.

[79] Ibid.

[80] Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 1.2.2-3, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 4.

Word."[81] To the Fathers, the Word is both God and man, one in nature with the Father within the Trinity, enjoining real humanity by the Incarnation.

Making God Visible

The Church Fathers are drawn to John 1:18 because it indicates the New Testament truth that humans actually see the God of the Old Testament when they look upon the Word. In fact, explaining that passage ("no one has ever seen God"), Eusebius notes that such verses are not in opposition to the reality of the numerous Old Testament theophanies: "If they be understood, like our former quotations, of the Word of God [the Second Person of the Trinity], Who [i]s seen by the fathers 'in many ways and in sundry manners,' no contradiction is involved."[82] Thus, to the Fathers, the Word makes God visible to humans in both testaments of Scripture. This is a striking affirmation of the deity of Christ.

The Fathers exhibit a consensus that Yahweh is manifested through all of the Old Testament theophanies (Angel of Yahweh, burning bush, cloud and fire, Son of Man, and others) by the preincarnate Word, just as God is made visible in the New Testament through the incarnate Word (John 1:1; 14). A good example is Jacob's physical wrestling with the Almighty in Genesis 32; Eusebius states the following about the patriarch: "[He] appreciat[es] God's divine power, [and] call[s] the place of the struggle the Sight of God, saying, 'I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved' . . . This [i]s no other than the Word [Son] of God."[83] Irenaeus states the matter more clearly, noting that Old Testament saints such as Moses, Elijah, Isaiah, and Ezekiel do not see God the Father in the Old Testament. Appealing to John 1:18, where the Second Person is said to declare God or make him known, Irenaeus says that the Word, by his own will, manifests "the Father's brightness, and . . . His purposes."[84] In other words, Christ (or the Word) is the way people see God, as the sun is seen by its brightness. This is true in the eyes of the Fathers, since they have such a deep conviction regarding the deity of Jesus Christ as the Word, the one who is the living God in the flesh.

The Word and the Creeds

The Fathers establish their well-defined doctrine of the Logos in the early creeds of Christianity. These creeds result from a defense of the faith against various heretics and are valued into the beginning of the twenty-first century. Critics are wrong to identify the councils and creeds as elements of "evolving" decisions of early Christians as to the truths of Scripture; these are the evidence of convictions held by orthodox believers from the beginning (though being hammered out in increasingly detailed language), and are ways the Church clearly separates itself from heresies.

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[81] Athanasius, *Discourses Against the Arians* 2.18.32-35, *Newman Reader*, http:// www.newmanreader .org/works/athanasius/volume1/discourse2-2.html (accessed June 29, 2007).

[82] Eusebius, *Proof of the Gospel* 5.18, *Early Christian Writings*, http://www.earlychristianwritings. com/fathers/eusebius_de_07_book5.htm (accessed June 29, 2007).

[83] Ibid., *Proof of the Gospel* 5.18, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament X: 5.

[84] Irenaeus, *Against Heresies* 4.20.11, Calvin College, *Christian Classics Ethereal Library*, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/anf01.ix.vi.xxi.html (accessed June 29, 2007).

Bruce A. Demarest notes the following theological and practical uses for the primary creeds of the early centuries:

> These four doctrinal formulae—the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Definition and the Creed of Athanasius—represent the bedrock conviction of the early Church. Their common focus is the redeeming incarnation of Christ, the Lord and very Son of God. The Church employ[s] these creedal statements not only to counter heresy but also to regulate baptism, order its corporate worship and shape its catechetical instruction.[85]

David J. MacLeod notes that the Apostles' Creed is "not written by the Apostles,"[86] but reflects the teaching of the twelve by affirming the Father, Son, and Spirit; Christ's virgin birth, death, burial, descent into the underworld, resurrection, and ascension; Christ's return and the judgment; the one true church; and forgiveness of sins, the resurrection, and eternal life for saints. Though the Apostles' Creed continues developing its current phraseology in the second through the eighth centuries, it still reflects the orthodox faith before and after that period. Demarest observes that the text of the Apostle's Creed is rooted in the Old Roman Symbol (a shorter version of the creed)—which itself serves as early as the second century "as a confession of faith at baptism."[87] The obvious anti-Gnostic elements of the Apostles' Creed indicate its early beginnings.

The Nicene Creed of A.D. 325 answers Arianism, citing the equality of the Son to the Father (and affirming the Holy Spirit). Moreover, Craig A. Blaising says "the creed . . . figure[s] prominently in the Christological thinking of Chalcedon"[88] a generation later. Thus, the Chalcedonian Creed (A.D. 451) affirms Christ's two natures in one personality, and the Athanasian Creed (ca. A.D. 500) affirms the Trinity, as well as the Spirit's procession from both Father and Son. Regarding the Spirit's procession from the Son, Bray says the Athanasian creed is "the earliest confessional text that contains this doctrine . . . composed in southern Gaul sometime in the first half of the sixth century."[89] Philip Schaff notes that it bears the name and influence of the famous Father, but "is nowhere found in the genuine writings of Athanasius or his contemporaries and eulogists."[90] The creed is identified with Athanasius from around the ninth century.

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[85] Bruce A. Demarest, "Christendom's Creeds: Their Relevance in the Modern World," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 21:4 (December 1978): 347; Libronix.

[86] David J. MacLeod, "The Virginal Conception of Our Lord in Matthew 1:18-25," *Emmaus Journal* 8:3 (Summer 1999): 3; Libronix.

[87] Demarest, 346.

[88] Craig A. Blaising, "Chalcedon and Christology: A 1530th Anniversary," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 138:552 (October 1981): 331; Libronix.

[89] Bray, "The Double Procession of the Holy Spirit in Evangelical Theology Today: Do We Still Need It?" *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 41:3 (September 1998): 5, *Find Articles*, http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3817/ is_199809/ai_n8814810/pg_5 (accessed July 14, 2007).

[90] Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom, with a History and Critical Notes: Volume I—The History of Creeds*, 3 vols., 6th ed., rev. and enlarged (N.p.: Harper and Brothers, 1877; n.p.: David S. Schaff, 1919), 35,

The creeds contain careful language affirming the deity of the Son of God, the Living Word. For example, the Apostles' Creed speaks of "Jesus Christ [God's] only Son our Lord." The Nicene Creed mentions the "Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God." The Chalcedonian Creed says, "Our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood." The Athanasian Creed states the following: "So the Father is God: the Son is God: and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods: but one God." The defense of the deity of Christ is the greatest reason, by far, for the existence of these early creeds.

Conclusion

Though many lesser doctrines are not represented among these heroes of Christianity's beginning, Hall states that "the fathers do affirm a broad set of theological propositions that have remained central to Christian orthodoxy across almost all denominational lines."[91] The inspiration of the Scriptures, trinitarianism, Christ's deity, and other bedrock tenets are defined and protected by the Fathers throughout their part of the first millennium of Christianity.

This articles displays the work of the Church Fathers to an extent that proves their steadfast conviction regarding the deity of the Word. Aside from the distinct expressions regarding the doctrine of the deity of Jesus Christ is the biblical logocentrism of the Church Fathers. Bray writes that Athanasius views "the incarnation as the key to understanding Scripture,"[92] and that the same principle applies to all of life for serious believers. Hall concludes that "the hermeneutical and historical proximity of the fathers to the New Testament church and its apostolic tradition demands that [all] listen carefully to their exegetical insights, advice and intuition."[93]

In sum, Ambrose states, with respect to John 1:18, "Christ is the interpreter of the Godhead."[94] This is the position of the Church Fathers—that the Word, deity Himself, communicates and manifests the Godhead.

Christian Classics Ethereal Library, http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds1.iv.v.html (accessed May 25, 2007).

[91] Hall, 53.

[92] Bray, *Biblical Interpretation*, 104.

[93] Hall, 196.

[94] Ambrose, *Joseph* 14.44, *Ancient Christian Commentary*, New Testament IVa: 54.

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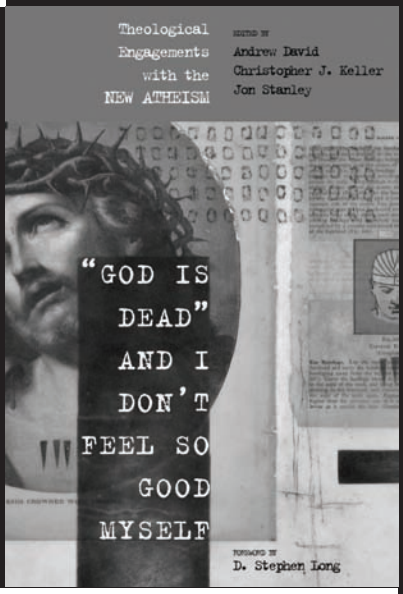

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PREACHING AS A MEANS OF GRACE AND THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION: A REFORMED PERSPECTIVE

By J. V. Fesko[1]

The Reformed tradition has historically placed a high premium on preaching. The Westminster Divines write: "The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves and drawing them unto Christ" (Larger Cat. q. 155). God speaks to his people by the men who have been specifically gifted by the Holy Spirit to herald the κήρυγμα, the performative word of God that goes forth in the midst of the communion of the saints and raises people from death to life, clothes them in the righteousness of Christ, nourishes them with the true bread from heaven, and further conforms them to the image of Christ in sanctification.[2] The preaching of the gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1.16).[3] This essay will therefore set out a brief theology of revelation and show how preaching is connected to it, along with the doctrine of sanctification—the church's corporate growth in holiness and greater conformity to the image of Christ. Key to understanding the nature of revelation as it relates to preaching is the pattern of word-act-word revelation and how the antecedent Old Testament (OT) revelation gives way to the divine-act revelation of God in Christ, followed by an authoritative word-revelation of the New Testament (NT). Understanding this pattern is key to comprehending how the word, but especially preaching, is a means of grace for the church, both individually and corporately. But when preachers herald the word, they must do so correctly. Hence, this essay will also cover three key principles that are necessary for the right preaching of the word for the edification and sanctification of the church: Christ-centered proclamation, respecting the indicative and imperative moods of Scripture, and the distinction between law and gospel.

The Revelation of God In Christ

The opening lines of the Epistle to the Hebrews contain a key, if not paradigmatic, indication of the proper understanding of divine revelation: "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son" (Heb 1.1-2a). This statement shows that there are two types of divine revelation: word- and act-revelation. God gave his word-revelation to the fathers and the prophets which was followed by the act-revelation of God in Christ, the incarnation. Christ was not mute but also spoke, thereby capping the act-revelation of the incarnation with more word-revelation. Geerhardus Vos summarizes this pattern by explaining the typical revelatory pattern found in the Scriptures: "First word, then the fact, then again the interpretive word. The Old Testament brings the predictive preparatory word, the Gospels record the redemptive-revelatory fact, the Epistles supply the subsequent, final

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[2] Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching and Biblical Theology* (1961; Phillipsburg: P & R, 2002), 20, 24.

[3] All Scripture quotations are taken from the English Standard Version unless otherwise noted.

interpretation."[4] This pattern of word-act-word revelation is crucial for comprehending the chief purpose of the Scriptures, namely to reveal God in Christ.

That Christ is at the center of the Scriptures is evident from a number of passages from the NT as it retrospectively looks at the OT.[5] In Christ's post-resurrection appearance on the road to Emmaus, he instructed his disciples concerning everything written about him in the "Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms" (Luke 24.44). Similar statements confirm that Jesus is the topic of the OT (John 5.39; 20.9). The christocentric focus of the OT is evident in Luke's mention of its division: the law, prophets, and psalms. A similar division was used in the literature of first-century Judaism to refer to the whole of the OT canon (4Q 397 line 10; Sirach, prologue; NRSV).[6] Jesus explains that the *whole* of the OT points to Him, rather than just a few scattered prophecies.[7] There is confirmation of this christocentric focus in the statements of the apostle Peter when he explains that the prophets of old spoke and wrote divine revelation concerning salvation by the "Spirit of Christ" (1 Pet 1.10-11). Peter coordinates christology and pneumatology by telling his hearers that it was the Holy Spirit that was revealing the person and work of Christ. However, there are two key points to be noted in Peter's argument.

First, Peter identifies the Holy Spirit, the agent of revelation in the OT, as the same Spirit who descended upon Christ at his baptism as well as the same Spirit who was at work in their midst.[8] Second, it is significant to note the ecclesial focus of the revelatory work of the Spirit. Peter writes: οἷς ἀπεκαλύφθη ὅτι οὐχ ἑαυτοῖς ὑμῖν δὲ διηκόνουν αὐτα& ("It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you") (1 Pet 1.12a). Note Peter's use of the plural pronoun, ὑμῖν. As one commentator explains, "Prophecy was intended for the community of salvation" (cf. Rom 4.23ff; 1 Cor 10.11; Acts 3.24; 13.26).[9] This second point will be explored in greater detail below, but for the time being it is necessary first to cross the threshold from the preparatory word-revelation of the OT, that which pointed to Christ, and briefly explore the disclosure of God in Christ as act-revelation.

The NT Scriptures are clear in a number of places that the culminating event of redemptive history is God's self-revelation in Christ. This is no more evident than in the opening chapter of John's gospel, which declares: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1.1). John goes on to state: "No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known (John 1.18). Christ reveals God, as Jesus told his disciples: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14.9). But the act-revelation of God in Christ is one that is as pneumatically

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[4] Geerhardus Vos, *Biblical Theology: Old and New Testaments* (1948; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996), 7; see also H. N. Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus: Origin and General Character of Paul's Preaching Christ*, trans. David H. Freeman (1957; Phillipsburg: P & R, 2002), 65; Clowney, *Preaching*, 34.

[5] Ridderbos, *Paul and Jesus*, 59-62.

[6] Geza Vermes, ed. and trans., *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English* (1962; New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 227.

[7] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke*, BECNT, 2 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1996), 2.1936-37.

[8] Karen H. Jobes, *1 Peter*, BECNT (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 101.

[9] Leonhard Goppelt, *A Commentary on 1 Peter*, trans. Johen E. Alsup (1978; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 98.

infused as the OT inscripturation of word-revelation. The pneumatic character of the revelation of God in Christ is dramatically presented in the Markan account of the baptism of Jesus. Mark writes that when Jesus came out of the water the heavens were literally "torn open" (σχίζω) and the Spirit descended upon Christ as a dove (Mark 1.10; cf. Matt 2.16; Luke 3.21 where the more ordinary term ἀνοίγω, "open," is used). What accounts for Mark's use of this more aggressive term?

Mark is specifically interested in showing his readers that the incarnation of Christ and his baptism is the long-awaited arrival of Yahweh in the flesh who would lead his people on the final, eschatological exodus.[10] This time the exodus would not be out from under Pharaoh's rule or out of Babylon, but out from under the tyranny of Satan, sin, and death. Isaiah promises that Yahweh would personally come to lead his people: "Oh that you would rend the heavens [ἀνοίξῃς τὸν οὐρανόν] and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence—as when fire kindles brushwood and the fire causes water to boil—to make your name known to your adversaries, and that the nations might tremble at your presence" (Isa 64.1; 63.19 LXX)! Mark's allusion to this Isaianic motif shows that the long-awaited eschatological revelation of Yahweh has come in Jesus.[11] Isaiah and Mark are not alone in the employment of such terminology; other passages of Scripture employ similar imagery to describe divine eschatological intervention and revelation (Job 14.12 LXX; Hag, 2.6, 21; 2 Pet 3.10; cf. Rev 6.14).[12]

But Mark writes not only of the rending of the heavens. He also calls attention to the descent of the Holy Spirit and the voice from heaven: "And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens tearing open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased'" (Mark 1.10-11).[13] As with v. 10a, vv. 10b-11 are steeped in Isaianic allusion. Within the broader context of Isaiah 64, the prophet refers to the Spirit of God leading Israel of old on the exodus (Isa 63.14). Additionally, there are a number of passages in Isaiah that speak of the Lord anointing his servant with the Holy Spirit. Commentators note, for example, not only that Psalm 2.7 (cf. 2 Sam 7.14; Psa 89.26) is a subtext for Mark 1.11, but that Mark has also conflated it with Isaiah 42.1: "Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my Spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations." God anoints his son, Jesus, with the Spirit to herald the gospel (εὐαγγέλιον) to the nations: "The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news [εὐαγγελίσασθαι] to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound" (Isa

[10] Meredith G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (1989; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1997), 181-95; also Rikki E. Watts, *Isaiah's New Exodus in Mark* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997).

[11] Michael F. Bird, "Tearing the Heavens and Shaking the Heavenlies: Mark's Cosmology in its Apocalyptic Context," in *Cosmology and New Testament Theology*, eds. Jonathan T. Pennington and Sean M. McDonough (London: T & T Clark, 2008), 50-51.

[12] G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, eds., *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007), 120.

[13] Translation mine.

61.1; cf. Luke 4.16-21).[14] That the Spirit comes as a dove also invokes another layer of biblical imagery, that of new creation. It is the Spirit who hovers like a bird over the watery chaos in Genesis 1.2; Noah releases a dove over the waters of the newly re-created earth after the flood (Gen 8.8-12); and God descended upon his people like a bird in their exodus-creation (Deut 32.11). What this multi-layered OT imagery tells us as it culminates in Mark's gospel is that the anticipatory word-revelation of God in Christ through the Spirit has given way to the act-revelation of the triune God. This act-revelation signals that God has begun to create the new heavens and earth in the midst of the old creation, and he has done so through the revelation of the incarnate word and the Holy Spirit.[15] The new creation is not a transformation of the old but the intrusion of the new, the anticipation of the eschatological descent of the New Jerusalem, the holy city, the temple of the living God.

The pattern identified thus far as act-revelation is followed by subsequent interpretive word-revelation. This model emerges in rough-hewn outlines in Mark's gospel as it concludes with the crucifixion of Christ. At the pinnacle of the crucifixion with Christ's death, the temple veil is torn from top to bottom (Mark 15.38). The tearing of the temple veil is important on a number of levels. The veil, of course, separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the inner temple. It separated the ark-presence of God from the priest's laboring in the inner temple. But the veil and surrounding design of the temple was patterned after the creation itself. The veil was patterned after the heavens. Josephus (37- ca. 100) describes the veil in the following manner: "It was a Babylonian curtain, embroidered with blue, and fine linen, and scarlet, and purple, and of a contexture that was truly wonderful. Nor was this mixture of colors without its mystical interpretation, but was a kind of image of the universe . . . This curtain had also embroidered upon it all that was mystical in the heavens" (Wars 5.212-14; cf. Ant 3.181). In a word, the temple was a microcosmic recreation of the cosmos and the veil represented the heavens.[16] Mark coordinates the rending of the temple veil with the confession of the Roman centurion, "Truly this man was the Son of God!" (Mark 15.39), which forms an inclusio with Mark 1.10-11.[17] The veil has not been torn allowing man to ascend to God but rather the heavens have been rent because God in Christ through the Spirit has now condescended to man. The rending of the temple veil means that the temple is no longer the location of the divine presence. Now God comes to man through the word-revelation of Christ who unleashes the Spirit. Christ through the Spirit sends forth his performative word throughout the whole world.[18] In fact, some have suggested that the rending of the temple veil is "Mark's Pentecost."[19]

The rough-hewn sketch of Mark's gospel is more sharply presented in the other gospels. In John's gospel, for example, Christ instructs the disciples concerning the dispatch of the

[14] Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 120-28; also Morna D. Hooker, *The Gospel According to Saint Mark*, BNTC (1991; Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 46-47.

[15] Kline, *Biblical Authority*, 88.

[16] Bird, "Mark's Cosmology," 54-55; also G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission: A Biblical Theology of the Dwelling Place of God*, NSBT (Downers Grove: IVP, 2004), 29-80.

[17] David Ulansey, "The Heavenly Veil Torn: Mark's Cosmic Inclusio," *JBL* 110.1 (1991): 123-25.

[18] Bird, "Mark's Cosmology," 55.

[19] See S. Motyer, "The Rending of the Veil: A Markan Pentecost," *NTS* 33 (1991): 155-57.

Holy Spirit: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you" (John 14.26). Jesus explains that the Father will send the Spirit, but he also stipulates that he too will send the Spirit (John 15.26). In the broader context of John's gospel, John the Baptist tells the crowds that he only baptizes with water but that Christ will baptize with the Spirit: "I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit'" (John 1.33). Note the coordination of the anointing of God's servant with the Spirit and the servant's subsequent sending, or baptism, of the Spirit—these are the same elements that appear in Mark's inclusio of Mark 1.10-11 and 15.36-39. That Jesus would baptize the church in the Spirit is further emphasized in the end of John's gospel when Jesus performs a mini-parable: "He breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit'" (John 20.22).[20]

Luke's gospel clearly presents the connections between word-act-word revelation. Recall that Jesus (the act-revelation of God in Christ) instructed his disciples on the road to Emmaus from the word-revelation of the OT (Luke 24.44-48). Jesus tells his two disciples to remain in Jerusalem until they are "clothed with power from on high" (Luke 24.49). Recall that Luke's two-volume work progresses from his gospel account to the book of Acts. In fact, the overlap of the close of Luke's gospel (24.44-53) and the beginning of the book of Acts (1.3-11) specifically shows that the OT was inherently christological and that Jesus' work would continue through the outpouring of the Spirit. The γέγραπται ("it is written") of the OT that prophesied the pneumatic act-revelation of God in Christ forms an irrefragable union with the church. It is Christ who pours out (or baptizes) the church at Pentecost (Acts 2.32-33); this Lukan account is parallel with Mark's rending of the temple veil and the descent of the Spirit.[21] The outpouring of the Spirit is both for the redemption of the church (1 Cor 15.45) and, according to John's gospel, the agent of the word-revelation of God in Christ (John 14.26; cf. Eph 1.17).

Christ sends the Holy Spirit to equip the church—to distribute his gifts. Apostles and NT prophets are the Spirit's gift to the church, as they are part of the foundation of the church with Christ as the chief cornerstone (Eph 2.20). In these "last days" (Heb 1.1) God has revealed the mystery that has been kept secret for long ages and was disclosed through the prophetic writings of the OT but now has been disclosed to all nations (Rom 16.25-26). Elsewhere Paul explains that the "mystery of Christ . . . was not made known to the sons of men in other generations as it has now been revealed to his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Eph 3.4-5). The Holy Spirit reveals the word-revelation of the NT that authoritatively interprets the OT word-revelation that culminated in the act-revelation of God in Christ. God's self-disclosure, therefore, is not restricted to his act-revelation in Jesus Christ but extends to the communication and interpretation of this act-revelation through those people whom he specifically chose and equipped to be the instruments of his divine word-revelation.[22] To borrow an analogy from Karl Barth, like the impact-crater that results

[20] D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991), 652-53.

[21] Clowney, *Preaching*, 31.

[22] Herman N. Ridderbos, *Redemptive History and the New Testament Scriptures* (1963; Phillipsburg: P & R, 1988), 23-24.

from an exploded artillery shell, the church is the result and effect of the divine intrusion of both the word- and act-revelation of God in Christ in the power of the Spirit.[23] The light of the revelation of God in Christ by the Spirit pierces the darkness of this present evil age (John 1.9-11), thus rending the heavens, and begins to create the new heavens and earth. The revelation of God gives birth to the church—the communion of saints—which is the centerpiece of the new creation.

But God's performative word has not ceased bringing about the creation of the church. Though the divine revelation through the apostolic and NT prophetic witness has ceased, thus bringing the closing of the canon, the resulting *effect* of that revelation has not ceased with the apostolic era.[24] The Spirit continues to distribute sovereignly his gifts to the church for its edification. Like Oholiab and Bezalel, who were filled with the "Spirit of God" and given ability, intelligence, knowledge, and craftsmanship to construct the tabernacle according to the divinely revealed architectural plans (Exo 31.3), so too Christ through the Spirit has gifted his church with the necessary skills to build the eschatological temple, the church. To this end Paul writes that Christ: "Gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ (Eph 4.11-12 KJV).[25] While the gifts of the Spirit are multifaceted (1 Cor 12.1-10; Rom 12.6-8), it is primarily the gifts of the evangelists and pastors that are of interest.

The Spirit's gifts of pastors and evangelists are of special interest because of the NT premium upon the preaching of the word of God. Paul begins his epistle to the Romans by calling attention to the preaching of the gospel as the power of God unto salvation (Rom 1.16).[26] This emphasis is also present when Paul, quoting Joel 2.32, states: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom 10.13). Paul then asks the important question: "But how are they to call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent" (Rom 10.14-15)? First, note that Paul quotes the prophet Joel and the promised effusion of the Holy Spirit. Hence, there is a connection between Christ's outpouring of the Spirit and the preaching of the word.

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[23] Karl Barth, *The Epistle to the Romans*, 6th ed., trans. Edwin C. Hoskyns (1933; New York: OUP, 1968), 36.

[24] On the cessation of divine revelation see Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 304; idem, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1980), 8-9; Richard B. Gaffin, Jr., *Perspectives on Pentecost* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1979); cf. Wayne Grudem, *The Gift of Prophecy in 1 Corinthians* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1999).

[25] On the preferable KJV translation of these verses, cf. Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians*, PNTC (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 302-05; Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, WBC (Dallas: Word, 1990), 253-55; T. David Gordon, "'Equipping' Ministry in Ephesians 4?" *JETS* 37 (1994): 69-78; Charles Hodge, *Ephesians* (1856; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1991), 136.

[26] James D. G. Dunn, *Romans*, 2 vols., WBC (Dallas: Word, 1988), 1.38-39; Robert Jewett, *Romans*, Hermenia (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007), 137.

Second, when Paul asks how people will believe and answers "preaching," he draws upon the Isaianic stream of revelation: "As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news [ὡς ὡραῖοι οἱ πόδες τῶν εὐαγγελιζομένων τὰ ἀγαθα]'" (Rom 10.16; cf. Isa 52.7). Paul's quotation of Isaiah 52.7 comes from the context where the Lord promised Israel that he would himself return to lead his people out of captivity. Isaiah 52.6 announces the presence of the Lord which then yields the heraldic mission of proclaiming the good news (εὐαγγελίζω, Isa 52.7 LXX). However, the specific point of Isaiah 52.6 is that the people of God will know that it is he, Yahweh, who speaks through these preachers: "Therefore my people shall know my name. Therefore in that day they shall know that it is I who speak; here am I." Paul's argument, then, is that God in the flesh has drawn near to his people through Christ by the Spirit and speaks to his people through the pneumatically charged preaching of the word (Rom 10.8, 17; cf. 2 Cor 5.20).[27] And it is this pneumatically charged word that brings salvation, that redeems, that calls into existence things that do not exist. It is for these reasons that the NT places such a high premium upon the preaching of the gospel, or more generally, the power of the word (John 6.63; 15.3; Acts 10.42; Rom 15.20; 1 Cor 1.17; 2.4-5; 9.16; Eph 3.8; 1 Thess 1.5; 2 Tim 4.2; James 1.18; 1 Pet 1.23). Conversely, where there is no divine revelation, God's people have historically floundered and become spiritually languid and rebellious: "Where there is no prophetic vision the people cast off restraint" (Prov 29.18a; cf. Hos 4.6).

This collective data concerning the pneumatic revelation of God in Christ is of the utmost importance for understanding the preaching of the word of God as a means of grace and hence as a source of spiritual nourishment, a source for greater sanctification and holiness. Our union with Christ is brought about, as Paul says (Rom 10.14-15), through the preaching of the word. We are not only brought from death to life by the preached word but are also spiritually nourished throughout our life-long process of sanctification. Christ powerfully explains that he is the source of our spiritual nourishment by appealing to the shadow lands of the OT exodus where God fed Israel with manna from heaven as they journeyed to the sanctuary-rest of the promised land. In the light of the eschatological revelation of Christ, Jesus identifies himself as the true manna from heaven: "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. And the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh" (John 6.49-51). The organ of consumption, however, is not the mouth, but faith, and God's people feed upon Christ by faith through the reading—but especially the preaching—of the word of God.

When the individual takes up the word and reads it, by the power of the Spirit, it is a means of grace. But at this point it is crucial to reintroduce the ecclesial dimension of God's self-disclosure in Christ as noted earlier. Recall Peter's words: "It was revealed to them that

[27] Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 661-62; John Murray, *Romans*, NICNT (1959-65; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1968), 58-59; J. Ross Wagner, "Isaiah in Romans and Galatians," in *Isaiah in the New Testament*, eds. Steve Moyise and Maarten J. J. Menken (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2007), 123-24; idem, *Heralds of the Good News: Isaiah and Paul in Concert in the Letter to the Romans* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2003), 170-76.

they were serving not themselves but you" (1 Pet 1.12a). The second person pronoun, "you," is plural. The revelation of God is to and for the communion of saints, the church. Moreover, the gifts of the Spirit, in this case pastors and evangelists and their pneumatically charged preaching, is for the edification of the church, the covenant community. Paul writes: "To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good" (1 Cor 12.7). Paul goes on to define the "common good" as that which is beneficial for the body, the church, not the isolated individual: "For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit" (1 Cor 12.12-13).

We are not sanctified merely as individuals. Rather, we are united to Christ our head, and sanctified as individuals who are part of a corporate body, the church. Barth was not too far off the mark when he observed: "The saints of the New Testament exist only in plurality. Sanctity belongs to them, but only in their common life, not as individuals."[28] Barth bases his observation on the fact that the NT, especially in the epistles, is addressed to the community of saints, the ἁγίοι, to the ἐκκλησία, the church. Barth's point is quite attractive given the highly individualistic age in which we live. But the answer to rampant individualism is not to swing the pendulum so far in the other direction so as completely to eradicate the individual. Otto Weber brings welcomed nuance when he takes Barth's point and restates it: "'Sanctification' is an event which does not exclude the individual but which is decisively carried out in and on the Community."[29] As Dietrich Bonhoeffer observes: "Human beings, rather, are always part of a community, in 'Adam' or in 'Christ.'"[30]

In this regard it is worth noting that the word-revelation of the OT was given to the covenant community, Israel. Likewise, the act-revelation of God in Christ was revealed to the covenant community.[31] Far too often people claim that because they only need their Bibles or their personal devotions the church and corporate worship is rendered superfluous. Or, there are also those who appeal to the almighty conscience in matters of sanctification and holiness, creating their own standards for themselves and others. But, "When conscience is said to be an immediate relation to God," writes Bonhoeffer, "Christ and the church are excluded, because God's having bound the divine self to the mediating word is circumvented."[32] The pneumatically charged word-revelation of God in Christ is disclosed once again in, to, and for the church, the covenant community. Again, Bonhoeffer: "Revelation happens in the community of faith."[33] Therefore, the center of gravity for the individual's sanctification lies not in his daily personal devotions (as important as they are),

[28] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, 14 vols., eds. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936-69), 4.2: 513.

[29] Otto Weber, *Foundations for Dogmatics*, 2 vols., trans. Darrell L. Guder (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), 2.331.

[30] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being: Transcendental Philosophy and Ontology in Systematic Theology*, trans. H. Martin Rumscheidt, ed. Wayne Whitson Floyd, Jr., *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works*, vol. 2 (1988; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 113.

[31] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 8-9.

[32] Bonhoeffer, *Act and Being*, 141.

[33] Ibid, 113.

but rather in corporate worship. The communion of the saints is where God's eschatological temple gathers and those preachers and evangelists whom the Spirit has sovereignly gifted to herald the performative word of God unleash the all-powerful creative word upon the covenant community. In the midst of the gathered community, preachers herald the pneumatic word-revelation of God in Christ and it goes forth and raises people from death to life and conforms them to the image of Christ. It is here that the *communio sanctorum*, the communion of the saints, comes to the fore in the doctrine of sanctification.

The Westminster Confession explains that all saints who are united to Jesus Christ as their head by the Holy Spirit have fellowship with him in his graces, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glory. However, the saints not only have fellowship with Christ but also with one another. The Divines write: "They have communion in each other's gifts and graces, and are obliged to the performance of such duties, public and private, as do conduce to their mutual good, both in the inward and outward man" (26.1). The Confession has all of the gifts of the Spirit in view, but in terms of the word of God, it is the gathered body of Christ, the church, who benefits from the gifts of pastors and evangelists. These preachers maintain the holy fellowship and communion with one another in the worship of God as they herald the pneumatically charged word of God for the mutual edification and sanctification of the church (26.2). Bonhoeffer, reflecting on the seventh article of the Augsburg Confession which deals with the *communio sanctorum*, summarizes the preaching-church nexus writing: "Preaching, as an office of the community of faith, has been given the promise that when preachers faithfully utter the 'words' and 'assertions' (pure doctrine! *recte docetur*), the living person of Christ declares itself in them by disclosing itself to the hearer."[34]

Key Interpretive Principles

Historically the Reformed tradition has understood and appreciated the relationship between the word of God, preachers, and the church. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75), Ulrich Zwingli's (1484-1531) successor at Zurich, preached a number of doctrinal sermons on the various loci of theology. In his first sermon he identified the various forms of the word of God:

> For *verbum Dei*, 'the word of God,' doth signify the virtue and power of God: it is also put for the Son of God, which is the second in the most reverend Trinity. For that saying of the holy evangelist is evident to all men, 'The word was made flesh.' But in this treatise of ours, the word of God doth properly signify the speech of God, and the revealing of God's will; first of all uttered in a lively-expressed voice by the mouth of Christ, the prophets and apostles; and after that gain registered in writings, which are rightly called 'holy and divine scriptures.'[35]

Bullinger's distinctions among the various forms of the word of God follows the pattern that has been established in this essay: word-revelation of the OT and NT but also in act-

[34] Ibid, 130. Article seven of the Augsburg Confession states: "The church is the congregation of saints [*congregatio sanctorum*], in which the Gospel is rightly taught and the Sacraments rightly administered" (Philip Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 3 vols. [1931; Baker, 1991], 3.11-12).

[35] Heinrich Bullinger, *The Decades of Henry Bullinger*, 4 vols., ed. Thomas Harding (1849-52; Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2004), 1.37.

revelation such as the creation *ex nihilo* (what Bullinger calls the "virtue and power of God") or the work of the second person of the trinity, the son of God. But in Bullinger's Second Helvetic Confession (1566) he also extends the word of God to preaching: "Wherefore when this Word of God is now preached in the church by preachers lawfully called, we believe that the very Word of God is proclaimed, and received by the faithful."[36]

Given the exegetical data brought forward heretofore, Bullinger is certainly correct. However, this does not mean that the preaching of the word functions *ex opere operato*. In other words, a preacher cannot simply offer up a homiletical slop and expect to automatically (and apart from faith) bring forth the creative and redemptive power of God in Christ through the Spirit. To be sure, the triune God is free to redeem and sanctify through whatever means he deems fit or necessary. One must assert the sovereignty of God in all things. At the same time, however, this does not mean that ministers of the gospel or even those who read the Scriptures have no responsibility whatsoever to read or preach the Scriptures according to their divine intention. In this respect it is important to stipulate that ministers must aim for the *right* preaching of the word of God. Hence there are several key interpretive principles that must be guarded, not only for proper interpretation but also for proper hearing: Christ-centered proclamation, the grammatical categories of the indicative and imperative, and the law-gospel antithesis.

Christ-Centered Proclamation

The first key principle to sound preaching is that it focuses upon Christ regardless of the text. This is not to say that interpreters should eisegete the Scriptures and force Christ into a passage where he is not present. Rather, as the interpreter comes to any given passage of Scripture, he should rightly recognize in what way Christ is organically connected to the text in question. Some have chastised such a reading of Scripture as the leftovers of a pre-critical theology that does not account for the advances of critical scholarship. Others, fearing the allegorical distortion of Scripture, are unwilling to see Christ in a text unless he explicitly appears. The problem with these two objections is rooted in the presuppositions brought to the text.

In the case of pre-critical versus critical exegesis, the obvious line of division is first and foremost historical—the watershed event of the Enlightenment. While it is debatable precisely what series of events or persons brought on the developments of the Enlightenment, the pre- and post-critical periods can be contrasted by two simple affirmations. By and large, pre-critical interpreters saw the source of their theological epistemology in the *Deus dixit* ("God says") of Scripture. Thomas Aquinas (1225-74), for example, begins the *Summa Theologia* not with autonomous human reason but upon the foundation of divine revelation. Thomas' rhetorical interlocutor raises the following objection: "It seems that, besides philosophical science, we have no need of any further knowledge. For man should not seek to know what is above reason." To this objection Thomas responds by quoting 2 Timothy 3.16 and then comments: "Now Scripture, inspired

[36] See Jaroslav Pelikan and Valerie Hotchkiss, eds., *Creeds and Confessions of Faith in the Christian Tradition*, 3 vols. (New Haven: Yale, 2003), 2.460.

of God, is not part of philosophical science, which has been built up by human reason."[37] In contrast stands the famous apothegm of René Descartes (1596-1650), *Cogito ergo sum* ("I think, therefore I am").[38] Granted, Descartes' statement is related to epistemology in general, but it nonetheless provides the perfect foil for comparison with the *Deus dixit* of pre-critical exegesis. In the former, reason submits to the text; in the latter, the text must submit to reason. The contradistinction of *dixit* versus *cogito* reveals the interpretive presuppositions behind pre-critical and critical exegesis.

Pre-critical exegesis came to the text of Scripture seeking to know God, hence seeking a sapiential reading of Scripture. Critical exegesis often came to the text with a scientific understanding of truth and assigned religious claims about God to the realm of myth and meaning. Critical exegesis is only interested in demonstrable historical claims and events, not in the claims of ontology or metaphysics, hence it has a scientific (quantifiable) approach to Scripture. A key figure here was John Locke (1632-1704) who, in his essay, *The Reasonableness of Christianity*, established the scaffolding by which later interpreters would proceed: discrediting the claims of divine revelation unless it could meet the standards of human reason.[39] In other words, in critical exegesis there is often an inherently anti-supernatural bias—the text is explained purely in terms of natural events and processes. Interpreters, especially those in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Germany, approached the Scriptures with a scientific (*wissenschaftliche*) approach. Adolf von Harnack (1851-1930) argued that theology conducted under the oversight of the church was detrimental to the scientific study of Scripture.[40] Wolfhart Pannenberg explains that early Christian interpreters such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-211/16) were not interested in myths but a true knowledge of God, which was ultimately revealed in Christ. In sharp contrast to *scientia*, pre-critical exegetes sought *sapientia*. [41] Pre-critical exegetes believed in the possibility of the supernatural—namely that God existed and had revealed himself in Christ and Scripture.

Critical scholars, therefore, were merely interested in the grammar (what the text said) and the purported history of what the text claimed. The grammatico-historical interpretation of Scripture therefore used the scientific and historical investigation of the Scriptures to neutralize the revelation-principle (*Deus dixit*) of Scripture.[42] It became commonplace to believe that in the Scriptures it was *homo dixit* (man says).[43] If the underlying narrative of

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[37] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologia*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (1911; Allen: Christian Classics, 1948), Ia q. 1 art 1.

[38] See René Descartes, *Discourse on the Method*, ed. and trans. George Heffernan (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994).

[39] Ellen T. Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: OUP, 1997), 3-7.

[40] Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (New York: OUP, 2006), 15.

[41] Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Theology and the Philosophy of Science*, trans. Francis McDonagh (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976), 8.

[42] Geerhardus Vos, "The Idea of Biblical Theology as a Science and as a Theological Discipline," in *Redemptive History and Biblical Interpretation: The Shorter Writings of Geerhardus Vos*, ed. Richard B. Gaffin, Jr. (Phillipsburg: P & R, 1980), 15.

[43] See Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity*, trans. George Eliot (New York: Harper, 1957).

Scripture is no longer the progressive unfolding of God's self-revelation in Christ but instead a disjointed evolutionary collection of clumsily edited fragments and narratives, then a Christ-centered interpretation and proclamation of Scripture is only possible by foisting Jesus upon the text.[44]

Even a cursory reading of the supposedly "boring" genealogies confirms, however, that the Bible is a literary whole centered upon one person: the seed of the woman (Gen 3.15). Luke traces Christ's genealogy back to Adam (Luke 3.23-38). In this respect the gospels make purposive, overt reference to Christ's lineage, thereby linking him organically to the antecedent biblical narratives (e.g., Matt 1.1; 9.27; 12.23; etc). The OT is not a ragbag of stories all tossed in together but a coherent narrative that begins with Adam and the creation of the world and ends with David and the construction of the temple (according to the Hebrew ordering of the canon). The OT concludes with Israel in a kind of exile awaiting the descendant of David to come, to rebuild the temple, and to restore all things.[45] The revelation of God in Christ is the central point and pinnacle of the overall biblical narrative and thus must be the central focus both of its interpretation and proclamation.[46]

On the other hand, many with a firm commitment to the authority and inspiration of Scripture genuinely fear an over-reading of the biblical text and stay firmly anchored in the grammatico-historical analysis of any particular passage. Fearful of an allegorical reading of a passage, or of importing later theological developments and anachronistically reading Christ into a text, they have no problem preaching various texts without making reference to Christ.[47] OT passages, for example, that do not explicitly mention Christ are, at the very least, about teaching moral principles (Moses as a model for biblical leadership) or, at most, teaching about the importance of faith or trust in God. Such sermons become "Jesus-shingle sermons." Preachers know they must make reference to Jesus so they tack him on to the end of their sermons like a shingle.

In many respects, a fear of mishandling the text in the name of Christ-centered preaching and interpretation is certainly warranted. The history of interpretation and preaching is riddled with the allegorical abuse of the Scriptures. Rahab's scarlet cord, for example, has been knotted into all manner of reckless "exegesis."[48] There is a profound difference, however, between the typological and allegorical interpretation of Scripture. Allegorical interpretation uses words or ideas in a biblical text as a springboard for presenting supposed truths that cannot be found in the literal sense of the text. Allegorical exegesis, therefore, is unconcerned with the truthfulness or historicity of the interpretation that is gleaned from the

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[44] Hans W. Frei, *The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative: A Study in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1974), 1-16.

[45] See Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible*, NSBT (Downers Grove: IVP, 2003), 231.

[46] Clowney, *Preaching*, 15.

[47] So with Walter Kaiser's *analogy of (antecedent) Scripture* (see Walter Kaiser and Moisés Silva, *An Introduction to Biblical Hermeneutics* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994], 195-96, cf. 262-63; also Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *Toward an Exegetical Theology: Biblical Exegesis for Preaching and Teaching* [Grand Rapids: Baker, 1981], 134-40).

[48] Clowney, *Preaching*, 75.

text. Typological interpretation, on the other hand, counts the literal sense and the events described as absolutely crucial to the interpretive process. The typical interpretation of a text is not a different or higher sense, but locates the particular passage within the broader canonical context, understood in the relationship between type and antitype.[49] Hence the link between type and antitype is found in the progressive unfolding of redemptive history, God's progressive self-disclosure in Christ.[50] Ultimately, interpreters must locate a particular text within the broader context of redemptive history. Hence, not only must an interpreter account for the grammatico-historical context but also the broader redemptive-historical horizon.

Typological interpretation goes far beyond the antiphonal interchange of predictive prophecy—prophecy given and fulfilled. Rather, it seeks to understand the typical revelation of the OT in terms of its own patterns and events as the NT interprets it. Recall the pattern of word-act-word revelation. In this case it is the NT that offers the authoritative interpretation of the OT. This is evident in a cornucopia of passages, but Psalm 22 is sufficient to illustrate the point. Psalm 22 is the most frequently quoted psalm in the NT. Here, David offers his laments in prayer (vv. 1-2, 6-8, 12-18) but also adorns the psalm with expressions of his confidence in Yahweh (vv. 3-5, 9-10). Lastly, the psalm ends with a vow to praise Yahweh (vv. 22-31).[51] From the immediate grammatico-historical context it seems as though Christ is absent.[52] On what grounds does Jesus quote Psalm 22 and why, for example, does John align so many of the statements of Psalm 22 with those of Christ's crucifixion? So strong is this emphasis that some scholars have branded Psalm 22 "the fifth gospel account" of the crucifixion?[53]

The answer comes through the typological interpretation of Psalm 22. The word-revelation of the OT was never intended to be the culminating revelation of God and therefore an end unto itself. Rather, the word-revelation was supposed to culminate in the act-revelation of God in Christ, which was then to be interpreted by the word-revelation of the NT. If we place Psalm 22 in its broader canonical context, we find that David is the anointed king, a messiah, who is being persecuted without cause by his fellow countrymen, such as Saul and those loyal to him. In these broad categories, David is a typical messiah that points forward to the antitypical Messiah, his greater son, Jesus. Bonhoeffer gives a helpful explanation of this point:

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[49] Leonhard Gopplet, *Typos: The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, trans. Donald H. Madvig (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 13.

[50] Vos, *Biblical Theology*, 146.

[51] Beale and Carson, *Commentary*, 501.

[52] See, e.g., John Goldingay, who in his commentary on this passage argues that the "direct reference of the psalm is thus to the suffering of the faithful. One of the faithful who has taken it on his lips is Jesus, which reflects the depths with which it plumbs forsakenness and hope. This does not make him the primary referent of the text. It is not a prophecy. The NT use of the psalm 'wrenches it out of its setting'" (*Psalms*, 3 vols. [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006-08], 1.341). Considered typologically, it is a prophetic text concerning Christ, as David the type anticipates Jesus the antitype.

[53] Charles H. H. Scobie, *The Ways of Our God: An Approach to Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 415-16; see, e.g., Patrick Henry Reardon, *Christ in the Psalms* (Ben Lomond: Conciliar Press, 2000), 41-42.

> According to the witness of the Bible, David, as the anointed king of the chosen people of God, is a prototype of Jesus Christ. What befalls David occurs for the sake of the one who is in him and who is to proceed from him, namely Jesus Christ. David did not remain unaware of this, but 'being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ' (Acts 2.30f).[54]

What is interesting is that the editor of Bonhoeffer's work comments that Bonhoeffer "reads more into David's role than modern exegetes would concede by insisting that, in the Psalms, David the prophet is consciously attesting to the coming of Jesus Christ, that is, the Messiah."[55] Yet notice Bonhoeffer's interpretive pattern: he appeals not to a principle or concept beyond the Scripture's but the NT's own interpretive statements about David. Bonhoeffer appeals to Acts 2.30-31, which explains that David foresaw the resurrection of Christ (cf. Acts 2.27; Psa 16.10). This places doubtful "modern exegetes" up against a brick wall: either Peter was right or wrong; either David knew about the Messiah, or he did not; either he was a prophet, or he was not. In the typological interpretation of the Scriptures, interpreters and preachers must conform their understanding to that of the text, not the text to their understanding.

In the preaching of the Scriptures, preachers must set Christ and him crucified before their congregations every time they mount the pulpit. It is only in the encounter with the resurrected and ascended Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures and through preaching that the performative power of the word is brought to bear upon God's people, the corporate communion of the saints. In this respect, Bonhoeffer has some helpful words of instruction: "If we want to read and to pray the prayers of the Bible, and especially the Psalms, we must not, therefore, first ask what they have to do with us, but what they have to do with Jesus Christ. We must ask how we can understand the Psalms as God's Word, and only then can we pray them with Christ."[56] Edmund Clowney makes a similar point when he writes: "Whenever we are confronted with the saving work of God culminating in Christ, we are faced with ethical demands. A religious response of faith and obedience is required. But that response must be evoked by the truth of the particular revelation which is before us."[57] Both Bonhoeffer's and Clowney's point is that only in the encounter with Christ through the word can God's people mature and grow in their sanctification. Apart from Christ we can do nothing.

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[54] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Prayerbook of the Bible*, trans. James H. Burtness, ed. Geffrey B. Kelly, in *Dietrich Bonhoeffer Works,* vol. 5, eds. Gerhard Ludwig Müller and Albrecht Schönherr (1940; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 158-59.

[55] Ibid, 145.

[56] Ibid, 157. For a Christ-centered approach to preaching see, Dennis E. Johnson, *Him We Proclaim: Preaching Christ from All the Scriptures* (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2007), 1-21; Edmund P. Clowney, *Preaching Christ in All of Scripture* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2003), 11-44; Sidney Greidanus, *Preaching Christ from the Old Testament: A Contemporary Hermeneutical Method* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 227-78.

[57] Clowney, *Preaching*, 80.

The Indicative and the Imperative

The second principle is recognizing the grammar of redemption, namely the indicative and imperative moods. In many respects the relationship between the indicative and imperative moods is related to the law-gospel principle. Respecting these two moods protects the interpreter from confusing law and gospel. However, it is first helpful to define these grammatical terms and then illustrate them from a number of passages. Generally speaking, "*mood* is the feature of the verb that presents the verbal action or state with reference to its *actuality* or *potentiality*."[58] The *indicative mood* is the mood of assertion or presentation of certainty.[59] By way of contrast, the *imperative mood* is used to convey intention and is most commonly employed for commands.[60] Broadly speaking, when these terms are employed vis-à-vis our soteriology, the *indicative* tells us who we are in Christ, and the *imperatives* tell us how we are to live.[61] The indicative and imperative surface throughout the Scriptures but are easily observable in Paul's epistles.

Paul tells the church at Rome: "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death" (Rom 6.3)? This is an indicative statement—the believer is baptized into Christ through the outpouring of the Spirit, which is symbolically portrayed in water baptism. Paul makes this assertion or presents this certainty. Based upon who the believer is in Christ, Paul then issues an imperative: "Let not sin therefore rein in your mortal bodies, to make you obey their passions" (Rom 6.12). This same pattern emerges elsewhere: "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. . . . Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col 3.3-5).[62] Respecting the indicatives and imperatives in Scripture is a key to the sound reading, interpretation, and preaching. As J. Gresham Machen (1881-1937) noted: "Here is found the most fundamental difference between liberalism and Christianity—liberalism is altogether in the imperative mood, while Christianity begins with a triumphant indicative; liberalism appeals to man's will, while Christianity announces first, a gracious act of God."[63]

Machen touches upon a cardinal principle of sound biblical interpretation and preaching, namely, the foundational nature of the indicative for any and all imperatives. In fact, the imperative always follows the indicative by way of a conclusion, with "thus," or "therefore" (Rom 6.12ff; 12.1; Col 3.5, et al.). Interpreters and preachers should note, though, that the indicative and the imperative do not represent the divine and human sides of a salvation equation, or division of labor: the indicative being what God has done and the imperative being what the believer must do in response. This state of affairs would oppose the very realities that this grammatical distinction preserves and leads to legalism. Rather, as

[58] Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 443-44.

[59] Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 448.

[60] Ibid, 485.

[61] Ridderbos, *Paul*, 253.

[62] Ibid, 254-55.

[63] J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism* (1923; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 47.

Ridderbos observes, "The imperative is grounded on the reality that has been given with the indicative, appeals to it, and is intended to bring it to full development."[64]

To say the least, the NT, especially against the backdrop of the first century world, represents a radical break with the pattern typically employed by Stoics and Cynics. Throughout the ancient world there were peripatetic philosophers who wandered about exhorting people on how they should live. "The strange thing about Christianity," notes Machen, "was that it adopted an entirely different method."[65] Christian preachers transformed the lives of men not by appealing to man's own abilities, but by telling a story; not by exhortation but by setting forth a narrative event. Machen asks, "Could anything be more impractical than the attempt to influence conduct by rehearsing events concerning the death of a religious teacher?"[66] Such an approach seemed foolish to the philosophers of the ancient world and still seems foolish to many preachers. This is what Paul called the "foolishness of preaching" (1 Cor 1.21 KJV). But what we must realize is that when preachers present the indicative of this narrative, it is no mere story but rather the pneumatic revelation of God in the crucified and risen Messiah by which he raises the dead to life. By the pneumatic word, God enables those whom he has raised to carry out the imperatives of the word through their holy union with Christ. Through the proclamation of the crucified Christ, preachers strike the rock and bring forth water in the midst of the desert land of this present evil age (Exo 17.6).[67]

The Law-Gospel Antithesis

The third and final principle of proper interpretation involves respecting the categories of law and gospel in the Scriptures. The law-gospel antithesis is often associated with the Lutheran tradition, but historically it is an equally shared conviction among Reformed theologians.[68] To be sure, confusing law and gospel does not mean confusing the OT and NT. Rather, the law consists of everything in the Bible that is a revelation of God's preceptive will in the form of a command or prohibition; there is, after all, law in the NT (e.g., Rom 8.4; 13.9; James 2.8-11; 1 John 3.4, 5.3). The gospel, on the other hand, entails everything, whether in the OT or NT, that pertains to the work of redemption and that

64 Ridderbos, *Paul*, 255.

65 Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 47.

66 Ibid, 47-48.

67 William H. Willimon, *Peculiar Speech: Preaching to the Baptized* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992), 2.

68 One can find the law-gospel distinction in a number of Reformed theologians such as Zacharias Ursinus, Theodore Beza, or William Perkins (Zacharias Ursinus, *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism* [1852; Phillipsburg: P & R, n. d.], 1; Theodore Beza, *The Christian Faith*, trans. James Clark [Lewes: Focus Christian Ministries, 1992], 41-43; *The Art of Prophesying* [1606; Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1996], 54-56). The law-gospel antithesis appears in contemporary Reformed theologians such as Herman Bavinck. Bavinck writes, "God uses his word to make his will known in the area of morality and spirituality, and it must be differentiated as law and gospel" (Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, 4 vols., ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend [Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003-08], 4.450).

proclaims the promises of God's saving love in Christ; the gospel appears in numerous places in the OT (Gen 3.15; Isa 53-53; Jer 31.33-32; Ezek 36.25-38).[69]

Good preaching will recognize the difference between law and gospel—the two are necessary and are inseparably joined but must not be mixed or confused. In the Epistle to the Romans, Paul sets forth the sinfulness of man and then in Romans 3-5 sets forth the wonders of the free gospel of God's grace in Christ. He then turns his attention to what we may infer what a common objection, namely that the doctrine of justification leads to antinomianism (Rom 6.1). Paul then discusses the doctrine of sanctification in the following chapters. But one of the things he does is set forth the inability of the law to sanctify. In terms evocative of Adam's failed probation in the garden and especially Israel's disastrous reception of the law at Sinai, Paul explains the utter powerlessness of the law to sanctify or save.[70] Paul tells his readers, "Apart from the law, sin lies dead" (Rom 7.8). Paul then uses the first person pronoun, "I," not to give a personal biographical account, but as a rhetorical device (cf. Gal 2.18-20), to describe Israel's condition prior to receiving the law: "I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died" (Rom 7.9).[71]

During Israel's initial reception of the law, whether at Sinai or the eve of the conquest of the promised land, God spoke his word to Moses that Israel would be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation *if* they obeyed his laws and kept His covenant (Exo 19.5-6). Moses went to the elders and the people and delivered God's word regarding the necessity of keeping the law to which the people, without hesitation, replied: "All that the LORD has spoken we will do" (Exo 19.8). There is a similar pattern that unfolds in the covenant renewal ceremony on Mt. Ebal where Moses and the Levitical priests explain the requirement for obedience to the law and specifically stipulated twelve curses of the covenant to which the people of Israel in antiphonal response were supposed to shout: "Amen" (Deut 27.9-26). Indeed, Paul once thought he was alive and thought the law would bring life; but instead, the law brought the opposite: "The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me" (Rom 7.10-11). On the heels of the revelation of the law, that which Israel thought would bring it life (cf. Deut 28.1-14), ultimately plunged it headlong into sin (cf. Gen 2.17, 3.5-6; Rom 5.12-14; Phil 2.5-8).[72] Moses had not even descended from Mt. Sinai when Israel began

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[69] Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology: Combined Edition* (1932-38; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 612.

[70] See Chris A. Vlachos, *The Law and the Knowledge of God and Evil: The Edenic Background of the Catalytic Operation of the Law in Paul* (Eugene: Pickwick Publications, 2009); and Dennis E. Johnson, "The Function of Romans 7.13-25 in Paul's Argument for the Law's Impotence and the Spirit's Power, and Its Bearing on the Identity of the Schizophrenic 'I,'" in *Resurrection and Eschatology: Theology in Service of the Church: Essays In Honor of Richard B. Gaffin, Jr.*, eds. Lane G. Tipton and Jeffrey C. Waddington (Phillipsburg: P & R, 2008): 3-59.

[71] Johnson, "Function of Romans 7.13-25," 33.

[72] On the bibliography for Edenic allusions in Romans 7.7-11 see Vlachos, *The Law*, 123-30. Also see Rudolph Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, 2 vols., trans. Kendrick Grobel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951-55), 1.251; C. E. B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans*, ICC, 2 vols. (1975; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2001), 1.350-51; Dunn, *Romans*, 1.376-85; Seyoon Kim, *The Origin of*

to engage in idolatry. The command, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness" of Yahweh (Exo 20.4-6) was a catalyst to incite Israel to make an image of *Elohim* (Exo 32.1; cf. Deut 4.13, 9.10).[73] Paul writes with Israel's fall in the wilderness as his likely subtext: "If it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet'" (Rom 7.7d).[74]

The law, however, is not evil; Paul roundly rejects such a notion (Rom 7.12). But given man's fallen condition, he is incapable of fulfilling the law and therefore the law acts as a catalyst for sin: "The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law" (1 Cor 15.56).[75] What Israel failed to understand is that they were captives to sin. Hence, Paul writes: "For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin" (Rom 7.14). To preach any part of the law, not merely the Decalogue, but any command of the Scriptures by itself brings death and incites the unbeliever to greater sin. To what hope does Paul point, then, if the law is powerless to save or sanctify? He points to the gospel of Christ. It is helpful to read the transition from Romans 7.24-8.4 without the chapter break, as the chapter division unnecessarily breaks the flow of Paul's argument:

> Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit (Rom 7.24-8.4).

The law is powerless to save or sanctify. But even for the believer, if he approaches the law apart from Christ, he in effect places himself under the bondage of the law and the power of sin, like Israel wanting to return to Egypt, and fails to heed Paul's crucial question to the Galatians: "Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh" (Gal 3.3)?

The Westminster Divines echo Paul's point regarding the powerlessness of the law in their explanation of the third (or normative) use of the law. When the catechism asks, "What special use is thereof the moral law to the regenerate?" The catechism responds that those

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Paul's Gospel (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 52-54; Herman Ridderbos, *Paul: An Outline of His Theology*, trans. John Richard DeWitt (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1975), 144; Udo Schnelle, *Apostle Paul: His Life and Theology*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2003), 334-36; John R. W. Stott, *The Message of Romans: God's Good News for the World*, BST (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 200-01; Frank Thielman, *Paul and the Law: A Contextual Approach* (Downers Grove: IVP, 1994), 295, n. 15; N. T. Wright, *Climax of the Covenant: Christ and the Law in Pauline Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992), 196-98.

[73] On Israel's violation of the second, not the first, command, see G. K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship: A Biblical Theology of Idolatry* (Downers Grove: IVP, 2009), 71-126.

[74] Vlachos, *The Law*, 196-97.

[75] Ibid, 45-130.

who believe in Christ are "delivered from the moral law as a covenant of works, so as thereby they are neither justified nor condemned." But it then goes on to say that the third use of the law shows believers "how much they are bound to Christ for his fulfilling it, and enduring the curse thereof in their stead, and for their good." It is only in Christ (i.e., through the gospel, not law) that the law becomes a "rule of obedience" (q. 97).

Preachers, therefore, must constantly be on guard against confusing the distinction between law and gospel. The clear and faithful preaching of the word depends upon the antithesis of law and gospel. Only the law brings the condemnation and the awareness of sin, guilt, and death—the bad news. Only the gospel brings forgiveness, life, freedom from guilt, justification, and sanctification. Louis Berkhof has a helpful summary of what characterizes law and gospel. The law:

1. Commands and demands.
2. Pronounces approval and blessing upon conformity to its demands (Rom 7.10; Gal 3.12).
3. Pronounces condemnation upon every infraction of its demands (Gal 3.10).
4. Exposes and convicts of sin (cf. Rom 7.7, 14; Heb 3.12).
5. Excites and incites sin to more aggravated transgression (cf. Rom 7.8, 9, 11, 13).
6. Is powerless to justify the person who has violated it.
7. Can do nothing to relieve the bondage of sin; it accentuates and confirms that bondage.

By way of contrast, the gospel:

1. Promises and gives.
2. Forgives and justifies the one who has violated the law.
3. Enables the Christian to grow in holiness.[76]

All too often, interpreters and preachers confuse the gospel with the law and say that it is our obedience that secures all or part of our redemption. Respecting the boundaries between law and gospel is crucial for the right preaching of the word especially as it relates to the doctrine of sanctification. In the doctrine of sanctification, it is legalism, not antinomianism, that is the siren. The antinomian has no concern for personal holiness whereas the one who is genuinely concerned with growth in sanctification finds legalism, turning the gospel into the law, to be the greater danger.

Conclusion

This essay began with an appeal to the Westminster Larger Catechism and its question, "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" The Catechism responds: "The Spirit of God makes the reading, but especially the preaching of the Word, an effectual means of enlightening, convincing, and humbling sinners; of driving them out of themselves, and drawing them unto Christ." But it is not merely the conviction of sin that the preaching of the word brings about. Remember that the question asks, "How is the word made effectual to salvation?" The conviction of sin is only part of the equation. The Catechism continues by stating the power of pneumatically charged preaching: "Of conforming them to his image, and subduing them to his will; of strengthening them against temptations and

[76] Berkhof, *Systematic Theology*, 612.

corruptions; of building them up in grace, and establishing their hearts in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation" (q. 155). How is this possible? Because not only in the reading but especially in the preaching of the word, God reveals himself in the crucified and risen Messiah and brings the power of the Holy Spirit to bear upon sinners, both unsaved and saved, whether for their entry point in their justification or for their sanctification throughout their lives.

Preachers must set forth Christ in their preaching, as Christ is the center of the whole Bible. To fail to set him forth organically from the text is to fail to see Christ and to proclaim him to God's people. A Christ-centered approach to Scripture is not in any way an imposition upon the text but is how Christ himself understood them. Additional interpretive principals that assist the preacher in avoiding moralizing, propagating legalism, or a false gospel, is to respect the boundaries between the indicative and imperative and between law and gospel. But the reading and especially the preaching of the word of God is not the only objective means of grace by which God has revealed himself in Christ. Christ has also been revealed in visible words, the sacraments. The sacraments highlight both the ecclesiocentric nature of revelation and hence sanctification, as well as sanctification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

'HE WENT ABOUT DOING GOOD': EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PARTICULAR BAPTISTS ON THE NECESSITY OF GOOD WORKS

Michael A. G. Haykin[1]

The meeting of the future Methodist leader Charles Wesley (1707-1788) and the Moravian missionary Peter Böhler (1712-1775) on February 7, 1738, was a true turning-point in the history of the Church. Böhler was on his way to South Carolina as a missionary and Wesley, who had had some contact with German-speaking Moravians on his one and only trip to America two years earlier, and who had also spent time with the Moravian leader Nicholas von Zinzendorf (1700-1760) in the early part of 1737, offered to help Böhler with his English. In his diary, Wesley recorded that it was on February 20 that he began to teach Böhler English.[2] Very soon, though, Böhler turned their meeting times to other issues, namely, Charles' standing with God. Wesley had been earnest in his commitment to Christian principles and assiduous in his practice of the Christian faith for nearly a decade, but his view of the Christian life was a moralistic one. Essentially, he viewed salvation as a reward for the doing of good works.

Shortly after meeting Böhler, Wesley fell seriously ill and thought he was dying. Böhler, visiting Wesley, used the opportunity to ask him plainly: "Do you hope to be saved?" When Charles assured him that he did, Böhler enquired further: "For what reason do you hope it?" "Because I have used my best endeavours to serve God," returned Charles. At such an inadequate response Böhler shook his head sadly and said no more. Charles later admitted that he considered Böhler to be most uncharitable and thought to himself, "What are not my endeavours a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavours? I have nothing else to trust to."[3] Exactly three months after these journal entries of February 24, 1738, however, Wesley began to understand Böhler's perspective that faith alone was foundational for a right standing with God as he himself went through an Evangelical conversion experience.[4]

Although Charles Wesley had now come to view good works as unnecessary for justification, he remained convinced that good works did have a vital role to play in the Christian life. His position is succinctly put in a sermon that he first preached on December 21, 1738, on Titus 3:8:

> We are to insist that a man is justified, that is, forgiven, and accounted righteous by grace only through faith, exclusive of all works and righteousness of his own; then, that he is to evidence this justification by universal obedience; by continually exercising himself unto righteousness… His [i.e., Christ's] righteousness is not imputed to me

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[2] "The Journal of Charles Wesley, January 5—April 30, 1738", entry for February 20, 1738 (http://wesley.nnu.edu/charles_wesley/journal/1738a.htm) Accessed December 26, 2007.

[3] "The Journal of Charles Wesley", entry for February 24, 1738.

[4] On Wesley's conversion, see Gary Best, *Charles Wesley: A Biography* (Peterborough: Epworth, 2006), 84-94.

> unless I manifest it by righteousness inherent in me. Whom he justifies, them he also sanctifies. …They are good that do good…[5]

What we see here in miniature in the experience and teaching of one of the central figures in the Evangelical Revival is generally characteristic of the Evangelical movement of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Good works, though rejected as necessary for justification, were nevertheless highly prized as evidence of authentic Christianity. Thus, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries we find Evangelicals engaged in a myriad of philanthropic enterprises: the establishment of orphanages; organized support for the poor and destitute, widows and immigrants; specific help for the blind and deaf; the education of the illiterate poor; the release of those imprisoned for small debts[6]; the making of barbarous sports like bear-baiting and bull-baiting illegal; and the rectification of the moral dilemmas created by drunkenness and prostitution.[7] David Bebbington quotes an aphorism from Hannah More (1745-1833)—who is rightly portrayed in a recent biography as a founding figure of Victorian values—that neatly sums up this devotion to social action: "Action is the life of virtue, and the world is the theatre of action."[8]

The "Corrupt Antinomian Leaven"

Now, Bebbington could have cited as equally summary a pithy remark by More's contemporary, the Calvinistic Baptist Robert Hall, Jr. (1764-1831), who, in an 1802 sermon to his congregation in Cambridge, maintained that "Christian benevolence is the distinguishing badge of the Christian profession."[9] Hall's aphorism is particularly striking in view of the fact that practical Antinomianism was perceived to be a significant problem among his co-

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[5] "Sermon 5 Titus 3:8" in Kenneth G.C. Newport, ed., *The Sermons of Charles Wesley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 154-155, 164. Titus 3:8 runs thus: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they who have believed in God be careful to maintain good works. These things are good, and profitable unto men." (KJV).

[6] As late as the 1820s, for instance, three-quarters of those in Scottish prisons were there because of the harsh debt laws of the time. See Ernest Marshall Howse, *Saints in Politics. The 'Clapham Sect' and the Growth of Freedom* (1952 ed.; repr. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1971), 125.

[7] For details, see Kathleen Heasman, *Evangelicals in Action: An Appraisal of their Social Work in the Victorian Era* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1962); John Wolffe, ed., *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal: Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1780-1980* (London: SPCK, 1995); Nigel A.D. Scotland, *Evangelical Anglicans in a Revolutionary Age 1789-1901* (Carlisle, Cumbria/Waynesboro, Georgia: Paternoster Press, 2004); Ian Randall, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus: The Evangelical Tradition* (Traditions of Christian Spirituality Series; Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 155-159; John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism: The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (A History of Evangelicalism, vol. 2; Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 159-227.

Heasman notes that other factors played a role in the emergence of these philanthropic enterprises: the creation of surplus wealth by the industrial revolution, for instance, and the desire by some middle-class women to have employment outside of the home (*Evangelicals in Action*, 286).

[8] *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989 ed.; repr. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1992), 12. See also Randall, *What a Friend We Have in Jesus*, 155-156. The biography is that of Anne Stott, *Hannah More: The First Victorian* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

[9] "Christian Benevolence" in *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.*, eds. Olinthus Gregory and Joseph Belcher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), IV, 528.

religionists, the English Particular Baptists.[10] At the annual meeting of the Baptist churches of the Western Association in 1789, for example, Caleb Evans (1737-1791), the Principal of Bristol Baptist Academy, warned the churches of that association about the "poisonous influence of a corrupt Antinomian leaven."[11] Associations of churches in geographical proximity had been a regular feature of Calvinistic Baptist life since the denomination's seventeenth-century beginnings. By the last half of the eighteenth century, these associations were holding annual meetings at which representatives of the churches in these associations, usually the pastors and deacons, were meeting for a couple of days along with a good number of the members of the churches. These annual meetings would be marked by times of corporate prayer, fellowship, and occasions for the public preaching of the Scriptures. At some point in the two-day meeting one of the pastors would be chosen to write a letter to all of the churches in the association on behalf of the association itself. It would be ratified, printed after the annual meeting, and sent out as a circular letter. The Western Association, which had existed since 1653, asked Evans to draw up this letter in 1789.[12]

Evans noted that while there were few among their churches who openly denied "the necessity of personal holiness and good works," there were some who critiqued any who were concerned about these as legalists. "If God sees fit to make us holy," he quoted these critics as saying, "he will, and if not, we cannot make ourselves holy." Evans was certain that where such an attitude as this reigned, it would undermine "the necessity of personal holiness and good works." Evans thus plainly warned his readers:

> If you are not made holy by the gospel now, a lover of holiness in your heart and a practiser of it in your life, you may depend upon it you will not be saved by it hereafter. This is a point as clearly revealed as any one in the whole bible. 'If any man be in Christ he is a new creature' [2 Corinthians 5:17]. Without holiness 'no man shall see the Lord' [Hebrews 12:14]. 'He that saith I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him' [1 John 2:4] .[13]

The following year the Western Association asked Philip Gibbs (d. 1801), the pastor of the Baptist cause in Plymouth, to draw up the annual circular letter. He too warned the churches in the association to be on their guard against "the baneful and pernicious poison of Antinomianism," which he asserted was an error that was all too prevalent in their day

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[10] For details, see Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771-1892: From John Gill to C.H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh/Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), 112-145.

[11] *Circular Letter of the Western Association* (N.p., 1789), 6. On Evans, see Norman S. Moon, "Caleb Evans, Founder of The Bristol Education Society", *The Baptist Quarterly*, 24 (1971-1972), 175-190 and Kirk Wellum, "Caleb Evans (1737-1791)" in Michael A.G. Haykin, ed., *The British Particular Baptists 1638-1910* (Springfield, Missouri: Particular Baptist Press, 1998), I, 212-233.

[12] For the early history of this association, see Geoffrey F. Nuttall, "The Baptist Western Association 1653-1658", *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 15 (1964), 213-218. For a less than adequate history of the association up to the mid-nineteenth century, see J.G. Fuller, *A Brief History of the Western Association* (Bristol, 1843).

[13] *Circular Letter of the Western Association* (1789), 7. Evans also identified the errors of eternal justification and the "setting aside the law as a rule of life" as also being part of what he termed the "Antinomian heresy" [*Circular Letter of the Western Association* (1789), 8-11, quote from page 9].

and was, in fact, a "growing evil."[14] Gibbs was careful to emphasize that he was not at all referring to the biblical doctrine of justification by faith alone, which had been wrongly attacked in the eighteenth century by opponents of the Evangelical Revival as Antinomianism. Rather, he was speaking of that horrid doctrine which makes God the author of sin, by charging it on his absolute decrees; and the minister of sin, by denying the sanctification of the Spirit, and substituting the holiness of Christ as imputed for our sanctification; and which further asserts, that God does not punish or chasten his people for sin, though he expressly declares the contrary in his holy word.[15]

As with Caleb Evans' circular letter the previous year, there is a concern here with the denial of the need for a vigorous pursuit of holiness. Gibbs concluded his discussion of this error with an admonition to his readers to "contend earnestly" for the biblical assertion that union with Christ is evidenced "through sanctification and 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord' [Hebrews 12:14]; for 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his' [Romans 8:9]."[16] By citing the verse from Romans 8 immediately after that from Hebrews 12, which Evans had also cited in his circular letter, Gibbs is clearly affirming that a sure mark of the indwelling of the Spirit is the pursuit of a holy life and the doing of good works.

"Our Duty To Grow In Grace"

Gibbs' fellow Baptist, John Ryland, Jr. (1753-1825), who became a leading figure in the Western Association in the three decades following Gibbs' letter and was a close friend of William Carey (1761-1834), was also deeply exercised by the growth of Antinomianism. In his funeral sermon for Ryland in 1825, Robert Hall noted that there had been "two extremes" against which Ryland had regularly warned believers. One was "Pelagian pride" and the other was "Antinomian licentiousness, the first of which he detested as an insult on the grace of the gospel; the last, on the majesty and authority of the law."[17] The concern with

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[14] *On Truth and Error* in John Rippon, ed., *The Baptist Annual Register* (London, 1793), I, 56-57. Gibbs had been converted under the preaching of George Whitefield (1714-1770) in 1745. He initially associated himself with the Calvinistic Methodists, but soon became convinced of Baptist principles. In 1748 he began his ministry at the Baptist cause in Plymouth, which prospered under his pastoral care. It is noteworthy that Gibbs had warned of the danger of Antinomianism in the Western Association's circular letter of 1776: see *Circular Letter of the Western Association* (N.p., 1776), 4-5.

For these details, see "Recent Deaths", *The Evangelical Magazine* 9 (1801), 35; W.T. Adey, *The History of the Baptist Church, Kingsbridge, Devon* (N.p., 1899), 11-13; Edwin Welch, *Two Calvinistic Methodist Chapels 1743-1811* (London: London Record Society, 1975), 34-38.

[15] *On Truth and Error* in Rippon, ed., *Baptist Annual Register*, I, 56-57.

[16] Ibid, I, 57.

[17] "A Sermon, occasioned by the Death of the Rev. John Ryland, D. D." [*The Works of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.*, ed. Olinthus Gregory and Joseph Belcher (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1854), I, 221]. For an overview of Ryland's life, see Michael A.G. Haykin, "John Ryland, Jr.—'O Lord, I would delight in Thee': The life and ministry of John Ryland, Jr. appreciated on the 250th anniversary of his birth", *Reformation Today*, 196 (Nov-Dec 2003), 13-20. For Ryland's pneumatology in general, see also Michael A.G. Haykin, " 'The Sum of All Good': John Ryland, Jr. and the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit", *Churchman*, 103 (1989), 332-353, from which some of the following discussion has been drawn.

Antinomianism was partly the result of the fact that Ryland, who became the Pastor of Broadmead Baptist Church in Bristol as well as the Principal of Bristol Baptist Academy in 1793—the latter being held by whomever was serving as the Pastor of Broadmead—had been bitterly attacked in the early 1790s by William Huntington (1745-1813) as one who was subverting the gospel of free grace.

A popular London who enjoyed a curious and heady mix of bombast, Tory politics, and rancorous denunciation of any who dared to criticize him,[18] Huntington played a significant role in the propagation of Antinomian principles in the late eighteenth century. Though he was not a Baptist, numerous Baptists imbibed his argument that the moral law should not be considered as a pattern for the Christian life and that any, like Ryland, who did regard it as such were simply nothing more than "Pharisees" and guilty of "undervaluing Christ's imputed righteousness."[19] Huntington was also insistent that the Bible knows only of imputed sanctification and that there is no scriptural basis at all for the doctrine of progressive sanctification. In his words:

> As to sanctification being a progressive work, it is best to consent to the wholesome words of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest we set poor weak believers to inquiring how long this progressive work is to be on the wheels, what part of it is wrought, what measure of it is required, and how much remains to be done: and like Sarah with her bondwoman, they begin to forward the business by the works of the flesh, instead of lying passive to be worked on. "He that believeth shall not make haste" [Isaiah 28:16], but he that hasteth with his feet sinneth.[20]

There is no evidence that Huntington himself was guilty of practical Antinomianism, but it is quite understandable that opponents like Ryland viewed Huntington's teaching as the foundation of such. As Ryland summed up Huntingtonianism: "[It is] a false gospel, which…[promotes] a redemption, not from sin, but from duty. A perseverance, not in grace, but in security. A mere witness of the Spirit, without the works of the Spirit."[21]

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[18] For contrasting perspectives on Huntington, see George M. Ella, *William Huntington: Pastor of Providence* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 1994) and Robert W. Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists 1771-1892: From John Gill to C. H. Spurgeon* (Edinburgh/Carlisle, Pennsylvania: The Banner of Truth Trust, 2006), 119-145.

Huntington went so far as to imply that any who strenuously opposed him would be struck dead by God. See John Ryland, *Serious Remarks on the Different Representations of Evangelical Doctrine by the Professed Friends of the Gospel* (Bristol, 1817), 2:39-41. I am thankful to my colleague, Thomas J. Nettles, for making me a photocopy of this important treatise by Ryland.

[19] Robert W. Oliver, "The Emergence of a Strict and Particular Baptist Community among the English Calvinistic Baptists, 1770-1850" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, London Bible College, 1986), 130; John Ryland, *The Practical Influence of Evangelical Religion* (London, 1819), 38.

Oliver's thesis is essentially the same as his book, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, though not all of the material in the thesis appears in the book and vice versa.

[20] Cited Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 127. This text appears in a letter directed against Caleb Evans.

[21] "The Enmity of the Carnal Mind" [*Pastoral Memorials: Selected from the Manuscripts of the Late Revd. John Ryland, D. D.* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1828), II, 12-13]. See also *The Necessity of the Trumpet's*

It was against the backdrop of this controversy with Antinomianism that Ryland developed a central pneumatological theme in his theology, namely, that the Spirit's work in sanctifying the believer and leading him or her to be the doer of good works is as important as his role in bringing that person to faith in Christ.[22] When "the Spirit has led the soul to Christ," Ryland maintained, "he will also cause him to run in the way of God's commandments."[23] The Spirit enables saved sinners "to conform to the law as a rule of conduct,"[24] to love holiness,[25] to mortify the flesh and its deeds,[26] to exercise "an irreconcilable hatred of all sin, and an insatiable thirst after perfect conformity to the Saviour."[27] Ryland further argued on the basis of 2 Corinthians 3:18 that Scripture regards this work of sanctification as a progressive work.

> They [Huntington and his followers] deny that sanctification is progressive, or that it is our duty to grow in grace… [But] what is intended by our "beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and being changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Corinthians 3:18)?[28]

On Not Grieving the Holy Spirit

Running parallel with Ryland's intense concern with holy living and the doing of good works was an equally intense fear of bringing grief to the One who sanctified him and enabled him to do good. In what really amounts to a personal confession, Ryland affirmed: "I earnestly seek the supply of the Spirit [see Philippians 1:19], and dread, above all things, grieving him by whom I am 'sealed to the day of redemption' [Ephesians 4:30]".[29] Allusions to this Pauline admonition from Ephesians 4 are frequent in Ryland's writings.[30] In fact,

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giving a certain Sound (Bristol, 1813), 33; "The Believer's Conflict Distinguished from the Struggle of Natural Conscience" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 121): "I am greatly afraid that some modern professors wish to substitute an immediate witness of the Spirit for the extensive and important work of the Spirit. They seem to deny all internal sanctification"; *Serious Remarks*, 2:53, where Ryland notes that "some, of late, deny all internal sanctification. They are for imputed sanctification."

[22] For more details of this controversy, see Oliver, *History of the English Calvinistic Baptists*, 112-145.

[23] 'Remarks on the Quarterly Review, for April 1824, Relative to the Memoirs of Scott and Newton' (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 349).

[24] "The Enmity of the Carnal Mind" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 14). See also "The Indwelling of the Spirit" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 19).

[25] "The Love of the Spirit" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 46): "Can a man have the Holy Spirit, and not love holiness? Surely not."

[26] *Practical Influence of Evangelical Religion*, 14-17, 28; "The Indwelling of the Spirit" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 16-17).

[27] "The Indwelling of the Spirit" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 19).

[28] *Serious Remarks*, 2:54.

[29] "On Devotedness to Christ" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 29).

[30] See, for instance, "The Days of Heaven upon Earth" [*Pastoral Memorials: Selected from the Manuscripts of the Late Revd. John Ryland, D. D.* (London: B. J. Holdsworth, 1826), I, 18-19]; "The Love of the Spirit" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 44, 46); "Separation from the World" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 98); "Obedience the Test of Love of God" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 295); "On Steadfastness in Religion" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 299); "On Lukewarmness in Religion" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 302). Cf. "On

preserved among his published sermons there are the notes of an address on this very text entitled "On Grieving the Holy Spirit."[31]

The sermon began by emphasizing that Ephesians 4:30 implies both the personality and deity of the Spirit. With regard to the latter, Ryland stated:

> The greatness of the work here attributed to the Holy Spirit, strongly indicates his divinity: who, but a Divine Person, can conquer human obstinacy, renew the heart, bow the will, regenerate the soul, sanctify it, and seal it to the day of redemption. Surely, then, he is not a mere creature, or super-angelic spirit.[32]

Ryland employs a form of argumentation that had been commonly used since the patristic era. If the Spirit does what only God can do, then he must be God.

Ryland now turned his attention to the clause "sealed unto the day of redemption." The seal of the Spirit, Ryland suggested,

> . . . consists in the impression of the divine image on the soul; really conforming us to God, in the temper of our minds. Without this, no immediate witness would be valid; and with it, it is unnecessary… This is truly a supernatural and divine work. It requires, indeed, the finger of God, to engrave his image on the soul, where it was totally effaced; to renew the resemblance of his moral perfections, and transform us into the likeness of his dear Son.[33]

Ryland here understands the seal of the Spirit to be the Spirit's progressive sanctification of the believer and reproduction of the character of Christ in the believer's life. Where this holy life is present, no other witness is needed to attest the reality of salvation. "This seal," Ryland concluded, "is the best proof of our relation to God."[34] Ryland's understanding of the seal of the Spirit has obviously been shaped by his controversy with Antinomianism. Yet, he was right to be skeptical of those who claimed that the Spirit had revealed to them that they were children of God and yet whose lives bore few or no marks of holiness.

The second half of Ryland's sermon on Ephesians 4:30 is focused on "the danger and evil of grieving the Holy Spirit." Here Ryland worked through a number of items that especially grieve the Spirit. Among those that received mention were duplicity and deceit, all types of moral impurity, neglect of prayer and the Word of God, bitterness, "slighting or undervaluing the Lord Jesus Christ, and his atoning blood and righteousness," and "merely formal attendance on divine ordinances, placing a low value on his work and power, and abusing the doctrine of his influence."[35]

Sober-Mindedness" (*Pastoral Memorials*, II, 230): "Dread the thought of not being…led by the Holy Spirit."

[31] *Pastoral Memorials*, II, 156-160.

[32] Ibid, II, 157.

[33] Ibid, II, 157-158.

[34] Ibid, II, 158.

[35] Ibid, II, 159-160.

The Influence of Jonathan Edwards

Ryland's very evident concern to please the Spirit in all things is essentially bound up with his view of the vital importance of the Holy Spirit for the believer's life. In a sermon on Luke 11:13[36] Ryland makes the following comment on the difference between this verse and its Matthean parallel, Matthew 7:11, which has "good things" instead of "the Holy Spirit":

> Nothing is so excellent, needful, or advantageous [as the Holy Spirit]. In this similar part of our Lord's sermon on the Mount, he had said "good things," indefinitely. Matt. vii. 11. Here he tells us what is good, the chief good. . . . The Holy Spirit is equivalent to all good things. No other blessing can be safely enjoyed without him. …[T]he Holy Spirit is the chief blessing for which we need to pray. His grace is the sum of all spiritual blessing, which we need infinitely more than any other blessing whatever.[37]

The theologian who was most influential in the theological and spiritual mentoring of Ryland was undoubtedly the American divine Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758). Ryland told fellow Baptist Joseph Kinghorn (1766-1832) in 1790, for instance, that Edwards' writings had been more useful to him than any other human compositions and if he was reduced to keeping but three books out of his entire library, then Edwards' life of David Brainerd, his *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, and *True Religion Delineated* by Edwards' disciple Joseph Bellamy (1719-1790) would be the three.[38] Now, there is little doubt that the above text by Ryland is essentially Edwardsean. In Edwards' *An Humble Attempt to Promote Explicit Agreement and Visible Union of God's People in Extraordinary Prayer, for the Revival of Religion and the Advancement of Christ's Kingdom on Earth* (1748), written to promote corporate prayer for revival (and which Ryland had read) in 1784, Edwards argued in words very similar to those of Ryland:

> The sum of the blessings Christ sought by what He did and suffered in the work of redemption, was the Holy Spirit... the Holy Spirit, in His indwelling, his influences and fruits, is the sum of all grace, holiness, comfort and joy, or in one word, of all the Spiritual good Christ purchased for men in this world: and is also the sum of all perfection, glory and joy, that He purchased for them in another world.[39]

Thus, to return to Ryland's defense of good works, while Ryland's argument for the vital necessity of good works in the believer's life is ultimately based on the text of Holy Scripture, the influence of Edwards should not be discounted. For example, in *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*—a text that Ryland treasured, as noted above—Edwards had

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[36] "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him!" (KJV).

[37] *Pastoral Memorials*, I, 268, 269.

[38] Letter to Joseph Kinghorn, October, 1790 [cited Martin Hood Wilkin, *Joseph Kinghorn, of Norwich: A Memoir* (Norwich: Fletcher and Alexander, 1855), 183].

His admiration of Edwards went so far as to name one of his sons "Jonathan Edwards Ryland"!In this, though, he was simply following his own father's lead who had named Ryland's brother after his favourite theologian, Herman Witsius (1636-1708), hence Herman Witsius Ryland.

[39] Jonathan Edwards, *Apocalyptic Writings*, ed. Stephen J. Stein (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 5; New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1977), 320.

delineated twelve signs of authentic Christianity, the last of which was that true spirituality bears visible fruit in the doing of good works.[40] Edwards noted on the basis of Titus 2:14 that Christ's people "not only do good works, but are zealous of good works."[41] Such people make Christianity their main business not only on the Lord's Day, but that which occupies their lives as long as they live.[42] While conscious of the fact that good works cannot save them, they also realize that they cannot be saved without them. Thus, "obedience, good works, good fruits, are to be taken," Edwards concluded, "as a sure evidence to our own consciences of a true principle of grace."[43] So Ryland, preaching in June of 1819 on the same text from Titus 2 from which Edwards had derived this emphasis on good works, can state in good Edwardsean fashion:

> As the hand cannot move if there be no motion in the heart, as the superstructure cannot stand without the foundation; so there can be no true holiness without faith in Christ. But of what use is the beating of the heart, if it doth not impel the blood through the whole body? or of what use is the firmest foundation, if no superstructure is to be raised upon it? "He that saith he abideth in" Christ, "ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked" [1 John 2:6]. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" [Romans 8:14]. And every one in whom a good work is begun, will be solicitous to have it carried on. He will not be satisfied with continued safety, but will long for progressive sanctification.[44]

Salvation by grace alone and a life of good works, "evangelical religion and holy practice," are thus "inseparably connected."[45]

Abolishing Slavery—A Good Work

Ryland's desire to see lives marked by good works among his fellow Baptists did not go unrequited. As was noted at the beginning of this paper, there were a significant array of ways in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in which Baptists as part of the Evangelical movement sought to do good. The outstanding illustration in Ryland's day of such, though, has to be the role that English Baptists played first in the titanic struggle to bring about the abolition of the slave trade and then in the emancipation of the slaves within the British Empire.[46]

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[40] For Edwards' discussion of this point, see his *Religious Affections*, ed. John E. Smith (*The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, vol. 2; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 383-461. For a discussion of this point, see also Michael A.G. Haykin, *Jonathan Edwards: The Holy Spirit in Revival* (Darlington, Co. Durham: Evangelical Press, 2005), 134-135.

[41] Edwards, *Religious Affections*, ed. Smith, 387.

[42] Ibid, 383-384.

[43] Ibid, 424.

[44] *Practical Influence of Evangelical Religion*, 28.

[45] Ibid, 29, 28.

[46] See, for example, the discussion of the former in Michael A.G. Haykin, *Abraham Booth and his Sermon against the Slave Trade* (Dunstable, Bedfordshire: The Strict Baptist Historical Society, 2006).

For the latter, see especially the discussion of the life and ministry of William Knibb (1803-1845) in John Howard Hinton, *Memoir of William Knibb, Missionary in Jamaica* (London: Houlston and Stoneman, 1847); Philip Wright, *Knibb 'the Notorious': Slaves' Missionary 1803-1845* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1973); Gordon A. Catherall, "William Knibb and Jamaica: the man who spoke too strongly" in R. L.

Consider the 1824 tract by Robert Hall, Jr., *An Address on the State of Slavery on the West India Islands*.[47] Hall had addressed the issue of the slave-trade in the late 1780s when he was first at Bristol serving as co-pastor with Caleb Evans at Broadmead. On that occasion, Hall had two newspaper articles published in the *Bristol Gazette*,[48] in which he maintained that slave-trading is utterly "inhuman," a "trafficking in blood" that is building an "empire of barbarity and ignorance." Hall was well aware of those who would defend the economic necessity of slavery, but he was convinced that "it is almost an insult on the use of language and the art of reasoning to attempt its vindication."[49] It would be close to twenty years later, on February 23, 1807, that the abolitionist forces triumphed and the British parliament overwhelmingly voted to abolish the slave trade (283 votes to 16) Slavery, though, continued to exist within the bounds of the British Empire. More than a quarter of a century would pass before it too was abolished by parliamentary fiat in the summer of 1833. In the latter campaign to abolish slavery itself, Robert Hall was asked by the Leicester Auxiliary Anti-Slavery Society—Hall was pastoring in Leicester at the time—to compose a tract against slavery, which was published anonymously in 1824.

Hall argued that if the slave trade was deemed to be fundamentally wrong, so was the keeping of slaves. Like the slave trade, it was "most iniquitous in its origin, most mischievous in its effects, and diametrically opposed to the genius of Christianity."[50] The West Indian slave owners, though, had convinced themselves that such a system—which treated fellow human beings as "mere beasts of burden, divested of the essential characteristics of humanity," essentially a trampling on "the image of their Maker"—was not unjust. But such reasoning, from Hall's perspective, revealed only a "vitiated" sense of right and wrong.[51] Slavery and Britain's enjoyment of its fruit—West India sugar, that "ingredient which sweetens our repasts"—was nothing less than worshipping at the "altar of Moloch," a biting reference to the Canaanite idol who demanded human sacrifice.[52]

For Hall, to remain silent in the face of "the most enormous oppression exercised within the limits of the British dominions" was to incur guilt along with the slave-owners. As he argued, "we are always answerable for the evils which it is in our power to prevent."[53] Anticipating that some might reply that only political power could effect the destruction of slavery and the emancipation of the slaves, Hall recalled for his readers the way in which popular support played a determinative role in the abolition of the slave trade.

Greenall, ed., *The Kettering Connection—Northamptonshire Baptists and Overseas Missions* ([Leicester]: Department of Adult Education, University of Leicester, 1993), 55-67.

[47] *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, II, 159-168. On Robert Hall, Jr., see Olinthus Gregory, "A Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M." in *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, III, 3-75 and G.W. Hughes, *Robert Hall (1764-1831)* (London: Independent Press, 1961).

[48] For these articles with commentary, see Timothy Whelan, "Robert Hall and the Bristol Slave-Trade Debate of 1787-1788", *The Baptist Quarterly*, 38 (1999-2000), 212-224.

[49] Whelan, "Robert Hall and the Bristol Slave-Trade Debate", 218-220, *passim*.

[50] *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, II, 164-165.

[51] Ibid, II, 163.

[52] Ibid, II, 162, 166.

[53] Ibid, II, 168, 167.

We cannot remain silent and inactive without forgetting who we are, and what we have done; that we are the country which, after a tedious struggle with a host of prejudices arrayed in support of opulent oppression, have overthrown the slave-trade, torn it up by the roots, and branded in the eyes of all nations the sale of human flesh, as the most atrocious of social crimes. …We must sever ourselves from all alliance of spirit with a [William] Wilberforce and a [Thomas] Clarkson, who looked forward to the final emancipation of the negro race as the consummation of their labours, and were sustained in their arduous contest by the joy which that prospect inspired. We must lose sight of still more awful considerations, and forget our great Original, who hath formed of "one blood all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth" [Acts 17:26].

Hall's passionate concern to see the abolition of slavery was also rooted in his fear that God would judge his nation severely for their role in maintaining the wicked institution. As he said publicly in the late 1820s, "slavery…is the darkest and foulest blot that ever stained the national escutcheon; and, if not speedily wiped out, will call down the vengeance of heaven."[54]

A Concluding Word

Five years after this tract appeared, Hall preached a sermon on November 5, 1829, that dealt with what he called the "Duty of Believers to Maintain Good Works." It was based on Titus 3:8, the very same text that Charles Wesley had preached on some ninety years earlier and with which this paper began. Among the various comments Hall made on this text, he, like Wesley, stressed that Christians must "maintain good works of benevolence to others." They must take care of widows and orphans. They need to help those who are strangers. And those who have wealth must assist those afflicted by poverty. In sum, they are "to excel in deeds of charity" and be imitators of Jesus Christ, whose character is well summed up by the declaration of Acts 10:38, "he went about doing good."[55]

Hall, who, like Ryland, was a lifelong admirer of the writings of Jonathan Edwards,[56] then summed up in true Edwardsean fashion: "It is the character of Christian love, that it attends to the infirmities and distresses of others; an eminent Christian will always be eminent in these evidences of genuine charity. It is the effect of spirituality to make the heart tender and generous, feelingly awake to the calls of philanthropy."[57]

[54] Cited Fred Trestrail, *Reminiscences of College Life in Bristol During the Ministry of the Rev. Robert Hall, A.M.* (London: E. Marlborough and Co., [1879]), 84.

[55] "Duty of Believers to Maintain Good Works" in *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, IV, 253-254.

[56] Gregory, "Brief Memoir of the Rev. Robert Hall" in *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, III, 65.

[57] "Duty of Believers to Maintain Good Works" in *Works of the Rev. Robert Hall*, IV, 254.

THE CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHER AND METAPHYSICS[1]

Robert Wood[2]

This paper takes its cue from John Paul II and his call for a renewed focus upon metaphysics. In keeping with the title, it will have two parts. In the first part I will reflect upon the Catholic philosopher;[3] in the second I will underscore certain features of metaphysics that the present Catholic philosopher thinks are true.

A leading thinker in the Catholic Church into the 1980s described the intellectual situation of the Church before Vatican II. He said: Hardened into its own way of thinking,[4] neo-Scholasticism [as he experienced it] had degenerated into a pedantic schoolishness of the real distinction minus the sense of mystery. It tended to a supernaturalistic rationalism, holding propositions true on authority and proceeding deductively therefrom,[5] operating with the notion of final causality without any sense of expressivity, making causal inferences and establishing order without epiphany.[6] It isolated an abstract essence of man and focused on the distinction of intellect and sense, but without the primacy of the I-Thou.[7] It developed a theology which assumed a kind of omniscience, locked into an apologetic circle impenetrable from without and, correspondingly, treating other systems from without—an aspect of the tragedy that has befallen Church history.[8] It developed a system of correct propositions and healthy practices but without the centrality of Christ. It helped form a Christianity 'knocked down from its height.'[9] It culminated in the Church of the Grand Inquisitor which thinks and chooses for the people,[10] in religious practices whose spirit is articulated in the non-ecclesial, anti-intellectual religiosity of the *Imitatio Christi*, in a

[1] This paper was originally delivered at Ave Maria University in their series on The Catholic Philosopher and Metaphysics that also featured Oliva Blanchette, Jorge Gracia, and John Haldane. It was subsequently presented at Thomas Aquinas College in Ojai, CA, St. Thomas University in Houston, TX and Holy Cross College in Worchester, MS.

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[3] The main themes of the first part of this paper were originally given as the Aquinas Lecture at Incarnate Word College and appeared as "Dancing at Arm's Length with One's Theological Mistress," in *Philosophy and Theology*, vol. 9, nos. 3 and 4, 251-71. Relevant parts are reprinted with permission.

[4] Hans Urs von Balthasar, *The Glory of the Lord* (henceforth *GL*), vol. V. *In the Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age,* O. Davies, A. Louth, B. McNeil, J. Saward, and R. Williams trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1991), 222, 446. See my review of *Glory* in "Philosophy, Aesthetics and Theology: A Review of Hans Urs von Balthasar's *The Glory ofthe Lord*," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. LXVII. no. 3 (Summer, 1993), pp. 355-382.

[5] *GL*, vol. I. *Seeing the Form*, E. Leiva-Merikakos (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1982), 555.

[6] *GL*. Vol. V *The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*, O. Davies, A. Louth, B. McNeil, J. Sawared, and R. Williams trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press,1991), 620-1.

[7] *GL*, vol. I, 381-2.

[8] *GL*, vol. V, 655; vol. VII. *Theology: The New Covenant*, B. McNeil, trans. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 490.

[9] *GL*. Vol. IV, *In the Realm of Metaphysics in Antiquity*, B. McNeil, A. Louth, J. Saward, R. Williams, O. Danier (tsl.), (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1989), 1989, 38.

[10] *GL*, vol. V, 569.

theological faith without the sensorium for glory,[11] replacing the living Gospel, and developing into a super-organized, super-scholasticized Catholicism.[12]

One who expects a "conservative" approach from a theologian to whom John Paul II offered the cardinal's hat is astonished by the vigor of Hans Urs von Balthasar's rejection, in this pastiche of statements, of what many people identify and love precisely as "Catholicism."

John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council in order to open up windows and let in some fresh air to what he thought had become the stale air of the pre-Vatican II Church. This led to the twin move, expressed in a simultaneous Italian and French manner: *aggiornamento/ resourcement*, an updating and a return to the sources. This is not a dangerous innovation, but only repeats the axiom of Leo XIII: *Vetera novis augere et perficere*, "To augment and perfect the old by the new." People standing to the left of center in the Church consider John Paul II as having initiated a reversal of the spirit of Vatican II, moving us back to "the good old days." However much that might be the case, there are many ways in which he carried that spirit forward. Let me note a few of them.

First of all, in "the good old days," in the 50s of my own upbringing, there was, among other things, the Index of Forbidden Books. The professor that gave me my first teaching position had taught at a leading Catholic University at a time when professors had to ask the chancellory office for permission to use texts from modern thinkers for their courses. And, as astonishing as that seems today—this professor was denied that permission! The attitude corresponding to that denial was a sneering contempt for "modernity." Paul VI, called by his biographer Hubbelwaite "The first modern pope,"[13] abolished the Index. And John Paul went further. Paul VI, after all, translated Jacques Maritain's bitterly anti-modern book, *Three Reformers.*[14] John Paul, though he recommends Maritain, spoke of "precious seminal insights" contained in modern thought.[15] And he expressly recommended such modern Catholic thinkers as Antonio Rossmini who was formerly accused by the Vatican of what they called "ontologism" and who, I understand, is being considered for beatification.

Secondly, when I was a young man interested in sports, *the* place to go for swimming and basketball was to the YMCA (or what we called "the Y"), only we were not permitted. We were discouraged from making Protestant friends, and were forbidden to go into Protestant churches, even if it involved the funeral or wedding of one's closest neighbors. Praying together was not envisioned. And yet, John Paul went into the synagogue in Rome, the first pontiff to do so, and invited representatives of all religions to pray together in Assisi (something of which then-Cardinal Ratzinger disapproved).

Thirdly, before Vatican II, the Reformation was often considered the root of modern evils. On the other hand, John Paul said that the Reformation might have been providential because it allowed the fuller implication of the Bible to be explored, something hamstrung by magisterial teaching for centuries. In his own words, he asks, "Could it not be that these

[11] *GL*, vol. V, 103, n. 2.
[12] *GL*, vol. I, 494.
[13] Peter Hebblethwaite, *Paul VI: The First Modern Pope* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993).
[14] Jacques Maritain, *Three Reformers: Luther, Descartes, Rousseau* (New York: Sheed and Ward: 1950).
[15] John Paul II, *Fides et Ratio* (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998), 48 (henceforth *FR*).

divisions [among the Christian churches] could also have been *a path continually leading the Church to discover the untold wealth contained in Christ's Gospel and the redemption accomplished in Christ?* Perhaps all this wealth would not have come to light otherwise...."[16] The four dots he inserts at the end of the sentence suggest that this is a subject that should definitely be pursued further.

Fourthly, in the pre-Vatican II church, Thomism was the Church's official philosophy, and professors in Catholic colleges and universities were expected to defend the Twenty-four Thomistic Theses. An on-line search yielded a lengthy article that claimed Catholics are *obligated* to teach St. Thomas's philosophy as the truth, and as official Catholic philosophy. A further search showed that, in the initial presentation of the Twenty-Four Theses, Catholic philosophers were *urged,* not *required* to teach the thought of Aquinas as true. A former colleague of mine, a fairly well-known Thomist, when asked why he was a Thomist, said: "Because the Pope told me to be one." What we are more likely to get out of such an attitude is rationalization rather than genuine philosophy and a polemical relation to thinkers not in the Thomistic line. In *Fides et Ratio* John Paul said, flat out, that there is no official Catholic philosophy. In his own words, "The Church has no philosophy of her own nor does she canonize any one particular philosophy in preference to others."[17] He cautioned against "sterile repetition of antiquated formulas.[18] Nonetheless, he saw in Aquinas an exemplar reconciling "the secularity of the world with the radicality of the Gospel."[19]

Given John Paul's respect for modern thought and for aspects of the Reformation as perhaps providential, one might even press that further in considering the possibility that several atheistic thinkers might have been providentially called to bear witness against the peculiar closure of the community of believers. After all, "the light...enlightens *every* man who comes into the world," within the biblical tradition or not.

Nietzsche, whom von Balthasar called "this profoundly sincere soul,"[20] smelled in Christianity a *lack* of "fidelity to the earth"[21]—a protest against the type represented by Dostoyevsky's Fr. Ferapont in his *Brothers Karamazov*, for whom life was a veil of tears and who was determined to see to it that it remained so.[22] By way of reply, Fr. Zosima's love of art and partiality to a spoonful of jelly was of a piece with his falling down and embracing the earth.[23] Nietzsche said that one Christian thinker he really appreciated was Dostoyevsky.[24] Nietzsche's own last lucid act was his embracing a horse being beaten by his

[16] John Paul II, *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* (New York: Knopf, 1994), 153.

[17] *FR*, §49.

[18] *FR* §97.

[19] *FR* §43.

[20] *GL*, vol. I, 514.

[21] "Prologue" §3, *Thus Spake Zarathustra* in *The Portable Nietzsche*, W. Kaufmann, ed. and trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1954), 125.

[22] Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers* Karamazov, C Garnett trans. (New York: Norton, 1976), 148-55 (henceforth *BK*).

[23] *BK*, 303.

[24] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, R. Hollingdale trans. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1968) IX, §45, 99.

owner. And his basic desire was "to stand over each thing in order to be its azure bell, its eternal security." He sought the power to will each thing as it is . . .[25]

Ludwig Feuerbach planted human life so firmly on the earth, in the body, that for him, in a peculiar play on words, *principium essendi est principium cognoscendi*, ("The principle of eating is the principle of knowing").[26] Nonetheless Jewish thinker Martin Buber credited him as the discoverer of the I-Thou relation, the center of Buber's thought and, for Buber, translator of the Hebrew Bible, the center of revelation.[27] Feuerbach held that "man by himself is only man, but man with man, the unity of the I and the Thou, is divine."[28] It is interesting to note that the interpretation of man as *imago Dei* has shifted in recent times, from a consideration of mental faculties in Augustine and Aquinas, to inter-personal relatedness.[29] That follows in Feuerbach's tracks, but is also a return to *Genesis* where the *imago Dei* is first announced: "In the divine image he created him; male and female he created them."[30]

In addition to the change of direction initiated by Vatican II and its implementation by John Paul, the magisterium has had many significant reversals n its history brought about precisely through the development of independent inquiry in the face of official condemnations. We can draw up a significant list of items where those reversals have taken place against a great deal of official heavy-handedness, attempting to block the developments that led up to a final and grudging reversal. In each case the enemy was conceived of as some form of "modernity." The list would include heliocentrism, biological evolution, interest-taking, modern Biblical criticism, and religious liberty, together with the separation of Church and state. These emerge from developments in cosmology, in biological theory, in economics, in historical and literary criticism, and in social-political theory, all achievements of modernity developing outside the Church. Each involves philosophical views at one level and theological developments at another. They are cases where philosophic and non-philosophic developments occurred in tandem. Heliocentrism arose from a renewal of mathematical and empirical understanding of nature in Renaissance thought. Interest-taking was tied to a new understanding of political economy and thus of the role of property developed by thinkers such as Locke. Biblical criticism had one of its major origins in Spinoza's treatment of the Bible.[31] Evolutionary theory itself emerged in Diderot's taking up of Locke's challenge that matter could never think and in German Idealism's rethinking the relation of the human spirit to pre-human nature.[32] Finally, religious freedom and the

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[25] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, in *The Portable Nietzsche*, W. Kaufmann trans. (New York: Viking Press, 1954), III, 4, 276.

[26] Ludwig Feuerbach, *Die Wissenschaft und die Revolution*, in *Sämmtliche WerkeI, W. Bolin and F. Jodl* eds. Stuttgardt, Band X, 20.

[27] Martin Buber, "Zur Geschichte des dialogischen Prinzips," in *Werke* vol. 1, *Schriften zur Philosophie* (München, Kösel, 1952), 294-5.

[28] Ludwig Feuerbach, *Principles of the Philosophy of the Future*, M. Vogel trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1986), §60.

[29] Von Balthasar, *GL*, vol. VI, 99.

[30] *Genesis*, I: 27, *New American Bible*.

[31] Benedict Spinoza, *A Theological-Political Treatise*, R. Elwes trans (New York: Dover, 1951).

[32] For my own attempt along those lines, see "Potentiality, Creativity, and Relationality: Creative Power as a New Transcendental?," *The Review of Metaphysics*, vol. 59 (December, 2005), 379-401 and ""Five Bodies and a Sixth: On the Place of Awareness in an Evolutionary Universe," *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 93 (Winter, 2009), 95-105.

separation of Church and State took center stage in the Enlightenment's response to bloody religious wars.

It is John Paul's "precious and seminal insights"[33] in modern thought that eventually moved the Church to take a new direction on the matters involved. It is in terms of the multiplicity of philosophic stances by those inside and outside the Church that led John Paul to declare that there is no one particular Catholic philosophy, even if that philosophy is that of Thomas Aquinas. But if there is no one Catholic philosophy, there are, nonetheless, many philosophers who are Catholic. And that should not be merely incidental to how one comes at philosophizing, as might occur with someone working in mathematics or engineering.

Being Catholic—or for that matter, being seriously committed religiously—entails that one's intellectual relation to the faith should be as high as the level of one's professional development. I would say that there is an imperative for the Catholic philosopher to be thinking seriously about what the contemporary magisterium, leading theologians, the tradition in its various epochs, and the biblical texts themselves present, taken together and not separately.

In this search, the magisterium deserves the utmost respect and careful attention. It is the default mode for Catholics, educated or not. But the magisterium itself had and has to be educated, and the little bit of history we have recounted shows that several of its instructions have been reversed by means of developments that went counter to the then-current magisterium. I think that the magisterium has to be read at any given time as exercising prudential judgment. For me that means that, when there is good reason to disagree, one should do so with respect and with an openness to being corrected by the advance of the appropriate evidences, both on the side of the one who thinks otherwise *and* on the part of the current holders of the magisterial office. Relation to the magisterium is a dialogue, a two-way street, and not a one-way imposition from on high. However, the stances of the magisterium define the subjects for such dialogue.

But beyond that, closeness to one's religion gives special focus to one's philosophical endeavors. In the Judaeo-Christian tradition there arises the philosophic notion of creation and the corresponding notion of positive infinity. In Christianity in particular there is the emphasis upon the primacy of love and the dignity of the individual person, which is linked to a Trinitarian understanding of the divine and a corresponding inter-personal understanding of the person. There is the emphasis upon an incarnational spirituality still not fully absorbed because of the early heavy dose of Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism still lingering on in the tradition. John Paul has cautioned against a "purely spiritual" view of the human person and has made his own significant contribution in *The Theology of the Body*.[34]

So, for the Catholic philosopher, questions about God, about morality and the socio-political order, and about the character of the human person should remain focal. Most pertinent to the pursuit of metaphysics, religious commitment raises the question central to metaphysics, the question of Being and consequently the question regarding our place in the

[33] *Fides et Ratio,* §48 (Boston: Pauline Books and Media, 1998), 64.

[34] John Paul II, *Man and Woman He Created Them: A Theology of the Body*, M. Waldstein, trans. and Introduction (Boston: Pauline Press and Media, 2006).

Whole. In an era of piecemeal focus and deconstruction which, in some of its forms, want "to send metaphysics packing,"[35] John Paul called for a recovery of metaphysics.[36]

The twin *aggiornamento/resourcement* movement, the movement of augmenting and perfecting the old by the new, is the editorial policy animating the current journal of the American Catholic Philosophical Association. Back in 1989, when I became editor of what was then called *The New Scholasticism*, I proposed changing the name to what is now called *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* I did so for two reasons. The first reason was because Scholasticism was no longer the primary focus of the members of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, but perhaps still the *primus inter pares*. The second reason was linked to a new editorial policy that would devote every third issue to a great figure in the history of philosophy, alternating between Pre-Moderns and Moderns. There would be guest editors who were commissioned to solicit manuscripts that would give basically non-polemical, sympathetic treatments to the figure in question in each special issue. Some of my friends in the Association thought that the term 'Catholic' in the title would suggest something sectarian—something they wanted to avoid. So do I. My idea was to change the image of the "Catholic" to its original meaning of "all-embracing" by paying non-polemical attention to figures from the whole history of philosophy. Of course, the aim is not simply to give an historically accurate picture of what a given thinker thought, but to think with him on the issues involved, to learn how to think by dialogue with the masters. We were following in the direction later given by John Paul in *Fides et Ratio* to discover the "precious insights" in the Moderns especially, in figures who, in the past, had been treated by Catholic thinkers polemically and from the outside as the basic orientation of Catholic intellectuals that constituted the pre-Vatican II mentality excoriated by von Balthasar.

In our second part we will look at some features of a metaphysical sort that I would see developed in the contemporary world, in close proximity to the Catholic faith and Catholic theological thought.

Religion—virtually no matter of what sort—provides some view of the Whole, how we humans fit into the Whole, and how we are to behave in order to come into proper relation to the Whole. Our behavior is regulated in terms of how we conceive the Whole. Providing such a view, even the plurality of religions bears witness to the prior questions, built into the character of humanness, to which it provides putative answers: What is our place within the Whole? What is the Whole? How can we come into proper relation to it? A philosopher born within a religious tradition will not tend to consider philosophy simply as a piece-meal operation, attempting to solve problems here and there—especially today, performing a kind of mopping-up operation that follows what natural science provides us the only reputedly reliable knowledge or, in the philosophy of mind, considering what categories would have to be changed in anticipation of science's eventually showing that our conscious life is nothing but a product of the brain. Religion, as I said previously, keeps open the question of the meaning of the Whole and implies the peculiarity of human existence. One can still follow Plato who taught that the task of the philosopher is to keep his eyes fixed on the character

[35] Jacques Derrida, *Of Spirit*, G. Bennington and R. Bowlby trans (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 75.

[36] *FR* §83.

of the Whole and the whole character of each type of being within the Whole.[37] Indeed, what makes possible this direction of attention is the notion of Being as the metaphysical notion par excellence. The notion of Being antecedes, underpins, pervades, and solicits all human knowing.[38] It is by reason of the operation of this notion that, for Aristotle, "the human soul is, in a way, all things: all things sensible by sense, all things intelligible by intellect."[39]

In both cases—sensation and intellection—human awareness is such by way of universal orientation, the sense by being, as a power, open to all instances of the differing types of sensory objects; but being activated by, and thus aware only of individual instances in their sensed actuality. What is sensed occupies a Here-and-Now, just as the observable organism of the perceiver occupies a Here-and-Now. Though we should add that the perceptual act sets the perceiver outside its own perceptible organism to be, in an intentional mode, *with* what is given "out there" and also to be outside the Here-and-Now by having learned from, and being able to explicitly recall the past as past and, in addition, by anticipating, in its own appetitive responses, the future of possible appetitive fulfillment. Sensory awareness gathers the past in the light of the future opened up in the present.

While human awareness at the level of sensation, like animal awareness, "is all things" in the same sensory mode, at the level of intellect human awareness "is all things" by way of anticipating all things unrestrictedly, unconfined by the sensory mode of its starting point. The notion of Being applies to all things universally and to everything about each thing. It arises in the mind whenever, in the psycho-genesis of the child, distinctively human awareness is activated. It makes the mind to be a mind. But it arises as an empty orientation toward the Whole. It establishes a distinctively human Eros described mythically by Plato as the result of the mating of Poros and Penia, as emptiness finding ways for fulfillment, as the mortal seeking the immortal.[40]

By reason of our orientation to the Whole, we are not enclosed within the circle of appearance that sensation initially presents in function of organic need. Animals are mono-polar and live within the closed circle of sensory appearance that yields only the individual and actual in function of appetite. We are bipolar and are able to consider the circle of appearance precisely as an appearance relative to our organic situation and as arising from an indirectly appearing wholeness in things that exceeds sensory manifestness. Via the notion of Being we emptily intend the total being of appearing things and move to begin filling that emptiness with theoretical interpretation, construction, and inference.

Being referred, via the notion of Being, to the Whole, one is referred to space and time as encompassing wholes. And that reference allows us to abstract from the sensorily given, and thus to become aware of forms that can be instantiated any time and any place their existential conditions are met. Such apprehending can only take place by giving body to the universals apprehended in a sensory medium through language. Language, arising in the between of I and You, creates conventional sensory place-holders for our awareness of universals, initially in speech, in the temporal medium of sound, and eventually in writing, in

[37] *Theaetetus*, 174A-175A.
[38] Bernard Longergan *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding* (London: Longman Green, 1957), 349.
[39] *On the Soul*, 431b 20.
[40] *Symposium*, 203B.

the spatial medium of color and extension. If sensation, even the sensation involved in hearing words, gives us always the individual and actual in the Here-and-Now, intellection presents us with the universal that is the permanent possibility of recognized instantiation and thus of possible predication in any other Heres-and-Nows. The act of sensing transcends the "Here" of its own observable body to manifest what is spatially "There", outside the inside of its organic location as well as the Now of its immediate environment and in relation to the recalled past and the anticipated future. But the intellectual act of grasping the universal transcends the location of the body and its sensory activity, even and especially the activity of speaking, in the particular time-space line of its embodied existence in relation to the whole of space-time and what might lie beyond that.

It is precisely the distance, afforded by the notion of Being, from the extended Heres-and-Nows of embodied perception, that gives the intellectually aware self over to itself and, in Jean-Paul Sartre's terms, condemns us to choose.[41] Though we are determined genetically, programmatically by our upbringing, and by the history of our past choices—all of which produces our current character—the primordial distance of the mind makes possible the choices that modify and add to the programs that support and limit our current concrete possibilities.

The notion of Being, operative within us to determine our ultimate horizon, makes intellectual knowing and choosing possible. And the knowings and choosings, sedimented into institutions and practices passed on to others, accumulate over the centuries to constitute history. The human being is the rational animal, the freely self-disposing animal, the linguistic animal, the historical animal, and the religious animal by reason of the operation of the founding notion of Being: the human being is, grounding all the rest, the *metaphysical animal*.[42]

We might add also that the human being is, potentially and all too often actually, the chaotic animal, the animal dis-tracted, torn assunder and rendered anxious because our reference to the Whole blows the lid off of the security of animal awareness that, for the most part, safely reaches its ends by following its natural appetites. As animals referred to the Whole, we are given over to ourselves and must take over the mass of appetites, natural and acquired, into which we find ourselves thrown, or else they will take over us. Our primordial superiority to the other animals is the basis for our chaotic tendencies: we are given over to ourselves and have to learn to shape our urges into a meaningful whole.[43]

Both the sensory and the intellectual aspects of our being are, in a way, all things. This refers to their respective potentialities. I want at this point to explore the notion of *potentiality*.[44] Consider the capacity for seeing. It is an individual power of an individual animal being that grounds individual acts revealing individual instances of colored bodies. Notice I stress the term *individual* here because, qua capacity, the power to see is not simply individual;

[41] "Existentialism Is a Humanism" in *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre*, W. Kaufmann ed. and trans. (New York: Meridian, 1957), 295.

[42] See my forthcoming "Being Human and the Question of Being: On the Unitary Ground of Individual and Cultural Pluralism" in *The Review of Metaphysics*.

[43] As Nietzsche saw it, our task is to "condemn the chaos that is within to take on form." *Will to Power*, W. Kaufmann trans. (New York: Vintage Books, 1967), III, IV, #842, p. 444.

[44] See my "Individuals, Universals, and Capacity" in *The Review of Metaphysics* (March, 2001).

it is a *universal* orientation towards the *kind* of bodily aspect we call color. If there are powers of sensation as universal orientations, an individual is not simply individual but is oriented universally; and there are not simply individuals as the correlates to these powers, but *kinds* of environmentally presented individuals. An individual is an instance of a natural type. Just as the power to see is an active power capable of seeing any individual of the kind correlative to the power, so also the power to be seen in the thing seen is open to being seen by any individual seer. We could go further and note that the kind of being that can see is the kind of being that has come into being by reproduction and is thus an instance of a species. These considerations provide, I think, a definitive refutation of nominalism.

We could go further still and observe that, not only cognitive powers, but any natural power is a universal orientation towards the kinds of aspects of environmentally present things upon which it can act or which can act upon it. Any bodily being is the locus of definite types of powers to act and to be acted upon and thus has universal orientations. It is the task of research to find out what the powers are for each type of body. The capacity to act and be acted upon is, indeed, the definition of Being suggested in Plato's *Sophist*.[45]

One significant point here is that individuals are not simply individual in the way sensation presents them, for sensation only presents the individual and actual, whereas reflection shows them to be the locus of universal orientations, active and passive, toward other individuals of the types correspondent to the powers. It is intellectual power, oriented unrestrictedly towards being as a whole, that can apprehend the powers and types as such and not simply as individually instantiated.

If sensation safely leads us practically, it systematically misleads us theoretically. By reason of what sensation presents, we are spontaneously inclined to identify a being with the individuality and actuality it presents, and, in the case of a being that is aware, whether animal or human, we are inclined to think that its whole being is contained within its empirically observable boundaries. This misses the underlying potentialities and correlative kinds, and more misleadingly, it misses the transcendence of the Here-and-Now of its own empirically given boundaries by the acts of awareness, and that, in different ways, both at the sensory and at the intellectual levels. Sensorily we are outside our observable boundaries and "with" what is given "out there" as we are "in" the immediately present, not by being confined within it, but as gathering the past and anticipating the future. And intellectually we are beyond the Here-and-Now of our organic ground as well as beyond the extended, flowing Here-and-Now of our sensory life; we are, by way of orientation, *with* being as a whole. We are thus with space-time as an encompassing field, while being referred to what might exist outside that whole complex of relations.

Let me repeat and rework what has been a rather dense presentation and attempt to apply some of these reflections to one of the crucial problems in today's intellectual world: the problem of the relation between mind and brain. From the sub-atomic particles up to the human brain, all the functions are located in a Here-and-Now, with brain functions as individual events observable inside the organism. From the animals to the human being, there is another function: *awareness* and its correlate, *manifestness* or *appearance*. Awareness takes the organism *outside* of its organic inside. In the case of the animal, what is manifest are

[45] *Sophist*, 248C.

things in a Here-and-Now, filtered relative to the receiving apparatus of the perceiver, and appearing in relation to what has been learned and what is now anticipated as appetitive fulfillment. In the case of the human being, manifestation of the universal orientations in things and their correlative kinds takes place in relation to the peculiar manifestness of the Whole. I say "peculiar manifestness" because the Whole is manifest only as what is sought, not as what is acquired. But our relation to it takes us not only outside our organic inside, but also outside the empirically manifest outside, that is, outside the immediate phenomenal environment. Our basic orientation as beings that are intellectually aware is towards space and time as a whole and towards what might be beyond the spatio-temporal universe as a whole. This makes it possible to uncover the universal principles manifest in and in relation to the immediate environment and our own bodily interior.

This means that brains actually know nothing. They are like the paper on which we write. They are at best like what Democritus said of awareness: they are mirrors of the environment. But, as Aristotle observed, we have no evidence that mirrors see.[46] Having an image is insufficient as an account of awareness, else cameras could see. The environment, so to speak, writes on the brain. What is written is individual and actual and inside the head. Brains are not aware; the animals that have a brain are aware and thus exceed the inside location of the brain. Neither do brains or computers have memories in the strict sense; what they have is present result of past programming.

For manifestness to happen, at least *implicit self-presence* is required. At the most fundamental level, this happens in the case of touch, possessed by all animals.[47] Unlike the other senses, the sense of touch has no organ situated in one part of the body; the entire surface of the organism itself is the organ. This requires the non-reflective self-presence of the animal to itself as a functioning whole. Awareness indwells in the organism as a functioning whole, it inhabits the organism—though not as a ghost in the machine, as a completely other entity externally related to its other, its body. Awareness is the higher level of functioning of a psycho-physical whole. It is other than the organism like the second dimension of space is other than, though inseparably conjoined with, the first dimension or the third dimension to the other two. The point of animal awareness is to display things in the environment that foster or threaten its existence toward which or away from which it moves itself in virtue of its appetites. Animal awareness makes possible flexible, creative responses to problems posed by the manifest environment.

In the case of the human being, by reason of our orientation, via the notion of Being, toward the Whole, we are capable of being *self-reflectively aware*. We can step back from our involvement in environmentally manifest objects and direct or redirect our awareness in terms other than bodily-based desire, for example, aesthetically or scientifically. What is manifest individually is always for us displayed in terms of its instantiating a type. And our use of language underscores that. Each term that we use is a stand-in for a type, that is, it refers to more than the individual present Here-and-Now; it refers to *any* individual that belongs to the type, at *any* time and in *any* place. So at the intellectual level we are referred to

[46] *On the Soul*, 438A.

[47] See my "On Touch: A Phenomenological Inquiry," *Southwestern Philosophy Review*, vol. 17, no. 1 (January, 2000).

space and time as a whole as the condition for abstraction, that is, for recognizing a form as capable of instantiation any time and any place the conditions for its existence are met.

Biologists speak of the DNA code as a text, indeed, a whole library that has to be read and applied for the construction of the organism. But, of course, there is no reader or agency as such. Such metaphors call attention to the need to go beyond the code. Now, the brain functions as a text, a Here-and-Now present written text, inside the organism and inside the brain, a text that is, as it were, "read" and presented to the reflectively self-conscious self. But though we look through a written text to the manifest universals, we do not look through the inscriptions in the brain to what is displayed as the universal in the individual and what can be displayed to reflective awareness precisely as universal. As self-conscious agents, we are not at all aware of what is inscribed upon the brain as we are of what is inscribed on a written page. What is in the brain is not, as the writing on a page is, non-focally or subsidiarily manifest; it is not manifest at all. The brain, I repeat, knows and remembers absolutely nothing; only the cognitive subject whose brain it is knows and remembers, based upon neural activity.

However, there is a real sense in which we as conscious beings are passive in relation to the workings of the brain. The brain *affects* the field in which manifestation, both of the universal and of the individual, occurs. The first effect of the brain is awakening; that happens when "the consciousness switch" in the back of the brain is turned on—as it can be turned off by a karate chop to the back of the neck. In the case of the animal, the effect of the brain in the "on" mode is the manifestation of individuals; in the case of the human, it is manifestation of the types or universal kinds instantiated by the individuals and the universal orientation of their various powers.

The brain stores the results of past thought and action. It has a naturally given program that grounds learning and that is re-programmed or program-modified by what the conscious agent learns to do and think. In learning a language, what has been consciously learned sinks into the unconscious upon which we draw in speaking. We spontaneously learn how to position lips, tongue, teeth and palate to pronounce the words we speak. The re-programmed brain of one who has learned a new language makes that skill spontaneously and thoughtlessly available to the conscious agent. As I speak or as I write, I don't know how the sentence that I begin will end; but, for the most part, it comes out right as I draw upon what the programs stored in the brain provide in my pursuing a line of thought and thus taking responsibility for what I say.

It is important for members of the scientific community to study how this works, both in order to know theoretically what is going on just in order to know, but also to learn to correct speech pathology or any other problems that occur because of some defect in brain-functioning. The I, as the highest level of functioning, sits atop a hierarchy of functions grounded in the brain. Sometimes the defect in brain functioning can so block its mental activity that it is unable to come to itself reflectively in such a way as to be responsible for its actions. A plea of not guilty by reason of insanity has its defensible grounds.

The brain is a visual object located inside the head, but it contains powers only knowable by seeing what it produces. What it produces is not accessible by looking. What one might see through an MRI are portions of the brain lighting up. For example, in states of severe depression, what is called area 25 in the back of the lower right quadrant of the right hemisphere of the brain lights up and flashes intensely; but seeing those flashes in not seeing depression. One only sees the visible manifestation of events that occur when depression is being produced. What the brain produces on the side of awareness is only given by reflection upon the field of awareness that, among other things, can study the functioning of the brain. But the scientist is able to do so in virtue of taking responsibility for providing evidence appropriate to his subject matter, for he has committed himself to the truth of his claims. And the claims hold, not just for the brain he happens to be observing, but for all like brains. To be able to operate in this way transcends the brain inside his head, even though it is necessarily grounded in the supportive functioning of the scientist's own brain.[1]

A second place where these considerations of consciousness and potentiality can aid us is in coming to terms with *human development*. At the very beginning of human existence, a fertilized ovum is set on a path of development where it ends up as an adult organism. A complete empirical inventory of the fertilized ovum will tell us nothing by itself of the powers that it contains, for it is on the way to being an articulated organism, eventually aware of its environment, and finally reflectively aware of itself as a self-disposing, intellectually functioning psycho-physical whole. The powers are there, undetectable by even the most refined instruments that necessarily only present the individual and actual because they simply extend the visual field. But the powers are present nonetheless as active orientations toward their own actualization. Since the most sophisticated instrumentation and the most careful observation sees, in the case of a fertilized ovum, only a tiny, relatively unarticulated whole, certainly nothing in the least resembling a fully articulated organism, there is the tendency to think that it can be treated as any other non-conscious entity, capable of being experimented with and disposed of at will.

We can develop these reflections further in a parallel manner to consider the place of human beings in a universe that has evolved from the primordial Big Bang. The principle involved here is the same invoked in considering the first occurrence of a fertilized human ovum: a complete empirical inspection will, by itself, reveal nothing of the powers that underlie the empirical surface, and neither will the models, based upon picturing, and thus capable of presenting only the directly manifest individual and actual, not the underlying universal and potential. As Whitehead noted, we only know what something is when we see what comes out of it. What is of interest here is that, if we consider evolution as a continuous process from the Big Bang to the emergence of humankind, what we would have to change is our view of so-called 'matter', for the structure of our awareness engaged in cosmological theorizing remains constant and ever-available to careful reflection. Rather than being a reductionism, explaining the latest and highest solely in terms of combinations of the earliest and lowest, we would be pressed simultaneously to explain the more elementary phases teleologically in terms of the most developed. Or, we might say that we would then have a "reductionism from above." The lower levels are potentially what the higher levels are actually. This move would be, contrary to any dualism, simultaneously a

[1] See my forthcoming "John Searle: Awareness Recovered."

spiritualization of "mere matter" and a materialization of supposedly separate mind: an en-mattering of mind and a re-minding of matter. We would not have to explain away what we have developed above as epi-phenomenal or as "folk psychological" but as the inward manifestation of the telos of the evolutionary whole. Mind occurs so that the universe of our experience not only exists but is *manifest* and capable of being refashioned in the light of that manifestation. Responsible scientists are part of the meaning of the evolutionary universe that they progressively uncover

This puts the burden of proof upon the materialist reductionists. They would have to explain, given the premises with which they work, how their own scientific activities are possible, insofar as they are not simply adjusting to their species-niche for the sake of survival, but are pursuing the truth of the Whole. Our view puts the scientists themselves squarely within the world they explore as part of the telos of that world.

One could say that the upward development of the universe provides the conditions in the human being for commitment to the transcendentals: truth, goodness, beauty, and unity as articulations of the meaning of Being. And we might add, that an evolutionary view shows that the condition for the emergence of ever-new levels is *relationality*. The elements by themselves only have the possibility for combination. Random mixing establishes that peculiar combination the leads to the emergence of life itself as a new level of self-controlling wholes that are self-reproductive. Darwinism presupposes that. The living whole emerges from the elements and, in turn, holds them under its sway so as to be able to reproduce itself. At a higher level, the sexual relation causes the emergence of new instances of a given species. And at the human level, the relation of people over time, by virtue of the creation of social systems, beginning with language, leads to higher and higher levels of empowerment of individual human beings across the length and breadth of their inner possibilities. This suggests adding to the transcendentals the notion of creative empowerment through relationality. This would apply in the first instance to God as Creative Empowerment Itself.[2]

Such a view would also allow us to consider human creativity in all of its forms as not inferior to *theoria*. Not only being alone with the Alone, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, being together with the Together, in the community, is where human beings flourish. Here we exhibit love for our neighbors by creatively empowering each of them to find their own creativity, to transcend wherever we stand historically in developing new forms of relatedness to ourselves and to our environment.

The universe so understood is intelligible in the first place because each level below the human is one of the conditions for the possibility of the emergence of intelligence. Human intelligence is not a stranger in a strange land, but the meaning of the levels that precede and are assimilated into humanness. Human existence is the place where what-is as a whole is manifest to human beings. However, the universe is intelligible in its ultimate grounds in the Intelligence in Whose image we are made. It is intelligible because it is thought-created, though purely from the point of view of intelligible order, what can be inferred is not a Creator but a Demiurge. A Creator, One Who makes from nothing, we can arrive at by reason of the mind's own reference to Being, for we are referred in such a way that we can

[2] See my "Potentiality" and my "Five Bodies" in note 30.

always question beyond any putative limit. When Stephen Hawking says that to ask whether there is space beyond the expanding universe or a time before the Big Bang, one raises meaningless questions.[3] This seems to me to be a dogmatism that pays no attention to the ground of making universal claims: the mind's being, in a way, everything. And so we can question meaningfully beyond Hawking's stipulative limits. Questioning can only stop at the absolutely Infinite. And so, the question is whether there is anything beyond any given limits that corresponds to the mind's own native transcendence beyond all limits. That would prompt the basic question, Why is there finite being at all? And the answer cannot be any finite being, but only an absolutely Infinite Being. The answer to such a *Why* can only be One Who does not have any limiting essence, Whose essence is identical with existence.[4]

The relation of essence to existence is an analogical relation, being both the same and different in each individual instance of existence. The relation of essence to existence is an identity in God: God's essence is to be; He is being in its unlimited fullness. In creatures the relation involves essence limiting existence. This not only involves essence limiting as type but also as peculiar individual termination. What-something-is is the same and different in each type: the same as type but different as individual. But individuals are related to their type, not like dimes off a mint; they vary within the limits of the type in indeterminate ways. And in the human case, our essence as metaphysical animal gives us each over to oneself for our own unique individual choices based upon its unique set of variables determined by genes, upbringing, environmental reinforcement, and past choices. Such a view is a genuine existentialism, with the priority given to the existent individual, and especially the freely self-disposing individual human being. But that priority is completed only through the ways in which the individual relates to others, guided by transcendental commitments to truth, goodness, beauty, and unity through creative empowerment.

We might suggest further, and finally in this line, that the divine Being, as the Ground of what is other than It, must have a principle of otherness within itself. There must be an Other in God because there can be otherness outside God. (We might add, theologically and parenthetically, that such a principle is the condition for the possibility of God Himself entering into the otherness outside Himself, othering Himself in the Incarnation. And the condition for that possibility on the part of creation is that place within creation where the finite is open to the Infinite, namely in human nature. As Karl Rahner has said: the God-Man is the horizon idea of humanness, realizable only from the side of the eternal Logos as the principle of the otherness of creation.)[5] If God must have a principle of otherness within himself, the image of that God is not the individual rational being, but the inter-subjective relation of rational beings.

One very last observation: What we are presenting is in the mode of what Heidegger called "representative-calculative thinking" (*das rechnende Denken*). It is the basis in human existence for metaphysics (although Heidegger would not approve of the "onto-theo-logical" way I have indicated). But such thinking itself has a deeper ground in what he called

[3] Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time* (New York: Bantam Books, 1988).

[4] See my translation of Herman Ebert, "Man as the Way to God," *Philosophy Today*, vol. X, Summer, 1966, pp. 88-106.

[5] Rahner, "Thoughts on the Theology of Christmas," *Theological Studies*, vol. III, K. and B. Kruger trans. (Baltimore: Helicon Press, 1967), 31.

"meditative thinking" (*besinnliche Nachdenken)*, the way back that he himself attempted to inculcate by turning to the poets.[6] It is a project that von Balthasar insisted we must make our own.[7] It is the way in which the so-called "aesthetic" stands at the ground of both volitional devotion to the Good and intellectual devotion to the True. Its aim is not to master, even theologically. It is to let ourselves be taken at the level of the heart by what we might call "significant presences" that draw near, out of the distance beyond the cognitively or practically mastered, and open up what Heidegger called a plentitude of "world-space" such that, "in it, even the ordinary appears extraordinary."[8] It is in this direction that philosophy draws near to the arts and theology draws near to prayer. Without such grounding we are fractured individuals, as good and intelligent as we might be. As Hegel said: Let us not be either intellects or hearts, heartless intellects or unintelligent hearts; authentic existence lies in the unity of intellect and heart, the assimilation of the objectively true into the depth of our own subjectivity where religious commitment takes place.[9]

We have covered a good bit of ground. But I think what I have said at least illustrates how one devoted to the Catholic tradition might go about developing an autonomous metaphysics. To employ a metaphor I used to structure a paper on the Catholic philosopher I gave previously, such a metaphysical attempt is one that continues to dance with its theological mistress—however, keeping sufficient distance so as not to be smothered by her maternal embrace. But in so doing, perhaps we can help out our lovely mistress and perform a service to the Church as the place where the dance takes place.

[6] Martin Heidegger, "Memorial Address" in *Discourse on Thinking* J. Anderson and E. Freund trans. (New York: Harper, 1966).

[7] *GL*, vol. V, 450.

[8] "Origin of the Work of Art," *Poetry, Language, and Thought*, A. Hofstadter trans. (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), 46-7.

[9] G. W. F. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Mind*, W. Wallace and A. Miller trans. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) §445.

IN DEFENSE OF CHRISTIAN THEISTIC METAETHICS[1]

Glenn B. Siniscalchi[2]

Although Erik Wielenberg recognizes that individuals can know and respond to objective moral truths, he argues that belief in God is irrelevant to living the moral life.[3] One can remain an atheist and be moral. Wielenberg is obviously correct when he argues that atheists can exhibit moral virtues to a significant degree, but atheistic moral realists ought to infer that a personal transcendent anchor is needed to account for the objectivity of those virtues. While naturalism cannot account for morality, supernaturalism provides a suitable context for it. I provide the following moral argument for the existence of God in hope of providing a means through which atheistic moral realists will apprehend the truth of the Christian faith.

Perhaps the main reason why atheistic moral realists ought to infer that the Christian God is the basis of moral truth is that Christian belief in God is motivationally necessary to ensure firmer adherence to moral standards. As St. Thomas Aquinas once reasoned, the strongest forms of moral motivation is not discovered by acknowledging that God exists, but is discovered by receiving the grace of the Christian God, culminating in a life that is lived in relationship with him.[4] Provided that one has faith in the Christian God, this can facilitate the necessary ingredient that is needed to live out the virtues in the way they are intended to be lived out. In the last section I will explain how belief in the Christian God is thought to cultivate stronger forms of moral motivation.

Erik Wielenberg's Atheistic Moral Realism: An Exposition and Critique

Wielenberg contends that there are some acts that are intrinsically worthwhile to perform even if they do not lead to anything of value. In his words: "If there are activities available to us during our lifetimes that are intrinsically valuable, then our lives can have internal meaning even if God does not exist. . . . I submit that there are such activities."[5] Elsewhere, he claims:

> Of the ethical states of affairs that obtain necessarily, at least some are brute facts. That pain is intrinsically bad is not explained in terms of other states of affairs that

[1] I would like to thank Paul Copan, Elizabeth Cochran, and Jeremiah Cowart for helpful suggestions on an earlier draft of this essay.

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[3] Erik J. Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[4] Thomas Aquinas, *De Virtutibus in communi*, 1.10. Here Aquinas says: "There is infused into us by God, to enable us to perform acts ordered to eternal life as their end: first grace, which gives the soul a certain spiritual or divine being; and then, faith, hope, and charity. By faith the mind is enlightened concerning supernatural truths, which in their order stand as do principles naturally known in the order of natural actions. By hope and charity the will acquires an inclination to the supernatural good to which the human will, by its own operations, is not adequately ordered. Besides the natural principles which a man has, for his perfection in the order natural to him, a man needs virtuous habits. . . . So also, besides the aforementioned supernatural principles, man is endowed by God with certain infused virtues which perfect him in the ordering of his actions to their end, which is eternal life."

[5] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 34.

> obtain. Moreover, at least some necessarily obtaining brute ethical facts are not trivial but substantive. Therefore, I have an ontological commitment shared by many theists: I am committed to the obtaining of substantive, metaphysically necessary, brute facts. Some ethical facts fall into this category; I call such facts *basic ethical facts*. Such facts are the foundation of (the rest of) objective morality and rest on no foundation themselves.[6]

Naturally, he also affirms that individuals do not have to believe in God in order to know and act in response to intrinsically valuable acts: "The foundation of morality is a set of axiomatic necessary moral truths. No being, natural or supernatural, is responsible for the truth of or has control over these ethical truths."[7] Consequently, not only can all normally functioning persons recognize that objective moral truths exist without believing in God, but everyone should be able to know and abide by them even if nobody else recognizes them as such.[8]

Wielenberg notes that objective moral norms are properly basic beliefs. Because of each person's innate awareness of the "first principles" that constitute moral knowledge, all persons can know what is morally right from wrong: "Claims about what is intrinsically good are the axioms of ethical theory; they are the starting points, the first principles. As such, they are unlikely to be the sort of things that can be *proved*. Nevertheless, it is perfectly consistent to say that some activities are intrinsically valuable—and that we *know* what some of these are."[9] Wielenberg's moral philosophy is clearly influenced by an Aristotelian virtue ethics which is based on an underlying rule-based ethic. Having briefly summarized the heart of his ethical theory, there are a number of reasons why it cannot withstand scrutiny.

First, Wielenberg rightly points out that virtues can be attained without believing in the Christian God.[10] Aquinas would not disagree with him: every person has been made in the image of God and is able to attain the human virtues (for, according to Aquinas, all persons, including those who deny God existence, are endowed with human rights, dignity, and conscience, etc.).[11] Moreover, Thomists argue that everyone can formulate a system of ethics that is largely consistent with the Church's teaching. Christians should not be surprised to see Wielenberg at least state that life can be worthwhile insofar as individuals perform intrinsically good acts. Many atheists are able to formulate ethical positions that resemble theistic views.[12]

Similar to Aquinas, Wielenberg contends that morality is not strictly based on popular opinion or cultural convention.[13] Rather, basic moral duties are objective and knowable.

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[6] Erik J. Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," *Faith and Philosophy*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (January 2009): 26.

[7] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 66.

[8] Ibid., 64.

[9] Ibid, 35.

[10] Ibid., 36.

[11] Cf. Fulvio Di Blasi, *God and the Natural Law: A Rereading of Thomas Aquinas*, trans. David Thunder (South Bend: St. Augustine's Press, 2006).

[12] H. P. Owen, *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism* (London: Allen and Unwin Publishers, 1965), 32-36, 42, 118.

[13] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 66.

However, Wielenberg affirms that moral truths exist without a deeper metaphysical and personal foundation. But many problems attach to this view. As J. P. Moreland and William Lane Craig rightly point out:

> What does it mean to say, for example, that the moral value *justice* just exists? It is hard to know what to make of this. It is clear what is meant when it is said that a person is just; but it is bewildering when it is said that in the absence of any people *justice* itself exists. Moral values seem to exist as properties of persons, not as mere abstractions—or at any rate, it is hard to know what it is for a moral value to exist as a mere abstraction. Atheistic moral realists seem to lack any adequate foundation in reality for moral values but just leave them floating in an unintelligible way.[14]

Are moral values impersonal "abstractions" in Wielenberg's view? In his book he asserts that they constitute the furniture of the universe.[15] In his article he seems to have modified his view in his book and says that they are somewhere in between the physical universe and the mind of God (that is, if one wishes to invoke God as part of the picture).

Second, atheistic moral realists cannot adequately reconcile a naturalistic interpretation of evolution and the existence of human beings who can act in response to moral norms.[16] The fabric of reality must be structured in such a way as to allow organisms to evolve in order for them to be moral. Without a structured universe, atheists could never begin to make intelligible statements, let alone intelligible arguments against theism. Structure, it may be added, is another form of teleology. And teleology implies the existence of a designer. In this way, Wielenberg must implicitly borrow from a theistic premise to formulate the arguments that he does.

Elizabeth Anscombe once argued in a well known article that modern ethical positions (such as atheistic moral realism) continue to borrow from Christian ethical systems. Such positions, she argued, once made complete sense: It was once recognized by Christian societies that morality was directly rooted in *God's* nature.[17] *No more questions need to be asked about what grounds moral truth!*

Similarly, it is fantastically unlikely that a nonconscious, immaterial, impersonal, valueless, and materialistic process could produce objective moral principles and persons and situate both of them in such a way that the former can be structured and known by valueless persons who can act in response to them.[18] Wielenberg sees the implications: "And if, as I believe, there is no God, then it is in some sense an accident that we have the moral

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[14] J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 492.

[15] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 52. As of late he seems to have altered his previous view, explaining that ethical facts are compatible with theism (and atheism); Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 24.

[16] Gregory E. Ganssle. "Necessary Moral Truths and the Need for Explanation," *Philosophia Christi*, Series 2, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2000): 105-112.

[17] Elizabeth Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy," *Philosophy* 33, (1958).

[18] Paul Copan, "Hume and the Moral Argument," from *In Defense of Natural Theology: A Post Humean Assessment*, James F. Sennett and Douglas Groothuis, ed. (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 210.

properties that we do."[19] In what seems like a desperate attempt to justify his response to this problem, Wielenberg maintains that valuable truths can *sometimes* spring from the greater context of complete and utter valuelessness![20] It is, one hardly needs to point out, difficult to see how value can occasionally just emerge out of utter valuelessness. If something is valueless it has no potential of producing value. If the universe has the potential to produce something valuable, then the universe is not ultimately valueless.

Third, even if moral precepts existed in some ephemeral realm or as part of the "furniture of the universe," it is hard to see how they have any morally binding power on *human persons*. Moreland and Craig have the right idea:

> Suppose that values like mercy, justice, love, forbearance, and the like just exist. How does that result in any moral obligations for me? Why would I have a moral duty, say, to be merciful? Who or what lays such an obligation on me? As the ethicist Richard Taylor points out, 'A duty is something that is owed. . . . But something can be owed only to some person or persons. There can be no such thing as duty in isolation.' God makes sense of moral obligation because his commands constitute for us our moral duties. Taylor writes, 'Our moral obligations can. . . . be understood as those that are imposed by God. . . . But what if this higher than human lawgiver is no longer taken into account? Does the concept of a moral obligation still make sense? . . . the concept of moral obligation [is] unintelligible apart from the idea of God. The words remain, but their meaning is gone.'[21]

Wielenberg is adamant that *persons* ought to do the right thing (inanimate or impersonal things do not have the obligation to love self-sacrificially, be generous, etc.). But every time he emphasizes that persons ought to be moral he necessarily presupposes something qualitatively different about persons as compared with mere animals.[22] But this would seem an insuperable presupposition for him in light of a naturalistic worldview.

To paraphrase Wielenberg, there is nothing special about the universe.[23] So how can intrinsically valuable persons evolve from utter valuelessness? And how can moral truths evolve in such a way that persons can respond to them? Wielenberg presupposes that human beings are capable of morality and that moral norms *are* intrinsically special: humans have free will and the ability to assess ethical dilemmas; norms are worthwhile to be obeyed even if they do not lead to anything of value. But this is precisely where the inconsistency is situated.

Lastly, there are many atheists who have admitted to the intrinsic connection between objective morality and God. Conversely, they point out that atheism cannot account for

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[19] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 40.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Moreland and Craig, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview*, 493.

[22] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 124-127.

[23] As Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 107, 108, plainly states, "the naturalistic universe is not just the Christian universe in which that section of the hierarchy above human beings has simply been sliced away. Rather, in a naturalistic universe, there is no hierarchy in the first place. There is no divinely ordered station to which we, or any other creature, has been assigned. Human beings were not singled out for special attention by a divine creator; rather, we were, like every other living thing on earth, formed by blind natural processes entirely beyond our control." Cf. 115, 123, 141.

objective morality. Atheist J. L. Mackie plainly recognized that objective moral principles would indeed be "queer" in a naturalistic universe. If they exist, then they would furnish the Christian theist with a defensible argument for God's existence: "If . . . there are . . .objective values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them. Thus we have . . . a defensible argument from morality to the existence of a god."[24] Many other citations could be provided. The point is that many atheists, both past and present, have seen the intrinsic connection between objective morality and the existence of a certain sort of "god."

The theistic heart of atheistic moral realism consists in the atheist's affirmation that objective moral norms exist and that all normally functioning individuals can know and act in response to them. But Wielenberg departs from the theist when he insists that moral truths reside solely in the physical universe. One could be a pantheist, a deist, an "apatheist," or a finite godist and show that this view is implausible on its own grounds for a variety of reasons. One does not have to be a Christian or even a bland theist to point out the inconsistencies in his view. We must resort to some other account of the notion of objective morality.

The reason why we must resort to some other view is quite simple: the more one understands the nature of moral norms, the better one understands the imperative of living the moral life. To give but one example, I have strong reasons to listen to my wife if she wants me to come home after studying at the library. I have less reason to listen to a colleague who insists that I go out for a beer with him. The nature of the person and the kind of request that they make of me has a direct impact on my decisions. It is much more important for me to listen to my wife than to stay out late on a weeknight drinking beer.

Wielenberg assumes throughout his writings that atheistic and theistic moral realists can equally live out the moral life with an equivalency of moral conviction. Although this may be true when comparing atheism and bare theism, the same cannot be said when comparing atheism and Christian theism. The Catholic Church, among other ecclesiastical bodies, would strongly affirm that Christian belief makes a moral difference in the lives of persons. [25]

Relevant is the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, paragraph 812: "Only faith can recognize that the Church possesses these properties from her divine source. But their historical manifestations are signs that also speak clearly to human reason. As the First Vatican Council noted, the 'Church herself, with her marvellous propagation, eminent holiness, and inexhaustible fruitfulness in everything good, her catholic unity and invincible stability, is a great and perpetual motive of credibility and an irrefutable witness of her divine mission.'"

[24] J. L. Mackie, *The Miracle of Theism: Arguments for and Against the Existence of God* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), 115, 116.

[25] Austin Flannery, ed. *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*. (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1975), *Lumen Gentium*, 35, 36, 46. When persons are converted to Christianity, they become equipped to change the world for the better; by contrast, the world's ominous doctrines, when construed apart from true religion, tears down the fabric of society: "Just as it must be recognized that the terrestrial city, rightly concerned with secular affairs, is governed by its own principles, thus also the ominous doctrine which seeks to build society with no regard for religion, and attacks and utterly destroys the religious liberty of its citizens, is rightly to be rejected" (N. 36).

One of the ways in which atheistic moral realists can become disposed to believe in the Christian God is by providing a moral argument for the existence of God. As Wielenberg admits, "The historical arguments for Christianity depend on the philosophical arguments for the existence of God. Because I do not find the latter convincing, I reject the former. This, in brief, is why I still am not a Christian." [26] Certainly, it would not make sense to believe in a divine revelation unless there is a God who can reveal something in the first place. After this I will explain how belief in the Christian God is thought to cultivate stronger forms of moral motivation than what the atheistic moral realist can achieve and enjoy through human strength alone.

The Necessity of Theological Metaethics

Good arguments can help one to apprehend the existence of the Christian God. As that doyen of apologists, C. S. Lewis, once wrote:

> It is after you have realized that there is a real Moral Law, and a Power behind the law, and that you have broken that law, and put yourself with that Power—it is after all this, and not a moment sooner, that Christianity begins to talk. When you know you are sick, you will listen to the doctor. When you have realized that our position is nearly desperate you will begin, to understand what the Christians are talking about."[27]

Insofar as Wielenberg defends objective morality, he has good practical grounds for believing in the Christian God. That is the contention I will make in this section. Given our common points of agreement, it would be intellectually irresponsible for Wielenberg to not believe in a transcendent personal source of moral goodness. Conversely, objective moral principles *cannot* exist if atheism is true. In this way, the atheistic moral realist wants "to eat his cake and have it too" in a valueless universe that enjoins human beings to believe in objective moral values without including God in the picture.

Before I proceed into developing the moral argument, it is necessary to define what is meant by "objective morality." First, these ethical actions are good to perform in and of themselves. They are not good to perform as a mere means to an end. Second, they prescribe behavior; they do not merely describe behavior. Only free agents are accountable to abide by them. Third, they are not temporal, but are applicable in all times and places. They are also universal, having binding power on every person. Objective moral norms are also non-conventional. They are not simply based on mere human apprehension, but obtain whether anybody believes in them or not. Lastly, objective moral values are discovered—not invented. Wielenberg would have no problem with this definition. The "moral realism" in his atheistic metaethics is not in dispute.

First, since the moral law is indiscriminately binding at all times and places on everyone, moral norms must transcend the physical universe. If they were merely physical, then they would be subject to change. But objective moral values do not change. Hence, they somehow reside beyond the universe. Similarly, material stuff does not seem capable of

[26] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 11.

[27] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, from *The Complete C. S. Lewis Signature Classics* (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 2002), 24.

prescribing ethical behavior, let alone ethical behavior for *persons*. These transcendent moral truths are known within the universe by human persons; they are accessible within the universe but are not of universe.[28]

Second, moral principles are grounded in a source that is personal. Human persons are not ethically accountable to impersonal things. Persons are only accountable to other persons. As Catholic philosopher H. P. Owen once argued, "since within the human realm claims imply a claimant and laws a lawgiver, the same implications must be posited within the supra-human order if we are to make morality consistent."[29] If we feel guilty for violating moral rules, then there is probably a personal being that we have offended. There is a greater person that we are accountable to (for the rest of this section I will refer to the source of moral principles as a "he" for mere convenience).

By contrast, if no human persons existed, then objective moral truth would still matter (otherwise, objective moral truths would not truly be "objective"). As Robert Adams once noted, even if the Nazis brainwashed the Jews into thinking that anti-Semitism was morally correct, in reality it would still be wrong.[30] There must be *someone* who we are morally accountable to. Given the traditional definition of a person, we might as well conclude that he or she has intellect and will.

Third, moral principles are based in a source that is good and holy. The fact that morality is probably distinctive to human beings alone implies that there is something unique about persons (in contradistinction to animals). The personal and transcendent source to whom we are accountable probably has a special interest in us. He may be considered good. Since he transcends the universe and is good, I also conclude that he is holy. He is set apart from all finite goods. There is simply no one like him.

Similarly, moral precepts, as unchanging as they are, also entail that the good source of morality is just. That is to say, he does not compromise in his condemnation of unethical behavior. His imperatives are supremely fair at all times and places, no matter where persons are.

Fourth, the source of morality is in the order of mind, not of matter.[31] That is, moral principles give us information—namely, the cognitive content that is entailed by moral right and wrong. And information, it may be added, is more related to mind, not material stuff. As C. S. Lewis argued, "All I have got to is a Something which is directing the universe, and which appears in me as a law urging me to do right and making me feel responsible and uncomfortable when I do wrong. I think we have to assume it is more like a mind than it is like anything else we know—because after all the only other thing we know is matter and

[28] Cf. H. P. Owen, *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism*, 65. Thus, Owen: "Furthermore, it is only by holding transcendence and immanence in right proportions that we shall be able to understand the double character of the pressure which the moral law exerts. This comes to us from without and bears the stamp of an objective fact. But we also experience it as something which is somehow lodged in our higher, or better, selves where it becomes the governing principle of our being."

[29] Ibid., 51.

[30] Robert Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods: A Framework for Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 247.

[31] Owen, *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism*, 72.

you can hardly imagine a bit of matter giving instructions."[32] The moral universe that we inhabit has mind at its basis, not physical matter.

Fifth, the standard of unconditional right and wrong implies that he is not temporally conditioned either. Since objective moral norms are unconditional and thus binding on all human persons, the source which grounds them is not bounded by time and place.[33] This is also confirmed by his transcendent, spiritual nature. Spirit is not bound by matter. At this point we ought to ponder long and hard over what is entailed by the existence of "objective moral norms." Lewis astutely saw the implications: "We are not taking anything from the Bible or the Churches, we are trying to see what we can find out about this Somebody on our own steam. And I want to make it quite clear that what we find out on our own steam is something that gives us a shock."[34] Indeed, we are morally accountable to follow the moral commands of a transcendent, unchanging, and holy person who is concerned about human affairs.

In addition, if there are no overriding reasons to believe that there is more than one source of morality, then we might as well conclude that there is only one of them. There is no reason to posit more than one transcendent personal source of morality. Far from being a set of sheer givens, moral values can bring the intellectually honest person to the doorstep of God. Although the argument cannot furnish us with all of the divine attributes of classical Christian theism, there is enough here to conclude that supernaturalism ought to be the preferred view.

It must be stressed that the nature of the "source" is not an entity that strictly stands over or external or beyond moral norms, but is equivalent to the very nature of moral norms, all of which are expressions leading persons toward what is good. When someone violates a moral norm, they offend God, not some ethereal standard that is distinct or even distinguishable from him.

Wielenberg maintains that objective moral norms can be known and followed in the form of "intrinsically good acts." Regardless of how much virtue one can achieve and enjoy, Christian theists believe that one cannot fully flourish without receiving God's grace. Given Wielenberg's atheistic moral realism, it would be intellectually responsible for him to believe in God to make greater sense out of the existence and nature of moral norms. The success of the moral argument is somewhat of an invitation for him to consider the credibility of the Christian faith. Let us now turn to some of his objections to the moral argument and respond to them in kind.

Misguided Shots on Theistic Metaethics

Wielenberg has fired a number of philosophical missiles in response to the positive case for theistic metaethics.

First, Wielenberg argues that it makes little sense to ask where moral norms come from. In his words: "To ask of such facts, "where do they come from?" or "on what foundation do they rest?" is misguided in much the way that, according to many theists, it is misguided

[32] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 22.
[33] Owen, *The Moral Argument for Christian Theism*, 46.
[34] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 23.

to ask of God, "where does He come from?" or "on what foundation does he rest"? The answer is the same in both cases: They come from nowhere, and nothing external to themselves grounds their existence; rather, they are fundamental features of the universe that ground other truths."[35] But, as I have argued above, one does not have to ask about God or what is "external" to moral norms. All one needs to do is reflect on the very nature of the norms themselves. Objective moral norms are not distinct or even distinguishable from God himself.[36]

Above I argued that moral norms are transcendent to the universe; they are accessible *within* the universe but are not *of* the universe. Moreover, they are directly equivalent to a source that is personal (thus a good case can be made for the source's intellect and will as well). They are not conditioned by time or place. Further, the source(s) is/are good, holy, immaterial, and completely just at all times and places, demanding that human persons (and not mere animals or inanimate objects) be accountable to him. If we deploy the philosophical principle of Ockham's razor, there is no need to posit more than one source of moral imperatives. It seems like there is enough here to amply justify theism.[37] Matter is not all there is or ever will be.

Second, Wielenberg says that atheists do not have to account for objective morality because theists are begging the issue without argument: "Craig claims that nihilism is false only if there is a single ultimate standard of value. This is mere question begging; my view posits no such single standard and yet is incompatible with nihilism."[38] This complaint is at the very heart of Wielenberg's argument: theists unnecessarily demand atheists to explain their ethical foundations without argument:

> Craig's critique of Sinnott-Armstrong's response has two main elements. First, he questions whether the moral principle to which Sinnott-Armstrong appeals holds in the context of atheism . . . This amounts to a demand that Sinnott-Armstrong provide a foundation for the moral principle that he relied on to explain the wrongness of rape—and that he do so *as an atheist,* that is, without appeal to God or related phenomena. This response reveals an assumption that underlies much of Craig's criticism of non-theistic approaches to moral realism: Objective morality requires a foundation external to itself. But why accept such an assumption? Another possibility is a view like mine, according to which all (non-brute) ethical facts rest at least in part on a set of basic ethical facts. Such basic ethical facts are the

[35] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 26.

[36] Ibid., 40, is a little too hasty. As he mistakenly puts it, "it is a mistake to think that on their approaches, the divinity that is built into reality provides a complete *external foundation for objective morality*. On both types of views, the bottom floor of objective morality rests ultimately on nothing" (emphasis mine).

[37] My contention is all the more plausible if other arguments for God's existence are shown to be successful. In other words, if we have strong independent reasons to believe that God exists, then it seems all the more likely that our reflection of the nature of morality is in fact leading us to God yet once again. For more on the arguments of natural theology, see William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, ed., *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology* (New York: Blackwell-Wiley Publishing, 2009).

[38] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 39.

> axioms of morality and, as such, do not have an external foundation. Rather, they *are* the foundation of morality.[39]

Wielenberg is adamant that we do not have to understand the nature of moral norms in order to live by them. But what is being posited when he asserts that *they* exist? Something must be said about *them*. If moral norms are a feature of reality, then we must understand them in order to recognize what is at stake in living the moral life (as I explained in the above example about my wife). Wielenberg seems to focus on the nature of objective morality to some extent, but he never makes a concentrated effort to understand them.[40] He argues that they are (1) necessary, (2) not part of the physical world, and that (3) persons can fully instantiate them. Wielenberg needs to continue his reflection more thoroughly.

My second response: *because we know in advance that naturalism cannot account for objective morality on its own grounds* (which I have argued for in the first section of this essay), we must resort to a non-naturalistic view. Furthermore, theism *can* account for objective morality. Should someone endorse a philosophically inconsistent worldview? Of course not! Christian theists will not assume that atheistic moral realists will be able to live out the moral life with equal amounts of moral motivation (all things being equal). Although this may be true when comparing atheism and a bare theism, the Christian theist will not admit this much.

To be sure, Christian theists specifically maintain that belief in the Christian God leads to stronger forms of moral motivation which cannot be achieved on human strength alone. Christian theists will seek to persuade atheists to become Christians. No orthodox Christian will remain content by arguing for a bare theism.[41] If atheistic moral realists are willing to grant that objective moral norms exist and are knowable, then this provides Christian thinkers with an opportunity for evangelism.

Not only does an explicit understanding of the nature of moral norms through reason alone help one to live the moral life more than an implicit understanding of moral norms (the latter is, of course, the view advocated by Wielenberg), but an understanding of divine revelation helps persons to be even more moral than an explicit awareness of a bland theism. I will explain and describe how this is thought to work out in the last section of this essay.

The third reason to account for the nature of moral norms is that we are trying to arrive at the truth, whatever it is, wherever it is. A universe that has inherent value would naturally invoke a human desire to wonder about moral values. As Illtyd Trethowan points out, "The notion of value is bound up with the notion of obligation. To say that people are worthwhile, that they have value in themselves, is to say that there is something about them which makes a demand upon us, that we *ought* to make them part of our own project, identify ourselves with them to some sort. . . .[And, moreover,] an awareness of obligation is

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[39] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 36, 37.

[40] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 98. Remaining consistent with the idea that moral norms are part of the "furniture of the universe" in his book, he says: "What sort of character one ought to strive to inculcate in oneself and others depends in part on what one knows about the nature of the universe. Being an ethically good person is, in part, a matter of being properly oriented toward the universe. A trait that would be a virtue in kind of universe might well be a vice in another, and vice versa."

[41] Walter Kasper, *The God of Jesus Christ*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1984).

an awareness of God."[42] The more one understands the nature of moral values, the better moralists can live the moral life.

Third, Wielenberg argues that the theoretical postulate of God is just as arbitrary as the atheistic moral realist's shopping list of what constitutes moral norms:

> The ethical shopping list of Adams, Craig, and Moreland contains items like this: (a) there is a being that is worthy of worship, (b) if the Good commands you to do something, then you are morally obliged to do it, and (c) the better the character of the commander, the more reason there is to obey his or her commands. My ethical shopping list contains items like this: (d) pain is intrinsically bad, (e) inflicting pain just for fun is morally wrong, and (f) it is just to give people what they deserve. None of us can provide an external foundation for every item on our list; each of our lists contains some brute ethical facts.
>
> In light of this, one can perhaps forgive the non-theistic moral realist for being somewhat underwhelmed by the argument that endorsing *that there is a being worthy of worship* as a basic ethical fact is *less arbitrary*, than, say, endorsing *that pleasure is an intrinsic good* as a basic ethical fact. If Craig and Moreland's support for the premise that the existence of objective ethical facts requires the existence of God boil down to the claim that (a)-(c) are less arbitrary than (d)-(f), then their moral argument for the existence of God is on shaky ground indeed.[43]

Notice that in Wielenberg's framing of the debate he seems to be confusing the relationship between moral epistemology and moral ontology. Of course, atheists can recognize basic moral values in the same way that theists can. This is not in dispute. The real question is how moral values exist in the way that they do in a godless universe. I have argued that they are not ephemeral, but are expressions of a personal, holy, spiritual, and unchanging being that holds all persons accountable to him for their actions throughout their earthly lives. For again, one does not offend a "brute fact." One can only offend a *person*.

What is more, Wielenberg misunderstands why Moreland, Craig, Adams and others have said that atheistic moral realists are "arbitrary" and that theists are not. The theists are arguing that naturalists are being arbitrary *in the sense that naturalism as a worldview cannot account for objective morality and therefore some other view must be able to account for it*. Theism, they add, *is* a view that can account for moral norms. The rejection of atheistic moral realism does not automatically mean that theism is true. Although there is some fogginess as the exact nature of the atemporal and spaceless personal source of moral goodness, *we have already recognized* that naturalists cannot consistently posit the objectivity of moral norms on their own valueless grounds.

The fourth critique is that evolution is all that is needed to account for morality. For Wielenberg, "Evolutionary processes have produced human beings that can reason, suffer, experience happiness, tell the difference between right and wrong, choose between right and wrong, and set goals for themselves. In this way, evolution has given us these moral

[42] Illtyd Trethowan, *Absolute Value* (London: Allen and Unwin Publishers, 1970), 84.
[43] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 40.

properties have endowed us with certain unalienable rights and duties."[44] In natural moral law thinking (modified divine command theories, it must be noted, are compatible with natural law theories), objective morality is discovered by the person choosing an action that corresponds with their nature that is not only universally the same as every other person's, but is pointed toward an end. The proponent of the natural law maintains that when someone freely chooses an action that rightly corresponds with their nature, they end up doing something teleological—something with future direction (because their nature is driven toward a goal, regardless of what action is chosen).

The sciences of sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, provided they are not infected with atheistic philosophical presuppositions, are not opposed to natural law thinking, but are consistent with them.[45] Science, it must be noted, can only describe human moral behavior, not prescribe what ethical actions should be undertaken.[46] There is a difference between mores and morals. What Wielenberg forgets is that evolutionary theory must rely on a natural moral law in order to make sense of objective morality. At most, evolution explains how we come to know moral values, not that we necessarily invent them.[47]

Fifth, at one point Wielenberg refers to the famous Euthyphro dilemma to fool the theist.[48] To wit, God is either arbitrary to command certain rules, or God must be subject to a moral standard that is higher than him. If the former, then God has imposed a morality that could have been different (which suggests that God is whimsical or inconsistent). If the latter, then God is subject to a moral standard and is not the highest good. God must consult the highest good to issue his commands for humanity (in this view, God is superfluous and has no significant role for human morality). All we have to do is split the horns of this dilemma and show that God is the good. God is necessarily just, holy, good, and timeless. God's commands, far from being capricious, perfectly embody his

[44] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 40.

[45] Craig A. Boyd, "Thomistic Natural Law and the Limits of Evolutionary Psychology," *Evolution and Ethics: Human Morality in Biological and Religious Perspective*, ed. Philip Clayton and Jeffrey Schloss (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004), 221-238; Benedict M. Ashley, "The Anthropological Foundations of the Natural Law: An Engagement with Modern Science," Saint *Thomas Aquinas and the Natural Law Tradition: Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. John Goyette, Mark S. Latcovic, and Richard S. Myers (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 3-16.

[46] Paul Copan, "God, Naturalism, and the Foundations of Morality," *The Future of Atheism: Alister McGrath and Daniel Dennett in Dialogue*, ed. Robert B. Stewart (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 154-157.

[47] Craig, "The Indispensability of Theological Meta-ethical Foundations for Morality," *Foundations* 5 (1997), 9-12: "There is no more reason to deny the objective reality of moral values than the objective reality of the physical world. The reasoning of Ruse is at worst a text-book example of the genetic fallacy and at best only proves that our subjective perception of objective moral values has evolved. But if moral values are gradually discovered, not invented, then such a gradual and fallible apprehension of the moral realm no more undermines the objective reality of that realm than our gradual, fallible perception of the physical world undermines the objectivity of that realm" (emphasis mine).

[48] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 65-67.

unchangeable goodness.[49] Euthyphro's dilemma is perhaps only a challenge for the strict voluntarist.[50] But in the view advocated here, the natural moral law is rooted in God's holy and perfect nature. God is the infinite good that all finite goods participate in.

Sixth, Wielenberg argues that some theists make reductive philosophical claims in defense of their views:

> Consider the first argument quoted above. It runs as follows: Without God, human beings are accidental, evolved, mortal, short-lived products of nature—and human beings are nothing more than this. This is about as plausible as the claim that according to theism, God is a necessarily existing being—and nothing more than this. While it is true that according to theism, God is a necessarily existing being, theists maintain that there is much more to God than this. Similarly, while contemporary atheists typically maintain that human beings are accidental, evolved, mortal, and relatively short-lived, they also maintain that there is much more to human beings than this. They can reason, suffer, fall in love, set goals for themselves, and so on. Therefore, it is open to the atheist to maintain that it is precisely the sorts of non-moral properties of human beings that Craig implicitly denies in his 'nothing more than' characterization of humans in a godless universe that grounds human moral rights and obligations.[51]

Wielenberg needs to be a little more genial when he reads Christian theists. Craig is comparing naturalism and theism on a barebones level and asks himself how each of these competing worldviews informs anthropology. Are humans intrinsically valuable in a valueless universe? Are they valuable in a theistic universe? It is not possible for the naturalist to consistently argue that human beings are different in kind from animals given that they must believe that the universe is utterly valueless.

But on a theistic view, there is a meaningful context for intrinsically valuable persons to evolve in it. *Contra* Wielenberg, value cannot pop out of a valuelessness universe "sometimes." It does not make sense for the naturalist to invoke all of the values that they do (as if these values were contrary to the theistic value systems). The theist will agree with most, if not all, of the moral values that atheistic moral realists want to uphold and defend.

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[49] Response found in Craig, "The Indispensability of Theological Meta-ethical Foundations for Morality," 9-12.

[50] Some examples of voluntarists and thus strong divine command theorists would include William of Ockham and Descartes. Strong divine command theorists maintain that God's will exclusively determines what constitutes moral norms. In this view God could have made adultery a morally excellent act. Such a view is subject to severe criticism. It lends credence to the view that God is manipulative and not concerned with guiding us to becoming morally excellent. Modified divine command theories are quite compatible with traditional natural law theories. For more on this see, Craig A. Boyd, *A Shared Morality: A Narrative Defense of Natural Law Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2007), 121-160.

[51] Wielenberg, "In Defense of Non-Natural, Non-Theistic Moral Realism," 35.

The Necessity of Living the Christian Moral Life

Unlike the acquired virtues, the infused virtues are given to those persons who entrust themselves in faith to God's revelation in Christ.[52] The infusion of divine grace into the lives of believers provides a safer and surer performance of the acquired virtues that can be attained through human striving alone, animating and securing persons toward their final end. Healing the human person's wounded human nature, God brings the acquired virtues to fulfillment by elevating believers to perform supernaturally moral acts.[53] According to St. Thomas Aquinas, the complete and final end for human beings is necessary but unattainable for human beings to achieve through their own intellectual and moral striving in this lifetime. Hence, the infusion of grace, which expresses itself in the infused virtues, does not suppress our naturally endowed human appetites, but reorders and conforms them to right reasoning about the world and other supernatural realities.[54]

While the natural moral law prescribes certain actions, virtue ethics is more agent-centered, concentrating on the kind of person that one is becoming. In Aquinas's view, these ethical systems are not in opposition to one another, but are mutually reinforcing. As the prominent Thomistic scholar, Servais Pinckaers, states: "For St. Thomas, virtues were more important than precepts, since they constituted the end and perfection of the inclinations. Furthermore, through the exercise of virtues there came about, at the center of free will, a personal conformity, to inclinations and natural law. Thus there was a profound continuity between our inclinations, natural law, and the virtues, within personal, free actions. There was no break separating inclinations from freedom or law from virtues, as happens in casuistical ethics."[55] The virtuous person is disposed to abide by the precepts of the natural moral law. Continuous observance of its precepts helps one to become more virtuous.

Proponents of virtue ethics presuppose the existence and knowability of moral norms.[56] If the virtue ethicist did not have this presupposition, then virtues must be considered as mere skills or habits. Within this reductive view of virtues one could develop the "skill" of torturing children and call it virtuous. But such a view is preposterous; we know that torture is not virtuous, but is evil and not in need of epistemological justification to explain why it is evil. Because the building up of virtue and the observance of objective moral norms are mutually reinforcing, divine grace helps one to become more virtuous and to abide by the precepts of the natural law at a level that cannot be achieved through human striving alone.

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[52] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II.62.1, 63.1.

[53] Ibid, I-II.2.1.

[54] Diana Fritz Cates, *Choosing to Feel: Virtue, Friendship, and Compassion for Friends* (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1997), 31.

[55] Servais Pinckaers, *The Sources of Christian Ethics*, trans. Sr. Mary Thomas Noble (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1995),453.

[56] Julia Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 9, 10. As she keenly observes, "all ancient theories understand a virtue to be, at least, a disposition to do the morally right thing; but the notion of the morally right thing to do is not defined or justified in terms of (still less reduced to) the disposition to do what will produce or sustain the virtue. We need to grasp in its own right what is the morally right thing to do. Indeed, if we do not do this, we will not have understood what makes this disposition a *virtue*, rather than some disposition which does not involve morality."

Other than merely stating that God's grace makes believers more virtuous, there are many reasons that can explain how Christian belief in God makes a moral difference in the lives of believers (and therefore in society as well). Only someone who has faith will recognize the effects of receiving the infused virtues by divine grace, but reason can apprehend the intrinsic connection between someone who believes in Christianity and the way in which this is thought to lead one to stronger forms of moral motivation. Let us now turn to those reasons.

First, because human life does not end at the grave in a Christian universe, all persons are held accountable for their earthly actions. In the end the scales of final justice will be balanced, and righteousness will prevail over evil. In turn, every decision that is made by the Christian in this lifetime has eternal significance because there is something to hope for in the end.[57] Christian believers can, therefore, make decisions that run highly against contrarian pressures and embrace acts of extreme self-sacrifice for the greater good.[58] As Catholic philosopher Linda Zagzebski emphasizes: "the moral life involves more than time and effort. At least some of the time it involves the sacrifice of self-interest. It is not rational, however, to give up a known good unless it is probable that the sacrifice really is for a greater good."[59]

Second, belief in God provides moral resolution in a world which is highly pluralistic and uncertain with respect to moral matters.[60] Moral pluralism can easily lead to moral skepticism and despair, making it easy, if not inevitable, to doubt the moral efficacy of human beings altogether. Paul Copan states, "The problem with naturalistic evolution is that not only is objective morality undermined; so is rational thought. Our beliefs—moral or epistemic—may help us survive, but we can have no confidence that they are true."[61] Sometimes moral skepticism makes it seemingly irrational to sacrifice oneself for another for their greater good because there is no guarantee that this is precisely what is needed in a particular situation in a certain ethical context.

In this way, skepticism can lead to a deprivation in the motivating force in the building of virtue. As Zagzebski points out, moral skepticism "does not take away the natural desire to be moral, but it does take away the motivating force because morality is intimately connected with feelings, commitments, sacrifices, expectations, and hopes. The moral life involves risk; both because of the personal sacrifices it requires and because of the emotional

[57] Cf. Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 156, 157. Here he writes that "naturalism implies that most people are doomed to live worthless or near worthless lives. There is room to debate the percentages here, but naturalism surely implies that many people have lived and will live such lives. If this is correct, then we can see why it might be hard for many people to believe naturalism; is it possible to live by a creed that implies one is doomed to live a worthless life? At the very least, a naturalistic universe allows for genuinely hopeless situations. Christianity, by contrast, offers hope to anyone, regardless of the situation. There is always the hope of eternal salvation. The transcendental temptation is hard to resist: if naturalism is true, then many people will find that '[r}eality, looked at steadily, is unbearable.'"

[58] Craig, "The Indispensability of Theological Meta-ethical Foundations for Morality," 9-12.

[59] Linda Zagzebski, "Does Ethics Need God?" *Faith and Philosophy*, vol. 4, no. 3, (July 1987), 295.

[60] Cf. Robert Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods*, 179-182.

[61] Copan, "God, Naturalism, and the Foundations of Morality," 153.

commitments it involves."[62] What is needed to overcome this is something that can provide moral guidance—such as divine providence.

Third, if one embraces the moral point of view, then they need the satisfaction of knowing that they will have a reasonable chance of success at being moral. Naturalists do not have the benefit of knowing that they will have a good chance of success at being moral because there are so many factors outside of their control that prevent them from reaching their full potential within the limited amount of time they have to live. Robert Adams observes: "Having to regard it as very likely that the history of the universe will not be good on the whole, no matter what one does, seems apt to induce a cynical sense of futility about the moral life, undermining one's moral resolve and one's interest in moral consequences."[63] Belief in the Christian God, by contrast, helps one to overcome moral weakness and inefficacy when facing the difficulties of moral living. The grace that manifests itself in the infused virtues provides one with a greater chance of moral success in facing the challenge of living the moral life.

Fourth, while observations from history strongly suggest that belief in the Christian God has led to an improvement in the physical, scientific, artistic, social, and political lives of countless people, the same cannot be said in non-Christian historical and cultural contexts.[64] Livio Melina is bold when he affirms that, "outside of Christianity . . . it is humanly impossible to live Christian values. In our day is being revealed more and more the face of a non-Christian existence, and the emptiness and fear that this portends."[65] Christ's supernatural work is seen in the lives of many Christians across the ages, manifested in the infused virtues. The moral transformation of so many people in so many different cultures is so impressive and attractive that it requires an extraordinary explanation. As the First Vatican Council declared, the Christian Church is a "moral miracle."

Fifth, Christian belief of the communion of saints helps believers to live a more moral life by removing the sense of cosmic loneliness, which can lead to despair. At the heart of this doctrine is the belief that there is a communication of spiritual gifts among all Christians. This sharing includes those who have passed into the next lifetime. With this conception of spiritual communication in mind, believers become more conscious of their obligation to contribute to the common good and also the extent to which they are indebted to others for their own spiritual blessings. All believers, regardless of their situation—no matter how dismal it may appear—can contribute to the betterment of the world through their lived

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[62] Zagzebski, "Does Ethics Need God?" 299.

[63] Robert Adams, "Moral Arguments for Theistic Belief," from *Rationality and Religious Belief*, ed. C.F. Delaney (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1979), 127.

[64] Rodney Stark, *For the Glory of God: How Monotheism Led to Reformations, Science, Witch-Hunts, and the End of Slavery*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); idem, *The Victory of Reason: How Christianity Led to Freedom, Capitalism and Western Success* (New York: Random House Publishing, 2005); idem., *One True God: The Historical Consequences of Monotheism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Thomas E. Woods, *How the Catholic Church Built Western Civilization* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery Publishing, 2005); Alvin J. Schmidt, *How Christianity Changed the World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing, 2004).

[65] Livio Melina, *Sharing in Christ's Virtues: For A Renewal of Moral Theology in Light of* Veritatis Splendor*,* trans. William E. May (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 2001), 22.

example, prayer, and other spiritual sacrifices (even if they are performed alone or in secret).[66]

In response to arguments like these, Wielenberg has given relatively few responses. In one place he replies that many Christians have been just as vicious as the worst unbelievers. But at most this only shows how much worse believers are without the grace of God.[67] One remembers the famous novelist, Evelyn Waugh, who once responded to the question, "How can a Catholic like you be so debauched?" by noting that he would be much worse if he was not a Catholic! The holy change that arises may not be as noticeable as some would like, but the point is that there is change to some degree. As theologian Diana Fritz Cates keenly points out, "We would expect this alteration to effect changes in our habits of action and passion. But we would not expect these changes to be radical in persons who already possess a significant amount of acquired virtue."[68] The change in holiness is somewhat relative (and remains relative within the believing community). Grace affects some individuals in different ways and in different degrees.

Wielenberg responds to the first argument in this section by noting that it "fails because it is based on what Paul Edwards (2000) calls a 'curious and totally arbitrary preference of the future to the present. . . . Yes, death awaits us all, and in the end we will turn to nothing more than food for worms—but the proper reaction to this fact is not to give up but rather to get moving!"[69] But why should persons "get moving" instead of giving up if naturalism is true? It does seem like the naturalist can provide a compelling reason in response to this question (without borrowing from the theistic worldview in the process). As I have shown in the first section of this essay, naturalism cannot account for the objectivity of moral values.

When Wielenberg isolates what he calls the "final outcome argument" from the "God as the source of ethics argument," it becomes easy for him to dismantle the former.[70] Belief in the afterlife is just one aspect of the Christian faith that is thought to facilitate moral motivation. The other aspect is that God provides human beings with value throughout their earthly lives. These two aspects are mutually reinforcing and necessarily connected. On the one hand, this lifetime takes on eternal significance in a Christian universe because the scales of justice will eventually be balanced in the end. Righteousness will be vindicated.

On the other hand, Christians maintain that the way persons live out their earthly lives in response to God's grace will eventually determine their ultimate fate. Further, the meaning of the incarnation denotes that the physical world is to be affirmed and renewed for the better in the here and now, not avoided. If Christians were really Gnostics in disguise, then it is understandable why someone would become less caring about life (hence, it would be understandable for Wielenberg to isolate what he calls the "final outcome argument" from the "God as the source of ethics" argument to knock the former down in one fell swoop). While complete personal discontinuity between this lifetime and the next could steer persons

[66] Yves Congar, *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, trans. David Smith (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 2000), II: 60, 61.

[67] Glenn B. Siniscalchi, "Evangelization and the New Atheism," *American Theological Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (July 15, 2009), 29-42.

[68] Fritz Cates, *Choosing to Feel*, 44.

[69] Wielenberg, *Value and Virtue in a Godless Universe*, 29, 30.

[70] Ibid., 29.

down the path of earthly indifference, belief in the afterlife and personal continuity between this lifetime and the next helps believers to care more about life in the here and now.

Elsewhere he argues that belief in divine providence (or final reward in heaven) can make Christians care less about this lifetime, and, in the worst case scenario, it can lead to religious violence.[71] But in every case of Christian related violence, what we are dealing with are reductive understandings of Christian faith, not healthy faith. This is a subject I have addressed in another issue of *American Theological Inquiry*.[72]

Conclusion

Although Wielenberg recognizes that moral norms can be known and lived out by performing intrinsically virtuous acts, he refuses to accept the notion of the infused virtues. The fallacy of this view consists in his affirmation that objective moral norms can exist without God. But the only way to account for moral norms is to posit a personal transcendent being who is good, changeless, holy, spiritual, and one. Insofar as we affirm that moral norms exist through our endorsement of virtue ethics, we also have good practical grounds for believing in God. I provide this moral argument as an invitation for atheistic moral realists such as Wielenberg to take that extra step in faith in order to entrust themselves to Jesus Christ. And in so doing, this will provide the necessary ingredient to live out the virtues in a heightened way. Certainly, in the Thomist school of theology, the acquired virtues structure our cognitive faculties to know that God exists, disposing "all the powers of the human being for communion with divine love."[73] Since Wielenberg already accepts the objectivity and binding power of moral norms, he ought to believe in the Christian God.

With respect to the problem of moral equality between Christians and unbelievers, this is not necessarily true. There are a number of compelling reasons why explicit belief in God provides individuals with additional motivation to abide by common moral standards. In this way, the honest unbeliever can see the difference that Christian faith makes "on earth as it is in heaven."

[71] Ibid., 89, 91.

[72] Glenn B. Siniscalchi, "Evangelization and the New Atheism," *American Theological Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (July 15, 2009), 29-42.

[73] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, N. 1804.

THE DYNAMIC, RELATIONAL, AND LOVING PURPOSE OF GOD

J. Lyle Story[1]

Since Jesus ushered in the "already but not yet" of the Kingdom of God through his person, words and works, it is important to explore the divine purpose at work through him. Since the Kingdom belongs to God and since God is a person, the advent of the Kingdom of God must be understood in light of God's dynamic and relational purpose and his feeling involvement with people. Many textbooks on the NT and systematic theology discuss the nature of God and his attributes; in doing so, the authors concentrate their attention on the decrees of God as if God is the divine legislator who sets forth an unalterable plan that will and must be meticulously followed. Often, such writers imply or posit a Greek view of a static God with numerous attributes, but they fail to see that the divine purpose is an outgrowth of God's heart of love. In a static view of God and the world, laws regulate everything, leading to a rigid predestination and universal determinism, a view that is often allied with a reformed position. A static position reveals a God who is the prime cause with secondary causes. However, God is a person who seeks to be dynamically and relationally involved with people; he desires the best for people, whom he comes to save in the person of Jesus. It is nigh impossible to be related to God as a friend when he is regarded simply in causal categories. The NT narrates the loving and responsive activity of God through the person of his Son; he is affected by humans and their free choices, whether for good or evil and is eager to share the wondrous future for those who love him.

The divine purpose, evident in the NT, is also included in the very fact of divine creation. At every stage of the first creation narrative (Gen. 1:1-2:3), God assesses each additional part of creation as "good," while the sixth day highlights the creation of the human person, with the assessment, it is "very good" (1:31). The same God who creates the universe and humanity desires relationship, even with the risk of the misuse of freedom by free moral agents. This is why the NT describes the work of salvation from the "foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4; I Pet. 1:20). The idea of divine purpose is fundamental for understanding the writings of the NT. Although there is no one passage that fully describes the divine purpose, John 3:16 perhaps comes the closest to describing the loving purpose of God. Elsewhere, it is expressed in different ways or is assumed by the NT writers. The NT mentions various aspects or phases of God's purpose, but in ways that transcend human language that is often expressed in the language of "mystery." Many others express God's ultimate purpose for the humanity and the universe. *God's purpose embraces various phases or aspects that are to be subsumed under God's ultimate purpose for the glory of God that is dynamic, relational and loving. God's glory, Jesus' glory and the glory of the disciples are intertwined—which will be consummated at the end, when the universe will also transformed.*

Various Terms Related to the Divine Purpose

We begin with various verbs, nouns and conjunctions that express purpose. Some of these purposes are phases, stages or aspects of the divine purpose, while others express

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God's ultimate purpose—the ultimate goal that the Trinitarian fellowship is pursuing. Thus, a leper is healed by Jesus' will to heal that refers to this distinctive context (Mk. 1:41-45) and can be subsumed under the broader purpose of God's ultimate goal. However, the story itself does not indicate God's ultimate goal, other than affirming Jesus' compassionate care and beneficent action for an outcast person.

Verbs and Nouns of Purpose

The verb, "wish to have, desire, want" (θέλω) and the noun "what one wishes, desires" (θέλημα).[2] The word family expresses the powerful and resolute will of God in gifting different individuals with charismatic gifts (I Cor. 12:18), the transformed resurrection body (I Cor. 15:38), the *willing* and mysterious movement of the Spirit (Jn. 3:8), and God's *want* to save all: "This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who *wants* all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:3-4). The terms reveal the independent power of God to act in a free manner according to his desires. In Rom. 9:18, 22, the verbal forms express God's free response of mercy for those who commit themselves to him or hardening of those who have rejected the Son. The "desire" of God is expressed in Col. 1:27 as the revelation of the divine mystery, which includes the Gentiles; thereby they can experience "Christ in you, the hope of glory." In accord with the divine wish, Jesus' *desires* disciples, from whom he formally appoints twelve (Mk. 3:13). The verb also expresses Jesus' *willing choice* to heal a leper.[3] The divine desire is linked with Jesus' desire in raising the spiritually dead: "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life *to whom he desires to give it*" (οὕτως καὶ ὁ υἱὸς *οὓς θέλει* ζῳοποιεῖ Jn. 5:21). The synthesis of Jesus' desire with God's desire is also expressed in Jesus' Gethsemane prayer, "Yet not what I desire, but what *you desire*" (ἀλλ᾽ οὐ τί ἐγὼ θέλω ἀλλὰ τί σύ Mk. 14:36). Even though Jesus may possess independent desires, which may work at cross-purposes with God, nonetheless he chooses to align his desires with his Father.

The verb, "wish, want or desire" (βούλομαι) with a following infinitive and the noun, "purpose, counsel" (βουλή). Since this word family is usually associated with the rational will, it is used sparingly of God, his Son or his Spirit in the NT, since there is a mysterious element in God's purpose. Both the verb and noun are used in Heb. 6:17 as the greater part of a lesser-greater argument ("light and heavy"), in which human oaths are used as a foil to express the certainty of the divine oath: "Because God *wanted* to make the unchanging nature of his *purpose* clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath." His purpose is clearly mysterious and cannot be ascertained by human reason but by divine revelation. In II Pet. 3:19, the divine delay of the Parousia is due to the grace of divine patience, since God was "*not wanting* (μὴ βουλόμενός) anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance." He waits for the most favorable circumstances for the Day of the Lord, wanting for the greatest possible response to the Son and thus, God delays the Parousia. The use of the verb in James 1:18 is part of a larger argument in which God's good and consistent nature is contrasted with the progression of sin and death. God gives good and perfect gifts, one of

[2] BDAG, 354-55.

[3] "If *you are willing*, you can make me clean" (ἐὰν *θέλῃς* δύνασαί με καθαρίσαι) is followed by the expression of Jesus' will: "*I am willing* . . . be clean" (*θέλω*, καθαρίσθητι) Mk. 1:41.

which is his *willing choice* (βουληθεὶς) to give us "birth[4] by a word of truth" with the positive goal that "we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." The verb is also used of Jesus in his thanksgiving-prayer (Matt. 11:25-30), when he express joy for those to whom he *wills* to impart the new and mediated relationship of believers with God, while he alone enjoys an unmediated relationship with the Father (11:27). The verb also expresses the independent wish of the Holy Spirit who distributes spiritual gifts "to those whom he *wishes/wills*" (I Cor. 12:11).

The verb, "to be about to" (μέλλω) followed by a complementary infinitive. The verb indicates that something is bound to occur and frequently refers to God's desire or necessary will and can be translated as "must." Some of the complementary infinitives reflect Jesus' forthcoming passion, "the Son of Man *is about to suffer* by them" (Matt. 17:12), "*is about to be* delivered into the hands of men" (17:22; Lk. 9:44). The fourth gospel notes with irony, that Caiaphas "prophesied" that "Jesus was *about to die*" (ἔμελλεν Ἰησοῦς ἀποθνῄσκειν) not only for the Jewish people but for the scattered people of God—to bring together one people (Jn. 11:51-52). What Jesus experiences is not happenstance but reflects God's intention that something should occur. The verb also expresses God's will in terms of his act of crediting righteousness to his people, "but also for us, who *are about to* be credited" righteousness, to those who believe" (Rom. 8:24). In Heb. 1:14, the verbal form introduces the wonder of salvation and the role of angels or ministering spirits who are sent to serve *those who are about to inherit salvation* (διὰ τοὺς μέλλοντας κληρονομεῖν σωτηρίαν). Standing behind such expressions of the verb, "I am about to," is a willing and purposeful God who works out his intent for the salvation of people.

The impersonal verb, "it is necessary, one must or has to" (δεῖ) with a complementary infinitive. The form is often used with the infinitive, "to come to pass" (γίνεσθαι) to indicate that certain actions should and must occur. In contrast to Greek thought which spoke of a neutral deity or fate, which leads to a neutral necessity, the use of the verb, "it is necessary" is often seen in the NT to express the will and purpose of God, "who personally summons man and which fashions history according to its plan."[5] Walter Grundmann notes that of the 102 occurrences of the impersonal verb, "it is necessary," 41 occurrences are found in Luke-Acts. Frequently, Jesus clashes with the "*must*" (δεῖ) of Jewish law when he follows the will of God. For example, Jesus disturbs the Synagogue president when he heals the crippled woman on the Sabbath; the official wishes that Jesus would heal on another day (Lk. 13:15). Jesus responds with the rhetorical question, "*was it not necessary* (ἔδει should") that this woman be freed from what bound her—on the Sabbath?" (13:16). In response to the older brother, who chooses to stay outside and refuses to come in "out of the cold," it refers to the *necessity* of celebration and joy with the Father and with God, Jesus and the angels, over the new life of the wayward son (Lk. 15:32). God's "necessity" includes a contagious merriment and joy that must be shared.

The divine "must" leads Jesus through his ministry (4:43—"to preach the Kingdom of God"; 13:33—"I *must* keep going today and tomorrow and the next day"; 19:15—*it is necessary* for Jesus to stay at Zacchaeus' house). This necessity governs his commitment to the

[4] It is interesting that the verb "to give us birth" usually denotes the female role in giving birth; the same verb is used negatively in v. 15, of "sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death."

[5] W. Grundmann, "δεῖ," *TDNT*, vol. II, 22.

various elements of the passion; in Matt. 16:21, "*it is necessary*" for Jesus "to depart," "to suffer many things," "to be killed" and "to be raised." The divine "*must*" leads Jesus to adopt the role of God's Servant in the Passion, "And he was numbered with the transgressors" (Lk. 22:37). In addition, the divine "must" includes his glory, when "he *must* remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything" (Acts 3:21). *Divine necessity* will also govern the preaching of the gospel in the whole world before the end comes (Matt. 24:6).

Further, the impersonal verb describes God's saving activity revealed with the "birth from on high" (Jn. 3:7), in the salvation through Jesus' name, "in which *it is necessary* for us to be saved" (Acts 4:12). The verb is used by the Philippian jailor and Peter, "What *is it necessary* for me to do that I might be saved?" (τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σῶθω) to which Peter announces the *necessity* of personal trust in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:30).

The verb, "consider good, be well pleased, take pleasure, delight" (εὐδοκέω) and the noun, "good will, favor, good pleasure" (εὐδοκία). The terms express God's good pleasure; even in secular literature, the terms express the good pleasure and will of a king. Since God is not coerced by any outside pressure, the terms communicate God's pleasure that a certain thing should come to pass. The verb, "to take pleasure" "brings out most strongly the emotional side of the love of Him"[6] who chooses. It is used of the Father's good pleasure that he enjoys in Jesus' baptism, "in you *I am well pleased*" (Mk. 1:11). When the verb is used of God, it can refer to the divine pleasure that God takes in his little flock, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father *has been pleased* to give you the kingdom" (Lk. 12:32). Schrenk notes that the verb refers "to the divine counsel of grace, which is free and independent of any human influence and which has as its goal the accomplishment of salvation, the revelation of grace and the deliverance of the community in the βασιλεία."[7] Paul refers God's grace and *pleasure* in choosing Paul to preach the good news to the Gentiles (Gal. 1:15); a person or organizations are not responsible for Paul's appointment as an apostle (Gal. 1:1).[8] The divine *pleasure* is also evident in the foolishness of preaching to save the ones who believe (I Cor. 1:21) and the *delight* that God takes in the "fullness" that dwells in Jesus (Col. 1:19) and leads to reconciliation.

The noun, "good pleasure" (εὐδοκία) is predominantly used of divine pleasure and is expressed in Jesus' thanksgiving prayer (Matt. 11:25-30). It was the Father's *good pleasure* that he should hide the knowledge of the Son from the wise and revealed it to babes (11:26). Paul's request for the Thessalonians is that God's *good pleasure* may be worked out in the believers (II Thess. 1:11). In Philippians 2:13, God's good *pleasure* is the reason why the Philippians should "work out their salvation", for God is at work in them both to will and act. These are goals that are empowered by God's good pleasure. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul links "good pleasure" with the divine "will," "purpose," and "counsel" (Eph. 1:5, 9, 11) and are coordinate descriptions of divine grace. Schrenk notes, "In all of the descriptions of the divine will (θέλημα), the strongest expression is found in εὐδοκία."[9]

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[6] W. Schrenk, "εὐδοκέω", *TDNT,* vol. II, 740.

[7] Schrenk, 741.

[8] Paul's status as an apostle is "neither through men nor through a man" (οὐκ ἀνθρώπων οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἀνθρώπου).

[9] Schrenk, 747.

This word family counters the notion of a divine legislator, who issues decrees; it expresses *God's good pleasure and feeling involvement with humanity.*

The verbs "I send" (πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω). The two verbs are frequently used of God who sends someone (notably Jesus) for a specific purpose. Frequently the two verbs are used interchangeably with respect to God's sending. Generally, the word "send" (πέμπω) emphasizes the divine participatory activity of sending while the verb "send" (ἀποστέλλω) refers to God's commission that the "sent one" adequately represents God. In particular, in John's gospel, the verb ἀποστέλλω highlights the truth that God stands behind the person, words and works of Jesus: "that the Father *has sent* me" (Jn. 5:36); "for him whom *he has sent*, him" (5:38); "on him whom *he has sent*" (6:29); "as the living Father *has sent* me" (6:57); "I have not come on my own, but *he sent me*" (8:42). Rengstorf summarizes the two verbs, "His concern is to ground His authority in that of God as the One who is responsible for His words and works and who guarantees their right and truth. On the other hand, He uses the formula "ὁ πέμψας με (πατήρ), ("the Father who sent me"—writer's addition) to affirm the participation of God in his work, in the *actio* of sending."[10] Thus, Jesus' words and works are grounded in the words and works of the Father; they originate from God. In other places the verb, "to send" (ἀποστέλλω) designates a sending forth in service with the full authority and commission of Jesus: "these twelve Jesus *sent forth* (Matt. 10:5), "*I send* you as sheep in the midst of wolves" (Matt. 10:15); "When *I sent* you forth without purse (Lk. 22:35); "how can they preach unless *they are sent*" (Rom. 10:15); "for Christ did not *send* me to baptize, but to preach" (I Cor. 1:17).

The verb, "I come" (ἔρχομαι). When the verb is spoken of Jesus or the Kingdom of God, it expresses God's purposeful action. Generally, it signifies the coming of God for help and salvation; it is not limited to a local coming. It implies God's purposeful will. Jesus *comes* to announce the reign of God (Mk. 1:38), to call sinners to repentance (Mk. 2:17), to kindle a fire on earth (Lk. 12:49), to create a new way of life (Matt. 5:17) and to force people to make a critical decision (Matt. 10:34ff.). As noted in BDAG, it can convey the sense of "appear, make an appearance, or come before the public."[11] Accordingly, the term is used of the Messiah, "*the one whom comes* after me, the one who is stronger" (Lk. 3:16); "I know that the Messiah *is coming*, which is called Christ: when he comes" (Jn. 4:25); "When the Messiah *comes*" (Jn. 7:27); "When the Messiah *comes*, will he do greater things?" (Jn. 7:31); "Blessed is *he who comes* in the name of the Lord" in connection with Jesus' entry into Jerusalem" (Matt. 11:10). In contrast to the religious leaders (thieves) who *come* to steal, kill and destroy, Jesus *comes* to give life and life abundant" (Jn. 10:10). The verb is frequent in John's gospel; "the idea of Jesus' having come from heaven to earth, sent by the Father, is of considerable importance"[12] (see Jn. 6:14; 11:27). Schneider notes of John's gospel, "He does not come in his own name, but in the name of the Father (5:34). Since He is light and life by nature, the purpose of His coming is accordingly to bring light and life into the dark and dead world (Jn. 10:10; 12:46)."[13]

[10] Rengstorf, "ἀποστέλλω," *TDNT,* vol. I, 405.
[11] BDAG, 310.
[12] BDAG, 311.
[13] Schneider, "ἔρχομαι," *TDNT*, vol. II, 678

The "hour" that *comes* is a major motif in the fourth gospel, which is the moment of glorification on the cross—an event of unique importance (Jn. 12:34, 37; 13:1; 16:32; 17:1). His very *coming* as light effects a crisis (κρίσις) in which people must decide for or against him (Jn. 3:17-21). Jesus defines his own purpose in *coming* to bear witness to the truth (18:37). Further, Jesus reveals that his *coming* is not for the purpose of condemning the world but for saving the world (12:47). The introduction to the foot-washing story announces that Jesus' hour *has come* (Jn. 13:1) and that *he came* from God (v. 3). Verse 1 encompasses the whole of the incarnation, taking into purview, Jesus' origin, purposeful mission, and destination as a grand parabola (similar to Phil. 2:5-11). Jesus' announcement of his impending departure is followed immediately by the affirmation of his love for his own (13:1). The expression "to the end" εἰς τέλος, means also, "to the uttermost, completely" or "the most that anyone could love them," i.e. all the way to the cross.[14] "The description of the mind of Jesus facing his death is impressive, including his awareness that his betrayer is an accomplice of the evil one (13:2)."[15] It is striking that John establishes Jesus' undying love for his disciples before any part of the Passion occurs.

Frequently, the verb refers to the *coming* of the Son of Man at the Parousia, i.e., the return of Jesus from his home: Matt. 10:23; Acts 1:11; I Cor. 4:5; 11:26; Matt. 16:27; 25:31. Many parables articulate the *coming* of God in judgment (Matt. 21:40; Lk. 13:6-9; Matt. 25:19; Lk. 19:13ff.). Jesus links the coming of the Paraclete in between his first and second comings (Jn. 15:26; 16:8, 13). "As Jesus was sent by God and came to earth, so the Paraclete is sent by the exalted Christ and comes to His community."[16] The Paraclete's purpose includes many things: effecting a mutual indwelling, revealing truth, reminding the community of the Jesus-message, teaching, confronting the aggressive world and serving as an advocate for believers.

The verb "to come" often expresses purpose when it is linked with an infinitive: "I did not *come* to destroy the law or the prophets but to fulfill them" (Matt. 5:17); "I did not *come* to bring peace . . . " (Matt. 10:34); "For the Son of Man *came* to seek and save what was lost" (Lk. 19:10).

The verb, "set before, display publicly, plan, intend to do something" (προτίθημι) and the noun, "plan, purpose, resolve, will" (πρόθεσις). In Romans 3:21-26, Paul speaks of a divine resolve that is transparent when he states that God has chosen to effect redemption through Jesus as a public expiation for the sin of a broken humanity. The display suggests the execution of God's plan in a public manner, "whom God *has set forth* publicly as a means of expiation (mercy seat)."[17] The word-family reflects God's primal decision for the saving event in Jesus. People are called according to *God's saving purpose* of goodness (Rom. 8:28) that sustains believers with a solid hope. God's purpose (πρόθεσις) "means a Yes to Israel, yet even in this area it is not rigid, but in each instance decides freely in what way and by what human agents the promise will be fulfilled."[18] In Eph. 1:9ff., Paul links the divine *will* (θέλημα), God's *good-pleasure* (εὐδοκία) and his *free resolve* (προτίθημι), established from the beginning

[14] BAG, p. 229a.

[15] Cullen I K Story, *The Fourth Gospel*: *ItsPurpose, Pattern and Power,* (Shippensburg, PA: Ragged Edge Press, 1996), 275.

[16] Schneider, 673.

[17] Maurer, "προτίθημι, πρόθεσις," *TDNT,* vol. VIII, 166.

[18] Maurer, 167.

with Jesus, "before the foundation of the world" (1:4). In v. 11, other similar or identical terms emerge: "divine call" (κληρόω), "deciding beforehand" (προορίζω), "public plan" (πρόθεσις), "purpose" (βουλή) and "will" (θέλημα). Ultimately, God's saving plan will lead to "the praise of his glory" (1:14). God has revealed the secret of his saving plan to sum up all things in Jesus (1:10) according to his *"good pleasure"* (1:9).

The verb, "choose someone for oneself" (ἐκλέγομαι), the noun, "selection, choice" (ἐκλογή) and the adjective "chosen, select" (ἐκλεκτός). The verb indicates the purpose of God's choice: "God *chose* the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God *chose* the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (I Cor. 1:27). God *chooses* to act in ways that appear to be foolish and weak. In Eph. 1:4, Paul states that "God *has chosen* us that we might be holy"—clearly a statement of divine purpose, which is positioned within a context of love; the divine choice is not a sterile selection of people. In Acts, Paul states the divine purpose in his calling as an apostle, "In your presence God *chose* that they were to hear through my mouth" (Acts 15:7). Similarly, James states that God *chose* the poor that they might be rich in faith (James 2:5). The verb is used in the context of friendship and privileged communication that Jesus shares with his disciples; Jesus affirms that he has *chosen* the twelve in order that they might produce fruit which remains, i.e., people who *come* to Jesus (Jn. 15:16).[19] The noun "selection, choice" is used of Paul as a "*vessel of choice*"[20] or "*chosen vessel*" with the vocation of reaching the Gentile world (Acts 9:15). The term covers the *selection* of Christians (II Pet. 1:10). In I Thess. 1, Paul celebrates the divine *choice* (v. 4) of the Thessalonian believers, and follows with several statements that indicate the signs that accompany God's *choice* of them: powerful preaching (v. 5), full conviction (v. 5), the Holy Spirit (v. 5), their imitation (v. 6), reception (v. 6), exemplary behavior (vss. 8-9) repentance (v. 9), service (v. 9) and their active waiting (v. 10) for the *Parousia.* The remnant of Israel is referred to as "a remnant *chosen* by grace" (Rom. 11:5). Grace reigns supreme in the divine choice.

The adjective, "chosen, select" applies to the people whom God has drawn to himself from humanity (Matt. 22:14) in contrast to the many who are called. The adjective is also used in apocalyptic passages referring to *chosen* or *elect* people (Mk. 13:20, 22, 27). Paul uses the term in Rom. 8:33 to refer to the confidence that believers may experience as the *chosen* of God; they can feel confidence even in the midst of accusation. Peter uses the adjective in several passages when he refers to Christians as "*chosen* according to God's foreknowledge" (I Pet. 1:1-2), "a *chosen* generation" (I Pet. 2:9) people who are built upon a "*chosen* and precious cornerstone"—Jesus (I Pet. 2:6). Taken as a whole, the word family expresses the freedom of God to act with loving choice.

The verb, "call" (καλέω) and the noun, "calling or call" (κλῆσις). From the broad sense of "summon" or "invite," emerge several NT sayings relative to the call of God: "And the God of grace *who called* you to his eternal glory in Christ" (I Pet. 5:10); "*called* unto eternal life" (I Tim. 6:12; "God *has called* you unto fellowship with his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (I Cor. 1:9); "*called* you from darkness unto his own light" (I Pet. 2:9); "he *called* me (Paul) by his grace" (Gal. 1:15); "for this *he called* you through our preaching (of the gospel), namely to obtain the glory" (II Thess. 2:14). Corresponding to the call is a host of Christian virtues,

[19] Outside of the Mashal of the Vine, the other two uses of "fruit" in John's gospel designate people (Jn. 4:36: 12:24).

[20] σκεῦος ἐκλογῆς Acts 9:15.

which express the purpose or goal of God's *calling*, in positive and negative manners: "to freedom" (Gal. 5:13); "not for impurity but for sanctification" (I Thess. 4:7); "*called* to one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4); "God *has called* us to live in peace" (I Cor. 7:15); "*called* to the peace of Christ in one body" (Col. 3:15); "*to call* sinners" (Mk. 2:17). The noun is similarly used with reference to the call of God: "the *call* that comes from God" (Rom. 11:29) as the basis for Jewish and Gentile inclusion into the one olive-tree (Rom. 11:11-24); "the hope that your *calling* brings you" (Eph. 4:4); "the hope to which God *calls*" (Eph. 1:18); "the upward *call* of God in Christ" (Phil. 3:14); "*a call* with a holy *calling*" (II Tim. 1:9). Generally, the verb signifies God's call of people to Jesus through his own means and for his purposes. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus' call reflects divine choice and saving action for those who are "called."

The verb, "decide upon beforehand, God's choice of someone or a group, appoint" (προορίζω ὁρίζω). Paul uses the verb twice in Rom. 8:29-30 along with two uses of the verb "call" (καλέω) and one use of the noun, "calling" (κλῆσις). The various forms suggest a chain-like relationship that begins with "love" and is climaxed by "glorification." It is used with respect to the "*ordained*" activity of God with respect to the conspirators against Jesus (Acts 4:28). God's choice is vitally connected with his love expressed in choosing people for adoption (Eph. 1:4-5). It also relates to the wisdom of God that is hidden before time, which also leads believers to their destined glory (I Cor. 2:7). Generally, the verb, "appoint" (ὁρίζω) is used with respect to Jesus, "through a man whom *he has appointed*" (Acts 17:31; see Acts 2:23, "Jesus was delivered according to the *determinate appointment* and decree of God"). In creedal form, Paul notes that according to his human nature, Jesus was also *appointed* by the Spirit of holiness, with power to be the Son of God" (Rom. 1:3-4). Seven of eight occurrences of the verb, "appoint" (ὁρίζω) describe the person and work of Jesus.

Conjunctions of Purpose

In addition to the numerous verbs and nouns that express purpose, there are also numerous conjunctions that are used to indicate the divine purpose at work: "unto, in order to" (εἰς sometimes εἰς τό with an infinitive of purpose); "so that, in order to" (πρός τό with an infinitive) in Acts 3:19, "*so that* your sins may be wiped out"; "for this purpose" (εἰς ὅ, εἰς τό or εἰς τοῦτο) in Mk. 1:38, Jesus refers to his need to preach in other towns, "*For that is why* I came out." The conjunctions "in order that" (ἵνα—used 655 times in the NT, or ὅπως—56 times) with the subjunctive mood dot the entire landscape of the NT and are used to express the divine purpose, "The Son of God was manifested *in order that* he might destroy the works of the devil" (I John 3:8); "I have come *in order that* they might have eternal life and have it abundantly" (Jn. 10:10). One of the purposes for a man's blindness is expressed as "*in order that* the works of God might be made manifest in him" (Jn. 9:3). The aged Simeon states that "this one (Jesus) is appointed *for* the falling and rising of many" (Lk. 2:34). Further, the signs of the Johannine Jesus serve for a judicial hardening or an awakening to faith (Jn. 12:40—same text from Isaiah is also used in Mk. 4:10 with respect to parables), which builds on the text of Isa. 6:9-10. By their free-will choices, people face the crisis-event of Jesus' coming and will then be awakened by their commitment or experience a divine hardening.

Taken as a whole, the various verbs, nouns, prepositions and conjunctions reflect many facets of God's purpose, and are opposite to the notion of a static divine lawmaker who

issues aloof decrees. Rather, the terms reflect God's dynamic and feeling involvement with people. The terms complement each other and offer a different perspective on how and why God is engaged with humans. His purposes are relational in that God wants people to know and experience his love for them. He wants people to be caught up into the Trinitarian fellowship, to experience grace and love. His purpose is positive in that he wants the best for a humanity that has gone astray and is in need of wholeness. The terms reflect a God who is affected by people with their various needs and problems, even for those who reject him; as a person, God is passionate and emotional when he responds to those who love or hate him. Further, God will go to the utmost length to elicit love from responsive people, even in the context of human rejection of God or his Son. God plans, purposes, desires, takes pleasure in, sends, comes, displays publicly, calls, appoints, chooses and delights—all for the betterment of needy persons in a broken world. When people overlook the dynamic and relational purpose of God, his work becomes a sort of mechanical necessity that is akin to the forces of nature. God's dynamic and relational purposes arise from God's free-will choice; his purpose is expressed by various terms or assumed by the writers of the NT. Thus, the NT mentions various aspects of God's purpose and readers of the NT are faced with the challenge of unifying numerous perspectives.

Before pursuing the ultimate purpose of God's glory as expressed in Jesus' prayer (John 17), we offer some comments about the use of the word-family (glory, glorify) in classical and NT Greek:

A Brief Excursus on the Noun "glory" (δόξα) and the Verb "I glorify" (δοξάζω).

There is a striking difference between the classical and biblical lexicons with respect to the meaning of the entries for the words δόξα and δοξάζω, which both occur in Jn. 17. In Liddell-Scott, the noun "glory" means "notion, mere opinion, judgment, fancy," and the verb means (also related to the verb δοκέω), "I think, seem, imagine or to possess an opinion or estimation of a person."[21] By way of contrast the biblical lexicon (BDAG) reveals that the noun means "brightness, splendor, radiance, glory or reflection," and is also given a final definition, "fame, renown, honor."[22] The related verb, "to glorify" is translated as "praise, honor, magnify, clothe in splendor, glorify."[23] In the LXX, the noun "glory" is the regular translation of the Hebrew word, כבוֹד, which means "weight, glory, honor, reputation," found extensively in the Psalms. The verb, כָּבֵד means "to be weighty (heavy), burdensome, honored." In the NT, there is an amazing lexicographical shift, from the classical understanding of "what one thinks, conjectures, or the opinion that one holds" to the biblical understanding of "honor, weightiness or glory that one ascribes to another." Kittel notes that when the LXX translators initiated the change; they "took a word for opinion which conveyed the sense of subjective human views and made it express something absolutely objective, i.e., the reality of God."[24] Building upon Hebrew usage and translation by the writers of the LXX, the noun may well be expressed by "impressiveness" and the verb might be well translated, "be carried away with the impressiveness [of God]."

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[21] Plato, *Timaeus* 46 *D* "*It is thought* (δοξάζεται) by the majority of writers"; Plato, *Theaetetus* 187 "This indeed, Socrates is called . . . *having an opinion*" (δοξάζειν); Aeschyklus, *Choephori* 844 "How can I suppose (δοξάσω) these things to be true? Liddell-Scott, 444.

[22] BDAG, 203-204.

[23] BDAG, 204.

[24] G. Kittel, "δόξα" *TDNT*, vol. II, 245.

The ideas of "weight" and "glory" are coordinated in II Cor. 4:17, "are working for us an eternal *weight* and *glory*—applied to believers. *We suggest that the word-family refers to God's impressiveness making itself felt in the lives of people in such a way as to summon the human response of loving adoration.* It is not God's very nature that is inaccessible to sinful humans but the manifestation of God's nature that can be experienced by people in their unredeemed condition. Support can be found in Moses' desire to see God's glory (Exod. 33:18). Moses is given an anthropomorphic response; he is denied access to God's glory, that is "the face of God" (v. 20—"you cannot see my face for no one may see me and live" (v. 20), but is granted access to God's back, i.e., "God's goodness, mercy, compassion and name (v. 19).[25] Indirectly, Yahweh communicates his goodness and his faithfulness through covenant relationship but Yahweh also refuses allow Moses to see God's face directly, that is God's glory, i.e., "the innermost secret of divinity."[26] Often, the OT and NT associate the glory of God with a "visible divine radiance,"[27] which is portrayed in the transfiguration-story as a proleptic anticipation of future glorification (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2-3; Lk. 9:29), which is interpreted as glory in II Pet. 1:17. "Glory" is used of the impressiveness, honor or praise, given to God or to Jesus (Jn. 11:41; Phil. 1:11; Eph. 1:6). In the Fourth Gospel, with three exceptions, all of the uses of the word family (noun and verb) refer to Jesus, to God and the believers; the exceptions include a false human glory that Jesus' critics give to each other wherein they fail to give God glory (Jn. 5:44; 12:43) and the prophesied death of Peter wherein he will give glory to God (21:19).

The Mutual and Reciprocal Goal of the Glory of God, Jesus and the Believers (Jn. 17).

When a stone is thrown into a lake it sets forth concentric circles that gravitate from the center, where the stone lands. In a similar manner, Jesus' prayer in the Upper Room encompasses three circles that work with centrifugal force:

Jesus prays for himself (Jn. 17:1-5)

Jesus prays for the disciples (vss. 6-19)

Jesus prays for those (world) who would believe in the witness of the disciples (vss. 20-26).[28] It is important to note that within this three-fold movement, "glory" (δόξα) is associated with the Father, the Son and the believers in the community of faith.

Within this matchless prayer we find a broad structure of: 1) imperative/wish-statements that are either preceded or followed by 2) the related grounds or explanation for the imperatives or wish-statements that lead to various 3) purpose statements.

1. The three imperatives are: "Glorify (δόξασον) the Son" (vss. 1, 5), "Keep (τήρησον) them (the twelve) in my name" (v. 11), and "Sanctify (ἁγίασον) them (the twelve) in the truth" (v. 17). Coordinated expressions are noted with various petitions or wish-statements: "I ask" (ἐρωτάω" in vss. 9 (twice), 15, 20 and I desire (θέλω) in v. 24.

[25] Samuel Terrien, *The Elusive Presence* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1978), 147.

[26] Terrien, 146.

[27] Kittel, vol. II, 247.

[28] We follow the paragraphing by Westcott and Hort and the UBS. Raymond Brown's commentary provides other possibilities in terms of the structure of the prayer. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (xiii-xxi)* (Anchor Bible) (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1970), 748-756.

2. The related grounds or explanation for the imperatives or wish statements include several statements in the indicative. For example, "because the hour has come" (v. 1) Jesus expresses the imperative, "Glorify your Son."

3. The purpose statements indicate the goal that the Father and his Son are pursuing. Within the prayer, there are 19 statements, introduced by the conjunction "in order that" (῞ινα of purpose) or "that, which" (῞ινα—with an object clause), which are all followed by the subjunctive mood.[29]

Jesus expresses God's purpose in the language of prayer as he fully identifies himself with the Father's purpose. Then he asks that God's purpose, with which he is identified, might be carried out in the life and destiny of his disciples. As Jesus aligns himself with the Father's purpose (vss. 1-5), he prays for the realization of that purpose in the life of the early community (vss. 6-19), with a solid witness to the world (vss. 20-26). The purpose of God is dynamic, flowing from the core of Jesus' relationship with the Father. It is also relational as it speaks of love and unity, which will mean a relational witness to the world. Jesus states that the world will believe as it witnesses the love and unity of believers. We should note that some of the imperatives and wish-statements reflect the immediate ends, which are phases within the entire process that issues in the glory of God.

God's ultimate goal is expressed under four aspects or phases with respect to: 1) God's glory, 2) Jesus' glory, 3) the glorification of believers, 4) the universe's restoration. Although, we list the first three aspects separately, in our discussion we cannot treat them separately since they are so dynamically and frequently entwined. Since the prayer of Jesus in Jn. 17 covers the first three items, the universe's restoration will find support in other NT passages. There is no aspect of creation which will remain unaffected by the divine purpose of glory.

John claims that the glory of God that filled the tent of meeting (Exod. 40:34) "tented among us" (ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν) . . . full of grace and truth," for, he claims "we beheld his glory" (1:14). "And now" (καὶ νῦν 17:5), with the cross so imminent, Jesus prays for the

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[29] v. 1—"*in order* that your Son may also glorify you,"
v. 2—"*in order that* he should give eternal life,"
v. 3—"*that* they might know" God and Jesus the sent one,
v. 4—"the work *which* you gave me that I do,"
v. 11-"*in order that* they might be one,"
v. 12-"*in order that* the Scripture might be fulfilled,"
v. 13-"*in order that* they might have my joy fulfilled,"
v. 15-"not *that* you should take them out of the world,"
-"*that* you should keep them"
v. 19-"*that* they also might be sanctified,"
v. 21-"*in order that* they all might be one,"
-"that they also may be one in us,"
-"*in order that* the world might believe,"
v. 22-"that they may be one, even as we are one,"
v. 23-"that they may be perfect in one,"
-"*in order that* the world may know that you sent me,"
v. 24-"I wish *that* where I am even those might be with me,"
-"*in order* that they might behold my glory,"
v. 26-"*in order that* the love with which you loved me might be in them."

glory of God to be visible in him (17:1, 5). From the first sign wherein Jesus manifested his glory in Cana (2:11) to the climactic sign in Bethany, with the raising of Lazarus (11:4, 40), Jesus' impressiveness shone through his life on earth, a glory which, nevertheless, could only be perceived by faith (2:11; 4:46-54; 11:40).

In the prayer, the Fourth Gospel reveals a clear reciprocity in the glory of God, Jesus and the believing disciples. Previously Jesus disclaimed his own glory (8:50, 54; 7:18), with his claim that it is the Father "who glorifies me" (8:54) and that "the Father is glorified in the Son" (14:13). Further, the glory that God gives to Jesus is for the sake of his disciples that he might grant life to them. God gives and Jesus receives glory, yet the very one who gives glory is glorified in the one who receives glory. And now, the Son who prays to be honored (17:1, 5), does so:

1. in order to honor the Father (v. 1),
2. in order to receive his pre-creation honor (v. 5),
3. in order to give honor to the believing disciples (vss. 22) and enable them to witness his pre-creation glory (v. 24).

These recipients of glory/honor are inseparable from each other.[30]

The grounds for the glorification of the Father and Son are initially expressed through: 1) the previous instruction in the upper-room discourse (13:1-16:33), 2) the importance of the present "hour," 3) the use of the verb "I give" (δίδωμι), 4) Jesus' gift of eternal life.

1. Previous instruction in the upper room discourse included the reciprocal glorification of God and the Son of Man (13:31-32); each glorifies the other. Further, the theme of glory is also inseparable from the experience of the disciples, evident in the new commandment of love (vss. 34-35) also evident in the *mashal* of the vine (15:9, 10, 12, 13, 17), which is also featured in the prayer of Jesus (17:23, 24, 26).
2. The glorification of the Son and the Father is signaled by the presence of the "hour" (v. 1). The presence of the "hour" (ὥρα) is contrasted with the "not yet" leit-motif of the "hour" (ὥρα) or "time" (καιρός). The two terms suggest a force that prevents a full and premature disclosure of Jesus, when the texts state that the "hour/time had not yet come" (2:4; 7:6; 7:30; 8:20). The presence of the "hour" in 17:1 repeats the affirmation of the presence of the hour (12:23, 27-twice; 13:1); the perfect tense, "the hour has come" (ἐλήλυθεν ὥρα) in 17:1, has set in motion the entire complex of Jesus' glorification. From 12:23, 27, readers learn that Jesus stands at the threshold of glorification through his death. Through the unmistakable parable, Jesus says that the greatest event in human history is the cross; there can be no fruit apart from the death and burial of a grain of wheat (Jesus).[31] In John's Gospel, the glorification is the honor that Jesus possesses, which is full of grace and truth (1:14), which is communicated to receptive believers (1:12), the whole of his earthly ministry (17:22-23), the cross when Jesus is lifted up (12:27-36), the resurrection/exaltation that will be manifest in the age to come (17:5, 24),

[30] See Rudolph Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John, Vol. 3* (New York: Crossroad, 1990), 170.

[31] For additional texts on "fruit," see 15:3-4, 16; 4:1-42—Samaritan conversion.

when believers would "behold Jesus' glory before the foundation of the earth" (17:24). In Jesus' prayer, the theme of "glory/honor" embraces the past, present and future of God, Jesus and the disciples. In terms of glorification through crucifixion, Leon Morris notes that Jesus "looks for glory in the last place that men would seek it, namely in the cross."[32] Frederick Godet interprets Jesus' request, "His petition is equivalent to saying: 'Grant me the Ascension that I may be able to bring to pass the Pentecost.'"[33]

3. In the introductory portion (vss. 1-5), the repeated use of the verb, "I give" (δίδωμι), also substantiates Jesus' request for the glorification of the Son.

   "You gave (ἔδωκας) to him authority" (v. 2)ἔ

   "All which you have given (δέδωκας) to him" (v. 2)

   "In order . . . he may give (δώσῃ) to them eternal life" (v. 2)

   "Having completed the work which you have given (δέδωκάς) me to do" (v. 4).

The various "givings" are all inseparable. The Father gives authority to give eternal life to those who are given to the Son by the Father—all of which embraces the mission that the Father has given to the Son.

Jesus' imperative for the glorification of the Son is also predicated upon the gift of eternal life, to all whom the Father has given to Jesus. This eternal life is equated with the personal and intimate knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ whom he has sent (vss. 2-3). Previously, eternal life was linked to: coming to Jesus (5:40; 6:35), perceiving the Son (6:40), "chewing" on Jesus' flesh (6:54), believing (3:15-16, 36; 5:24; 6:47). Now, eternal life is in apposition with knowledge of the Father and Jesus Christ, "the sent one." As Bultmann notes, knowledge of God is not "theoretical speculation"[34] but is deeply personal and intimate; it implies a reciprocal relationship that binds the sheep to the shepherd and the shepherd to the sheep (10:14) and is mirrored in the relationship of Father and Son, "Even as the Father knows me, I also know the Father" (10:15). Since the verb, "they may know" (γινώσκωσιν) is a present subjunctive, the force of the present tense accents a continuous growth in the knowledge of God, which is mediated through the "sent one."[35] The verb "I know" (γινώσκω) and its cognate, "I make known" (γνωρίζω) are used nine times in the prayer and reflect Jesus' passion for his disciples' growth in a knowing-discipleship, even to a world that may know that Jesus is the "sent one" (v. 23) of God. Jesus' comment about the disciples' knowledge (17:3) finds an appropriate context in 16:29-30, in which the disciples boldly assert, "Now we know that you know all things . . . we believe that you came forth from God." Jesus challenges their confidence when he indicates that the time is at hand when they will be scattered and leave Jesus to go it alone (16:31-32). The disciples say, "we know" to which Jesus responds, "Your claim is insufficient. Your need is to continue to

[32] Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 721.

[33] Frederick Godet, *Commentary on the Gospel of John*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970 repr. 1886), 325.

[34] Rudolf Bultmann, "γινώσκω," *TDNT*, vol. 1, 709.

[35] The verb, "I send" (ἀποστέλλω) is used seven times in the prayer; six of the references express Jesus' self-understanding as being "the sent one."

grow in the knowledge of God and the sent one of God. The disciples would be in critical need of the teaching of the interpreting Paraclete (16:12-15).

The glorification of the disciples will occur through their enduring success, which is based upon the Father's response to Jesus' imperatives, "keep (τήρησον) them" v. 11, and "sanctify (ἁγίασον) them" (v. 17) as well as the various verbs of petition. As the prayer unfolds, we learn of further grounds for Jesus' imperatives and wish-petitions. Jesus reminds the Father of his historical success with the disciples. Jesus has revealed the Father's name to the disciples and they have kept the Father's word (λόγος v. 7) or words (ῥήματα v. 8). They received the words, have truly realized Jesus' origin and believed that Jesus is the "sent one." Following Jesus' petition for the disciples, he explains why his prayer for them should be answered, because they have experienced benefits of the sharedness of the Father-Son relationship, "All I have is yours, and all that you have is mine" (v. 10), in which Jesus has been honored in them. Jesus also explains why petition is needed for the disciples. He will no longer be with them in a hostile world (v. 14) since Jesus is coming to the Father (v. 11; also the resumptive statement in v. 13) through the complex of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. Just as Jesus expresses an imperative, "keep (τήρησον) them in your name" (v. 11), so he reminds the Father of the way in which he was keeping ("I was keeping" ἐτήρουν) the twelve in the Father's name (grounds) and the further statement about the disciples' positive response, "they have kept (τετήρηκαν) your word" (17:6). Similarly, his imperative, "sanctify (ἁγίασον) them" (v. 17) is grounded in the "*holy* Father," and the fact that Jesus *sanctifies* himself (ἁγιάζω v. 19) coupled with the purpose that the disciples would *be sanctified* ("in order that even they might be sanctified (ἵνα ὦσιν ἡγιασμένοι) in truth" (v. 19). God is always the subject of the verb "I sanctify" (active verb ἁγιάζω); believers are sanctified (passive voice). Jesus, and Jesus only can sanctify/consecrate himself (v. 19). The cross is in view, which is the means by which his own disciples are consecrated in the truth.

The glorification of the disciples will not be limited to the eleven disciples, but will embrace all future believers ("concerning the ones who (will—futuristic participle) believe" through the word of the eleven (v. 21), and the positive response of the world to the unity of the community (v. 21). The prayer of 17:20 parallels the claim to have other sheep that are not of this fold (10:16) and the beatitude pronounced upon those who have not seen, but believed (20:29). They will share in the divine unity and experience the wonder of mutual indwelling. Even though the world is pictured in negative ways in vss. 9, 14, 15, 25, the world will also believe and be won over to the witness that Jesus is the sent one of God (v. 21), that the disciples experience mutual indwelling with God (21), and that a believing community provides the all-important witness of the "unity" (vss. 9, 21, 22, 23). The world is still the object of God's love (3:16). Craig Keener notes, "They beheld his preexistent glory (12:41; 17:5) during his earthly ministry (1:14; 2:11; 8:54; 11:4) and would continue to do so through the Spirit (16:14; cf. 7:39)."[36]

The glorification of the disciples is spelled out explicitly in v. 22, "I have given them the glory you have given me," which is grounded in the wonder of God's love for Jesus that is compared ("just as" κάθως) to God's love for the believing disciples; such love staggers the

[36] Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John A Commentary, vol. 2* (Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2005), 1063-64.

imagination.[37] In v. 24, Jesus states that when there is a reunion between Jesus and the believing community, they will witness Jesus' pre-creation glory, which includes love, before the foundation of the world.[38] At the beginning of the prayer, Jesus had equated eternal life with the personal and intimate knowledge of God (v. 3), so at the conclusion of the prayer, Jesus links the knowledge of God—not simply with another sphere of knowledge but with the purpose of an indwelling love of God in the lives of believers (v. 26). Genuine love must be shared with persons and even before the world came into being, there was genuine love, the love of the Father for his son. Jesus says that true knowledge leads to love. The honor that the Father has given to the Son, in turn, has been returned back to the Father, and to the disciples as well—an honor of position, the Son in the Father and the Son in disciples—all for the expressed purpose of being caught up in the love of God, "in order that the love with which you loved me may be (ᾖ) in them and in order that I may be in them." Such knowledge means that believers are possessed by love.

The prayer of Jesus expresses the ultimate goal of the impressive honor (glory) of God, Jesus and believers living in community. While the glory is provisional in nature in the present age, such honor will reach its consummation when believers will witness and share in the consummate glory and love of God before the foundation of the world.

Other Texts That Affirm the Glory of God, of Jesus and the Believing Community

At the consummation, the full revelation of God's glory will be a dynamic condition of the universe in which nothing can separate believers from the glory and love of God. This is not the current condition since Christians live with the tension of the "already but not yet." In Jesus' thanksgiving-prayer (Matt. 11:25-30), he alone stands in an unmediated relationship with the Father, while believers live in a mediated relationship—through him. Paul states that the dynamic purpose of God will become manifest everywhere and recognized as such by all people; God's impressiveness will elicit the human response of loving adoration. In I Cor. 15:25, Paul expresses a similar idea when he says that ultimately God will be "all in all" (πάντα ἐν πᾶσιν). Surely this expression is climactic in Paul's eschatological parenthesis with three phases of Salvation-History (past, present, future).

Past	**Present**	**Future**
	Christ has been raised from the dead = first fruits[39] *of those who have fallen asleep (20)*	*. . . full harvest (implied)*
through a man . . . death	*through a man*	*. . . resurrection of the dead (21)*
in Adam		*in Christ*
all die		*all shall be made alive (22)*
	in his own order	*then. . .*

[37] See 3:35; 5:20; 10:17. Cullen Story notes, "It is in the light of the last sentence of the prayer in John 17:26 that we begin to understand "how much" is packed into the adverb "so" in 3:16.", 339.

[38] See Eph. 1:3-4 wherein Christians are also chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world for the purpose that the people of God might be saints and blameless *in love.*

[39]The term *first fruits* reminds us of the first sheaf that was reaped from the harvest field at the Israelite festival of weeks (Lev. 23:10-14) and was a sign of the full-ingathering of the harvest later in the agricultural year. Thus, when Paul says that Christ alone was raised, he implicitly counters the Corinthian claim to be raised already. They will likewise follow his paradigm.

Past	Present	Future
	first-fruits = Christ (23)	*those who are Christ's at his coming (23)*
		then the end (24)
		when he has when he abolished... delivers up
	for he must reign (25)	*until he puts all his enemies under his feet (25)*
		the last enemy which is abolished is death (26)
	for he has put all things in subjection under his feet (27a)	
	all things are put in subjection (27b)	
	the one who put all things in subjection to him (27c)	*when all things are subjected to him (28a)*
		Son subject to God (28b)
		God will be all in all (28c)

In this parenthesis of I Cor. 15, Paul's purpose is to demonstrate the close union between the death-resurrection of Jesus and the death-resurrection of all believers. The promise of a future fulfillment is not the simple possession of an elite group, but the certainty of all believers (vss. 22, 28). The future tenses of the verbs not only promise a resurrection-fulfillment, but counter the Corinthian claim to have already received resurrection. The paragraph states that all the opposition (including death) to God on the part of humanity will have disappeared then so that the final point will reveal that God is in all. This means that during the "already" present, the conflict between ruler and subjects (including death), is necessary until the final stage (v. 25). It is important and necessary that Jesus should reign during this contested age until he has put all enemies under his feet. Until that final age, there is enmity and hostility between God and humanity; in the final stage, it will be love that binds God and humanity together. That stage will encompass the revelation of the glory of God. God's love for his people will then be recognized by all his people and they will respond with love to his love.

In Romans 8, Paul forges a solid link between glory and love, which affect God, Jesus, the Spirit and believers. Believers are caught up into the Trinitarian fellowship. In 8:28-30, Paul widens the perspective of the believers' future state and offers the proof that God will cooperate for the ultimate good of those whom he has called. The Spirit's activity in intercession (v. 27) parallels the love and activity of God for the wellbeing of his people (vss. 28-30). Paul grounds the future realization of God's complete purpose for people in their present posture of waiting, groaning, expectation, weakness and ignorance. God will work out his eternal purpose even as he has given the Spirit to Christians in the intervening period. "Just as the present aeon is to be followed by an eternity, it has already been preceded by an eternity."[40] God is fully committed to bring his purpose to completion. Paul affirms that "all things will work towards the good" for those who love God. In this chapter,

[40] Nygren, p. 337.

this is the first mention of Christians' love for God, characterizing their response in the present age. Why do Christians love God? The following text provides the answer: they respond to the divine call. Paul claims that God's love exists prior to the human response of love for God (vss. 31-39). The general clause, "all things work together for good"[41] is followed by the specific elements of what that "good" embraces:

"those who are called according to his purpose" (v. 28)

⇓

"whom he foreknew"[42] (v. 29)

⇓

"He also predestined[43] to be conformed to the image of his Son (v. 29)

⇓

"so that he might be first-born among many brothers"[44] (v. 29)

⇓

"And those whom he predestined he also called" (v. 30)

⇓

"And those whom he called[45] he also justified"[46] (v. 30)

⇓

"And those whom he justified he also glorified"[47] (v. 30)

Through the use of these chain-like statements (step-parallelism),[48] Paul takes into account the whole of the Christian life, past, present and future, thereby underscoring the certainty of hope's realization. Standing behind the Christians' love for God lies the prior

[41] The term "good" is qualified by its context, referring to the entirety of the salvation event from its inception to consummation and does not include such human needs, comforts, securities or worldly concerns. Indeed, as Paul develops his thought in vss. 31-39, Christians can and do experience many negative experiences, e.g., affliction, anguish.

[42] Foreknowledge includes the act of God's electing grace (Rom. 11:2; Jer. 1:5; Amos 3:2) before the world was created (Eph. 1:4; II Tim. 1:9).

[43] The verb refers to God's gracious decision concerning his elect (I Cor. 2:7; Acts 4:28; Eph. 1:5, 11.

[44] Paul stresses the company, the new community, which will share in the immeasurable privileges of Jesus' Sonship. "He is thus the first-born (πρωτότοκος), like them but above them in rank and dignity, since he remains their Lord." W. Michaeilis, "πρωτότοκος," *TDNT,* vol. VI, p. 877.

[45] The verb refers to the concrete call of individuals as they respond with the "obedience of faith" (Rom. 1:5)

[46] The word-family associated with "justify" is the subject matter of chs. 1-8.

[47] While glorification has not yet been fully realized, God's purpose can still be regarded as accomplished.

[48] Step parallelism is a literary feature wherein the second member of one clause is followed by another clause where the second member becomes the first member.

love and choice of God which has set into motion the salvation experience from its inception to complete fulfillment,[49] "from eternity—through time—to eternity."[50] From the human standpoint, the glorification of believers is the last stage that will be realized. Elsewhere, Paul refers to Christ as the "first-fruits" of the full harvest of the resurrection" (I Cor. 15:20, 23), "the hope of glory" (Col. 1:27), "our life . . . we will be manifested with him in glory" (Col. 3:4), and the body of his glory" (Phil. 3:20), who "will transform the present humble body of the believer" to be conformed to his glorious body. Paul is convinced that Christians will "bear the image of the heavenly" (I Cor. 15:49) with a Spirit-animated body like that of the resurrected Jesus (I Cor. 15:43-44). Paul affirms the transcendent purpose of God as it bears upon the ultimate good of the individual Christian.

The next paragraph substantiates the future glorification through an assurance of the eternal and effective love of Jesus (Rom. 8:31-39). The opening question, "What shall we say to these things?" (v. 31) takes into purview not only the affirmations of vss. 28-30 but also the wondrous future that God has in store for his people as well as the entire argument of the letter thus far. The chapter concludes with rhetorical questions, and serves as a strong affirmation of the powerful love of Christ, which itself is a solid guarantee of ultimate fulfillment that Christians will enjoy. The very God who "is for us" is the one who is known by his activity for us. Paul is supremely confident, desiring that his readers be confident; but he also enjoins confident dependence upon God. There are four rhetorical questions, introduced by the interrogative pronoun, "who?" (ti/v), which posit some sort of negative action, attitude or force that would hinder the believer; each rhetorical question needs no answer, but Paul gives a response, a positive affirmation, which more than answers the self-evident question:

Rhetorical Question	**Response**
31 Since[51] God is for us, who is against us?[52]	32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, will he not also give us all things with him
33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect?[53]	It is God who justifies;
34 Who is to condemn?	Is it Christ Jesus, who died, yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed intercedes for us?
35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or	37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.38 For I am sure that neither death,[54] nor life, nor angels, nor

[49] The idea is similar to I Jn. 4:19.

[50] Anders Nygren, *Commentary on Romans* (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press, 1949), 340.

[51] The particle "if" (ei) is used as the protasis of a true conditional sentence in which both halves are regarded as true and may well be translated, "since."

[52] Psa. 23: 4, ". . .I will fear no evil for you are with me." Psa. 59:6, "This I know, that God is for me."

[53] The one who brings a charge against God's elect fights with God Himself.

[54] "Death is the dreaded separator of loved ones." Cranfield, p. 441. For Paul, death is translated into being with Christ (Phil. 1:21-23; II Cor. 5:8).

Rhetorical Question	**Response**
nakedness, or peril, or sword?	principalities,[55] nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,[56] 39 nor height, nor depth,[57] nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Paul's implicit argument is this: other people and forces are against the people of God. Adverse circumstances may and will come against the Christian in this age. However, these people, things, events, circumstances and adversities *cannot win and need not be feared as if they could harm Christians in an ultimate sense.* In v. 31, the question, "Who is against us?" is countered by the limitless gift of God; he, who did not spare his own Son, becomes the guarantor of limitless grace, the fullness of salvation (5:10). The language accentuates the cost and commitment of God to his people; he went to the extreme limit by delivering his only Son.[58] In v. 33, the question, "Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?" is countered by the activity of God, the supreme one who justifies; other accusations will simply not stand in the divine court.[59] It is inconceivable that anyone can bring a charge against believers that will stand. In v. 34, the rhetorical question, "Who is to condemn?" is countered by the answer that Jesus Christ is the one who died, and was vindicated by his resurrection, who continues to make intercession for the believers. He can be counted upon.

The verbal forms, "died," "was raised," and "makes intercession" form a progression in which the present intercessory work of Christ is accentuated, as Lord of the Church. Not only is Jesus the one who died and was raised, but stands in the favored position in the divine court who is presently at work in intercession for his people, similar to the intercessory role of the Spirit (vss. 26-27). His activity on behalf of humanity can be counted on; other words of condemnation will not stand before him. The final and extensive question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" is countered by vss. 37-39. The harsh realities are part of the experience of the people of God. Paul substantiates such experiences through the experience of the OT poet: "being put to death the whole day, being reckoned as sheep destined for slaughter" (Psa. 44:22); for Paul, believers belong to the same good company. Such hardships are nothing new and they should cause no surprise to the people of God. The questions conclude with the triumphant affirmation, "But in all these things we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us" (v. 37). Paul uses the verbal form, "we are more than conquerors" (ὑπερνικῶμεν), which is a heightened form of the root verb "to conquer" (νικάω). The contrast lies between all the things that

[55] The two terms "angels, principalities" refer to the Spiritual cosmic powers (evil or good) which could conceivably be hostile to humans, e.g., Eph. 6:12.

[56] The term is probably used in apposition to "angels, principalities."

[57] While the terms may include things above and below, it is probable that the pair is associated with Spirit-beings associated with the two places.

[58] Perhaps there is an echo of Abraham's offering of his beloved Son (Gen. 22:16): . . . καί οὐκ ἐφεισω τοῦ ὑιοῦ τοῦ ἀγαπητοῦ. While Isaac was divinely rescued, Jesus experienced no such deliverance. The same verb "handed over" is used in 4:25.

[59] The language echoes Psa. 50:8, "The one who justifies me draws near; Who is the one who condemns?"

could conceivably make one feel separated from the love of God and the actual state of affairs. The love of God, stated in vss. 35, 37, 39 is independent of all these external things and is the certain confidence and hope in the midst of adversity:

35 Who shall separate us from the *love of God*?

37 through the one *who loved us*

39 [nothing] will be able to separate us from the *love of God* in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To the witness and experience of the early Christians, Paul adds his own personal confession, stated in the first person singular, "I am persuaded" (v. 38); the use of the perfect tense (πέπεισμαι) suggests that Paul is in a persuaded condition The type of argument is *major-minor (heavy and light)*: God has already done the hard thing (major); correspondingly Christians may be certain that he will do the comparatively easy thing (minor), that is to bring Christians to their ultimate fulfillment and completion in the love of Christ. The choosing love of Christ stands as the eternal, immovable and effective foundation and guarantee for the meaning and hope of human existence against the destroying powers of the present age.

Numerous references can be found in the NT doxologies, wherein writers and readers express the glory of God in a benediction (Lk. 2:14; Rom. 11:36; 16:27; Gal. 1:5; Eph. 1:6, 12, 14, 17; I Tim. 1:17; II Tim. 4:18; Heb. 13:21; I Pet. 5:11; II Pet. 3:18; Jude 25; Rev. 1:6; 19;1). The expression "to give glory" to God "does not imply the adding of something not already present;"[60] rather the expression means the loving adoration of what is already true (Acts 12:23; Rom. 4:20; Rev. 16:9). God does not want his glory for himself alone to selfishly enjoy; the Trinitarian-fellowship wishes to benefit believers in the present and future ages with an eye to the consummated glory, when faith will give way to sight.

Since the revelation of God's glory is his ultimate goal, Jesus is related to this solid hope when believers experience the unimaginable love of God. When God sets the Son beside himself, then the Son is bound to recognize the Father's purpose and to carry it out; the Trinitarian-fellowship necessitates that for the glory of God, the Son should not be kept within the fellowship, because he would be unknown to the world. It is important to speak of the glorification of the Son as a special act apart from the glorification of the Father, since the Son was unknown to humanity, notwithstanding the special agency of the Son in the creation of the universe. In the incarnation, the true nature of the Son and Father was revealed, for the Son alone is able to "exegete, narrate, tell the story" (ἐξηγέομαι) of God (Jn. 1:18) and his glory was revealed in the glory of the Son (1:14). Jesus' prayer (Jn. 17) affirms that the glorification of Jesus includes his ministry as an act of glorification of the Father, "I glorified you on earth, by completing the work which you have given me to do" (Jn. 17:4). In his ministry, the true nature of divine love was revealed to a needy and broken humanity.

Two other terms are used to express the ultimate purpose of God: "fullness" (πλήρωμα) and "to sum up, to gather into one" (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι). The "fullness" in the Son is a divine activity or process in which the filling energy of God enters into history to transform it. Its goal has been fixed by God—namely that Jesus should become the head

[60] G. Kittel, vol. II 248.

of all things, the unifying and directive principle: "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he has purposed in himself; that in the dispensation of the "fullness" (πλήρωμα) of times, "he might gather in one" (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι) all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him" (Eph. 1:9-10). The Greek verb points to the headship of Christ and signifies an action by which several things are brought together and are related to their common principle. Jesus will become the unifying force in a world that still lives in anarchy. Even though the initial activity of the Son in creation did not preclude the disobedience of the world to God, things have changed as a result of the incarnation, and they will change again in the consummation of human history. Jesus will work on the world in such a way that "God will be all in all" (I Cor. 15:28). As the head, Jesus will effect such a harmonious union between people themselves and between humans and God. In Jesus, all things will be "summed up." The creative activity of the "fullness" will overcome all the distortions in the original nature of humans. One aspect of the "fullness" includes reconciliation (Col. 1:19-20).

Since the essence of the "fullness" is love, it will bring all persons into a harmonious relationship. Paul states that Jesus will take up residence in the inner person, rooted and established in love for the expressed purpose that they "may have power, together will all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge *in order that* you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God" (Eph. 3:18-19). The purpose clause ἵνα "in order that") of 3:19, "gathers together the petitions of vss. 16-19a. In the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, the witnessing community experiences the "fullness" of grace, "grace in the place of grace" (Jn. 1:16), which is described as actively present in a superabundant manner. Colossians 1:19 affirms that it has pleased God "that the whole fullness of essence should take up dwelling (aor.) in Christ . . . in the historical Jesus (v. 20), and hence to the fullness of the essence of the God of love."[61] Romans 13:10 provides another link between "fullness" and love, "love is the fulfillment/fullness of the law." "Loving conduct (cf. vv. 8-10a) is a 'complete and entire fulfillment' of what God demands in the law."[62]

The glorification of Jesus, including the "fullness" is also the means by which Jesus' lordship will be revealed. Paul states that it is God's will that Jesus shall reign (I Cor. 15:25), until God's ultimate goal will be realized. In liturgical form, the book of Revelation declares that "The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign forever" (Rev. 11:15). In this time between the incarnation and the final revelation, Jesus' kingdom is contested; however, when all rebellious powers that oppose God are bound, then the Son will return his lordship to God (I Cor. 15:27). On the day of Pentecost, Peter states that the victorious resurrection and ascension of Jesus, coupled with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, results in the solid affirmation, that "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified as , both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). In the age to come, the kingship of Jesus will no longer be contested; there will be no further authoritative reign and display of power.

[61] G. Delling, "πλήρωμα," *TDNT*, vol. VI, 303.
[62] Ibid, 305.

This reign of Jesus also implies his role as judge, "For the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father" (Jn. 5:22-23). During Jesus ministry, he effects a crisis (κρίσις Jn. 5:22), wherein people are faced with a free-willed choice and its consequence; they will either receive a resurrection of life or a resurrection unto judgment (5:29; see also 3:16-21), based upon reception or rejection of Jesus. When Jesus says "For judgment I have come unto the world" (Jn. 9:39), he realizes that his very presence effects a "crisis" of choice. Will his audience be responsive people and thereby find the meaning of their existence, or will they reject the supreme offer of himself, his words and his deeds?

Other texts direct the readership to sense the intertwined present and future glorification of believers. In I Cor. 2:7, Paul indicates that true wisdom is to be found that has been "destined by God for our glory," even though the rulers of this age did not understand and crucified "the Lord of glory" (I Cor. 2:8). In the movement of Romans 8:29-30, with its eight aorist tenses, the glorification of believers is said to originate in the divine calling (καλεῖν) and reach its consummation in glorification (v. 30). Paul also uses the metaphors of "first-fruit" (ἀπαρχή) and "down-payment" (ἀρραβών) to designate the role of the Spirit that expresses the present and future glorification of believers. The gift of the first-fruit is connected to the final harvest; the gift of the down-payment is connected with the full payment that is yet in store for the people of God. Kittel notes, "Hence to some degree proleptically, prayer may be made that 'according to the riches of His glory God may grant you His Spirit, that you may become strong in the inner-man'" (Eph. 3:16).[63] Peter states that in the midst of persecution and insults, believers can draw strength from "the Spirit of glory and of God" rests upon the believing community. "In both cases there is to διὰ τοῦ πνεύματος a full working of eschatological δόξα in the present life of the believer."[64]

In II Cor. 3, Paul uses a minor-major form of argument to highlight the present and future glory of believers under the new covenant. The minor portion expresses the limitations of the old covenant under Moses. The major form of argument is expressed in the "how much more" language (πῶς οὐχὶ μᾶλλον—v. 8; πολλῷ μᾶλλον—v. 9; πολλῷ μᾶλλον—v. 11) as Paul both compares and contrasts the old and new "ministry" (διακονία). The ministry of Moses is described as the ministry of death (v. 7), the ministry of condemnation (v. 9) and what was being annulled (v. 11) is used as a foil to present the splendor ("glory") of the ministry of the Spirit (v. 8), the ministry of righteousness (v. 9) and the ministry that endures (v. 11):

The relative glory of the old covenant/ministry: "if" and "since":[65]	**The surpassing glory of the new covenant\ministry: "how much more"**

[63] G. Kittel, "δόξα," vol. II, 250-251.

[64] Kittel, 251.

[65] The conditional "if" (εἰ) with the indicative introduces a true condition and can be translated as "since." A.T. Robertson notes, "This condition, therefore, taken at its face value, assumes the condition to be true." A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934), 1008. Thus, the true conditions of the old ministry/covenant in the protasis serve as the basis for the certainty of the future-centered apodosis, "how much more."

The relative glory of the old covenant/ministry: "if" and "since":[65]	**The surpassing glory of the new covenant\ministry: "how much more"**
literal letters of commendation (v. 1)	figurative letters—people (v. 2); letters of Christ (v. 3)
written with literal ink on tablets of stone (v. 3)	figuratively written on tablets of fleshly human hearts (v. 3); written by the Spirit of the living God (v. 3)
ministers of the letter (v. 6)	ministers of the new covenant "of the Spirit" (v. 6)
letter which kills (v. 6)	ministry of the Spirit who makes alive (v. 6)
"if"—ministry that brought death (v. 7)	**"how much more"**—will ministry of the Spirit be even more glorious (v. 8)
engraved in literal letters—light of Moses too bright (v. 7)	written with the Spirit of God in human hearts (v. 3)
glory so that Israelites could not look steadily at Moses' face (v. 7)	unveiled (vss. 12-18)
"if"—ministry that condemns to death—in glory (v. 9)	**"how much more"**—the ministry that brings righteousness (v. 9)
no glory now in comparison (v. 10)	"how much more" the ministry of the Spirit is even more glorious (v. 8) the surpassing glory (v. 10); ever-increasing glory (v. 18).
"if"—glory came with fading (v. 11)	**"how much more"**—is the glory of that which lasts (v. 11)
veil is not taken away (v. 14)	in Christ, the old veil is removed (v. 14);
a ministry with a necessary veil (v. 15)	turning to Lord means that the veil is taken away (v. 15)
fading away (v. 13)	glory that remains (v. 11)
veil of dullness that remains (v. 14);	turning to Lord means that the veil is taken away (vss. 14-15); glory that remains (v. 11)
dull minds (v. 14)	transformation[66] into his likeness (v. 18); from glory unto glory (v. 18)
veil covers their hearts (v. 15)	unveiled faces that reflect the Lord's glory (v. 18);

In Paul's argument, the glory of Moses was small and scarcely deserved the name "glory," for in v. 10, Paul says, "For what was glorious (Moses' ministry) has no glory in comparison with the surpassing glory." With the affirmation, "from glory unto glory" (ἀπὸ δόξης εἰς δόξαν—3:18), Paul connects the present and future aspects of glory[67] for the people of God. On 3:18, Furnish notes, "The context, as well as the idiom itself, makes it clear that the

[66] The verb, "to transform" (μεταμορφόω) is used elsewhere only of Jesus' transfiguration (Matt. 17:2; Mk. 9:2) and is also used in a figurative sense in Rom. 12:2 through the contrast between "being conformed (συσχηματίζεσθε) to the pattern of this age" and its opposite, "be transformed (μεταμορφοῦσθε) in the renewal of their mindset."

[67] Paul Furnish uses the term "splendor" as the translation of δόξα throughout his discussion on this passage. Victor Paul Furnish, *II Corinthians* (Anchor Bible) (New York: Doubleday & Company Inc., 1984), 215.

permanence (cf. *the splendor of that which endures,* (v. 11) and the increase of the *splendor* are being emphasized over against the diminishing splendor of Moses."[68] There are three occurrences of the verb, "to abolish, wipe out, nullify, doomed to perish" (καταργέω) in vss. 7, 11, 13, which refer to Moses' face or his ministry, all of which are transitory. On the idiom, "from glory unto glory," Kittel notes, "The present is ἐν δόξῃ, but the εἰς points to a future consummation."[69] It is the Spirit as "first fruit" and "down-payment" that expresses the present possession of glory that is also vitally connected with future expectation of the consummation (v. 12, "having this hope"). The thought of the present and future aspects of glory are expressed so well in the following chapter: "For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' has made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of glory in the face of Christ" (4:6). Paul appears to link the creation of light (Gen. 1:3) with the light of his conversion call (Acts 9:3; 22:6, 11; 26:13) and the glorious light of the people of God: "in contemplation of the κύριος, there shines in our hearts the light of the knowledge of the δόξα θεοῦ."[70] Elsewhere, Paul orients the community to its solid hope of the future glorification of believers (Rom. 8:18—"the glory that will be revealed in us"; 8:21—"the glorious freedom of the children of God"; dead believers "who are sown in dishonor but raised in glory"). In Matt. 19:28, Jesus promises that those who have followed him will share in the future glory and will share in judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Similarly, the Petrine elders are promised that as they have witnessed Christ's suffering, "will also share in the glory that is to be revealed" (I Pet. 5:1) and "the crown of glory that will never fade way" (5:4).

The Restoration of the Universe

At the end of the process of time as we know it, a new heaven and new earth will come into existence (Rev. 20:13; 21:1). It is important to note that this does not mean something entirely new after the first heaven and first earth. It does not mean that the first heaven and first earth are destroyed. The NT lives in expectation of the "renewal" that will occur at the end, "Behold, I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5). In the Bible there is one heaven and one earth—which will both be renewed, "He (Jesus) must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets" (Acts 3:21). The term "renewal, restitution" (ἀποκαταστάσις) refers to the state wherein the original goodness of universe will be restored or renewed. What was once created by God will then be made perfect. The Book of Revelation describes the future in this way, "And there shall be no more curse" (Rev. 22:3). It does not mean that a new universe, new heaven, or new earth will be created, but the removal of the curse, which had created chaos and alienation within these spheres. At present, the universe is in desperate need of renewal to be aligned with the purpose of God. When John says that there will be no more curse, he excludes the idea of the events that took place at the beginning of the world's history. Paul reminds his readership that the evil effect of Adam's sin upon the universe will be done away with (Rom. 8:20).

This paragraph links the preceding ethical statements (vss. 12-17) to the firm future that is yet in store for the people of God; Paul provides a further incentive. The preceding verse

[68] Furnish, 215.
[69] Kittel, vol. II, 251.
[70] Kittel, 251.

mentioned the general paradox of the present experience, "we suffer with Christ" (συμπάσχωμεν present), linked with the future certainty, "we will be glorified with Christ" (συνδοξασθῶμεν future). Indeed, the whole of vss. 18-30 supports the wonder of the "glory that is yet to be revealed." Paul explains how the present sufferings are related to the wondrous future.[71]

Paul affirms the incredible glory that is revealed to us (v. 18). He states that the present sufferings can in no way be compared[72] with future glory. Indeed, they are not even worthy of such comparison; the coming glory will totally eclipse any such comparison. While the paradox continues in the present age, the future age will be characterized by no such paradox; the glory will be fully revealed for all to see.

Paul states the incredible glory, yet to be revealed is shared by all of creation (vss. 19-22). Believers are not alone in their posture of hope but share in the eschatological hope of all of creation.[73] Paul personifies creation itself; it waits with "eager expectation with outstretched head" (ajpokardokiva)[74] for such revelation as far as humanity is concerned. "With poetic boldness and penetrating prophetic insight Paul sees the whole splendid theatre of the universe together with all sub-human life within it as eagerly awaiting the time when the Sons of God will be manifest in their true glory."[75]

Verse 20 explains why ("for" γάρ) creation itself looks to the future revealing of the Sons and daughters of God; creation itself will be set free from its own bondage, frustration, futility and decay.[76] The future of creation is bound inextricably with the future of the human person. Creation itself is subject to futility, without hope, in and of itself, subject to its own transitory existence and lack of volition; it is perpetually frustrated, looking for what it cannot find. All around us, we witness waste, environmental pillage, suffering of animals, survival of the fittest, ruthless destruction of plant life and natural disasters. The earth itself can only produce disappointment. Probably, Paul has in view the curse that was pronounced upon the ground in Gen. 3:17-19, "Cursed is the ground for your sake." With an attitude of hope, the created order anticipates the prospect of genuine freedom, grounded in the freedom of sons and daughters of God, contrasted with its present state of bondage (vss. 20-21). The created order is also promised a better future, a new world, when judgment would be lifted (Gen. 3:15).[77]

Paul also argues that the anticipated glory is now the object of present travail. In v. 22ff., Paul further explains the present "labor pains" of creation ("gives birth with labor pains" συνωδίνει), in anticipation of its future freedom. Paul uses the word-family "groan with"

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[71] The language is similarly expressed in II Cor. 4:17: "This slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison."

[72] The adjective ἄξιος here means equal in value. BAGD, p. 77.

[73] The term "creation" probably refers to the whole of sub-human reality (animate and inanimate).

[74] ἀποκαραδοκία means eager expectation or anticipation. BAGD, p. 92.

[75] C.E.B. Cranfield, *The Epistle to the Romans* (ICC) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1975), 412.

[76] The sense of "futility" (ματαιότης) expresses the viewpoint of the "assemblyman" in the book of Ecclesiasties, "Futility, futility, all is futility" (Eccl. 1:2; 2:1).

[77] II Pet. 3:13, "According to his promise we wait for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:1).

(συστενάζω, στενάζω, στεναγμός) with three different subjects—all of which participate in the travail of the present in anticipation of the future:

Whole creation: "*groans* and travails in labor pains" (συστενάζει καὶ συνωδίνει) v. 22

Christians: "We ourselves *groan* within ourselves (αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς στενάζομεν) v. 23

The Spirit: "intercedes for us with *groans* (στεναγμοῖς) too deep for words" v. 26

The word-family expresses the groan and labor pains of: creation, Christians, and the Spirit; the groaning concerns the undesirable circumstances of the present age in light of the future within the paradox of the "already but not-yet." In each instance (creation, Christians, the Spirit), groaning looks to the future for resolution. The future revelation of the "Sons and daughters" of God will reflect a cosmic dimension. As a guarantee of the future, Christians possess the "first-fruit" (ἀπαρχή), a pledge of the fuller gift yet to come.[78] The grand moment, which will relieve all such groaning is the visible adoption, the redemption of our body (v. 23). While adoption has been experienced by Christians (v. 15), nonetheless, that adoption has not yet been manifest, since it is the object of eager hope (v. 23). The future visible adoption is explained as "the redemption of our body" (τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν τοῦ σώματος ἡμῶν), which is "freeing of our body from earthly limitations."[79] While redemption is regarded as an accomplished fact,[80] it is also incomplete in that the full and public adoption has not yet been made manifest. The redemption that the future will bring is the redemption of the whole human person, the individual frame or recognizable form of the human person, not some sort of disembodied Spirit (II Cor. 5:3).[81] It will also mean the negation of the futility and decay of the created order.

Paul also says that the anticipated glory is experienced in the present age as hope and endurance (vss. 24-25). In v. 20, Paul stated that creation itself is subject by the one who subjected creation; thus, creation lives by hope. Paul now states that Christians live in hope of that which is not yet visible, the visible adoption, the redemption of the body, which is also the object of human groaning. For the Christian, the saving moment is directed towards hope in the unseen future: "We walk by faith, not by sight" (II Cor. 5:7). Although salvation is assured, its realization lies still in the future. Hope also leads to the quality of "endurance" (uJpomonhv), which grows in the midst of unrealized hope and looks ahead for the life of the coming age.

God will transform the present structure that lies under a curse and alienation. This new heaven and new earth will be revealed when the transformation of the present universe occurs. In terms of beauty and perfection, the universe will no longer be marred by the consequences of the curse; instead the renewed heaven and renewed earth will manifest the Father's glory. The universe's imperfection and ugliness will disappear. The universe as created by God will continue to exist but in a transformed and renewed form. True, there will be an end and there will be a change in material existence. Changes will occur since the very idea of life implies change; but the changes that occur will be the result of loving

[78] Rom. 11:16; 16:5; I Cor. 15:20, 23; 16:15; II Thess. 2:13; James 1:18. The term "first-fruit" parallels the term "down-payment" (ἀρραβών) in II Cor. 1:22; 5:5; Eph. 1:14.

[79] BAGD, p. 95.

[80] "being justified freely through the redemption which is in Christ" (Rom. 3:24).

[81] G. A. Scott, *Christianity According to St. Paul*, (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1961), p. 231.

relationships among the innumerable beings and the infinite possibilities for such loving relationships in the renewed heaven and renewed earth. It will take an infinity of time for believers to fully embrace the wonder of God's love. When the Scripture states that God is changeless, it does not mean an unchanging ontological deity, but that there is nothing that can compromise the loving and faithful love of God for persons and their renewed world.

The oneness of God's creation of the universe includes human harmony with the created world (e.g., no sickness or disease), harmony among humans, and the harmony of a renewed heaven and renewed earth. The purpose statement in Jesus' prayer, "that they may be one" (Jn. 17:11), uses the neuter gender for "one" (ἕν), not the masculine gender, "one" (εἷς). The masculine gender (εἷς) of "one" would mean the same person. However, the neuter form indicates an identical purpose. In the context of John 17, love is that responsive virtue of love, the common tie that unites all people, and makes the human love of God and love of believers, grounded in the reality of God's love for all humanity. In the Lord's Prayer, followers express the petition that "your will be done on earth as it is done in heaven" (Matt. 6:10). The prayer implies that there is a difference between the will of God on earth and the will of God in heaven. Jesus intimates that this difference in "wills" will disappear when there will be one will that is reflected in both earth and heaven. At the end, the final goal will be the complete interpenetration of the two, "And I saw a new heaven and new earth . . . and I, John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven" (Rev. 21:1-3). Jesus' goal of bringing about such oneness is the very reality for which Jesus came, "to sum up all things (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι τὰ πάντα) in Christ, both of which are in heaven and which are on earth" (Eph. 1:9-10).[82] In a divided universe, it is hard to see the oneness of the creator. However, the unification of the universe and the unification of humans in love (towards God and towards other humans) is the fundamental prerequisite for the full manifestation of the glory of God. The glory of God and of his Son will be as much for the benefit for his people as much for the satisfaction of his will. They will be glorified as well.

Implications

People are invited to celebrate the wonder of God's ultimate purpose—that of revealing his glory to all people and the entire universe; this purpose offers a solid hope. We have explored some of the ways in which various purposes and goals are regarded as immediate ends of a process that leads to an ultimate goal. It takes place in the ministry of Jesus as well as through the events of the crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension of his Son. Various word-families and conjunctions express immediate goals, which nonetheless lead to the final glory of God that is expressed through love. We have drawn attention to the intertwined and ultimate glory of God, of Jesus, glory of people, which will be consummated at the Parousia and will be accompanied by the restoration of the universe (heaven and earth). It is through God's love that his glory is revealed, for there is nothing greater in God than love. God's impressiveness makes itself present in the lives of people in such a way as to summon the human response of loving adoration. God is no such selfish person who greedily demands "glory" for himself. Rather, he benefits believers both now and in the age to come who respond to God with loving adoration. There is no greater work of God and his glorification

[82] The idea of the Cosmic Christ is one major theme of Ephesians, who is known by his various acts of reconciliation in the place of alienation.

than the love he calls forth from those who respond to him with love. This is the way that glorification is both felt and expressed. Jesus is glorified and constitutes the "fullness" of God, that he be made lord of all creation in an atmosphere of love and that all things might be summed up in him.

Such revelation implies that changes occur in human lives. In the life of Jesus, people are no longer the same after their encounter with him. The history of humanity will reach a final end in which love and happiness will be part of the shared experience of glorification. Then, the divine radiance and splendor will shine upon them; "But we know that when he appears (at the Parousia), we shall be like him, for we shall see him just as he is" (I Jn. 3:2). John says the glorious future for believers is predicated upon the extent of God's love, "Behold what manner the love the Father has lavished upon us that we should be called children of God" (I Jn. 3:1). Thus, when Paul says that God's final purpose is a state where God is all in all, he is confident of a state of things, where perfect harmony and love prevail and where the will of God is no longer thwarted or opposed. God will bring about a final end in which he brings about the consequences of human responsiveness to his glory and love, utter happiness and love for those who respond with love and the tragic consequences for those who hate him and reject the supreme offer of glory and love. It will be the greatest miracle in the universe; for Jesus, the climax of human life is the love of God. This is why love is the center of the Christian message. God's glory, Jesus' glory, and the glory of the disciples are intertwined and one cannot be looked at in one aspect alone. The various NT witnesses affirm that the Trinitarian fellowship is dynamic, relational and loving. These qualities are revealed in a supreme way in the life, ministry and Passion of Jesus. Correspondingly, Christians experience these qualities in a provisional way and look to the consummation with hope when their faith-experience will give way to sight to the wonders that God has prepared.

STEPHEN CHARNOCK'S DOCTRINE OF GOD:
An Anthology of *The Existence and Attributes Of God*[1]

Ken Deusterman[2]

One cannot go too far wrong using the writings of the Puritans when formulating a doctrine of God. The reason is simple: it is because our modern cathedrals no longer have their spires pointing to the heavens. This is not by accident. One need not listen very long to the old, traditional hymns sung by our parents and grandparents before realizing that something of the transcendence of God has been lost in the transition to contemporary evangelical theology. And without transcendence, immanence eventually becomes something of our own creation. Though we give lip service to it, we no longer pour contempt on all our pride; we only too gladly brag about our richest gains so the things of earth do not grow strangely dim; we do not want a dark path on the wings of the storm; and because our minds are not fixed upon Him, we no longer see Him as high and lifted up. The response of the biblical character in the presence of the Holy was usually fear; a fear which manifested itself in, among other characteristics, falling down as dead, admission of unclean lips, and recognition of one's sinfulness. Our evangelical chronological snobbery has replaced any possibility of fear with familiarity, which usually prevents one from realizing that "unfaithfulness to God always begins in minute declensions."[3] "What God is doing in the world is thus contracted into what He is doing for us personally and privately."[4] "Few things are easier than to use the name of God and mean nothing by it."[5] The result is that the Psalmist's comfort "nevertheless I am continually with Thee" (Psa 73:23) is no longer sufficient and His lovingkindness is not really better than life itself (Psa 63:3). Self-absorption, reaching full maturity in the 1980s with the "me" generation, has replaced the self-scrutiny of earlier generations.[6] I offer as proof the majority of the titles lining the bookshelves of any Christian bookstore. "When spirituality is viewed as a static possession, the way to spiritual wholeness is seen as the acquisition of information and techniques that enable us to gain possession of the desired state of spirituality. In other words, we are in control of your relationship with God."[7] Why indeed would anyone want to wait if you really can have your best life now? The everlasting, omnipotent Lord God, the Holy One of Israel has become our casual acquaintance; a back slapping buddy who answers to our every whim. The pendulum of assurance has swung too far. Since we have tamed the Lion of Judah, He is no longer to be feared.[8] We dismiss Barth's claim that "if our faith is indeed real, it must encroach upon our lives."[9] A faith that calls you to love your neighbor and pray for your enemies is sometimes messy. So the promises of God, instead of directing us to the One

[1] Originally printed 1682. Sovereign Grace Publishers, Grand Rapids, MI, 1971. Reprinted 1996 by Baker Books, Grand Rapids, MI.

[2] Ken Deusterman, MA, is Book Reviews Editor for *American Theological Inquiry*,

[3] Helmut Thielicke, *How the World Began* (Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1961) 146.

[4] David F. Wells, *God in the Wasteland* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1994) 176.

[5] L.P. Jacks, *Religious Perplexities* (George H. Doran Company, New York, 1923) 60.

[6] J. I. Packer's foreword to John Owen, *The Mortification of Sin* (Christian Focus) 17.

[7] M. Robert Mulholland Jr., *Invitation to a Journey* (InterVarsity, Downers Grove, 1993) 12.

[8] Dorothy Sayers, *Creed or Chaos?* (Sophia Institute Press, Manchester, NH, 1974) 6.

[9] Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline* (Harper & Row, New York, 1959) 32.

who said He would never leave us, become a spiritual means to the desired ends we have devised for ourselves. Whenever you hear talk of 'claiming' promises, it is generally safe to assume that the promises, with our predetermined answers, are more important than His presence. If we knew His character as He was in ages past, is now, and forever will be, we would not need to be reminded of His promises. The promises of God are simply the outworking and extension of His character.[10] Oswald Chambers, when asked what he thought God was going to do in a particularly trying situation, replied "I don't care what God *does*. It's what God *is* that I care about."[11] A. W. Tozer wrote "what comes into our minds when we think of God is the most important thing about us."[12] A mere generation later insists that, in the name of a healthy self image, what comes into our minds when we think of ourselves is the most important thing about us. One of the inherent risks of capitalism and Puritanism was the rise of the individual will and the inevitable privatized faith at the expense of the biblical community.[13] Feelings and beneficial experience have taken center stage. C. S. Lewis' claim that "an honest man believes the truth even when it does not help him"[14] and Thomas Merton's statement that "our feeling God's presence is an altogether accidental and secondary event giving no sure indication of His actual presence,"[15] are easily dismissed as being too 'dogmatic.' When the demands of cognitive dissonance replace rigorous study, the result is usually a syncretistic faith in which the vision of earth is the primary reality while the vision of heaven becomes secondary. And those who lick the dust of the earth eventually "alter the soul to the surrounding conditions, instead of altering the conditions to fit the soul."[16] How does one escape this trite theological drivel? My suggestion, and what works for me when I am fully clothed and in my right mind, is a return to the writings of the much maligned Puritan, "who prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker; but set his foot on the neck of the king."[17] And there is no one better to turn to than Stephen Charnock, who though dead, still speaks, "having tasted the old, he did not desire the new, but said that the old was better."[18]

The composition of Charnock's writing style followed typical Puritan structure: the doctrine in which the truth of God was explained was given first; followed by a reasoned logical proof and defense of the doctrine; and finally the third section was intended to drive home the practical use of the doctrine by providing both comfort and admonition.[19] Initially I would much rather read an author than someone else's interpretation of their work.

[10] Notes from 1973 Great Falls, Montana lecture by Dr. Ralph Alexander, Western Conservative Baptist Seminary

[11] David McCasland, *Oswald Chambers Abandoned to God* (Discovery House, Grand Rapids, 1993), 11.

[12] A. W. Tozer, *Knowledge of the Holy*.

[13] Paul Johnson, *A History of Christianity* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1995) 317; William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism* (Harper, New York, 1957), 172-3.

[14] C. S. Lewis, *Man or Rabbit?*

[15] Thomas Merton, *No Man is an Island* (Image, New York, 1967), 169.

[16] G. K. Chesterton, *What's Wrong With the World* (Sherwood Sugden & Company, Peru, IL), 81.

[17] D. Martin Lloyd-Jones, ed., *Puritan Papers*, Vol. 1, (P&R Publishing, Phillipsburg, 2000), x.

[18] Preface to 1996 Baker Books edition, 20.

[19] Horton Davies, *The Worship of the English Puritans* (Soli Deo Gloria Publications, Morgan, PA, 1997), 191.

Therefore, in keeping with that preference, what follows is a selected anthology of Charnock's opus.

I use a great many quotations; but they are illustrious and true, and if I am not mistaken, they convey authority pleasurably. People say that I could use fewer. Of course I could; I might even omit them entirely. I shan't deny that I might even be totally silent; and perhaps that would be the wisest thing. But in view of the world's ills and shames it is hard to keep silent…If anyone asks why I do so abound with quotations and seem to dwell on them so lovingly, I can merely reply that I think my reader's taste is like mine. Nothing moves me so much as the quoted maxims of great men. I like to rise above myself, to test my mind to see if it contains anything solid or lofty, or stout or firm against ill fortune, or to find if my mind has been lying to me about myself. And there is no better way of doing this—expect by direct experience, the surest mistress—than by comparing one's mind with those it would most like to resemble. Thus, as I am grateful to my authors who give me the chance of testing my mind against maxims frequently quoted, so I hope my readers will thank me.[20]

An Anthology taken from the 1971 Edition

The Existence of God (11-67)

"The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God'" (Psalm 14:1)

I. It is a great folly to deny or doubt the existence or being of God; or, an atheist is a great fool.

II. Practical atheism is natural to man in his corrupt state.

III. A secret atheism, or a partial atheism, is the spring of all wicked practices in the world; the disorders of the life spring from ill dispositions of the heart.

While the true atheist denies the existence of God (*quoad existentiam*), believers without a knowledge of His attributes may fall victim to denying His providence or care (*quoad providentiam*) and certain aspects or rights of His nature (*quoad naturam*). In addressing the true atheist, Charnock adroitly states that even the devil thought it impossible to tempt man to deny God's existence, "but persuaded him to believe, he might ascend to that dignity, and become a god himself" (21). And he argues for the existence of God due to the "vastness of the boundless desires in man and the real dissatisfaction he has in every good thing below himself… In the highest fruitions of worldly things, [man's soul] is still pursuing something else, which speaks a defect in what it already has" (55). *In the fullness of his plenty, he will be cramped*…Job 20:22. This boundless desire did not originate from man himself. Nothing would render itself restless; something above the bounds of this world implanted those desires after a higher good, and made him restless in everything else…There is therefore some infinite being that can only give a contentment to the soul, and this is God (56). The theist only has to demonstrate that it is possible for God to exist while the atheist, with the far greater burden of proof, has to prove that it is not possible for God to exist. G. K. Chesterton gives us a practical example of this logic: "Even if I believe in immortality I need not think about it. But if I disbelieve in immortality I must not think about it"[21]Charnock

[20] Petrarch, in a letter dated September 25, 1342.

[21] G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Doubleday, New York, 1990), 24.

concludes by saying that it is utterly impossible to demonstrate there is no God (61). God is not a God who is careless of our actions. Without this truth fixed in us, we can never give him the worship due his name; we cannot order our lives and we cannot have any comfort of our lives for when the knowledge of anything is fluctuating and uncertain, our actions about it are careless (64). We cannot order our lives without being established in this truth. So far as we are weak in the acknowledgement of God, we deprive ourselves of our content in the view of his infinite perfections (65). A God forgotten is as good as no God to us (67). So it is necessary to excite men to daily and actual considerations of God and his nature, which would be a bar to much of that wickedness which overflows in the lives of men (14).

The Eternity of God (69-97)

"Before the mountains were born, or Thou didst give birth to the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God" (Psalm 90:2)

I. How God is eternal, or in what respects eternity is his property. (73)

II. That he is eternal, and must needs be so. (78)

III. That eternity is only proper to God, and not common to him with any creature.(83)

IV. The use. (84)

Not a jot of the happiness and life which God possesses can be lost; it will be as durable to everlasting as it has been possessed from everlasting. There is no succession in God. God is without succession or change; it is part of eternity: 'From everlasting to everlasting he is God,' i.e., the same. God does not only always remain in being, but he always remains the same in that being: 'Thou art the same,' Psa 102:27 (75).

He is not in his essence this day what he was not before, or will be the next day and year what he is not now. All his perfections are most perfect in him every moment, before all ages, after all ages…. God is the same without any succession of parts, and of time, of him it may be said, he is; he is no more now that he was, and he shall be no more hereafter than he is (76).

There is no succession in the knowledge of God…He does not know one thing now and another anon, he sees all things at once: 'Known unto God are all things from the beginning of the world,' Acts 15:18…There is no succession in the decrees of God. He does not decree this now which he decreed not before (77).

Nothing can be added to him, nothing can be detracted from him. There is nothing superior to him which can detract from him, nothing desirable that can be added to him (79)

Here is a strong comfort against all the distresses of the church…From everlasting to everlasting there is no diminution of his power (89).

His promises are established upon his eternity, and this perfection is a main ground of trust (Isa 26:4)…His eternity is the assurance of his ability to perform (90).

He knows nothing but what he did know from eternity, he shall know no more for the future than he now knows (91).

Our life is a constant change and flux, we remain not the same an entire day (93).

Meditate often on the eternity of God. The happiness of our souls depends upon his other attributes, but the perpetuity of it upon his eternity. By a frequent meditation of God's eternity, we should become more sensible of our own vanity and the world's triflingness (96).Prov. 23:5—"Wilt thou set they eyes upon that which is not?

The Immutability of God (98-143)

"Even they will perish, but Thou dost endure; and all of them will wear out like a garment; like clothing Thou wilt change them, and they will be changed. But Thou art the same, and Thy years will not come to an end" (Psalm 102:26,27)

I. In what regards God is immutable. (106)

II. Prove that God is immutable. (115)

III. That this is proper to God and incommunicable to any creature. (119)

IV. Some propositions to clear the unchangeableness of God from anything that seems contrary to it. (121)

V. The use. (130)

Immutability is a glory belonging to all the attributes of God. In our notion and conception of the divine perfections, his perfections are different; the wisdom of God is not his power, nor his power his holiness, but immutability is the centre wherein they all unite…unchangeableness is a thread that runs though the whole web, it is the enamel of all the rest; none of them without it could look with a triumphant aspect.(105)

There can be no alteration by the accession of anything to make his substance greater or better, or by diminution to make it less or worse. (106)

The divine nature cannot be increased so God cannot gain anything. (107)

God is immutable in regard of knowledge. God has known from all eternity all that which he can know, so nothing is hid from him; he knows not at present any more than he hath known from eternity, and that which he knows now, he always knows (Heb 4:13). (108) As there is no succession in his being, so that he is one thing now and another thing hereafter, so there is no succession in his knowledge. (109)

God's knowledge and will is the cause of all things and their successions. God does not know creatures because they are, but they are because he knows them, Acts 15:18. All his works were not known to him, if the events of all those works were not also known to him. (110)

God never began in time to understand anything, to will anything, or to be able to do anything; but he always understood and always willed, those things, which he determined in eternity to produce in time. (121)

The immutability of a good God is a strong ground of consolation. This unchangeableness of God's will shows him as ready to accept any that come to him as ever he was, so that we may with confidence make our addresses to him, since he cannot change his affections to goodness. This attribute is the strongest prop for faith in all our addresses. Herein is the basis and strength of all his promises—'Those that know thy name will put

their trust in thee' Psa 9:10—those who are spiritually acquainted with thy name Jehovah and have a true sense of it upon their hearts will put their trust in thee. His goodness could not be distrusted, if his unchangeableness were well apprehended and considered.(Isa 26:4; 54:10). (136)

Not one word fails-1 Kgs. 8:56.

God's Omnipresence (144-180)

I. Doctrine of God is essentially everywhere present in heaven and earth. (147)

II. Reasons to prove God's essential presence. (157)

III. Propositions for the further clearing this doctrine from any exceptions. (163)

IV. The use. (169)

"Am I a God who is near, declares the Lord, and not a God far off? Can a man hide himself in hiding places, so I do not see him? declares the Lord. Do I not fill the heavens and the earth? declares the Lord" (Jer 23:23-24)

As the knowledge of God is not a bare contemplation of a thing, so his presence is not a bare inspection into a thing. Were it an idle, careless presence, it were a presence to no purpose, which cannot be imagined of God. Infinite power, goodness and wisdom, being everywhere present with his essence, are never without their exercise. He never manifests any of his perfections, but the manifestation is full of some indulgence and benefit to his creatures. (170)

It is most certain that his presence with his people is far from being an idle one, for when he promises to be with them, he adds some special cordial, as, 'I will be with thee and bless thee,' Gen 31:3; Jer 15:20. 'I am with thee, and I will strengthen thee; I will help thee, I will uphold thee,' Isa 41:10,14. Infinite goodness will never countenance a negligent presence. (171)

It is forgotten by good men, when they fear too much the designs of their enemies: 'Fear not, for I am with thee,' Isa 43:5. If the presence of God be enough to strengthen against fear, then the prevailing of fear issues from the forgetfulness of it. (173)

So powerful is this presence of God in the pressures of his people that this presence outweighs all other comforts, and is more valuable to a Christian than barns of corn or cellars of wine can be to a covetous man (Psa. 4:7). (176)

God never puts any upon a hard task, but He promises to encourage them and assist them; and the matter of the promise is that of His presence…he gives them a cordial only composed of His presence: Mt 28:20, 'I will be with you.' … This presence is not without the special presence of all his attributes. Where his essence is, his perfections are, because they are one with his essence, though they have several degrees of manifestation. As in the covenant, he makes over himself as our God, not a part of himself, but his whole deity, so, in the promising of his presence, he means not a part of it, but the whole, the presence of all the excellencies of his nature manifested for our good. It is not a piece of God here and another parcel there, but God in his whole essence and perfections, in his wisdom to guide

us, his power to protect and support us, his mercy to pity us, his fullness to refresh us, and his goodness to relieve us. (177)

God's Knowledge (181-260)

"Great is our Lord, and of great power, his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:5)

I. What kind of knowledge or understanding there is in God. (185)

II. What God knows. (188)

III. How God knows things. (220)

IV. The proof that God knows all things. (229)

V. The use of all to ourselves. (232)

Since he knows himself who is infinite, he cannot but know whatsoever is finite. This is the foundation of all his other knowledge. The knowledge of everything present, past and to come is far less than the knowledge of himself. (190)

God knows all things past. This is an argument used by God himself to elevate his excellency above all the commonly adored idols: Isa 41:22. In his eternity there is nothing past or future to his knowledge. This is called remembrance in Scripture, as when God remembered Rachel's prayer for a child, Gen 30:22, and he is said to put tears into his bottle, and write them into his book of accounts, which signifies the exact and unerring knowledge in God of the minute circumstances past in the world; and this knowledge is called a book of remembrance, Mal 3: 16, signifying the perpetual presence of things past before him. (193)

He counts in particular all the ways of men: 'does he not see all my ways, and count all my steps?' Job 31:4. God knows not only what men do, but what they would have done had he not restrained them (Gen 20:6) (196)

He knows my thoughts from afar (Psa 139:2), before they are my thoughts. He knows the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Heb 4:12).

He knew the son of Jeroboam to have 'some good thing in him towards the Lord God of Israel,' I Kings 14:13. (198)

God acquires no new knowledge of the thoughts and heart, by the discovery of them in the actions …When God is said to search the heart, we must not understand it as if God were ignorant before, and was fain to make an exact scrutiny and inquiry, before he attained what he desired to know; but God condescends to our capacity in the expression of his own knowledge. (199)

If God does not know future things, there was a time when God was ignorant of most things in the world, for, before the deluge, he was more ignorant than after; the more things were done in the world, the more knowledge did accrue to God, and so the more perfection; then, the understanding of God was not perfect from eternity, but in time; nay, is not perfect yet, if he be ignorant of those things which are still to come to pass; he must tarry for a perfection he wants, till those futurities come to be in act, till those things which are to come cease to be future, and begin to be present. Either God knows them, or desires to know them, if he desires to know them and does not, there is something wanting to him, all desire

speaks an absence of the object desired, and a sentiment of want in the person desiring. If he does not desire to know them, nay, if he does not actually know them, it destroys all providence, all his government of affairs, for his providence has a concatenation of means with a prospect of something that is future, as in Joseph's case, who was put into the pit, and sold to the Egyptians, in order to his future advancement, and the preservation both of his father and his envious brethren. If God did not know all the future inclinations and actions of men, something might have been done by the will of Potiphar, or by the free will of Pharaoh, whereby Joseph might have been cut short of his advancement, and so God have been interrupted in the track and method of his designed providences. He that hath decreed to govern man for that end he hath designed him, knows all the means before whereby he will govern him, and therefore hath a distinct and certain knowledge of all things, for a confused knowledge is an imperfection in government… To make it further appear that God knows all things future, consider:

Everything which is the object of God's knowledge without himself was once only future. (202)

The prediction of future things evidence this. God even challenges, submitting the being of Deity to this trial: 'Let them bring forth (speaking of idols) and show us what shall happen, or declare us things to come: show the things that are to come after, that we may know that you are gods.' Isa 41:21,22 (203)

God knows his own decree and will, and therefore must needs know all future things. If anything be future, or to come to pass, it must be from itself or from God; not from itself, then it would be independent and absolute. If it has its futurity from God, then God must know what he has decreed to come to pass. Those things that are future in necessary causes God must know, because he willed them to be causes of such effects; he therefore knows them, because he knows what he willed. The knowledge of God cannot arise from the things themselves, for then the knowledge of God would have a cause without him, and knowledge, which is an eminent perfection, would be conferred upon him by his creatures. But as God sees things possible in the glass of his own power, so he sees things future in the glass of his own will; in his effecting will, if he has decreed to produce them, in his permitting will, as he has decreed to suffer them and dispose of them. Nothing can pass out of the rank of things merely possible into the order of things future, before some act of God's will has passed for its futurition…His declaration of things to come is founded upon his appointment of things to come: Isa 44:7—'And who, as I, shall call and declare it, since I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming?' [NIV—"Who then is like me? Let him proclaim it. Let him declare and lay out before me what has happened since I established my ancient people, and what is yet to come- yes, let him foretell what will come.']…He knows his own decrees, and therefore necessarily knows what he hath decreed, or else we must say things come to pass whether God will or not; or, that he wills he knows not what. But this cannot be; for 'known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world,' Acts 15:18. This necessarily flows from that principle first laid down, that God knows himself, since nothing is future without God's will. If God did not know future things, he would not know his own will; for as things possible could not be known by him unless he knew the fullness of his own power, so things future could not be known by his understanding unless he knew the resolves of his own will…God's knowledge of his works

precedes his works; man's knowledge of God's works follows his works…If God did not know all future things, he would be mutable in his knowledge. (205-6)

'How shall we know whether God has spoken?…If the thing does not come to pass, the Lord has not spoken" (Deut. 18:21) If his knowledge of future things were not certain, there were no stability in this rule, it would fall to the ground. We never yet find God deceived in any prediction, but the event did answer his fore revelation; his foreknowledge therefore is certain and infallible…This foreknowledge was from eternity. Seeing he knows things possible in his power, and things future in his will, if his power and resolves were from eternity, his knowledge must be so too, or else we must make him ignorant of his own power, and ignorant of his own will from eternity and consequently not from eternity blessed and perfect. His knowledge of possible things must run parallel with his power, and his knowledge of future things run parallel with his will. (207)

Those that deny God's foreknowledge ….must either say that God hath an opinion that a man will resolve rather this way than that;—but then if a man by his liberty determine himself contrary to the opinion of God, is not God deceived? And what rational creature can own him for a God that can be deceived in anything?—or else they must say that God is at uncertainty, and suspends his opinion without determining it any way; then cannot know free acts till they are done, he would then depend upon his creature for his information, his knowledge would be every instant increased, as things he knew not before come into act; and since there are every minute an innumerable multitude of various imaginations in the minds of men, there would be every minute an accession of new knowledge to God, which he had not before; besides, this knowledge would be mutable, according to the wavering and weather-cock resolutions of men, one while standing to this point, another while to that, if he depended upon the creatures determination for his knowledge. [Job 23:13-14] If the free acts of men were unknown before to God, no man can see how there can be any government of the world by him. Such contingencies may happen, and such resolves of men's free wills unknown to God, as may perplex his affairs, and put him upon new counsels and methods for attaining those ends which he settled at the first creation of things; if things happen which God knows not of before, this must be the consequence, where there is no foresight, there is no providence; things may happen so sudden, if God be ignorant of them, that they may give a check to his intentions and scheme of government, and put him upon changing the model of it…To govern necessary causes, as sun and stars, whose effects are natural and constant in themselves, is easy to be imagined; but how to govern the world, that consists of so many men of free will, able to determine themselves to this or that, and which have no constancy in themselves, cannot be imagined, unless we will allow in God as great a certainty of foreknowledge of the designs and actions of men, as there is inconstancy in their resolves. God must be altering the methods of his government every day, every hour, every minute, according to the determinations of men, which are so various and changeable in the whole compass of the world in the space of one minute; he must wait to see what the counsels of men will be, before he could settle his own methods of government; and so must govern the world according to their mutability, and not according to any certainty in himself. But 'his counsel is stable' in the midst of multitudes of free 'devices' in the heart of man, Prov 19:21, and knowing them all before, orders them to be subservient to his own stable counsel. If he cannot know what tomorrow will bring forth in the mind of a man, how can he certainly settle his own determination of governing him, his degrees and resolves must be temporal, and arise *pro re nata*, and he must always be in counsel what he should do

upon every change of men's minds. This is an unworthy conceit of the infinite majesty of heaven, to make his government depend upon the resolves of men, rather than their resolves upon the designs of God. How could he else order his people to ask of him 'things to come,' in order to their deliverance, such things as depend upon the will of man, if he foreknew not the motions of their will, Isa 45:11? (211-12)

Can all the free acts of man surmount the infinite capacity of the divine understanding? If God singles out one voluntary action in man as contingent as any, and lying among a vast number of other designs and resolutions, both antecedent and subsequent, why should he not know the whole mass of man's thought and actions, and pierce into all that the liberty of man's will can effect? Why should he not know every grain, as well as one that lies in the midst of many of the same kind? (213)

God did not only foreknow our actions, but the manner of our actions, that is, he did not only know that we would do such actions, but that we would do them freely. He foresaw that the will would freely determine itself to this or that. The knowledge of God takes not away the nature of things. Though God knows possible things, yet they remain in the nature of possibility, and though God knows contingent things, yet they remain in the nature of contingencies; and though God knows free agents, yet they remain in the nature of liberty. God did not foreknow the actions of man as necessary, but as free; so that liberty is rather established by this foreknowledge than removed…But what if the foreknowledge of God, and the liberty of man, cannot be fully reconciled by man? Shall we therefore deny a perfection in God, to support a liberty in ourselves? …That God doth foreknow everything and yet that there is liberty in the rational creature are both certain, but how to fully reconcile them, may surmount the understanding of man. (219)

Whenever we meet with depths that we cannot fathom, let us remember that he is God, and we his creatures, and not be guilty of so great extravagance as to think that a subject can pierce into all the secrets of a prince, or a work understand all the operations of the artificer. Let us only resolve not to fasten anything on God that is unworthy of the perfection of his nature, and dishonorable to the glory of his majesty; nor imagine that we can ever step out of the rank of creatures to the glory of the Deity, to understand fully everything in his nature. (p. 220).

God knows all things perpetually. (228)

He never slumbers or sleeps; therefore he never slumbers in regard of his providence, and never slumbers in regard of his knowledge. He knows not himself, nor any other creature, more perfectly at one time than at another, he is perpetually in the act of knowing. (229)

Knowledge is the basis of providence. (231)

Providence depends upon the knowledge of God, and the exercise of it upon the goodness of God. (232)

All God's attributes teach admiring thoughts of God, and low thoughts of ourselves. (241)

This perfection of God fits him to be a special object of trust. If he were forgetful, what comfort could we have in any promise? How could we depend upon him if here were

ignorant of our state? His compassions to pity us, his readiness to relieve us, his power to protect and assist us, would be insignificant without his omniscience to inform his goodness and direct his arm of power…You may depend upon his mercy that hath promised, and upon his truth to perform, upon his sufficiency to supply you and his goodness to relieve you, and his righteousness to reward you, because he hath an infinite understanding to know you and your wants, you and your services. And without this knowledge of his, no comfort could be drawn from any other perfection; none of them could be a sure nail to hang our hopes and confidence upon. (249)

God knows the least dram of grace and righteousness in the hearts of his people, though but as a smoking flax, or as the least bruise of a saving conviction, Mt. 12:20 (Isa 42:3), and knows it so as to cherish it. He knows that work he hath begun, and never hath his eye off from it to abandon it (Phil 1:6). The consideration of this excellent perfection in God may comfort us in our secret prayers, sighs, and works. If God were not of infinite understanding, to pierce into the heart, what comfort hath a poor creature that hath a scantiness of expressions, but a heart in flame? If God did not understand the heart, faith and prayer, which are internal works, would be in vain. …A sigh cannot escape an infinite understanding, though crowded among a mighty multitude of cries from others. Our groans are as audible and intelligible to him as our words—Psa 38:9—"Lord, all my desire is before Thee and my sighing is not hidden from Thee." (251)

The consideration of this attribute affords comfort in affliction. He knows their pressure as well as hears their cries, Exod. 3:7. (252)

God's wisdom (261-356)

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." (Romans 16:27)

I. What wisdom is. (269)

II. Some propositions about the wisdom of God. (270)

III. Prove that God is wise and only wise. (275)

IV. Where his wisdom appears. (279)

IV. The use. (332)

Wisdom consists in acting for a right end, observing all circumstances for action. (269) Knowledge is the apprehension of a thing, and wisdom is the appointing and ordering of things. (270)

He compasseth his ends by those actions of men and devils wherein they think to cross Him; they shoot at their own mark and hit His. Lucifer's plot by divine wisdom fulfilled God's purpose against Lucifer's mind. The counsel of redemption by Christ, the end of the creation of the world, rode into the world upon the back of the serpent's temptation. God never mistakes the means, nor can there be any disappointments to make him vary His counsels, and pitch upon other means than what before He had ordained…(274)

God's laws are not an act of mere authority respecting his own glory, but of wisdom and goodness respecting man's benefit. All his laws are suited to the true satisfaction of man.(286)

Man's advantage was designed in God's laws, and does naturally result from the observance of them.(287) Psa 19:10—'In keeping the commandments there is great reward.'

God's wisdom is seen in bringing good to the creature out of sin. He hath ordered sin to such an end as man never dreamt of, the devil never imagined, and sin in its own nature could never attain. Sin in its own nature tends to no good, but that of punishment, whereby the creature is brought into order. It hath no relation to the creature's good in itself, but to the creature's mischief, but God, by an infinite act of wisdom, brings good out of it to the creature, as well as glory to his name, contrary to the nature of the crime, the intention of the criminal, and the design of the tempter. And thus to draw good out of those things which are in their own nature most contrary to good, is the highest pitch of wisdom. (293)

The greatest blessing that ever the world was blessed with, was ushered in by contrarieties… the highest good came out of the greatest wickedness. (294)

As God had not permitted sin to enter upon the world, unless to bring glory to himself by it, so he would not let sin remain in the little world of a believer's heart, if he did not intend to order it for good. (295)

The falls of believers God orders to their further stability. (296)

Hence we have a ground for a mighty reverence and veneration of the divine majesty. (336)

He understands our griefs, weighs our necessities, and no remedies are beyond the reach of his contrivance. When our feeble wits are bewildered in a maze, and at the end of their line for a rescue, the remedies unknown to us are not unknown to God…He knows how to time our crosses, and His own blessings…There is as much judgment in sending them as judgment in removing them. How comfortable is it to think that our distresses, as well as our deliverances, are the fruits of infinite wisdom! Nothing is done by Him too soon or too slow, but in the true point of time, with all its due circumstances, most conveniently for His glory and our good. How wise is God, to bring the glory of our salvation out of the depths of seeming ruin, and *make the evils of affliction subservient to the good of the afflicted.* (344)

God's Power (357-445)

"To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen." (Romans 16:27)

I. The nature of this power. (363)

II. Reasons to prove that God must needs be powerful. (379)

III. How this power appears: in creation, in government, in redemption. (383)

IV. The use. (422)

The power of God is that ability and strength whereby he can bring to pass whatsoever he pleases. (364)

This power is of that nature that he can do whatsoever he pleases without difficulty, without resistance; it cannot be checked, restrained or frustrated. (365)

Power contributes life and activity to all the other perfections of his nature. How vain would be his eternal counsels, if power did not step in to execute them? His mercy would be

feeble pity, if he were destitute of power to relieve; and his justice would be a slighted scarecrow, without power to punish; his promises an empty sound, without power to accomplish them. (366)

That might which suffered no diminution from eternity, but hatched so great a world by brooding upon nothing, will not suffer any dimness or decrease to eternity. This power being the same as His essence, is as durable as His essence, and resides forever in His nature—Isa 40:28, 'Hast thou not known, has thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, faints not, neither is weary?' (375)

The same power that creates preserves. Acts 17:28—In him we live and move and have our being. (393)

Because this attribute is a main foundation of prayer, the Lord's prayer concludes with a doxology of it, 'for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.' (429)

'If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean,' was the consideration the leper had when he came to worship Christ, (Mt 8:2); he was clear in His power and therefore worshipped Him, though he was not equally clear in His will…As power ushers in all the attributes of God in their exercise and manifestation in the world, so should it be the foundation our eyes should be fixed upon in all our acts of worship; as without His power His other attributes would be useless, so without apprehensions of His power our prayers would be faithless and comfortless. (430)

In general, all idolatry in the world did arise from the want of due notion of this infinite power. All sin whatsoever is built upon some false notion or monstrous conception of one or other of God's perfections, and in particular of this. (432)

We measure the infinite power of God by the short line of our understandings, as if infinite strength were bounded within the narrow compass of our finite reason, as if he could do no more than we were able to do. "Can God furnish a table in the wilderness?' Psa 78:19. (433)

It is comfort from hence that all promises shall be performed. Goodness is sufficient to make a promise, but power is necessary to perform a promise. (438)

We cannot glorify God without due consideration of this attribute; for his power is his glory as much as any other attribute. (441)

Trust in God can never be without taking in God's power as a concurrent foundation with his truth. It is the main ground of trust, and so set forth in Isa 26:4, 'Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.'…All the attributes of God are the objects of our veneration, but they do not equally contribute to the producing trust in our hearts; his eternity, simplicity, infiniteness, ravish and astonish our minds when we consider them. But there is no immediate tendency in their nature to allure us to a confidence in him… The other perfections of his nature, as his holiness, righteousness, mercy are amiable to us in regard of the immediate operations of them upon and about the creature, and so having something in their own nature to allure us to repose ourselves in him; but yet those cannot engage to an entire trust in him, without reflecting upon his ability, which can only render those useful and successful to the creature. (442)

As no attribute can act without it, so in our addresses to Him upon the account of any particular perfection in the Godhead according to our indigency, one eye must be perpetually fixed upon this of His power, and our faith would be feeble and dispirited without eying this; without this, His holiness, which hates sin, would not be regarded, and His mercy, pitying a grieving sinner, would not be valued. As this power is the ground of a wicked man's fear, so it is the ground of a good man's trust. This was that which was the principal support of Abraham, not barely His promise, but His ability to make it good (Rom. 4:21); and when he was commanded to sacrifice Isaac, the ability of God to raise him up again (Heb 11:19). All faith would droop, and be in the mire, without leaning upon this. All those attributes which we consider as moral in God would have no influence upon us without this, which we consider physical in God. Though we value the kindness men may express to us in our distresses, yet we make them not the objects of our confidence, unless they have an ability to act what they express. There can be no trust in God without an eye to His power…Our Savior, when he receives the petition of the blind man, require no more of them in order of a cure, but a belief of his ability to perform it: Mt 9:28, 'Believe you that I am able to do this?' (443)

'Is the Lord's power limited? Now you shall see whether My word will come true for you or not' Num 11:23.

God's Holiness (446-532)

"Who is like Thee among the gods, O Lord? Who is like Thee, majestic in holiness, awesome in praises, working wonders?"(Exodus 15:11)

I. The nature of this holiness. (452)

II. The demonstration of it. (461)

III. The purity of his nature in all his acts about sin. (473)

IV. The use of all to ourselves. (500)

If any, this attribute hath an excellency above his other perfections. There are some attributes of God we prefer, because of our interest in them, and the relation they bear to us; as we esteem his goodness before his power, and his mercy whereby he relieves us, before his justice, whereby he punishes us. Where do you find any other attribute trebled in the praises of it, as this (Isa 6:3—'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory.' (449)

He singles it out to swear by: Psa 89:35 '…I have sworn by my holiness…' Amos 4:2. He twice swears by his holiness, once by his power, Isa 62:8, and once by all, when he swears by his name, Jer 44:26…He that swears, swears by a greater than himself. God having no greater than Himself, swears by Himself; and swearing here by His holiness seems to equal that single to all His other attributes, as if He were more concerned in the honor of it than of all the rest. (450)

The Lord, into whose image we are changed, but we are changed into nothing as the image of God but into holiness. We bore not upon us by creation, nor by regeneration, the image of any other perfection. We cannot be changed into his omnipotence, omniscience, etc, but into the image of his righteousness. (469)

God's foreknowledge that his law would not be observed lays no blame upon Him. Though the foreknowledge of God be infallible, yet it doth not necessitate the creature into acting…Adam did freely break the law, and never imagined that the foreknowledge of God did necessitate him to it. He could find no cause of his own sin but the liberty of his own will, he charges the occasion of his sin upon the woman, and consequently upon God in giving the woman to him… had the excuse of foreknowledge been valid, he would not have omitted a plea of so strong a nature, when he was on trial for his life, especially when he put forth an argument so weak as imputing God for the gift of the woman. (478)

Foreknowledge is so far from intrenching upon the liberty of the will, that predetermination, which in the notion of it speaks something more, doth not dissolve it; God did not only foreknow, but determine the suffering of Christ, Acts 4:27,28. It was necessary, therefore, that Christ should suffer, that God might not be mistaken in his foreknowledge, or come short of his determinate decree. But did this take away the liberty of Christ in suffering? Eph 5:2—'who offered himself up to God'- that is, by a .voluntary act, as well as designed to do it by a determinate counsel. It did infallibly secure the event, but did not annihilate the liberty of the action. (478-9)

For as God acts nothing in time but what he decreed from eternity, so he permits nothing in time but what he decreed from eternity. The decrees of God to make use of the sin of man for the glory of his grace, in the mission and passion of his Son, hung upon this entrance of sin; would it consist with the wisdom of God to decree such great and stupendous things, the event whereof should depend upon an uncertain foundation, which he might be mistaken in?(482)

All sin is against this attribute, all sin aims in general at the being of God, but in particular at the holiness of His being. All sin is a violence to this perfection. (501)

A holy God requires a holy worship. The holiness of God is injured by our unprepared addresses to him, when we come into his presence with all our mire reeking and steaming upon us. We contemn this perfection when we come before him without due preparation. (505)

To rejoice in the holiness of God is the true and genuine spirit of a renewed man: 'My heart rejoices in the Lord.' What follows? 'There is none holy as the Lord.' (1 Sam 2:1,2). Some perfections of the divine nature are astonishing, some affrighting, but this may fill us both with astonishment at it, and a joy in it…Heb 12:10—'But he corrects us for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.' Not simply, partakers of holiness, but of his holiness, to have a portion of it in our nature. (514)

This attribute renders God a fit object for trust and dependence. He will be in his actions what he is in his nature. Unrighteousness is the ground of mutability; but the promise of God never fails, because the rectitude of his nature never languishes. Were his attributes without the conduct of this, they would be altogether formidable. As this is the glory of all his other perfections, so this only renders him comfortable to a believing soul. When God would give us the highest security of the sincerity of his intentions, he swears by this attribute, Psa 89:35. …It is this that renders him fit to be confided in for the answer of our prayers. *This is the ground of his readiness to give.* 'If you, being evil, know how to give good gifts , how much more shall your Father in heaven give good things to them that ask him?' Mt.

7:11. Though the holiness of God is not mentioned, it is understood; the emphasis lies in those words, *if you being evil*; God is then considered in a disposition contrary to this, which can be nothing but his righteousness. (515)

We honor this attribute when we trust His covenant and promise against outward appearances. (523)

It is this only wherein he commands our imitation of him. We are not commanded to be mighty and wise, as God is mighty and wise, but 'be holy as I am holy.' (526)

God's Goodness (533-657)

"No one is good except God alone" (Mark 10:18)

I. What this goodness is. (540)

II. Some propositions concerning the nature of it. (543)

III. That God is good. (551)

IV. The manifestation of it in creation, providence, and redemption. (564)

V. The use. (622)

By goodness is meant the bounty of God. The goodness of God is his inclination to deal well and bountifully with his creatures. (541)

The goodness of God comprehends all his attributes. All the acts of God are nothing else but the effluxes of his goodness; distinguished by several names, according to the objects it is exercised about. When Moses longed to see his glory, God tells him, he would give him a prospect of his goodness: Exod 33:19, 'I will make all my goodness to pass before thee.' His goodness is his glory. (542)

He is good by his own essence. God is good as he is God, and therefore good by himself, and from himself, not by participation with another. He made everything good, but none made him good. Since his goodness was not received from another, he is good by his own nature. He is absolutely his own goodness, he needed none to make him good; but all things needed him to be good by him. (543)

Nothing can add to him, or make him better than he is, nothing can detract from him to make him worse, and nothing can be added to him, nothing can be severed from him. No created good can render him more excellent; no evil from any creature can render him less excellent: Psa 16:2 ' our goodness extends not to him' (KJV)—(NAS)—'I have no good besides Thee.' (544)

What God gives out of goodness he gives with joy and gladness. He did not only will that we should be, but rejoice that he had brought us into being. 'He rejoiced in his works,' Psa 104:21. Infinite cheerfulness attends infinite goodness. He is not wearied by the solicitations of men, he is pleased with their prayers, because he is pleased with the imparting of his own goodness. He seems to be in travail with it, longing to be delivered of it into the lap of his creatures. (549)

The justice of God is a part of the goodness of his nature. All his attributes, which are parts of his goodness, engage him to punish sin; without it, his authority would be vilified,

his purity stained, his power derided, his truth disgraced, his justice scorned, his wisdom slighted. Punishment is not the primary intention of God. Thus God speaks of himself: Isa 28:21, he calls the act of his wrath his 'strange work,' his 'strange act,' a work not against his nature as the governor of the world, but against his first intention as creator, which was to manifest his goodness. (560)

And when his precepts were broken, God seems sometimes to be more grieved for men's impairing their own felicity by it, than for their violating his authority: Isa 48:18, 'If only you had paid attention to My commandments! Then your well-being would have been like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.' (571)

The chief design of God, in his law, is the happiness of the subject; and obedience is intended by him, as a means for the attaining of happiness, as well as preserving his sovereignty. (572)

When man fell from his created goodness, God would evidence that he could not fall from his infinite goodness, that the greatest evil could not surmount the ability of his wisdom to contrive, nor the riches of his bounty to present us a remedy for it. (575)

He doth not only relieve our wants, but restores us to dignity. It is a greater testimony of goodness to instate a person in the highest honor, than barely to supply his present necessity. In creation he formed an innocent creature of the dust of the ground; in redemption he restores a rebellious creature by the blood of his Son; it is great than that goodness manifested in creation. (577)

When the angels sinned, divine thunder dashed them into hell; when man sinned, divine blood wafts the fallen creature from his misery. (579)

What man sinfully aspired to, God hath graciously granted, and more. Man aspired to a likeness in knowledge, and God hath granted him an affinity in union. It had been astonishing goodness to angelize our natures, but in redemption, our nature is exalted above all the host of heaven. As creatures, we were higher than the beasts, but lower than the angels (Psa 8:5) but by the incarnation of the Son of God our nature is elevated many steps above them. Now the 'fullness of the Godhead dwells in our nature bodily,' Col 2:9. (588-9)

This goodness of God is remarkable also in the condition of this covenant, which is faith. He does not require an exact knowledge of us, all men's understanding being of a different size, they had not been capable of this. And it was a goodness to us, it is nothing else he requires, but a willingness to accept what he hath contrived and acted for us. He hath suited this covenant to the misery of man's fallen condition; he considers our weakness, and that we are but dust and therefore exacts not of us an entire but sincere obedience. (593)

His goodness is manifested in obliging us to believe him, not fully to understand him. The understandings of men are of several sizes and elevations, one higher than another. If the condition of this covenant had been a greatness of knowledge, the most acute men had only enjoyed the benefits of it. But it is faith, which is as easy to be performed by the ignorant and simple as by the strongest and most towering mind. It is that which is within the compass of every man's understanding. God did not require that everyone within the verge of the covenant should be able to discourse of it to the reasons of men. He required not that every man should be a philosopher or an orator, but a believer. It is a condition,

which may be performed by the weakest as well as the strongest. As it is easy, so it is reasonable. Thus God, by so small and reasonable a condition as faith, lets in the fruits of Christ's death into our soul, and wraps us up in the future of all the privileges purchased by it.(594-5)

He is so good, that he would have worship declined for a time in favor of a distressed beast; the helping of a sheep, or an ox, or an ass out of a pit was indulged them even on the Sabbath day, a day God had peculiarly sanctified and ordered for his service, Mt 12:11, Luke 14:5. In this case he seems to remit for a time the rights of Deity for the rescue of a mere animal (which was most likely crucial for the survival of the owner's family). (609)

The goodness of God is seen in bearing with the infirmities of his people and accepting imperfect obedience, 1 Kings 15:14. When there is not an opportunity to work, but only to will, he accepts the will as if it had passed into work and act, John 7:17, 2 Chron 6:7-8. (618)

The goodness of God is seen in afflictions and persecutions. If it is good for us to be afflicted, Psa 119:71, then goodness in God is the principal cause and orderer of the afflictions. He takes away the thing which we have some value for, but such as his infinite wisdom sees inconsistent with our true happiness. When Jacob was to go into Egypt, which was to prove a furnace of affliction to his offspring, God promises to 'go down' with him and to 'bring him up again,' Gen 46:4, a promise not only made to Jacob in his person, but to Jacob in his posterity. (619-20)

The goodness of God is seen in temptations. He exposes them not to temptation beyond the ability he hath already granted them, or will at the time, or afterwards multiply in them, 1 Cor. 10:13. His goodness is not less in performing than it was in promising.

The goodness of God is appears in shortening temptations. None of them can go beyond their appointed times, Dan. 11:35…The goodness of God appears in strengthening his people under temptation. If he obscures his goodness in one part, he clears and brightens it in another. He either qualifies the temptation suitably to the force we have, or else supplies us with a new strength to make the temptation he intends to let loose against us. He knows we are but dust, and his goodness will not have us unequally matched…The goodness of God is seen in temptations, in giving great comforts in or after them. Job had heard of God before by the hearing of the ear, but afterwards is admitted into greater familiarity, Job 42:5. (620-21)

His goodness is most proper to strengthen our assurance in him. (641)

Let us therefore make use of his goodness to hearten our faith. We may take refuge in the sanctuary of his goodness; this will encourage us as well as astonish us, whereas the consideration of his other attributes would only amaze us, but can never refresh us, but when they are considered marching under the conduct and banners of this. (643)

Here is comfort in our addresses to him. He can never be weary of being solicited for the effusions of his goodness. If he rejoices over his people to do them good, he will rejoice in any opportunities offered to him to honor his goodness. He therefore delights in prayer. He loves to be sought, to give vent to his bounty, Job 22:21, 'Acquaint thyself with God, and thereby good shall come unto thee.' The word signifies to accustom ourselves to God. Every experience God gives us of his bounty is a motive to solicit him afresh, and a kind of

obligation he hath laid upon himself to renew it, 1 Sam 17:37. It is one part of his goodness that it is boundless and bottomless; we need not fear the wasting of it, nor any weariness in him to bestow it. The stock cannot be spent, when we have enjoyed it, there is still an infinite ocean in him to refresh us, and as full streams as ever to supply us. (646)

Goodness cannot be a deluding thing; it cannot consist with the nobleness and largeness of this perfection to invite the creature to come to Him, and leave the creature empty when it comes…Divine goodness will not let any man serve God for nought. He hath promised our weak obedience more than any man in his right wits can say it merits: Mt 10:42, 'A cup of cold water shall not lose its reward.' (648)

God's Dominion (658-757)

"His sovereignty rules over all" (Psalm 103:19)

I. General propositions for the clearing and confirming it. (665)

II. Wherein this right of dominion is founded. (668)

III. What the nature of it is. (672)

IV. Wherein it consists, and how it is manifested. (685)

V. The use. (719)

We must know the difference between the might and power of God and his authority. We commonly mean by the power of God, the strength of God, whereby he is able to effect all his purposes; by the authority of God we mean the right he has to act what he pleases. Omnipotence is his physical power, whereby he is able to do what he will: dominion is his moral power, whereby it is lawful for him to do what he will. (665)

All the other attributes of God refer to the perfection of dominion. They all bespeak him for it, and are discovered in the exercise of it. His goodness fits him for it, because he can never use his authority but for the good of his creatures, and conducting them to their true end. Without this dominion some perfections, as justice and mercy, would lie in obscurity, and much of his wisdom would be shrouded from our sight and knowledge. (666)

Affliction is an act of his sovereignty. By this right of sovereignty may not God take away any man's goods, since they were his doles? As He was not indebted to us when he bestowed them, so he cannot wrong us when he removes them. (674)

His sovereignty is manifest in the bestowing much wealth and honor upon some, and not vouchsafing it to the more industrious labors and attempts of others. Some are abased and others are elevated, some are enriched and others impoverished; some scarce feel any cross, and others scarce feel any comfort, in their whole lives. Some sweat and toil, and what they labor for runs out of their reach; others sit still, and what they wish for falls into their lap. …The poverty of some, and the wealth of others, is an effect of the divine sovereignty, whence God is said to be the maker of the poor as well as the rich, Prov 22:2, not only of their persons, but of their conditions….for he speaks of himself as a great proprietor of the corn that nourishes us, and the wine that cheers us, and the wool that warms us: Hosea 2:8,9, 'I will take away,' not *your* corn and wine, but *my* corn, *my* wine, *my* wool. (705-6)

He is a God who causes well-being and one who also creates calamity, He forms light and creates darkness—that men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun that there is no other besides Him, Isa 45:6,7. (708)

The dominion of God is manifest in defeating the purposes and devices of men. Job 5:12—'He frustrates the plotting of the shrewd, so that their hands cannot attain success, He captures the wise by their own shrewdness and the advice of the cunning is quickly thwarted.' (711)

Things do not happen according to men's ability, but according to the overruling authority of God. God never granted man the dominion of his own way, no more than to be lord of his own time—'The way of man is not in himself, it is not in him that walks to direct his steps,' Jer 10:23. (712)

The dominion of God is manifest in appointing every man his calling and station in the world. If the hairs of every man's head fall under his sovereign care, the calling of every man wherein he is to glorify God and serve his generation, which is of greater concern than the hairs of the head, falls under his dominion. (713-4)

The covenant *I will be your God* implies protection, government and relief, which are all grounded upon sovereignty; that therefore which is our greatest burden will be removed by his sovereign power. Micah 7:19, 'He will subdue our iniquities.' (739)

Here is comfort in afflictions.

As a sovereign, he is the author of afflictions; as a sovereign, he can be the remover of them; he can command the waters of affliction to go so far, and no farther. If he speaks the word, a disease shall depart, as soon as a servant shall from your presence with a nod. If we are banished from one place, he can command a shelter for us in another. (740)

The meditation on this would,

1. Fix us on him as an object of trust. It is upon his sovereign dominion as much as upon anything, that safe and secure confidence is built, for if he had any superior above him to control him in his designs and promises, his veracity and power would be of little efficacy to form our souls to a close adherency to him.
2. It would make us diligent in worship. The consideration of God as the supreme Lord is the foundation of all religion. *Our Father which art in heaven* prefaceth the Lord's prayer.
3. It would make us charitable to others.
4. It would make us watchful, and arm us against all temptations.
5. It would make us entertain afflictions, as they ought to be entertained, e.g., with a respect to God.
6. This dominion of God would make us resign up ourselves to God in everything. (742-44)

God's Patience (758-802)

'The Lord is slow to anger and great in power…(Nahum 1:3)

I. Let us consider the nature of this patience. (764)

II. Wherein it is manifested. (770)

III. Why God exercises so much patience. (782)

IV. The use. (788)

This is one remarkable letter in the name of God, he himself proclaims it: Ex 34:6, 'The Lord, the Lord God, merciful, gracious and long-suffering.' And Moses pleads it in the behalf of the people, Nu 14:18, where he places it in the first rank: 'The Lord is long-suffering, and of great mercy.' It is the first spark of mercy, and ushers it to its exercises in the world. In the Lord's proclamation it is put in the middle, linking mercy and truth together. Mercy could have no room to act if patience did not prepare the way…God's patience is the silence of his justice, and the first whisper of his mercy…Patience is the life of his providence in this world…This attribute is so great a one, that it is signally called by the name of perfection, Mt 5:45,48. (763)

It is part of the divine goodness and mercy, yet differs from both. God being the greatest goodness hath the greatest mildness; mildness is always the companion of true goodness, and the greater the goodness, the greater the mildness. Psa 145:8, 'The Lord is full of compassion, slow to anger.' It differs from mercy in the formal consideration of the object; mercy represents the creature as miserable, patience respects the creature as criminal; mercy pities him in his misery, and patience bears with the sin which engendered the misery, and is giving birth to more. (764)

Sin cries loud and long before he takes his sword in hand. Four hundred years he kept off deserved destruction from the Amorites, and deferred making good his promise to Abraham…'for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full' (Gen 15:16). (775)

His patience is manifest in his unwillingness to execute judgments when he can delay no longer. 'He does not afflict willingly, or grieve the sons of men, (lit. He does not afflict from his heart), Lam 3:33… Every prophecy loaded with threatenings is called the 'burden of the Lord,' a burden to him to execute it as well as to men to suffer it. Though three angels came to Abraham about the punishment of Sodom, whereof one Abraham speaks to as to God, yet but two appeared at the destruction of Sodom, as if the governor of the world were unwilling to be present at such dreadful work, Gen 19:1...When God punishes, he does it with some regret. He created, said Chrysostom, the world in six days, but was seven days in destroying one city, Jericho…When he comes to strike, he does it with a sigh or groan: 'Ah, I will be relieved of My adversaries, and avenge Myself on My foes' (Isa 1:24) Ah = a note of grief…I have tried all means to reclaim you, I have used all my ways of kindness and nothing prevails. (776)

How often in former times, when he had signed a warrant for their execution, did he call it back? 'But he, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; and often he restrained (turned away) his anger' (Psa 78:38). Many a time he recalled, or 'ordered his anger to return again,' as the word signifies…His patience is manifest, in that when he begins to send out his judgments, he does it by degrees. His judgments are as the morning light, which goes forth by degrees in the hemisphere, Hos 6:5. He does not shoot all his thunders at once, and bring his sharpest judgments in array at one time, but gradually, that a people may have time to turn to him, Joel 1:4: first the gnawing locust, then the swarming locust, then the creeping locust, then the stripping locust; what one left, the other was to eat,

if there was not a timely return…God had been first, as a moth to Israel…making little holes in a garment and not consuming it all at once…(777)

'He stirs not up all his wrath,' Psa 78:38; he does but pinch, where he might have torn asunder; when he takes away much, he leaves enough to support us…He punishes 'less than our iniquities deserve,' (Ezra 9:13), and 'rewards us not according to our iniquities,' (Psa 103:10). (778)

When he is invaded in all his attributes, it is astonishing that this single one of patience and meekness should withstand the assault of all the rest of his perfections. His being, which is attacked by sin, speaks for vengeance; his justice cannot be imagined to stand silent, without charging the sinner; his holiness cannot but encourage his justice to urge its pleas, and be an advocate for it; his omniscience proves the truth of all the charge, and his abused mercy has little encouragement to make opposition to the indictment: nothing but patience stands in the gap to keep off the arrest of judgment from the sinner. (780) 'These things you have done, and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you…' (Psa 50:21)…because he suffers their sins, they imagine he forgets them—Psa 10:11, He says to himself, 'God has forgotten,'—thinking his patience proceeds not from the sweetness of his nature, but a weakness of his mind. (789)

This attribute has no other place of appearance but in this world…because, at the close of the world, it will remain closed up in the Deity, without any further operation. (794)

Patience is the first attribute which steps in for our salvation, and there called 'salvation,' 2 Pet. 3:15. Those two letters of His name, 'a God keeping mercy for thousands,' and 'forgiving iniquity, transgressions and sin,' follows the other letter of his 'long-suffering,' in the proclamation, Ex 34:6,7…His patience is a ground of trust in his promise. If his slowness to anger be so great, when his precept is slighted, his readiness to give what he has promised will be as great, when his promise is believed. (795)

To conclude, as patience is God's perfection, so it is the accomplishment of the soul. And as his slowness to anger argues the greatness of his power over himself, so an unwillingness to revenge is a sign of a power over ourselves, which is more noble than to be a monarch over others. (802)

Conclusion

Dr. Alexander Whyte, a 19th century pastor of Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh, was a lover of great books and freely recommended them to his listeners. Many times "he would hold a battered old volume in his hands as he urged his audience, 'Sell your beds and buy it.'"[22] While that is not necessary for most of us today, what is needed is a passion for knowing God regardless of the cost, which ironically becomes smaller the more you know Him. Augustine understood that passion: Give me a man in love. Give me one who yearns; give me one far away in the desert who is thirsty and sighs for the spring of the Eternal. Give me that sort of man; he knows what I mean.[23]

[22] David McClasland, *Oswald Chambers Abandoned to God* (Discovery House, Grand Rapids, 1993), 50.

[23] Malcolm Muggeridge, *Jesus The Man Who Lives* (Harper & Row, New York, 1975), 121.

Stephen Charnock's work is a worthwhile study that will lead you to believe that 'the half was not told me.' Since His actions flow out of His being, there are no contradictions between any of His attributes. All of His acts are consistent with all of His attributes, and when He acts, all of God acts. Charnock dispels the persistent current evangelical myth that God suspends one attribute (i.e., holiness producing the law) when acting out of another (i.e., goodness producing grace). The perfection of His eternity is the ground of our trust(90); His immutability is the center where all of His attributes meet (105); He never manifests any of His perfections unless the manifestation is full of some indulgence and benefit to His creatures (170); His omnipresence is the greatest of all comforts (176); without His knowledge no comfort could be drawn from any other perfection (249); His wisdom causes evil to become the servant of His elect (344); no attribute can act without His power (443); while we cannot be changed into His omnipotence or His omniscience, He makes it possible that we are to be changed into His holiness, the glory of all His other perfections (469); His goodness is said to represent all His glory (542); all His attributes refer to His sovereignty (666); and His patience is so great it is referred to as perfection (763).When we come into His presence through the study of His attributes we quickly realize that "all that is ever ours is ours forever"[24]; "all that we have lost is only our shadow", and that "a great good is coming to us."[25]

Deliver my soul from …men of the world, whose portion is in this life…as for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake (Psalm 17: 13-15).

[24] Amy Carmichael.

[25] George MacDonald, *Phantastes* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1997) 166,185.

IN HONOR OF THE REV. DR. JOHN MCKENZIE

Editor's Note

Father John L. McKenzie (1910-1991) was a biblical scholar specializing in the Old Testament. He was an American leader among post-World War II Catholic scholars and highly influential in the beginnings and orientation of modern biblical scholarship in the 1940-50s. Fr. McKenzie's work had a tremendous influence in orienting Catholic thinkers to the Old Testament using modern biblical scholarship and tools; he helped to make respectable among Catholic bishops and scholars what had previously been regarded as largely a mainline Protestant enterprise. Indeed, his mid-1950s introduction to the Old Testament was controversial enough at the time to have been held up for three years by church authorities. The Jesuit scholar was also an outspoken pacifist and critic of the powerful, be they ecclesiastical or civil. Fr. McKenzie accused the church of tampering with the internal intent of Jesus' words in order to accommodate violence.

Father McKenzie was the first Catholic to be president of the Society of Biblical Literature, was a past president of the Catholic Biblical Association, participant in archaeological investigations at Ben Zur and Gideon, president of Clergy and Laity Concerned, and received numerous honors. His writings include: *The Two-Edged Sword*, *Dictionary of the Bible*, *The Civilization of Christianity*, *The Power and the Wisdom*, *The Theology of the Old Testament*, and regular articles in Catholic Biblical Quarterly and The Critic. Fr. McKenzie taught for most of his academic career at Loyola University of Chicago, University of Chicago, Notre Dame, and DePaul University.

In celebration of the long-awaited reprinting of McKenzie's many books by Wipf & Stock Publishers, ATI is pleased to offer the following two essays reflecting on McKenzie's life and work.

If you're not familiar with McKenzie, my own personal recommendation is to start with his, *The Two-Edged Sword: An Interpretation of the Old Testament*. Though written decades ago, I still consider it to be the best book I have ever read on understanding the Old Testament. I return to it often and always find that it has that rare quality of seeming as fresh as ever. Some books just don't age.

GOD AND SUFFERING—"IT HAPPENS": JOB'S SILENT SOLUTION

Tony Campbell[1]

I knew Fr. John L. McKenzie in the later years of his life when he was living in retirement in Claremont on the outskirts of Los Angeles. I had finished my PhD earlier with Rolf Knierim at the Claremont Graduate School and returned to my Jesuit confrères in Australia. I had come back for a year to work on 1-2 Samuel for the Forms of the Old Testament Literature series and lived in the rectory of Our Lady of the Assumption parish in Claremont.

Every Sunday morning, McKenzie said the 8.45 Mass in that parish. He had a devoted following among the parishioners, who spoke very highly of his homilies. They worshipped him. Regularly on Mondays, and often on Tuesdays too, John would join us for a clergy gathering and evening meal, hosted by Msgr. Bill Barry, a genial and outgoing pastor. They were good times.

I never knew the John L. McKenzie of awesome reputation, renowned for well-informed and independent thought and often feared for the barbed sharpness (when he felt it necessary) of a well-honed tongue and an always eloquent pen. The man I knew was "Uncle Jack," delighting fondly in the attentions of the Robinson's daughter, then a 6-8 year-old delight, who blissfully charmed the socks off doting "Uncle Jack."[2] Very evidently, she adored him; equally evidently, he adored her.

I remember an evening in the Robinson home when some classical allusion came up in conversation and McKenzie was groping for the exact context and could not recall it. He went out into the garden in search of peace and memory. Jim Robinson remarked, "Tony, that's the difference between his generation and ours. We know where to look things up; the giants of his generation know them." A minute or two later Robinson was proved right. McKenzie returned to the house and had remembered the reference.

John left the Jesuits in circumstances that for many of us remain unclear, though his Jesuit identity never left him. A not uncommon comment, years later, was: "Tony, we Jesuits …" I am told that he was deeply touched and genuinely pleased to have been invited, late in life, to a reunion of his former Jesuit classmates.

I remember as a student in the 1960s that McKenzie's *The Two-Edged Sword* was one of the books I cut my teeth on. His *Old Testament Theology* was singled out by James Barr (*Concept of Biblical Theology*, 176-77) as a rare example of a Christian theology of the Old Testament that restricted itself to the Old (or Older) Testament and did not push beyond to Christ to find meaning and fulfillment. McKenzie's *Dictionary of the Bible* I find valuable to this day.

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[1] Rev. Fr Antony Campbell, SJ, PhD, DD, teaches Old Testament at Jesuit Theological College, within the United Faculty of Theology, Melbourne, Australia. He is the author of over a dozen books.

[2] James M. Robinson, now emeritus at Claremont, is a noted New Testament scholar, and was the founder of Claremont Graduate School's Institute for Antiquity and Christianity. Anita, his wife, had known McKenzie in Chicago, and McKenzie was living with them in Claremont.

In *The Two-Edged Sword*, half a dozen pages are given to the book of Job. In this article, I would like to propose an understanding of a central aspect of the book that is not to be found in the literature on it—and that I think "Uncle Jack" would sagely agree with.

Part One: Solutions

When looking at suffering intellectually, McKenzie concludes with characteristic honesty: "We have no answer to the problem." He settles as such on "an experience of God" as the ultimate answer (*Two-Edged Sword*, p. 237). Some such experience has to be the ultimate answer; there is no other. Nevertheless, I propose that the second section of the initial divine speech (Job 38:39-39:30, some thirty-three verses), may invite us or allow us to move "the problem" to a quite different context. The experience of God is still crucial, but the context is radically other than generally allowed for in the book of Job.

Issues of the shape of the book of Job can wait till Part Two of this article. It is enough for now to say that the speeches given by God (in Job 38-41) are the culmination of the book. There is a strong sense in these speeches, above all concerning creation and the associated material (Job 38:4-38), that Job is not in the same dimension of being as God, that Job has indeed uttered what he did not understand—things too wonderful for him that he did not know (see Job 42:3). However, following these verses there is a major section that may deserve more scrutiny than is usually given (i.e., Job 38:39-39:30).

At the end of a course on the book of Job, Hamish Graham, a young doctor about to leave for six months or so in Darfur, drew my attention to this section. His question: Why is so much text given to the animal kingdom? His thought: Is it because the animal kingdom is an *amoral* realm, one where moral goodness and badness (righteousness and wickedness) play no role? Could this be the case with human suffering—at least occasionally? Is this passage suggesting that, in the exchanges with his interlocutors, Job might be situating his suffering in the wrong context?

The purpose of this paper, then, is to point out that a good case can be made for the possibility that part of the text of Job subtly invites its readers to imagine an alternative context for human suffering, an *amoral* context, one where the reality of human success or failure, joy or sorrow, is not exclusively associated with the moral quality of human living, with goodness or badness. Space must be allowed for the amoral, for Nature's lottery of talent, energy, and luck; above all, luck! Where human suffering or success is concerned, it is possible that "it happens"; moral causation need not be alleged.

Those who spend time studying the book of Job usually come to the speeches given by God in the final chapters with an expectation that the tensions which have been steadily building will at last be resolved. Initially, Job's defense of himself matched with his three interlocutors' defenses of tradition; then Elihu's defense of God; finally, word from God. The expectation, alas, will not be fulfilled. Few would disagree with McKenzie that the divine speeches are "magnificent poetry, but not altogether relevant to the discussion" (*Two-Edged Sword*, 236). Finding the wisdom we expect requires serious exploration.[3]

[3] Recent helpful studies on the book of Job include: Clines, D. J. A. *Job 1–20* and *Job 21–37*. WBC. Dallas, TX: Word, 1989, 2006; Good, E. M. *In Turns of Tempest*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990; Greenberg, M. "Job." Pp. 283-304 in R. Alter and F. Kermode, *The Literary Guide to the*

The opening speech from the storm, attributed to God, is an evident unity. God's speaking is announced in 38:1, "the LORD answered Job." Job's reply does not begin until 40:3, "then Job answered the LORD." Reinforcing the strong sense of unity is God's line of questioning that extends through both chapters 38 and 39. As a concluding coda, God's speaking is articulated again at the end, "and the LORD said to Job" (40:1).

This evident unity may prevent the reader from seeing that the divine speech is built out of two quite different panels. It comes as a surprise to realize that they are equally balanced in extent, even if the cosmic concerns of the first panel palpably outweigh the zoological concerns of the second.

Despite the balance in extent, the two panels are remarkably different. The first panel has all the weight, first, of creation itself, second, the stabilization of the ocean, and then associated material of cosmic dimension: dawn; springs of the sea, with death, dark, and the expanse of the earth; light and dark; snow and hail; rain and ice; stars and constellations; the weather in all its mystery. These are all beyond the envelope of this earth—and beyond the grasp of Job.

The change from one panel to the next is sudden: from "the waterskins of the heavens" to prey for beast and bird, lion and raven (Job 38:37-41). The mystery world of the cosmos is left behind and the discourse traipses through the length and breadth of the animal world.

The second panel contains the prey of predators, the birthing of goats and deer, the freedom of wild ass and ox, the thoughtless speed of the ostrich that leaves its eggs unprotected, and the fearsome might of the warhorse. Creating an envelope, highlighting the unity of the panel, it ends with the prey of hawk and eagle. All these are found within the envelope of our earthly world. The hawk may fly high and the ass roam far; all belong with our earth.

The balance needs to be seen. Despite appearances, the gravity of matters cosmic does not receive more treatment than the reality of matters worldly. The difference is surprising. First we will look at the balance; then we will turn to the difference.

Balance

The first element of balance is quite clear. Practically the same number of verses is given to the first panel as to the second. Laying the foundation of the earth extends for four verses (38:4-7). Stabilizing the sea extends for another four verses (38:8-11). The associated matters take up another twenty-six verses (38:12-38). The grand total is thirty-four verses. The second panel, the zoological catalog, has thirty-three verses (38:39-39:30).

There is perhaps something perverse in readers (or this reader at least) that creates the impression of greater weight and substance for matters that are largely unseeable and certainly unknowable. The tangible and knowable of the animal realm somehow seems almost trivial by comparison. Frankly, who bothers about ravens and ostriches? Oh, the folly

Bible. London: Collins, 1987; Gutierrez, Gustavo. *On God: God-talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1987; Habel, N. C. *The Book of Job*. OTL. London: SCM, 1985; Miles, J. *God: A Biography*. New York: Knopf, 1995. Pp. 308-28 and notes; Newsom, Carol A. *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*. Oxford: OUP, 2003; Penchansky, David. *The Betrayal of God: Ideological Conflict in Job*. Louisville, KY: Westminster/John Knox, 1990.

of ignoring what is almost under one's nose while being vastly impressed by what is thoroughly out of reach.

The number of items constituting the two panels is fluid; for both, the items can be counted in various ways. Allowing for this however, the count is surprisingly similar. In tabular form, it can look like this:

Cosmic:	Zoological:
1) the foundation of the earth	1) the prey for lion and raven
2) the stabilizing of the sea	2) the birthing of goats and deer
3) the dawn	3) the freedom of the wild ass
4) the recesses of the deep	4) the liberty of the wild ox
5) the dwellings of light and darkness	5) the ostrich
6) the storehouses of snow and hail	6) the warhorse
7) the torrents of rain	7) the hawk
8) the constellations	8) the eagle
9) the weather	

The parity is far from perfect, but the balance is inescapably there. The panels have to be seen as two, within the one speech. Neither can be ignored.

Difference

The difference between the two panels is evident in three aspects: first, as already mentioned, the cosmic is outside the envelope of this earth while the zoological is firmly within it; second, the questions addressed to Job are significantly more aggressive in the first panel than in the second; third, Job's potential in relation to these questions is essentially different.

The first aspect hardly needs further mention. Creative activity, the dwellings of light and dark, the mysteries of snow and hail, rain and ice, the movements of the stars, all these are in the lofty realm that surrounds the earth. They may bring it light and dark, ice and snow, rain and hail, but these elements are brought to the earth—they are not perceived as there already, belonging as part of it.

To the contrary, the animal kingdom is of the earth—even the soaring hawk and eagle. Ass and ox, ostrich and warhorse may be beyond Job's control, but asses and oxen can be domesticated; the warhorse is under the control of its rider. They are part of the phenomena of the world; they belong on earth.

The second aspect needs attention. It is not a matter of whether the questions put in the speech given by God are heard either as "in some way caring" or alternatively as "rather crushing" (the Hebrew is somewhat less emphatic than the NRSV translation). It is that the first panel's questions have among them elements that belittle Job. "Tell me, if you have understanding" (v. 4). "Surely you know" (v. 5). "Declare if you know all this" (v. 18). "Surely you know, for you were born then" (v. 21). They are found at the beginning of the panel and in the middle, but there is a sense in which they set a tone for the whole. In the second panel, that tone is not repeated; it is not present.

The third aspect correlates with the preceding two. The questions in the first panel are quite clearly beyond any capacity that Job might dream of. He was not there when God laid the foundation of the earth (38:4). He could not possibly know such mysteries as the springs of the sea, the recesses of the deep, or the gates of death. Control of the dawn, of light and darkness, of the weather in all its variety, or the stars and their ordinances are well and truly beyond the limits of human capacity (at the time of Job and still in ours).

The same cannot be said of the questions in the second panel. These questions, in the main, concern what Job *does not do* and, as matters stand, *cannot do*. But the key phrase is "as matters stand". Most of them are not in the category of what Job unquestionably *could not do*. In this, they differ from the cosmic questions of the first panel.

Job does not hunt prey for the lions or provide the raven with prey for its young (38:39-41). But it would not be beyond Job to provide such food if needed. He could always tether a poor beast where the lion would find it or lay out food where the raven would see it. Careful observation would reveal when mountain goats give birth or deer calve. Wild asses and wild oxen can be domesticated. Warhorses have riders. Hawks and eagles have their nests in the lofty fastness of the rocky crag, but their food needs can be provided for.

What has been spelled out here in detail was potentially clear at a first reading. The speech given by God (Job 38:1-40:2) is made up of two panels—and they are different.

The meaning of the first panel is articulated in its own text: Job is not in the same dimension of being with God; Job is not in God's league. "If you have understanding" (38:4). Clearly Job does not have understanding equal to the task. "Surely you know" (38:5, 21). Equally clearly, Job does not know in either case. Both tasks are well and truly beyond this mere man. The other issues in the first panel are in the same category: well and truly beyond Job.

Power is not the issue in panel one. Job has conceded that already and has complained about it from early on in the book (e.g., Job 9:4-19). The issue is ultimately one of being. God and Job exist in different dimensions of being (ontologically). What is natural for God is impossible for Job. What is wisdom for God is quintessentially out of reach for Job.

We have seen an essential difference between the first and second panel. The first panel concerns matters that Job *could* not do in *any* circumstances. The second panel, however, concerns matters that Job *cannot* do in the *present* circumstances. We need to explore whether the difference between the two panels is significant for a fruitful interpretation of the relevant text.

To facilitate imagination and to highlight what is particular to the second panel, it is helpful to envision other forms that the panel might have taken. It is perfectly possible, for example, that after the cosmic realm in the first panel a second panel continued in the earthly realm with issues that lay well and truly beyond Job, with matters that Job *could not* do in *any* circumstances.

Numerous examples are available from prophetic texts where actions are claimed for God. Could Job bring about a plague, a groundwater drought, or the destruction of a temple (Amos 7-9)? Could Job claim responsibility for the gift of Israel's grain, wine, and oil, silver and gold, wool and flax (Hosea 2)? Could Job make the threat to strip Israel of its protective

defenses and withhold rain from it (Isaiah 5)? Could Job bring a nation from far away against Israel or be responsible for famine, war, and pestilence (Jeremiah 5 and 28)? Such a second panel in the divine speech is perfectly possible. It would shift from the cosmic to the earthly realm. It would propose issues, as in the first panel, that Job *could not do in any* circumstances. Within the patterns of Hebrew thought and language it is perfectly possible. What we have in the second panel is by no means the only possibility; it could have been otherwise.

In the divine speech we have, the second panel is not of the same kind as the first; it is not simply a continuation of the first panel of the speech. It is different enough to merit consideration in its own right. Does the difference have meaning?

From the history of the interpretation of the book of Job, it is clear that the second panel can be read as a continuation and reinforcement of the first, developing the same message beyond the realm of panel one. This should be unarguably clear. Competent scholars have read it in that way; so, it can be read in that way. The question is whether "that way" is the *only* reading.

The questions in the second panel focus attention on the animal realm, akin to the human realm but different from it. The questions "Do you know?" and "Can you do?" focus attention on this other world, a world that is not Job's. It is a world with suffering and death, with success and failure, with hunger and plenty. But it is an *amoral* world. The freedom of the ass or the liberty of the ox, the success or failure of the hunting lion or questing eagle are in no way correlated with moral qualities such as goodness and badness.

It is a realm adjacent to the human. It is a realm without the involvement of moral causes, where what happens happens. Does this zoological catalog, drawing Job's attention to a realm adjacent to his own, suggest a possible reading that Job's arguments about the justice and injustice of human suffering and pain are being mounted in the wrong context? *Then*, in the time of the book, we might have suggested the "wrong context" as a possible reading. *now*, in our own time, we might propose it as a valid reading.

Brought by the catalog to contemplate the animal realm, where the amoral holds sway, is Job invited to contemplate the possibility of an amoral context for human suffering? Goodness or badness does not cause an animal's fate. Is the possibility to be contemplated that goodness or badness do not always cause a human's fate, that goodness or badness may not be the sole cause of human suffering or well-being? For completeness' sake, we might add that the book of Job entertains a third cause: suffering appropriately endured can purify.

In much modern thinking, morality may not affect human fate or human suffering. The possibility is there that "it happens"; it is not caused on moral grounds. The question posed to the interpreter of Job is whether the marked difference between the two parts of the divine speech could have been interpreted then, or can be interpreted now, in the direction just indicated.

Two interpretations at least are possible. In the first, panel two reinforces panel one. In the second, panel two adds another perspective to panel one. Panel one is clear; Job is not in the same league as God. Panel two is less clear, but may suggest the thought that, as in the animal world, suffering in the human world may be amoral, divorced from the moral qualities of goodness or badness.

A third reading is also possible: both of the above. The two interpretations complement each other. First, panel two reinforces panel one. Both panels make clear that Job is not in God's league: for panel one, not in the same dimension of being as God; for panel two, not in the same situation that can be claimed for God. At the same time, however, panel two adds another perspective to that of panel one in adding the potentially amoral aspect of some human suffering, analogous to the animal kingdom.

Two hermeneutical options are present. Might the text have been open to an amoral interpretation in ancient times? Might the text be open to an amoral interpretation in modern times?

That Job is not in the same dimension of being as God is *certain*; it was certain then and it is certain now. God is not to be thought of within the reduced limits of human capacity or imprisoned within the constraints of human imagination. God's actions are not to be assessed within the terms of human courts of law (Job's error!).

Though not certain, it is *possible* that the human suffering Job argues about with such intensity may, at least on occasion, stem from an amoral context ("it happens") rather than a moral one. It may have been possible to conceive of it as possible then, in the time of Job. It is certainly possible to conceive of it as possible now, in our time.

The text that follows in the book of Job does not advocate or give an opening to an understanding of the cause of some human suffering as amoral. Hence the subtitle of this article: "Job's silent solution".

Job's reply is general: "I am of small account; what shall I answer you?" (40:4). His second statement is ambiguous: "I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted" (42:2). It can be a confession of difference in the dimensions of being. On the other hand, "you can do all things … no purpose of yours can be thwarted" is readily understood as a confession of divine power. Given Job's earlier views about divine power (e.g., "who has resisted him and succeeded?" [9:4]), this points to silence and submission rather than insight and inner progress. "I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know" (42:3) is a direct response to the first panel of the divine speech and does suggest insight and inner progress. However, it is only indirectly relevant to the second panel. In what is to come (Job 40:6-41:4, above all Behemoth and Leviathan), the issue of power is primary: "Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?" (40:8). Insight and inner progress have little place.

What is clear in the responses noted here (40:4; 42:2, 3) is that the possible role of the amoral in regard to some human suffering is left untouched and undeveloped. Given the climate of the time, it is not surprising that it was left unspoken—if it was understood as a possible solution in the first place. Given the considerations we have discussed, it appears to have been available as an understanding of the text *then*. It is certainly available as an understanding of the text *now*. Job does not appeal to this solution; today, however, it may appeal to many.

Part Two: Structures

Prose begins and ends the Book of Job (prologue and epilogue), while the middle is poetry. A lament by Job gets the poetry under way (Job 3), followed by three rounds of

speeches between Job and each of the three "friends" or interlocutors (with the third round incomplete); a poem on wisdom marks the closure of these exchanges (Job 28). After that, three chapters are given to Job himself (Job 29-31); a new figure on the scene, Elihu, is given six chapters (Job 32–37); then YHWH himself (i.e., God) is presented speaking to Job from the storm wind (Job 38-41). Job replies, God speaks again and Job replies again. Finally, YHWH adjudicates, and the epilogue ends the book.

In the mid-twentieth century, the book of Job was often seen as a magnificent but mangled piece of literature. The prologue-epilogue was archaic and at variance with the whole. Job 28 and the Elihu material were secondary. The third round of exchanges was incomplete, involving textual disruption and loss, and the Behemoth and Leviathan material was secondary, involving disruption of Job's single reply to a single divine speech. Over the years since, a strong sense of unity and purpose has been restored to the book. Brief discussion of some aspects is important.

Prologue

Independently of issues of origin, a couple of points are important regarding the prologue-epilogue section of the book. First, the story that is now distributed over the prologue and the epilogue has nothing to do with the central issue of the poetry of the book of Job. It explores the issue whether religious faith can be free of self-interest. The question raised in the story by the Satan-figure is: "Does Job fear God for nothing?" (1:9). Job is wealthy, thanks to the God Job worships. Strip Job of his wealth and he will curse God (the Hebrew euphemism is "bless God" but the meaning is clear). A second time round, the Satan-figure's claim is that, stripped of his health, Job will surely curse God. The double climax of the story: in neither case does Job curse God (1:20-22; 2:10). Job's faith is not motivated by self-interest. End of argument; end of story.[4]

The restoration of the unjustifiably disturbed balance of human order is left to the epilogue (42:10-17). Human suffering is involved in the story; Job is stripped of his wealth, his children's lives, and his personal health. This suffering, nevertheless, is not the point of the story. The story is about human religious faith and human self-interest.

The human suffering inflicted on Job creates a perfect setting for the poetry of the book, focused on the issue of suffering. Nevertheless, the suffering in the prologue can be a distraction from the suffering in the poetry.

The importance of the issue in the prologue's story is easily overlooked. Perhaps the question it poses to those of religious faith is too painful for commentators to bring it to the fore. Perhaps the behavior narrated of God is deemed too shameful to be attended to. Whatever the reasons, the importance of the story should not be downplayed.

Second, the narrative presentation of the story highlights the unreality of this trial situation. Leaving other elements aside, the sequence of mishaps is massively unreal. "I alone have escaped to tell you. While he was still speaking, another came and said …" (1:15-16, 16-17, 17-18, 19). Reality has never been so unreal. Readers may be grateful.

[4] Antony F. Campbell, "The Book of Job: Two Questions, One Answer," *ABR* 51 (2003) 15-25.

Prose/Poetry; Prologue/Epilogue Boundaries

The standard division between the story (prologue and epilogue) and the central core of the book has usually been along the lines of prose and poetry. So the prologue is seen as Job 1:1-2:13 (prose) and the epilogue as 42:11-17 (prose); the central core is then 3:1-41:9 (almost entirely poetry).

Job 42:7-9 is essential to the central core but creates two problems for the prose/poetry division of material. First, the three verses are prose. Second, they involve Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar whose arrival was narrated in 2:11-13. The problem is solved by recognizing that the prologue (and its story) ends with 2:10 and the central core begins in prose with 2:11-13; it also ends in prose, 42:7-9, thus introducing and dismissing the three, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, without whom there would be no central core.[5]

It is also important to recognize that the epilogue is to be understood as restoration of the disturbed balance and not as reward for Job's piety. The language of reward is absent from the epilogue. "The LORD restored the fortunes of Job … The LORD blessed the latter days of Job … " (42:10, 12). The language and conceptualization of reward is not present. The balance was disturbed in the prologue—improperly; it is restored in the epilogue—equally improperly.

Job 28

Job 28 is a poem about wisdom; it has no links into the book of Job. Whether it comes from the author of Job or not is unimportant. Its function in the text is important. It marks the end of the series of exchanges between Job and the three. After it, the three are not heard from again. Job has three chapters to himself, Elihu has six, and the exchanges between God and Job all but wrap it up. Job 28 matters as a marker. At the same time, reflection on wisdom in this context is not out of place.

Elihu

The Elihu material is widely regarded as a later addition to the book. Elihu is not named with the three at the beginning, nor is he present at the end (perhaps having spoken negatively of both Job and the three, he has no place in God's adjudication between them). A compelling reason to view the Elihu chapters as later additions is that in 38:1, after six chapters of Elihu, the text has "the LORD answered Job." It is unlikely that Elihu would have been passed over so lightly.

However, the Elihu speeches take an approach that is otherwise largely absent from the book of Job. Job has defended himself and accused God. The three have defended God from their own understanding of experience, from their inherited tradition, and from their personal conviction. Different from these, Elihu exalts God from the point of view of human perception. This is quite different from God's inviting Job to see himself from the point of view of divine perception. Elihu's speeches are variously assessed; however, they add a perception that is otherwise missing.

[5] Campbell, "Book of Job".

Behemoth/Leviathan

A standard position in the past was to end the original poetry of Job (prescinding from 42:7-17) with *one* divine speech (38:1-40:2) and *one* reply from Job (made up of parts from 40:1-5 and 42:1-6). The material associated with Behemoth and Leviathan (40:6-41:34) was assessed as secondary. More recent studies have moved away from this position, focusing on the present text and evaluating the Behemoth and Leviathan material positively.[6] However, the issue of God's overwhelming power renders this material problematic. The solution to Job's problem proposed in it is that of God's superior power rather than that of the difference in dimension of being.

The power theme is introduced at the start: "Have you an arm like God, and can you thunder with a voice like his?" (40:9). It is continued in God's challenge (40:10-14), in the portrayal of Behemoth ("its strength is in its loins and its power in the muscles of its belly" [40:16]), and of the portrayal of Leviathan (esp. 41:1-11 [Heb., 40:25-41:3]; other examples include such declarations as "I will not keep silence concerning its limbs, or its mighty strength" [41:12; Heb., 41:4] and "On earth it has no equal, a creature without fear [41:33; Heb., 41:25]).

The origin of this block of text is immaterial. The assumed dislocation of Job's sole reply to God is possible. What is troubling, however, is that what is being proposed at the end of the book as part of the *solution* is precisely what was highlighted by Job earlier in the book as a significant part of the *problem*—the overwhelming power of God. "He snatches away; who can stop him? Who will say to him, 'What are you doing?'" (9:12). "The thunder of his power who can understand?" (26:14). The emphasis on God's overwhelming power as a solution to Job's problem—which it is not—appears to be based on a misunderstanding of the initial divine speech, coupled with an inappropriate development of the passage on the warhorse (39:19-25). In this sense, whatever its origin, this block is of secondary value.

42:5

It is symbolically appropriate that this verse is wide open to various translations.[7] Its final phrase, however, is crystal clear: "but now my eye sees you [NAB: has seen you]." The difficulty with it is equally clear: nowhere in the text of the book has Job seen God. Job has just *listened* to a lengthy discourse from God. God spoke to Job: "then the LORD answered Job out of the whirlwind" (38:1; the Hebrew adds, "saying," the equivalent in Hebrew of quotation marks). It would have been so simple to formulate the text as: "the LORD *appeared* to Job in the whirlwind and said." But the text does not have that.

An appeal to Job's growth in insight and inner understanding, in the light of all that has just been said, is most attractive. Against this, the corporeality of "my eye sees you" seems to demand something more physical. For lack of something better (*faute de mieux*), we are left to assume that God appeared to Job and spoke. It is symbolically appropriate that the *seeing* is unclear. Human seeing of God is seldom clear. Yet the human experience of God is the only ultimate answer for the suffering in human life.

[6] See especially Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), 85-110.

[7] See especially E. M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest.* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990), 370-78.

42:6

It is again appropriate that the poetry's final verse should be opaque. The first part of the verse has two verbs and no object; the second part of the verse has two objects and no verb.[8] To the best of my knowledge, the syntactical structure of the verse is unique in the Hebrew Bible.

It has long been known to scholars that, without emendation, the verse cannot bear the meaning usually found in modern translations or even commentaries (i.e., "I despise myself" or equivalent).[9] It is highly unlikely that Job's stance should be changed so radically in the profound uncertainty of one opaque verse. It is more likely that, taking the two verbs together and the two objects together, 42:6 is an exit line: "I have had enough of this lamentation stuff."

It is dishonest to translate the verse in the traditional fashion without a note to say that an emendation, a change, has been made to the text. John McKenzie resisted dishonesty fiercely. So should we.

[8] For more detail, see Antony F. Campbell, *God and Bible: Exploring Stories from Genesis to Job* (New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist), 120.

[9] Above all, see S. R. Driver and G. B. Gray, *The Book of Job* (ICC; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921), Part One, p. 373 ("The v. is probably corrupt"); Part Two, p. 347–48 ("The v. seems to be defective … if correctly read, an obj. has dropped out … it is better to restore a suitable object by emendation"). Also, Good, *Turns of Tempest*, 25-26, 170, as well as 375-78 and Habel, *Book of Job*, 576, noting the contributions of Moses Maimonides (12th cent.) and Dale Patrick (1976). Clines takes a different and not indefensible tack: "Therefore I melt in reverence before you, and I have received my comfort, even while sitting in dust and ashes" (*Job 1–20*, xlvi).

THE REVEREND JOHN L. MCKENZIE (1910-1991) A PERSONAL MEMOIR

Jean-Marie de la Trinité[1]

It is not my purpose in this brief, personal memoir to discuss the brilliant biblical scholarship, linguistic, and academic achievements of Fr. John McKenzie, although written on the occasion of the reprinting on the 50-plus anniversary of the publication of his seminal work *The Two-Edged Sword*, a work called at the time "the most significant Catholic interpretation of the Old Testament ever written in English", by *The Thomist*. Rather, my purpose is to remember a man I am honored to call my friend and in so doing to say something about a simple man of faith and a priest who captured the hearts and imaginations of those of us who were blessed to have known him personally.

At the outset, let me say, to sum up at the beginning of this writing all that is in this little memoir, that Reverend John L. McKenzie was a man of faith, as he described it in his work *Authority in the Church* when he spoke of Jesus giving to Peter the Keys of the Kingdom. I paraphrase him in broad strokes, but accurately: When Christ said to Peter, "You are Peter and upon this rock I will build My Church," the rock that Jesus means is Peter's faith.

Therefore, the authority of the Church rests upon her faith as the single bedrock of her place, title, position and teaching, and it is faith which defines those who carry forth the vitality of the truth of her message, the message of the teaching of faith given to us by Jesus Christ who often repeated, "Your faith has saved you."

My first encounter with Father McKenzie occurred in 1965 at Loyola University, Chicago where he was a professor in his fields of expertise and where I was an undergraduate in philosophy and languages. This was the dramatic year of the Selma to Montgomery Marches in Alabama for civil rights which occurred on March 7, 9 and 21-25, respectively, and which involved the shedding of much blood and the death of civil rights activists (among them Jimmie Lee Jackson, Reverend James Reed, and Mrs. Viola Liuzzo) and which marked the emotional and legislatively historic and climactic moment of the civil rights movement in the United States. It brought Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee into the fight to secure the rights of black voters, all of which culminated in the signing of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson. August 1965 was a heated year of racial conflict, legal and political controversy, intimidation, and violence surrounding the denial of voting rights to a segment of American citizens based on their race. There emerged a moral insistence upon the redress of that most grave and institutionalized injustice to some American citizens which contradicted, in fact, the Constitution of the United States and the Declaration of Independence.

Father McKenzie, a pacifist and advocate of human rights and equality, was acutely aware of these events, as were all of us at the time, which were of worldwide, historic importance and were reported daily in the media as the events of that peculiarly American drama of human socio-political tragedy and triumph unfolded.

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In this highly-charged, revolutionary atmosphere, a controversy arose on Loyola University's Northshore campus regarding the rights of students to freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. As a private, religious institution of higher learning, Loyola had sought to suppress and even to eliminate altogether the political, social and racial urgencies of the Civil Rights Movement in general and the freedom of persons in particular, exhibiting a considerably restrictive frame of mind,.

Thirty or 40 students met for debate and discussion in a classroom on campus late one chilly afternoon amidst the atmosphere of this colossal human rights struggle that was being played out in Selma before the entire international media and thus before the whole world.

I was friends with a young woman at that time, an intellectual student activist who was politically well in advance of her college peers in such matters as the recognition and fostering of the rights and freedoms of persons and who was naturally an important participant in this student gathering and in the advocacy of the rights of persons in society, even the society of a private, Catholic university. The laws governing human freedoms and human rights, so it seemed, did not apply to it, except as it wished to accept such laws.

She and Fr. McKenzie were friends and he was there at the meeting as an unofficial observer, not deployed by the University administration, nor did he take an active part in the discussions. I remember him standing on the sidelines listening intently as we students grappled with our feelings and our philosophies in regard to the University's rather hard-line stance, wishing to squelch this kind of "demonstration" of the intellect vis-à-vis questions primary to conscience, justice, the rights of persons, and the human condition. I was struck by both the silence and the strength of Fr. McKenzie's presence. He seemed to add legitimacy to our concerns simply by being there and by being engaged, as a friendly observer, in the proceedings which became quite polemical and vocally rough at times. But he did not intervene as an authority figure and retained his *persona* as observer to the last.

In point of fact, the truth itself was being debated that afternoon and evening among us students; and he was there to see how the debate would turn out. His curiosity and advocacy for the truth and for the right, as in *right*eousness, as it would turn out, and as I would later witness firsthand, was apparent to me immediately in this early encounter with Fr. McKenzie, so intent was his presence in what appeared to be his personal desire to listen and to understand, to know what was going on, and what we students felt and thought about it as affecting our own lives as students and the whole of humanity.

I will not delve more deeply into this event except to say that the evening's discussions and debates happily were won by us "liberals" who fostered student freedoms against the closed mind of the University, our so-called *alma mater*. We found the truth to be on our side and, in Fr. McKenzie, being our friend, either in fact or by association, we also saw an ally.

My friendship with Fr. McKenzie and my admiration for him further developed from that encounter.

This is how it occurred. The marchers at Selma and their families were undergoing extraordinarily brutal repression by the Alabama state police and National Guard involving savage beatings with sticks and bullwhips (which caused the death of some), teargas assaults which caused the marchers much suffering, and the denial of judicial appeals and protections by certain pernicious judges during the days of the marches and thereafter. Food was in

short supply for them, and I determined to at least try to do something about that particular problem. I organized a food drive on Loyola University campuses for the relief of the victims of the human tragedy of Selma.

I obtained the University's permission to hold a rally for this relief effort in one of the classrooms of the law school at the Lewis Towers Campus which was widely publicized. On the day of the rally, many students showed up at the designated classroom with food items and to show their support for my little relief effort. In fact, I was amazed at how many students actually responded, not only with their presence but also with the needed provisions to be sent to Selma. I was also amazed at their enthusiasm for this human rights cause, never having seen them involved in anything nearly so specific, "in-your-face," and self-sacrificing a cause as was this struggle, although probably never having seen the opportunity to do so either, while I was totally involved in the nonviolent civil rights movement from day one, both in the advocacy of prayer to Almighty God for the relief of the oppressed, the assaulted and the murdered, and the change of heart of the oppressors, as well as in my feet on the ground marching for justice.

However, before the doors were opened to the general student body for the rally, several students from the law school itself had arrived and established themselves in the meeting room to stage a sit-in protest to prevent our humanitarian efforts and to silence any discussion on the topic of Selma. We occupied the classroom despite the law students' presence and protests through a nonviolent penetration and takeover of the larger portion of the space. I began to call on the guest speakers who were invited to address the rally. The law students tried to shut them up and to shout us down, my appeals for calm and the respect of the rights of others to speak notwithstanding and falling on deaf ears.

A brave and beautiful little nun, I remember, walked up to the podium, stood as straight as an arrow, addressed the angry law students and effectively silenced them, embarrassing them by the statement of some very simple Christian truths and beliefs which she embodied in her diminutive person and which she expressed to them in calm and measured tones, in peace, and with the authority of Truth Itself. She was stunning.

However, no sooner had she sat down, and with regained hubris and contempt, the ruckus began again in protest of our nonviolent, humanitarian efforts. Suddenly, the rear door of the classroom opened and in walked Fr. McKenzie, who I now believe had been listening outside in the hallway at the rear door of the classroom, the renowned thinker and priest universally recognized as an intellect of intellects and a man of God. He walked up to the front of the classroom and stood quietly, forthrightly there, near the podium, gazing on all those present. He said not a word, but his look seemed to say, "If you want to deal with these that are mine, you will first have to deal with me!" It was one of those "moments" and I will never, never forget it. The law students fell silent at this and remained so for the rest of the proceedings. Some of them sheepishly left the room, others, still angry, remained, threateningly, to the end, but did not dare say another word.

My admiration for Fr. McKenzie at that moment knew no bounds. Here was a man of truth, personal integrity, righteousness and humanity, a man of charity and a defender of the poor and the oppressed standing his ground. He was a priest of God and a good shepherd after the likeness of his Savior and Exemplar, Jesus Christ.

On another occasion, which was to further reveal something of the nature of my friend, I was visiting Fr. McKenzie at the University of Chicago with four or five priests and laypersons. He provided dinner for us, and the evening turned to many and various discussions—linguistic, biblical, intellectual and simple and homely, sometimes even mystical. With regard to the latter, Fr. McKenzie had little patience being the spiritual egalitarian that he was and thinking of mystics as a self-considered class of elites, a notion at which I balked but loved him nonetheless. He had stated in *Authority in the Church* his opinion that in Heaven all are equals, though perhaps from his seat in Heaven he now holds a kindlier view of mystics and of mysticism.

Hardly noticed in a Chicago winter, snow was quietly accumulating outside. It was Thursday afternoon turning into evening of January 27, 1967, the day of the beginning of the great Chicago blizzard of that year which lasted through the following Friday and paralyzed the City for several days thereafter. Fr. McKenzie put us all up at his residence until we could brave the sea of snow outside and make our way to our own residences. Here now was the man of hospitality and friendship to the journeyer in times of distress, in times of their need. Add to that the priestly care of our souls, we who were close to him and who served his Masses, and a fuller picture of Fr. McKenzie reveals itself.

He was not an iceberg, to be sure, not cold, nor really frightening either; but at first sight he was formidable in appearance; not handsome but striking to look at, rather like seeing a mountain for the first time from a great distance rising black on the horizon, not realizing that close up it is covered with lush, emerald forests and possessed of valleys teeming with spectacular life and running streams of beautiful, crystalline waters. He was like that.

And here he was, the gentle priest of kindly grace and comforting care of God's sheep, which he accomplished without a second thought and, it seemed to me, totally unaware of the effect of the exercise of his priesthood, as such, upon us. As a priest, he appeared to me to be completely unselfconscious and never to have adverted to the fact that he was indeed a priest. He was simply our friend who happened to be a priest who was now saying Mass for those of us gathered with him in the service and worship of our Lord; our Lord and his Lord. We were somehow equal, in some completely acknowledged but unspoken manner. It seems, in retrospect, that to him Christ was over all and in all, and all there was for him was Jesus Christ. Christ was the totality of his own priesthood, just as though his priesthood had nothing at to do with himself, but that it had everything to do with Christ.

I am shaken at this thought, for I believe in my soul, in my heart of hearts, that this was John McKenzie's sole consciousness of himself. He belonged to Christ Jesus, in His service for His Church, and Christ was All in all to him. Even the arrangement of his Masses for us seemed to me sudden, almost improvisational and unaccounted for. In an instant, without a word, we were preparing for Mass. It was the most extraordinary thing to me.

The *coup de grâce* of our friendship, however, and its most strikingly revelatory moment came in two separate events, but both related in charity. I was extremely poor in my student days, and attended university on scholarships while working three jobs to pay for my room and board. Nevertheless, it was impossible to make ends meet and I consequently fell farther and farther behind in payment of my living expenses. This reached a critical moment and became an embarrassment to me in that I was being turned out of Gonzaga Hall, my dormitory, for lack of payment of room and board.

Some days passed with my not knowing what to do and with no place to turn for help. Then one day I was called to the dormitory administrator's office. He wished to speak to me. I knew exactly what it was about and prepared for the worst. I sat down in his office in front of him. He looked at me curiously for a moment but said nothing. I was puzzled. "You wanted to see me," I ventured. "Yes," he said and, leaning forward across his desk, he handed me an envelope saying only that it was for me. I opened it and drew from it a check from Fr. McKenzie made out to the University in the total amount of my expenses for room and board, covering what I owed the dormitory in arrears and to the date of my graduation. Thus, I had no more housing concerns and could concentrate fully on my studies. To this day, I do not know how Fr. McKenzie got wind of my financial situation and stepped in to change my life, to "save" one of God's children. *What you do to the least of these that are Mine, you do to Me*, Jesus said.

One of my housemates, a sometime tormentor because of my poverty, became aware of this and cornered me to find out what he could about it, saying to me, outdone by events having turned in my favor, "You have some friend!" Actually, he was dismayed.

Yes, some friend indeed. John McKenzie, priest or not, was a Christian, and he showed it and he lived it.

Related to this occurrence, as I have mentioned, for it is a relationship in charity, he knew of my admiration for the University of Chicago in the shadow of which, growing up in Hyde Park, I had spent my adolescence and whose international reputation was the envy of the world. Everyone wanted to go there, and I applied, in my turn, for admission to the graduate school with not the chance, it seemed to me, of a snowball's survival in the infernal regions of succeeding in my desire. However, I went to Fr. McKenzie and told him of my desires. He wrote a letter recommending my admission to graduate School at UC. The University's acceptance fell upon me with the stunning effect of the unattainable sought and achieved. Here was I, nothing and nobody, accepted to the University of Chicago's graduate school in South Asian Studies. Quite amazing it was.

"He has done all things well," it can be rightly said of Reverend John L. McKenzie, in regard to one who is his friend, even myself, and who remembers him with the affection of Divine Love, *a great priest who in his day pleased God.*

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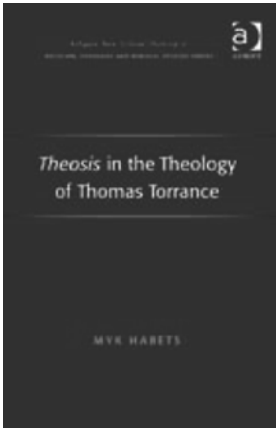

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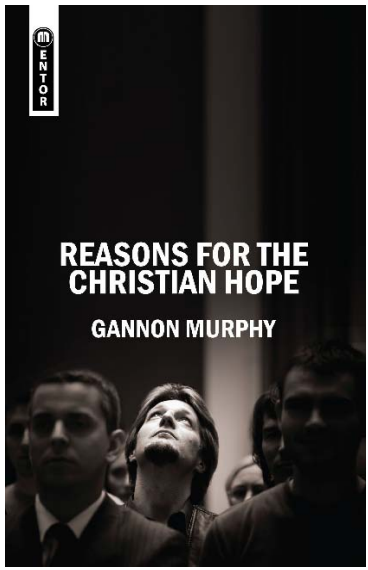

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BOOK REVIEWS

The New Shape of World Christianity: How American Experience Reflects Global Faith. **By Mark Noll. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009, 212 pp., $25.00.**

Those of us who are Western Christians continue to hear reports that the church is migrating to the south and to the east—that as our nations increasingly turn their collective backs on God, God begins fresh work in other parts of the world. Says Mark Noll in his new book *The New Shape of World Christianity*, "It is as if the globe had been turned upside down and sideways. A few short decades ago, Christian believers were concentrated in the global north and west, but now a rapidly swelling majority lives in the global south and east. [If a Christian] Rip Van Winkle wiped a half-century of sleep from his eyes … and tried to locate his fellow Christian believers, he would find them in surprising places, expressing their faith in surprising ways, under surprising conditions, with surprising relationships to culture and politics, and raising surprising theological questions that would not have seemed possible when he fell asleep."

Here are a few remarkable facts Noll provides:

- This past Sunday it is possible that more Christian believers attended church in China than in all of so-called "Christian Europe." Yet in 1970 there were no legally functioning churches in all of China; only in 1971 did the communist regime allow for one Protestant and one Roman Catholic Church to hold public worship services, and this was mostly a concession to visiting Europeans and African students from Tanzania and Zambia.
- This past Sunday more Anglicans attended church in each of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda than did Anglicans in Britain and Canada and Episcopalians in the United States combined—and the number of Anglicans in church in Nigeria was several times the number in those other African countries.
- This past Sunday more Presbyterians were at church in Ghana than in Scotland, and more were in congregations of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa than in the United States.
- The past Sunday more people attended the Yoido Full Gospel Church pastored by Yongi Cho is Seoul, Korea, than attended all the churches in significant American denominations like the Christian Reformed Church, the Evangelical Covenant Church or the Presbyterian Church in America.
- This past Sunday the churches with the largest attendance in England and France had mostly black congregations. About half of the churchgoers in London were African or African-Caribbean. Today, the largest Christian congregation in Europe is in Kiev, and it is pastored by a Nigerian of Pentecostal background.
- This past week in Great Britain, at least fifteen thousand Christian foreign missionaries were hard at work evangelizing the locals. most of these missionaries are from Africa and Asia.
- For several years the world's largest chapter of the Jesuit order has been found in India, not in the United States, as it had been for much of the late twentieth century.

I have several books on my shelf that explore this phenomenon, showing how the center of the church is, indeed, migrating away from the West. Noll's book, though, takes a fresh approach. Because the world is coming more and more to look like America, American Christianity is important to the world. "The point of this book," he says, "is not primarily to shed light on the history of Christianity in North America. It is, rather, to address the question of what American Christianity means for the worldwide Christian community. … The book's major argument is that Christianity in its American form has indeed become very important for the world. But it has become important, not primarily because of direct influence. Rather, the key is how American Christianity was itself transformed when Europeans carried their faith across the Atlantic. The American model rather than American manipulation is key." So in this book Noll looks to the American pattern and seeks to understand how that may shed light on how the faith will spread in this new areas of the world.

What Noll does not do is blame America for the woes of the church in the south and in the east. He does not charge America with recklessness in exporting religion as she has exported culture and conflict and so much else. Instead he stresses "the advantage of seeing the new regions of recent Christian growth as following a historical path that Americans pioneered before much of the rest of the Christian world embarked on the same path." It is an intriguing thesis and one that bears examination. Noll has to admit, though, that this book can be little more than an interim report since the situation is changing so rapidly. Yet even as an interim report there is much to glean from it.

Here is how Noll goes about this task. In the first three chapters, the first part of the book, he provides a short sketch of the Christian world today, outlines some of the challenges posed by this new reality and then describes a few developments among evangelicals of the nineteenth century that pointed toward what would happen in the world in the twentieth century. Chapters four through seven are the heart of the book and here he provides his argument that American form rather than American influence has been the foremost contribution of America to the recent world history of Christianity. In the third and final section he tests his argument against specific case studies. And, of course, he pulls everything together in a concluding chapter.

While his argument is compelling and while the book shares a great deal of interesting facts, both historical and contemporary, it is not without what I consider quite a considerable weakness. In defining what it means to be a Christian or an evangelical, terms Noll uses repeatedly, an author may face two extremes: death by a thousand qualifications or the opposite error of a lack of qualification. And in Noll's case I think he tends toward the latter. His definition of Christian is wider than it ought to be, I think, and the same is true of evangelical. In both cases the definition could include Roman Catholics and potentially even Mormons or other groups who have no great love for the true gospel. While we cannot deny that these groups are also exporting religion to the far corners of the world, grouping them under the same banner as Protestant evangelicals obscures rather than clarifies. When we look at a church like Yongi Cho's Full Gospel Church we are right to ask whether what is being taught there is even the gospel and, hence, whether it is truly a church at all. Rarely does Noll pause to consider if the churches he writes about are faithful to the gospel. It is as if anybody calling itself a church (or perhaps calling itself evangelical) is equal. And then we wonder, is much of the new shape of world Christianity really even Christian?

The New Shape of World Christianity is an interesting read and an important one, even. As an interim report, I think it succeeds in its task of drawing attention to a reality that is only now unfolding around us. And on that basis I am glad to recommend it to those who are interested in the subject matter.

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***The Irish Puritans: James Ussher and the Reformation of the Church*. By Crawford Gribben. Darlington, England: Evangelical Press, 2003, 160 pp., $14.99.**

James Ussher (1581-1656) was one of the most influential Reformed theologians of the seventeenth century. In spite of this, he appears only faintly on the horizon of the contemporary resurgence of Reformed theology. However, the man who stands behind the Westminster Confession of Faith deserves greater recognition for his role not only in the reformation in Ireland, but in England as well. With the 2003 publication of Crawford Gribben's *The Irish Puritans: James Ussher and the Reformation of the Church*, the house of Ussher is beginning to ascend to the heights of influence that it once had.

Although the book under review is written in a style that is accessible to the layperson, it is not simplistic. One comes away from it learning much about the religious and political situation in early modern Ireland. To further educate the reader, Gribben provides illustrations, mostly portraits of key figures as well as two delightful sketches by his wife Pauline whose background is in architecture. Gribben writes with an apparent sympathetic bent towards those who sought reform in seventeenth century Ireland, particularly the Puritans.

The Irish Puritans follows what one historian has called "horizontal history," in that it looks not only at historical characters, but also at their social background. Thus, it is a work that is very much about the Irish reformation. Its opening chapter is a short history of the people and events that lead up to it. For instance, Gribben traces the differences between Ireland's "native Irish," "Old English" and "New English" populations; one cannot understand the scene on the ground in Ireland in the seventeenth century if these groups are not kept in mind. The reformation itself had a different flavor than the one in England. While the English reformation was as theological as it was political, in Ireland the basic difference between Protestants and Roman Catholics "was their response to Henry's divorce, rather than biblical doctrine" (16). There was therefore a strong pragmatic element guiding the reformation's early phase.

What frequently appears in Gribben's book is the issue of English cultural encroachment, what is sometimes anachronistically called Anglicization. Instead of recognizing the value in meeting the Irish on their terms – using the Irish language rather than English to evangelize is but one example – England imposed its own political and religious agenda on Ireland. Gribben at times uses strong language to explain the situation: "In the institutions of its day, the Irish reformation was rooted in the betrayal of the Irish people as the English government thought that the demonstration of English culture was more important than the clear communication of the gospel" (17).

By and large the population of Ireland was steeped in a melding of Roman Catholic religion and pre-Christian paganism. The Irish were just as likely to go to Mass as they were to make pilgrimages to holy wells. When the reformation reached the shores of Ireland in the late sixteenth century it could only take hold by political force, relegating itself to English controlled districts like the Pale, a fortified area around Dublin.

Similar to the situation on the Continent, the Catholic Counter-Reformation was active in Ireland. Irish priests who had been trained in places like Lisbon, Paris and Rouen were "attempting to make Ireland's reformation a battleground of academics" (21). In 1592 Trinity College Dublin was founded as a Puritan college that sought to provide preachers and theologians for the Church of Ireland. It was at Trinity that James Ussher first makes his appearance on the larger religious stage.

In the second chapter of the book, Gribben highlights the early life of Ussher paralleled with the story of the growth of the Irish reformation. Ussher was born on January 4, 1581 in Dublin. He came from a distinguished family that included Protestants and Roman Catholics on both sides, but was truly converted to Christ at ten years of age after having read Romans 12:1: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (KJV).

Ussher received his MA from Trinity College in 1601 and it was at this time, in order to answer the claims of the Roman Catholics, that he took up an eighteen-year study of the church fathers. In 1607 he was awarded the BD and later in 1613 the DD Initially he taught at Trinity College and was its vice-chancellor, but by 1621 he was called to the bishopric of Meath and by 1625 he was made Archbishop of Armagh, primate of the Irish church. Gribben notes that Ussher's fast rise in the church "was as much to do with his moderation as his brilliance" (28). Although Ussher was thrust into roles that required great administrative ability, his preference would have been the life of study. He made a regular habit of visiting England one summer out of every three to study and grow his collection of books, which numbered at ten thousand volumes and formed the basis of the Trinity College Dublin library.

The Irish Archbishop is well known for his chronology of the bible and his dating of the Creation at 4004 BC. Both of these works indicate that Ussher was a respected historian. Yet his historical ability stretches far beyond chronologies based upon biblical genealogy. It should be this broader legacy for which modern Christianity should remember him.

The lack of gospel influence in Ireland was not due to any deficiency in doctrine. Gribben points to the publication of the Irish Articles (1615) as an example of the Church of Ireland's theological influence. Grown out of dissatisfaction with the English Articles (1563) – commonly referred to as the Thirty-Nine Articles – the Irish Articles for a time became the doctrinal basis of the Church of Ireland. Consisting of one hundred and four statements, it leaned heavily on both the English and the Lambeth Articles (1595). It was strongly Calvinistic and demonstrated a high regard for the bible. Whether Ussher was the principle author or not, he was definitely a strong influence behind them. As a result, Ussher's contemporaries saw him as having gone beyond the conciliatory tone of most in the Church of England: "in their eyes, he had become a 'Puritan'" (39).

Gribben provides a very useful exposition of the Irish Articles (39-48) and reproduces them as an Appendix to the book. He notes certain confessional innovations of the Articles. For instance, they provided the most extensive discussion of God's decree out of any Protestant confessions of faith published to that point, they were the first to set out the basics of covenant theology and they have the distinction of being the first to claim that the Pope was the Antichrist. Oddly enough, the Irish Articles are silent on issues of church government, which for a document of an episcopalian church is surprising. Gribben notes that this silence is due to the Irish Articles' feature as a "statement of a missions agency" which the Church of Ireland essentially was (46). In terms of subscription, "Ministers who hoped to work with the Irish church were not required to agree to everything in its confession of faith – all what was required of them was a promise not to teach anything contrary to it" (47).

The sad fact of the Irish reformation was that its demise came not at the hands of Roman Catholicism, but as a result of English control. Ussher had a positive opinion of James I (1566-1625), who had abandoned his Presbyterianism for prelacy upon his ascendance to the English throne. However, Ussher had methodological differences with his king when it came to implementing reform. The desire of James and his bishops was the complete uniformity of ministers within the Church's fold. Ussher, on the other hand, demonstrated such ecclesiastical flexibility that it was possible to be Presbyterian while holding office in the Church of Ireland. According to Gribben, the "royal programme of uniformity brought about the downfall of Ussher's reformed church" (52). This in no small part was due to the distinctly Arminian flavor of James' uniformity, seen clearly in the influence of the infamous Archbishop William Laud (1573-1645).

One of the positive moments in the history of Ireland came in the early 1630s with the revival that took place in Ulster known as the Six Mile Water Revival. Sparked by the preaching of men like John Ridge and John Livingstone, hundreds were swept up by the word of God and were converted. As with most surprising works of God, difficulties arose in the shape of counterfeit revivals as well as Roman Catholic opposition. Ultimately the revival died down and a time of persecution set in, namely at the hands of the Arminians who were in power. This brought about what Gribben calls "the collapse of Ussher's Puritan church" (62).

By 1640, Ussher had left Ireland for good and remained in England for the rest of his life. While there he sought the life of quiet scholarship, but peace was interrupted by ecclesiastical conflicts. In order to pacify both the church hierarchy and those rattling for Presbyterianism, he drafted a work on what he called "limited episcopacy," a proposal that was rejected by both sides (73).

Both Parliament and the royalists by and large viewed Ussher favorably. He had the freedom to move from London, a Parliamentary base, to Oxford where the king and his followers were stationed. As the Parliament gained control in the ensuing conflicts, the Arminian power base in the Church began to wane resulting in the trial and execution of key leaders including Laud, Wentworth and ultimately the king. The execution of Wentworth is one of the shining moments in Ussher's personal history. Though he had been a thorn in Ussher's side in Ireland, as Wentworth approached the block the Archbishop pastored him through the process of dying (74).

In 1641, Ireland saw some of its worst violence in the rebellion of Ulster Catholics, where much of Ussher's property – including his library – was either confiscated or destroyed. The rebels were supported by the papacy and exacted vicious revenge on Protestants. Gribben provides the statistics and gruesome details of Protestant deaths as the rebellion spread throughout Ireland.

It was during this time England found itself embroiled in civil war and though Ussher had many friends on the side of Parliament, he sided with the king and joined him in Oxford. Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658), the leader of the New Model Army, fast became a central figure in the wars, experiencing many victories over the king's army.

In Scotland, loyalties were divided, though eventually they sided with Parliament in the Solemn League and Covenant. In response, Parliament called together an Assembly of divines at Westminster to draft a series of documents that were to be the constitution of a new Presbyterian church in England. Ussher had a minor role to play in the events leading up to the Westminster Assembly (1643), but because of his views of the divine right of kings, he did not formally join the proceedings. Though he was absent in body, theologically his influence was felt in that the Assembly used the Irish Articles as a starting point for the Westminster Confession (86-87).

After a series of failed political maneuvers, that included an alliance with the Scots, Charles was formally beaten, tried and executed. Ussher watched from a distance as the regicide took place, fainting at the sight of it (90). In Ireland the reaction to the king's death was similarly that of horror, as was the Scots who responded by declaring Charles II (1630-1685) as king. The Cromwellian republic was then faced with the possibility of a Puritan civil war.

With the death of his king now past, Ussher again sought a life of study. He spent much of his scholarly efforts on his chronology of the bible. In Ireland, things were not so calm. After an alliance between Presbyterians and Roman Catholics, instigated by the Duke of Ormand, Cromwell's army invaded Ireland. Towns like Drogheda and Wexford saw very fierce fighting; to such a degree that Cromwell's victory in Drogheda is still a bone of contention for Irish Catholics. Finally in Clonmel Cromwell was defeated after his troops were tricked into entering the well-armed city.

In the ensuing chaos, Ireland saw the rise of various sectarian groups, like the Fifth Monarchy men (103-104). Baptists and Independents were in positions of political leadership in Dublin and all around there were tensions amongst the Irish Puritans. Ussher, however, remained in England, now spending his time in Oxford, where John Owen (1616-1683) was in administrative leadership.

The death of Ireland's Primate in 1656, according to Gribben, coincided with the demise of Irish Puritanism. As the Cromwellian government moved its support from the radical sects to the seemingly stable Presbyterians, divisions continued to spread. Finally, at the Restoration of the Monarchy in 1660, many of those who dissented from the Established church conformed. Ulster was the only province to continue with a Presbyterian heritage, but by and large, the Church of Ireland became the dominant ecclesial body (115).

Gribben's concluding chapter quickly surveys the situation in Ireland since the Glorious Revolution (1688) brought the Dutch William of Orange (1650-1702) to the English throne.

He notes the lack of toleration that Presbyterianism continued to experience in the years following, the impact of Enlightenment thought and the Evangelical revivals on the church and the 1798 rebellion that was again a collage of Roman Catholic and Presbyterian allegiance. He also explains the rise of Arianism amongst the Ulster Presbyterians and the efforts of Henry Cooke to assuage them, though there is no mention of Alexander Carson (1776-1844) who also combated Arianism before he left the Ulster Synod and became a Baptist. Gribben also notes the Ulster revival of 1859 and the growth of the Brethren, led by John Nelson Darby (1800-1892), the work of the twentieth century churchman T. C. Hammond (1877-1961), the modernism of J. E. Davey and the formation of the small Evangelical Presbyterian Church. Ireland's embattled political situation is also mentioned as well as the slow growth of evangelicalism that has begun in recent years.

In this final chapter Gribben concludes with the question, "Why study James Ussher and the Irish Puritans?" His answer is so that Christians can learn lessons from past mistakes, particularly on the question of mission. It was the Irish reformation's great failure to evangelize the native Irish in their own language, being mindful of their own culture. According to Gribben, "of all Europe, surely nowhere has been neglected to the same extent [missionally] as Ireland" (126). Gribben's plea is that Ireland would no longer be forgotten and that missionaries would come and not make the same mistakes as those in the past. National flags, that Christians so often trip over (127), need to be put away so that the banner of the gospel may one day fly over the entirety of the Emerald Isle. As Gribben rightly says, "The Lord of the harvest will never forget those who sow in tears" (127).

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***The God I Don't Understand: Reflection on Tough Questions of Faith*. By Christopher J. H. Wright. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2008, 224 pp., $19.99.**

This book is a very personal account by an Old Testament scholar struggling with some problems raised by reading the scriptures, particularly the Old Testament, in our modern culture. He realizes that these questions can easily become a genuine stumbling block for many and that even believers need to face them rather than hoping they will go away by suppressing them. One of the real strengths of this book is that the author does not set himself up as an objective authority, but views himself as a pilgrim who struggles with these problems just as much as anyone else. When a book like this is written, sometimes one is left wondering whether it is too much of a concession to contemporary culture, but as Wright reminds the reader, these problems—the mystery of evil and suffering—did not arise with contemporary culture: they arose in the biblical period itself. From Abraham on there are many precedents for questioning God and his ways in the world. You will not learn how to lament in the contemporary western church with its therapeutic mindset and saccharine spirituality, but you will learn it in the Psalter where it is a dominant key. From the outset of this book, Wright puts believers at ease with their doubts and welcomes the questions of unbelievers—they are all in good *biblical* company! Wright himself uses a psalm, which voices a radical doubt in God's goodness, to provide the lens through which he will consider his topic. Psalm 73 presents a deep-seated doubt of a believer that arose because of the injustices of life. This doubt was virtually impossible to dislodge and almost "carried the day" in the believer's mind until there was a profound experience of transcendence in

communal worship. The resulting new vision of life was won at a high cost, but for Wright the fact that the old ingrained doubts were not erased from the psalm is important. It gives them a legitimate voice that needs to be heard, even if now seen within a more comprehensive theological vision. Wright then begins to consider in order the following subjects: the mystery of suffering and evil, the conquest of the Canaanites, the cross, and the end of the world.

Wright begins by dealing with the problem of evil and suffering. He immediately points out that this is only a problem if one has a theological vision that simultaneously holds together the goodness and godhood (omnipotence and sovereignty) of God. In polytheism evil is just a part of the fabric of reality, located in some of the gods as well as in the world. For the various forms of eastern monism, ultimate reality is beyond good and evil and the distinction is only apparent. For modern naturalism, reality is just the sum of materialistic forces. Can one really speak of evil or even good in the absence of any objective frame of reference? However, Wright points out that the Christian faith (and I would add, Judaism) believes in both the omnipotence and goodness of God and thus has a genuine problem in the face of evil and suffering.

The author then considers three aspects of the problem of evil: mystery, offence and defeat. He points out that the Bible never speculates about the origin of evil; it describes its entrance into the world. This fact of evil is largely attributed to the fall of the human race and the consequential disaster for the planet. Wright cautiously proceeds to make connections between the serpent in the Garden, Satan and the angels, recognizing that resulting conclusions are still shrouded in mystery. His main point is that evil defies rationality: it is not to be understood but to be resisted and ultimately expelled. Wright further argues that the Bible gives the resources for human beings to lament, grieve and protest the horrific offence of evil. Finally the Bible clearly shows that evil will one day be ultimately defeated. The message of the Apocalypse, with its final version of the end, is supremely relevant.

Wright makes some valuable observations in this section but I thought he might have considered the creation of free agency as a helpful, partial explanation for the mystery of evil. In other words, the freedom for human beings to make their own decisions and to chart their own destiny, whether to embrace God or reject him, could at least partly explain the presence of evil—evil being then defined as the rejection of God. Otherwise God would have created creatures who would be automatons, which would be incompatible with genuine love. Genuine free choice at the beginning, then, creates the potential for evil.

The next major topic is the putative genocide of the Canaanites during the conquest. Wright shows that there are three popular ways that Christians try to deal with this problem but they are in fact "dead ends." First, this is decidedly not an Old Testament problem that the New Testament puts right because there is much about the love of God in the former and plenty of divine wrath in the latter. Secondly, the Israelites were not wrong about God's command to kill the Canaanites. Rather the conquest is integral to God's unfolding plan in the Bible. To argue against this would distort fundamentally the meaning of the biblical text. Finally, the conquest is not simply a matter of allegory either. Wright makes the valid point that "it was not allegorical Israelites who attacked or allegorical Canaanites who died." As for a proposed solution, Wright counters the three dead ends with three roads that can help

navigate the way through this problem. First there is the road of historical context that sheds light on aspects of the violence. For example, Israel may well have been using ancient near eastern conventions for the rhetoric of war, which often exaggerated violence and was not to be intended literally. Moreover God may well have accommodated his revelation to the cultural conventions of the time (e.g., *herem* was practiced by a number of cultures). He certainly did this for practices like divorce, so in theory he could have used violence in war for the same purpose. The conquest is also portrayed within the Bible as a unique and limited event.

The second roadway is that of God's sovereign justice. It is clear that Canaanite culture was not neutral and innocent but had deteriorated to the point where it was morally depraved and therefore deserved just punishment. In fact the Israelites experienced the same judgment when they sunk to the same level. The third roadway through this problem is that of God's ultimate plan to save the world. The temporal and limited action of God to judge the Canaanites takes place within God's great plan to save the entire world, including Canaanites. If the Canaanites bore the violence of judgment for their sin, God himself in Jesus Christ bore the violence of judgment on the cross for the sin of the world.

In these chapters Wright may be accused of "wanting to have it both ways." For example, if the violent destruction was not as bad as depicted that would seem to diminish the importance of God's justice in history and on the cross. However, I think Wright is genuinely presenting evidence that he has found in his research as an Old Testament scholar in order to try and bring to bear all possible evidence on this difficult issue. I think that his consideration of the larger biblical theological issue of God's ultimate desire to bless the nations is absolutely vital to understanding this problem. In the second millennium BCE the Canaanites had to be dealt with since they presented a roadblock to this blessing.

The third major theme is that of the Cross and it is considered with three questions: Why, What and How? The question as to the why of the cross is simply found in the Love of God. Given the fact that humanity and especially Israel is so recalcitrant, God's love, though totally inexplicable, is a certain fact of Scripture. The question as to what happened at the Cross is found in the word atonement, which has so many ramifications: coming home, mercy, redemption, forgiveness, reconciliation with God and one another, justification, cleansing and new life. It can all be summed up laconically: "[The cross] was an act of God in which God in Christ put himself in our place in an act of substitution for our benefit..."(p. 125). The question as to how the cross achieved salvation is developed in contrast to modern and postmodern views which do not accept the idea of penal substitution. Wright argues convincingly that only this concept of substitution explains the Cross of Christ. He points out that often contemporary scholarship tries to understand the Cross with other stories while "ignoring the one story in which it is actually set –the biblical story of God's dealings with Israel and of God's mission to bring blessing and salvation to the world" (p. 145).

I particularly thought that this chapter was timely, given the recent spate of literature that depicts the substitution concept as divine child abuse: God the Father abusing his son Jesus on the cross. It is certain that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, which shows that the Trinity had a cross purpose but was not at cross purposes! At the same time the biblical evidence is absolutely unequivocal that Christ was a sin-bearer, and became a

curse for us, the just suffering in place of the unjust. Contemporary theories often start with different frames of reference than the Bible, and thus it is not unheard of today even to hear about the cross being God's apology for all the suffering he has caused for the human race. We are told then that we need to forgive God.

The last theme is that of the end of the world. Wright discusses all the many "cranks and controversies" that surround this topic. The sheer speculation spawned by critical events, the concepts in the popular evangelical sub-culture like the millennium, the rapture and the land of Israel, all get *sane consideration*. There is a noteworthy sobering conclusion to this chapter: "But it is tragic if Christians take their beliefs more from fictional novels and even comics and Hollywood movies than from a careful study of the Bible itself and of the solid tradition of Christian faith through the ages of the church" (p. 170). When pondering the climax of history Wright describes three pivotal events: the return of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. Finally, it is observed that the Bible does not end with an end but with a new beginning: a newly transformed earth with a gardencity at the centre.

This is an important book. Wright writes personally, pastorally and apologetically. He writes with a great knowledge of biblical theology, the biblical text, and also a great deal of life experience. Although this is not a scholarly book, I never had the feeling that the answers proffered are "pat." At times I felt I was overhearing a sermon or two with the many personal illustrations and the use of many verses of hymns. Subsection titles like "The Lamb with a Plan," and "A Room with a View" contributed to this impression. Yet there was a refreshing honesty to the book and a pastoral sensitivity, which made for easy reading. I think that a good target for the book would be the believer struggling with these important questions. That means all believers!

I appreciated Wright's grasp of biblical theology and ancient near eastern history in dealing with many of the issues, particularly that of the Conquest. If one were to judge the rhetoric of the Reformers by modern standards, one would be hard pressed to judge them in a positive light. However when the language is viewed within the context of its time, it becomes more understandable. Similarly, when students of the biblical text have no knowledge of ancient history and culture, they can fail to understand the biblical text. It is so easy to read back into the text contemporary meaning and so completely distort the ancient meaning.

The book shows the power and promise for biblical theology to deal with difficult questions. First of all, as Wright indicates, many of the questions come from the Bible itself. The Bible not only welcomes our questions, it legitimizes them and probably puts them in far rawer form than we would ever dare. I am reminded of Karl Barth's observation that all modern atheists and agnostics, when placed next to Job, seem like such innocuous, genteel folk ! Secondly, biblical theology frames the book with its focus on Genesis at the beginning and Revelation at the end. Thirdly, biblical theology "centers" the book on the Cross, which is seen as absolutely crucial to not only the whole plan of salvation but also as an answer to the problem of evil. I believe a book like this is far more satisfying than reading a book which deals with these questions at a more abstract and systematic level.

Yet I am left wondering why an important section of the Bible, which specifically deals with many of the problems raised in the book, has been left out of the discussion. I am thinking of the Wisdom Literature of Job and Ecclesiastes. It seems to me that these books

plumb the depths of suffering and mystery. I think they could have shed some light on both. But probably there were practical reasons for this omission.

Finally, a book like this is desperately needed. Many people in the church do not want to face these types of issues. They would rather sing their praise songs, drink their coffee and have their ears tickled. This book meets a massive need. Within the last twenty-four hours, I have met three individuals who demonstrate this fact: first, a mother whose Christian daughter at the age of 21 is suffering with chronic, incurable pain, and for whom this is "a gigantic spiritual challenge"; secondly, a Christian medical student who had just witnessed an abortion and was deeply troubled about what to do; thirdly, a person reading *Shake Hands with the Devil* by Romeo Dallaire, a disturbing account of the Rwandan genocide perpetrated in a largely Christian nation.

Thank you Christopher Wright for taking some time from your scholarly projects to shed some needed light on these very personal and yet universal questions (Prov. 15:23b).

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***Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry*. By Eldin Villafañe. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1995, 164 pp., $16.00.**

Rooted in Jeremiah 29:4-7 as the paradigm for ministry in the inner city, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary professor and Pentecostal minister, Eldin Villafañe succinctly, yet profoundly, explores and describes the role of the urban church. The Jeremiah paradigm for the city consists of a theology of presence, peace and prayer. Presence stands for the "critical engagement" (p. 2) of the church to the city, culture and society. Peace implies that the church is (and should be) an agent of justice and reconciliation in both personal and social dimensions. Prayer highlights the spirituality that the church needs not only in order to struggle and live in the city, but also to "confront principalities and powers" (p. 3). *Seek The Peace of the City* is designed to redefine, empower, build and renew the leadership of the urban church by engaging and advocating three specific, yet broad areas: a socio-theological analysis, ministry approach and sound urban theological education.

First, the role of church is fulfilled with the help and use of scholarship; the calling to live a social spirituality and to give a voice to the voiceless. Scholarship should be re-defined to be a tool/instrument that: serves (*sierva*), sanctifies (*santificadora*) and heals (*sanadora*). Given the social reality of social life, confronting evil in the urban space demands a social spirituality. The church is not only called to nurture and live for an inner and vertical-directed (individual and local), but also live an outer-directed and horizontal relationships that confront sinful and evil structures of society – the geography of evil (p. 26). It is about holistic spirituality where sin is highlighted as a personal and social reality. The role of the urban church then is not only to save souls, but also to be an agent of social services, justice, cultural affirmation, survival, resistance and protest. The urban church has a 'hermeneutical' advantage and dimension for engaging in this work. It breathes and lives among those who are disenfranchised and marginalized (the underside) in society.

On urban ministry, Villafañe brilliantly states that due to the fact that "one's religious experience is mediated through one's cultural reality" (p. 49), the urban church is encouraged

to act as an agent of cultural and ethnic identity affirmation rather than as an institution to assimilate or Americanize its members. The urban church rethinks ways and employs strategies to empower ethnic leadership, evangelize holistically, educate contextually and provide ecclesiastical structures that are liberating. Popular music (Latin Jazz) serves as a metaphor for not only biblical reconciliation and justice, but also a time to "reflect the unity among the diversity of the body of Christ" (p. 63). Villafañe sets out ministry parameters by suggesting a sociocultural matrix to capture and frame intergenerational issues so prevalent in the urban church. This matrix points out the critical importance of the cultural/social reality, communication/language and church categories.

On urban theological education, it is claimed that the contextual reality should inform its approach. Six elements are suggested as essential: constituency, contextualization, curriculum, community, co-existence with host seminary and cost. Next, the realities and conditions of our urban environment are presented as the strategic way to read our cities and do ministry, not simply as the reason to do paternalistic services and/or as the means toward another end that negates unlearning. Leadership is critical for the urban church. The basis of Pauline leadership, its theological and practical development implications and challenges are mentioned as the key to unpack the use of skills to help people better their own communities. Finally, the importance of contextualization on urban theological education programs is highlighted. The ways in which the culture and status of ethnic groups is nurtured at and shaped by Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary Center for Urban Ministerial Education (CUME) is put into perspective. CUME's location, focus, leadership, ethics, cost and language along with praxis-, present and future-oriented and servant leadership-centered underpinnings is presented as evidence of contextualization.

Seek The Peace of the City is an eye-opening book. The underlying assumptions embedded in the theological reflection of urban ministry by Dr. Villafañe has led me to question the unquestionable or the neglected in Pentecostal circles where I serve. It has led me to seek ways that can and will allow me to articulate and apply God's worldview in a way that will not only be personal (local, inner), but also social (global, outer). It has allowed me to rethink and redefine the assumptions and presuppositions underlying market and consumption-driven ministry. I am beginning to have a language and the willingness to enter into a dialogue about what it means to be an authentic Christian in the inner city.

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***God and the New Atheism: A Critical Response to Dawkins, Harris, and Hitchens.* By John F. Haught. Louisville and London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008, 124 pp., $16.95.**

What could lead or cause an otherwise reasonable person to believe the unbelievable? Believability is determined by the existence and extent of empirical evidence, unbelievability by the paucity and absence of such evidence, and rationality by the willingness to be bound by the traceable connection between the two. This is the New Atheists' (NA) case.

But otherwise reasonable persons do in fact believe the unbelievable, especially in the case of religion. Though one must always leave the door open to more evidence on the matter, the believer and unbeliever seem sometimes to be in the same range of intelligence and rationality give or take twenty or thirty IQ points. Perhaps one is a tad more gullible, or afraid, or romantic, or in greater need of a master narrative than the other. Perhaps there is a deeper reason springing from the evolutionary depths. The NA think all of the above with emphasis on the last. John Haught, for long an established and respected commentator on science and religion, and one among the hoards of the irrational, doesn't believe them. He thinks there is evidence for theistic belief and is agreeable to the evolution hypothesis of Dawkins, et al. once their pejorative reading of it is challenged.

He proceeds by putting seven questions in as many chapters: Is the new atheism new? Just how atheistic is it? Does the intellectual side of religion, called theology, need to be engaged? Is God an empirical hypothesis? Why do the irrational believe without empirical evidence? Will ethics perish if there is no God and no religion? Is God personal? In a final chapter he reengages a major flaw in the presentations of the NA: the absence of any attention to the university discipline on an equal intellectual footing with the atheists, namely theology. He asks there about the concept of god at work in the NA theory. Is their god the God of the believer and especially of the theologian? [It should be noted that the atheists, though they dismiss theology in their published works, have joined theologians on the debate circuit. In fact, Georgetown University, a Roman Catholic institution, recently hosted a very well attended debate between Hitchens and Alister McGrath.]

Unlike Dawkins et al. on religion and believers, Haught despises neither the atheists nor atheism. This seems the general rule with the authors who respond in print to atheist criticisms. Haught et al. take them (the atheists) seriously, generally understand their arguments quite well, and respond to the arguments pointedly. One benefit of the NA assault on religion and believers is a spate of a dozen or more well-written and thoughtful books on the shelves of booksellers and libraries. One can't say that there is a philosophical eureka moment among them – anymore than one can say the same of atheists once their books are placed in the context of hundreds of years of atheist literature. Old coals, new heat. But capable, informed and intelligent responses there have been. Haught's is among the best.

Haught makes a couple of points that are worth noting in a short review. He has long been a critic of scientific naturalism, and here offers a strong challenge to the NA understanding of "evidence." Secondly, he neatly spells out the curious link, in fact a mirror image, between the NA and their fundamentalist/orthodox enemies. This has been done often but rarely so well. Finally, retortion as a logical technique is prominent in Haught's treatment of NA thought. For example, it is not at all odd that the NA criticizes religious intolerance but it is logically peculiar indeed to find the NA demanding intolerance of religious faith. Apparently reasonable intolerance is preferable to believers' intolerance.

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***God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible*. By William Lane Craig and Chad Meister (eds). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009. 265 pp., $19.00.**

It is not a surprise to hear that William Lane Craig and Chad Meister are two of the leading Christian apologists in North America. While many Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican and mainline Protestants have continued to depreciate the discipline of apologetics in recent years, it is encouraging to see Evangelicals presenting first rate arguments in defense of the faith in some of the most engaging publications in American Christian writing. *God is Great, God is Good: Why Believing in God is Reasonable and Responsible* brings together some of the leading thinkers representing a wide range of scholarly fields such as cosmology, astrophysics, biology, New Testament studies, theology, and philosophy in response to the challenges posed by the "New Atheism" (which is led by the atheist writers Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, Christopher Hitchens, and Daniel Dennett).

The book will appeal to theologians, philosophers, pastors, intelligent laymen, and college level students who are already sympathetic to the validity of apologetics in the Christian life. Perhaps the greatest contribution of Craig and Meister's book is that it helps the reader to think in Christian terms in a secular climate which is becoming increasingly hostile to the fundamental claims of the Church. All in all, this book has plenty of food for thought for believing Christians (and unbelievers!) who need a reason to believe in Jesus Christ and the Church.

The book is broken down into three sections. The first part tackles issues related to God's existence. These chapters are composed by the philosophers William Lane Craig ("Richard Dawkins on Arguments for God," pp. 13-32), J. P. Moreland, ("The Image of God and the Failure of Scientific Atheism," pp. 32-48), and Paul K. Moser ("Evidence of a Morally Perfect God," pp. 49-64). Similar to the first part, the next section addresses atheistic challenges to the teleological argument for God's existence. These essays are written by the scientist-theologian, John Polkinghorne ("God and Physics," pp. 65-77), Michael J. Behe ("God and Evolution," pp. 78-91), and Michael J. Murray ("Evolutionary Explanations of Religion," pp. 91-106).

In the third section issues related to God's goodness are discussed, a major bone of contention by the New Atheists. "For example, how could a perfectly good God coexist with evil or hell? And what about the Old Testament laws that seem so revolting, if not malevolent? Does it make sense to believe in a good and wise God who ordained such things" (p. 10)? These are the kinds of questions addressed in this section. Spearheaded by Chad Meister ("God, Evil, and Morality," pp. 107-118), Alister McGrath ("Is Religion Evil?," pp. 119-133), Paul Copan ("Are Old Testament Laws Evil?" pp. 134-154), and Jerry Walls, (How Could God Create Hell?, pp. 155-168), this section breaks open some new ground which Evangelicals have not typically discussed in their writings.

In the fourth section the conversation shifts from natural theology to defending the validity and relevance of Christianity. The essays come to us from Charles Taliaferro ("Recognizing Divine Revelation," pp. 169-186), Scot McKnight ("The Messiah You Never Expected," pp. 187-201), Gary R. Habermas ("Tracing Jesus' Resurrection to Its Earliest Eyewitness Accounts," pp. 202-216), and Mark Mittelberg (Why Faith in Jesus Matters," pp. 217-227). This section is also dedicated to the relevancy of Christian faith. Why believe that

Jesus was God-incarnate and that He was raised from the dead? What bearing does this have on all of us? Mittelburg's piece in particular is acutely concerned with these pressing problems.

The book also contains two postscripts at the end. Both of them are excellent and nicely complement the previous essays. The first essay is an exchange about Antony Flew's recent change of mind about the existence of God. This essay was originally published in the Winter 2004 edition of *Philosophia Christi* (i.e., the scholarly journal of the Evangelical Philosophical Society). The second piece is a reprinted version of Alvin Plantinga's review of Dawkins' *The God Delusion*.

As apologists who are keen on understanding and responding to the challenges posed by the New Atheists and other objectors, all of the essayists in *God is Great, God is Good* show a serious and yet winsome concern to outline and assess the relevant facts, interpretations, and assertions made for and against the basic beliefs of orthodox Christians. If Evangelical apologists want their publications to be taken more seriously by the broader academic community of theologians, however, then they will have to wisely defend the legitimacy of apologetics under the larger umbrella of theological issues such as ecumenism, contextual theology, globalization, and inculturation. If Evangelicals start doing this, then they should start making inroads into the wider Christian culture. One is hard-pressed to find a welcoming acceptance of the defense of the faith in many Christian universities and seminaries.

Yet, apologetics work is desperately needed in the mainstream of Christian thought. As Pope Benedict XVI explains: "The faith cannot be liberated if reason itself does not open up again. If the door to metaphysical cognition remains closed, if the limits of human knowledge set by Kant are impossible, faith is destined to atrophy: It simply lacks air to breathe" (taken from his lecture "Relativism: The Central Problem for Faith Today," an address delivered at the meeting of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith with the Latin American Bishops, held at Guadalajara, Mexico, May 1996). So long as we are living in the Church age, there will always be a need to defend the Gospel of Christ.

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Salvation For All: God's Other Peoples. **By Gerald O'Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, 279 pp., $29.95.**

A former professor of theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University at Rome, Fr. Gerald O'Collins is one of the most prolific Catholic theologians in the English speaking world. Although O'Collins has never dedicated his energies to the theology of religions in previous publications, he has finally sought to find his own unique place in this well-ploughed field in *Salvation for All: God's Other Peoples*. Arguing that many theologians have neglected the Bible in this hugely important topic, O'Collins fills in a great need by broadly discussing the entire biblical witness to God's love for persons who lived outside the nation of Israel under the Old Covenant and the Church after the Messianic age. In the second half of the book, he begins to make systematic conclusions on the basis of his biblical theology. "Any theology of world cultures and religions that wishes to be faithful to the biblical

witness," he proclaims, "must give prominence to the universal benevolence of God…." "The bible," he says, "begins with a range of figures and stories that express the unity of humankind and God's gracious concern for all human beings" (176).

After beginning with the account of Adam and Eve, O'Collins begins to corroborate his thesis by discussing the story of Noah: "Unlike the later covenants made with Abraham and Sarah (Gen. 17) and with the Israelites at Mount Sinai (Exod. 24), the covenant with Noah is *universal* in its scope. The three sons of Noah are regarded as the ancestors of all peoples (Gen. 9:18; 10:1-32)" (198). So although the story of the chosen people begins with Abraham and Sarah, the universal benevolence of God continues to affect all people, whether they are aware of it or not. He analyzes other Old Testament passages. "Deuteronomy," for instance, "made a bold attempt to place other nations, their religions, and their gods within the one plan of God" (178). Referring to Amos and Jonah, he claims that "Two prophetic books help to fill out vividly the divine concern for all peoples" (179). He then turns to Isaiah: "As far as God was concerned, there were no outsiders" (182).

The Old Testament indicates that the omnibenevolence of God is exercised toward large groups of people, not just individuals in obscure places: "The OT yields a bewildering variety of cases that invite our detailed study. How do they fit into the one, overall plan of God for the salvation of the whole human race? Some patient and modest reflection on the variety of ways in which God is effectively present may guide us somewhat in our quest for understanding." (206). No one can responsibly dismiss the Old Testament witness to the benevolence of God for a contemporary theology of religions. To be sure, the Hebrew Scriptures can provide theologians with more information about the universality of God's love than the New Testament.

It is apparent in O'Collins book that the formally unevangelized persons of the world can be saved by receiving the grace of the Holy Spirit. This grace gives these individuals the strength to live up to the standards of the natural moral law. In a lucid passage, he claims that:

> The language of Paul in Romans seems to extend these promises to the Gentiles. In Romans 2, he presumably has in mind a divine "Writer' as the One who writes on the hearts of the Gentiles and empowers them to practise the essential requirements of the divine law. Should we recognize the Holy Spirit to be the One who touches the hearts and lives of these 'outsiders' who show themselves ready, with divine help, to follow God's law? Paul's language encourages us to recognize the Holy Spirit at work in the hearts and live of Gentiles. Thus they can live according to the Spirit and not according to the flesh (or dominated by selfish passions and incapable of submitting to God's law) (Rom. 8:5-11). (195; cf. 225).

This point on page 195 seems to coincide with Vatican II's teaching on salvation *extra Ecclesiam*. One of the primary ways to interpret the Catholic view is to understand the classical Thomistic nature-grace distinction: grace builds on nature and brings it to perfection. Persons who are invincibly ignorant about the Good News are saved by a special grace that is known to God himself (cf. *Ad Gentes* 7, *Gaudium et Spes* 22). Thus, radical theologians who construct their theologies from within the sphere of grace (redemption) rather than nature (creation) with respect to the status of non-Christian salvations will deviate from the conciliar teaching. Religions are merely seen as human or cultural

phenomena that are based on *gratia creata sive communis*. Non-Christian religions do not consist of *revelatio specialis* or of *gratia increata sive supernaturalis*.

Summarizing Luke-Acts, he comes to the same conclusion about so many of the other passages that have already discussed: "In the book of Acts Luke certainly endorses a clear and compelling mission to evangelize the world. At the same time, as we have seen, he encourages a generous and respectful openness to those who are not or not yet Christian believers" (198). He then goes over Jesus's view of the outsiders: "Embodying personally the extravagant love of God, Jesus embraced with his words and deeds, all human beings. Even if the primary thrust of his ministry was towards the reform of Israel, he showed a gracious openness and kindness towards Gentiles" (189). These points are reinforced by O'Collins' exposition of the Lord's Prayer (192).

By this point in the book he has undoubtedly established the universal benevolence of God as a bona fide Scriptural teaching. Even though Christ's presence is found in the Church in a much fuller way, this does not mean that God is not at work in the lives of those outside it (cf. 207). He then turns to what he dubs the "philosophy of presence." Recognizing that many philosophers have generally neglected to write about presence, he outlines nine aspects of what it means to be present: presence is always related to someone; presence is relational; presence implies a free act; presence implies that one will be affected by someone else; presence is costly; presence is bodily; presence is mediated through words and things; presence takes on a variety of forms and qualities; and there is always a feminine dimension to presence (209-214).

Given these characteristics, he challenges the reader: "What light can this account shed on the presence of all human beings 'in' Christ and the presence 'in' them of the Holy Spirit?" (214). He concludes that "Since the kingdom of God touches everyone, the revealing and saving presence of Christ, the heart of the kingdom, must do likewise. No human beings, whether they are aware of this or not, can escape living in the presence of Christ. Whoever acts, acts in the presence of Christ, even if he or she does not discern and acknowledge his presence (214)." Because Christ is present to all persons, they must experience him in these ways.

Toward the end of the book he constructs a theology of religions by allowing it to fit in with his philosophy of presence (214 ff.). Insistently arguing about the universal presence of Christ in all persons, O'Collins seeks to dispel the notion that love is not so one-sided that it could not work in non-Christian believers: "Such an objection" he rightly observes, "does not reckon with the way in which the love of Jesus resembles human love by not being exercised in an identical way towards all cultures, religions, and individuals. The risen Jesus lovingly interacts with the whole world, and that means he interacts in ways that are different" (219). "There is, for instance, a difference of kind and not merely of degree between the risen Christ as Founder (upper case) of Christianity and the founders (lower case) of various world religions" (218).

Attempting to understand what it means to please God by faith (cf. Heb. 11:6), O'Collins then provides five characteristics of the kind of faith that pleases God (254-256). This faith, it must be added, is saving faith and can be found outside the canonical boundaries of the Church: "Without knowing Jesus and hence without the possibility of consciously obeying him, they mysteriously experience in him (and his Holy Spirit) the cause of their salvation. In

their case faith does not include conscious obedience towards Jesus, but that does not prevent him from being 'the pioneer of their salvation'" (258, 259).

While some have criticized a few of O'Collins fine points of theological detail (for a critical appraisal, see the articles by Peter Phan, Francis Clooney, Catherine Cornille, and Paul Griffiths (and O'Collins' response to them) in *Horizons: The Journal of the College Theology Society*, Vol. 36, No. 1., Spring 2009, pp. 121-142), I happily find myself in agreement with O'Collins most of the time. My single complaint has to do with his failure to interact with the significant problem of the declining urgency of mission work in the Church. One can easily come away from this book without learning a much needed rationale to help Catholic Christians understand why they should become evangelical and take up the missionary mandate.

To my mind, the most important passage in Vatican II which needs to be developed in light of this problem is found in *Lumen Gentium* 14 (and later reiterated in John Paul II's *Redemptoris Missio* and the CDF's controversial *Dominus Iesus*). In an inspiring and frightening passage, the Fathers of the Council announce that "All the Church's children should remember that their exalted status is to be attributed not to their own merits but to the special grace of Christ. If they fail moreover to respond to that grace in thought, word and deed, not only shall they not be saved but they will be the more severely judged." Salvation is not *easier* for those who have been exposed to the fullness of revelation, but is more *demanding*. Indeed, we should not be so concerned with all the millions of people who have not heard the Gospel as much as we should be concerned about what God will do with us if we do not respond to his calling to be evangelical and attempt to reach them with the Good News.

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***Ontology and Providence in Creation: Taking* Ex Nihilo *Seriously*. By Mark Ian Thomas Robson. London: Continuum, 2008, 223 pp., $130.00.**

A quotation from *Ontology and Providence* ably summarizes its central aim: 'Once we get the bad models of God's creation out of the way, we can develop a better understanding of God's providence.' (p. 128). Mark Robson scrutinizes the idea of possible worlds and argues cogently that God's actualization of a particular possible world, even the *best* of all possible worlds, is no more than God duplicating that which pre-exists. Consequently, creation is not truly *ex nihilo*. This conclusion impacts on how God's creative action should be construed, particularly in relation to the ever-present problem of evil. Robson's thesis is intriguing and, in my view, persuasive.

Ontology and Providence is divided into three sections. The first section, 'The Ontology of *Creatio Ex Nihilo*', is a lengthy treatment of the issues raised by Leibniz's conception of possible worlds. Leibniz argues that while God perceives all those things that could exist, God wills only to actualize one set of possibilia. There are numerous possible adams, for example, and any one of these may be actualized as the man Adam. However, Robson notes that understood in this way, God's act of creation is not *creatio ex nihilo*, but rather God's replication in 'stuff' of that which already exists in the realm of possibilia.

The remainder of the first section expounds the nature of possibility, and so the natures of God and the created order. Thoughts from an impressive range of philosophers, from Quine to Hartshorne via Peirce, are compressed into startling, often controversial statements. An example to illustrate this point is Robson's development of David Blumenfeld's concept empiricism. Some things – like the *sensation of red* – are known only when they are experienced. A blind man 'could know many truths about the concept of redness', but 'the full reality of redness would never be known by him.' (p. 78). Similarly, for Robson, God cannot know the sensation of red unless God somehow experiences an instantiation of redness: 'God, like us, has to look to this world of flesh, blood and stone in order to comprehend it.' (p. 80). Robson is aware that such a statement is not mainstream Christian thought, but it does appear to cohere with an account of *creatio ex nihilo* that requires there to exist absolutely nothing but God before the act of creation.

The second section, 'Providential Aspects of *Creatio Ex Nihilo*', is concerned to elucidate the concept of divine action in a world that is genuinely other than God. A critique of Leibniz's take on providence in the context of his possible worlds theory forms the basis for a discussion of the doctrine of providence, especially as it appears in the thought of Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, and those who hold the theory of middle knowledge. In Robson's view, an emphasis on divine predestination implies that creation cannot be *ex nihilo*, simply because God creates with something in mind. (This is, I believe, a very important insight; certainly, I do not recall ever coming across it before, and it will be interesting to see if anything is made of it in future dialogue.) Moreover, if God *does* create with something in mind, the implication is that all that transpires in the created order is fixed, determined in advance. Yet if Robson is correct to claim that a world made *ex nihilo* is a world that God has to experience in order to know it, these pancausal accounts of divine providence are ruled out.

Thus for Robson, a world created *ex nihilo* is genuinely novel and so genuinely free. This means that divine providence is seen as God's interaction with creatures that are 'personal centres of free activity.' (p. 137, following Vincent Brümmer). The affinities with movements such as open theism cannot be avoided; but Robson flashes a card seldom played so deftly: Given all that has been argued about God's act of creation, it follows that God did not know – indeed, *could* not know – that evil would enter the world. It is important to recognize that Robson does not mean simply that God did not anticipate the presence of evil in the world, or even that God could not know that evil would enter the world on the basis that the future, as something yet to occur, cannot be known. Rather, in Robson's words, 'How can God, who is pre-eminently a positive and unsurpassable being, know the negativity of evil?' (pp. 143–144). Evil, for Robson, can only emerge in a world that is genuinely novel, genuinely free and genuinely other from God, as creatures exercise their own capacities for creativity.

Robson supports this claim by affirming that the world God has created is one where chance plays a proper role, even in God's own creative act. God's decree, 'Let there be light', does not specify the manner of that decree's fulfilment; God 'cannot foresee its hue' (p. 153), for example. The point is that as soon as God creates, chance exists – and this includes the possibility of evil, which God could not foresee.

The final section, 'Creativity and *Creatio Ex Nihilo*', explores what is a genuinely creative act. Following Carl Hausman, Robson argues that human creativity is both planned and discovered. An artist can picture in her mind the image that she wishes to produce on canvas, but finds that the image evolves according to the practicalities and fresh insights that the act of painting generates. Thus there is a very real sense in which humans create *ex nihilo*. Robson is aware that human creativity cannot be compared to God's creative act, for only God creates from *absolutely nothing*; but the possibility that humans can and do create *ex nihilo* in some way means that the presence of evil in the world can be accounted for in terms of *warped* human creativity. 'When the unforeseen novelty of a new thing is seen,' Robson concludes, 'it might be that it does not fit in with the whole and needs to be revised.' (p. 189).

Ontology and Providence is not an especially easy read, though it is a rewarding one. Much of the discussion in the first section is technical and, in my view, unnecessarily lengthy and complicated, though Robson does enough to ensure that the overall thrust of his argument can be followed. Conversely, the sections on providence and creativity could have been longer, not least because the insights on creativity and evil merit further discussion. I do hope that Robson has opportunity to write a second volume, or perhaps a series of papers, elaborating these points. He has challenged many dearly-held presuppositions concerning the meaning and implications of *creatio ex nihilo* and, as a result, has laid a modest but stable foundation for future discussions.

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***The Bible Among the Myths*. By John N. Oswalt. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009, 208 pp., $17.99.**

Theological books that truly capture one's attention are few and far between. A book's ability to entrance the reader depends on its intrinsic subjective interest to the reader, as well as its objective stylistic qualities. I am happy to report that John N. Oswalt's book *The Bible Among the Myths* heartily and handsomely delivers on both counts, at least where this particular reader is concerned.

John N. Oswalt's publishing pedigree is impressive. To date he has written three or more commentaries on Isaiah for the NIV Application series and the NICOT series, is a member of more than one major Bible translation team, has consulted for the New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis, and has written a few other smaller books on the side. Formerly a student and faculty member at Asbury Theological Seminary, he is ten years into a tenure at Wesley Biblical Seminary. I have said it before and I will say it again: whatever you think of their theology, Methodists are among the finest Christian writers, bar none.

The Bible Among the Myths seems to have been a labor of love for its author. In the introduction Oswalt reveals that its content had been stewing for decades. Indeed, the venerable age of many of the books he cites in his footnotes (from the 50s and 60s) betrays this. However, Oswalt assures us that the datedness of the cited materials is not an issue, for virtually no new and/or significant discoveries have been made in the field for decades.

Revelation, myth, and history are the main topics treated in this book, virtually always on a macro scale. While Oswalt does deal with some specific mythological materials, their treatments are always and only in service to his greater themes: that by any scholarly definition the term "myth" cannot be applied to the Bible, that one cannot divorce "fact" from "meaning," and that "contrary to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century delusion, science and logic are not self-evident." These points are subsumed under his major point: *the Bible is essentially different from other Near Eastern literature.* The view that the Bible must be beholden to myths of neighboring Near Eastern cultures is the result of a change in assumptions over the past five or more decades, and not the result of new discoveries, says Oswalt.

It is divided into two main parts of five chapters apiece. The first part, subtitled "The Bible in Its World," firstly defines myth, then places the creation and transmission of the Hebrew Bible in its near Eastern historical and geographical context. This was a time and place in which "continuity" thinking prevailed. As Oswalt ably demonstrates, continuity thinking was the natural result of humans reasoning backwards from the creation to the unseen. Under this view, the gods look, behave, and feel as humans do. In contrast, the essence of the Bible's portrayal of reality posits a transcendent vision of reality in which humankind has received revelation from outside of itself.

Once Oswalt has dealt with those who would call the Bible myth, he then turns to those who would assert the Bible isn't history. More and more Evangelicals fall into this camp, unfortunately. Navigating through various definitions of history, Oswalt differentiates between historical accounts in Judeo-Christian Scripture and those purportedly historical accounts of neighboring pagan nations, whose "history" shows up in royal annals, epics, king lists, and chronicles. Oswalt demonstrates convincingly that whereas these nations' written "histories" virtually always served to deliver a biased, even fanciful account of a king's reign or military campaign (for example, two nations would routinely claim to have won the same battle, or the losing nation's annals would fail utterly to mention the battle at all), the Hebrew Scriptures do not paint the protagonist nation in any sort of special light in and of itself. On the contrary; the Hebrews failed, and failed, and failed again, time without end. And the Hebrew writers reported, and reported, and reported again, on the Hebrews' failures. This is just one of the crucial differences Oswalt identifies between Hebrew Scripture and the written accounts from the surrounding nations.

Perhaps some critics will accuse Oswalt of special pleading; that he has conveniently omitted some lines of inquiry that might fatally wound his thesis. Certainly one must have a Christian faith commitment to fully embrace his advocating of divine revelation, but even so, his lines of logic are worked out in fine detail. As one just beginning seminary training I may be oblivious to the finer points of the debate, but I can say with relative certainty that there are no gaping holes in Oswalt's argumentation.

Near the end of the book Oswalt includes a chapter surveying "alternatives" to the orthodox view of the Bible as divine revelation. In this chapter he deals briefly with thinkers such as John Van Seters, Frank Cross, William Dever, and Mark Smith. Elsewhere a reviewer has suggested that Oswalt might have dealt with more recent figures in the field such as Peter Enns and Kenton Sparks, but I'm content to give Oswalt a pass on this count. The

regular Christian reader could, in my opinion, skip this section and not do any damage to their overall understanding of this book.

My one complaint is minor and barely noteworthy, but is entered here for the record. Since the book only deals with the Old Testament, it would have been more accurate to title it *The Old Testament Among the Myths*, or *The Hebrew Bible Among the Myths*, or to lift a phrase directly out of the book itself, *Israel's Bible Among the Myths*. The book barely touches on the New Testament, so the title is slightly misleading. Savvier publishing heads prevailed, I suppose.

For the most part I found *The Bible Among the Myths* riveting reading. From beginning to end, I couldn't wait to pick it up again. Oswalt possesses an old-school eloquence which is a delight to read. He is thoroughly informative without succumbing to interminable technicalities. More than "just" a book about the Bible, this is a book on worldview. If you have read the two-dozen or so worldview books published in the last few years and find yourself pining for the next step, here it is.

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Theological Aesthetics After von Balthasar. **Edited by Oleg V. Bychkov and James Fodor. Ashgate Studies in Theology, Imagination and the Arts. Edited by Trevor Hart, Jeremy Begbie and Roger Lundin. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008, 238 pp., $99.95.**

Theological Aesthetics After von Balthasar is a collection of sixteen essays that arose from two conferences sponsored by the Franciscan Holy Name Province. The essays, written by both Catholic and Protestant authors, explores a "cross-section of theological aesthetics in its current state, as well as a tribute to Hans Urs von Balthasar's contribution to this academic discipline" (xi). Furthermore, as Oleg Bychkov acknowledges in his introduction, the state of the discipline is "honestly messy" (xvii). The editor's observation is quite accurate and this messiness extends itself into this collection of essays. The diversity of the subject matter demands both a level of competence and a variety of interest from the reader. Topics such as Gadamer's hermeneutics, Gerard Manley Hopkins' poetry, Aquinas' philosophical aesthetics, the role of art in religion, and of course Balthasar's own ideas, are covered here. Besides the range of topics, the depth and focus of the essays differ substantially. Some essays read more as exploratory remarks, such as Lee Barrett's, "Von Balthasar and Protestant Aesthetics: A Mutually Corrective Conversation." While others such as Nicholas Wolterstorff's "Beyond Beauty and the Aesthetic in the Engagement of Religion and Art" clearly bear the marks of a developed argument from previous book-length works.

Yet despite the variety of topics and differing levels of academic prose covered within, the whole text is characterized by similar themes. The major theme that stands out above all else is the criticism of aesthetic autonomy. In other words, most of these authors want to use aesthetics within other disciplines, rather than treat it as an independent discipline with its own goals.

For example, Nicholas Wolterstorff's essay provides the historical context for this concern to avoid aesthetic autonomy in what he refers to as the "The Grand Modern

Narrative." This term is used to describe a monolithic approach to artistic creations from the perspective of "disinterested contemplation" that developed in seventeenth century Europe. Wolterstorff argues that for Christians, art has never served such an ethereal purpose and the Grand Modern Narrative's emphasis on art for art's sake obscures the often "sexist, colonialist, elitist, nationalist, fascist" (130) elements of artistic works. Wolterstorff believes that art is best understood with reference to "social practices" that allow for a variety of contextual interpretations. For example, the Christian tradition makes use of a "memorial" function for art that the Grand Modern Narrative excludes from the discussion. (130). The memorial function places art in service of worship and contemplation of God and the building up of the Church, rather than focusing on the inherent beauty of an individual work of art.

Francesca Murphy's excellent essay, "Beauty as a Gateway to Love," argues similarly that Hans Urs von Balthasar's theological aesthetics did not function as a standalone entity but instead was designed to serve as a "gateway to love." Balthasar warns in the first volume of the *Glory of the Lord* that if beauty is not reestablished within theological discourse, Christians will "no longer pray and soon will no longer be able to love" (18). The cultural climate of Balthasar's day was founded in the dominance of scientific hegemony on one side and the Neo-Scholastic theology on the other, which jeopardized the church's ability to keep love at the theological center. And it is love that Balthasar's theological aesthetics is designed to serve. Often Balthasar is introduced to students in ways that imply he is primarily important for his explication of theological aesthetics when in actuality, his work centers around the motivation and fruit of the Christian Gospel itself. Murphy's essay is a well-argued corrective to that misconception.

In a different manner from Wolterstorff and Murphy, Alejandro Garcia-Rivera's essay, "On a New List of Aesthetic Categories" also critiques the Grand Modern Narrative by a reflecting on how art is experienced by the Latin American Catholic community. Aesthetics, he argues, has been too long viewed within the provenance of the elites in western culture. Garcia-Rivera argues against that form of elitism by asking for "a new list of aesthetic categories" (171) that expands both the notion of what constitutes art and also opens up the possibility for a "unitive revelatory experience" that challenges the idea of disinterested contemplation as the preferred mode for relating to artistic works. He points to the use of prayer cards among Catholics as a legitimate subject for theological aesthetics. While the prayer card is not a particularly innovative as an artistic creation, the card provides a "healing" and "catharsis" for those who approach it as a "sensible Mystery" (180).

As a whole the essays within this text, though dissimilar in many ways, work toward a common goal: to unmask the "Grand Modern Narrative's" impotence as an aesthetic tool and offer constructive proposals to move beyond it. Some authors seek to undermine the Grand Modern Narrative through explicit theological concepts, texts, and analogy, while others focus on the concrete aesthetic experience both in the arts and in religion.

The text is certainly profitable for the specialist interested in theological aesthetics and reflects the variety, even confusion, that is present within the discipline today. While the cost

of the text will likely mean that this book will end up on institutional shelves rather than in personal libraries, it is a welcome addition to the field.

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THE ECUMENICAL CREEDS OF CHRISTIANITY

THE APOSTLES' CREED (OLD ROMAN FORM)

I believe in God the Father Almighty. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary; crucified under Pontius Pilate and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit; the holy Church; the forgiveness of sins; [and] the resurrection of the flesh.

THE NICÆNO-CONSTANTINOPOLITAN CREED

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man, and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

THE ATHANASIAN CREED

Whoever desires to be saved must above all things hold to the catholic faith. Unless a man keeps it in its entirety inviolate, he will assuredly perish eternally.

Now this is the catholic faith, that we worship one God in trinity and trinity in unity, without either confusing the persons, or dividing the substance. For the Father's person is one, the Son's another, the Holy Spirit's another; but the Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is one, their glory is equal, their majesty is co-eternal.

Such as the Father is, such is the Son, such is also the Holy Spirit. The Father is uncreate, the Son uncreate, the Holy Spirit uncreate. The Father is infinite, the Son infinite, the Holy Spirit infinite. The Father is eternal, the Son eternal, the Holy Spirit eternal. Yet there are not three eternals, but one eternal; just as there are not three uncreates or three infinites, but one uncreate and one infinite. In the same way the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, the Holy Spirit almighty; yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty.

Thus the Father is God, the Son God, the Holy Spirit God; and yet there are not three Gods, but there is one God. Thus the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet there are not three Lords, but there is one Lord. Because just as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge each person separately to be both God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to speak of three Gods or Lords.

The Father is from none, not made nor created nor begotten. The Son is from the Father alone, not made nor created but begotten. The Holy Spirit is from the Father and the Son, not made nor created nor begotten but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this trinity there is nothing before or after, nothing greater or less, but all three persons are co-eternal with each other and co-equal. Thus in all things, as has been stated above, both trinity and unity and unity in trinity must be worshipped. So he who desires to be saved should think thus of the Trinity.

It is necessary, however, to eternal salvation that he should also believe in the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now the right faith is that we should believe and confess that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is equally both God and man.

He is God from the Father's substance, begotten before time; and He is man from His mother's substance, born in time. Perfect God, perfect man composed of a human soul and human flesh, equal to the Father in respect of His divinity, less than the Father in respect of His humanity.

Who, although He is God and man, is nevertheless not two, but one Christ. He is one, however, not by the transformation of His divinity into flesh, but by the taking up of His humanity into God; one certainly not by confusion of substance, but by oneness of person. For just as soul and flesh are one man, so God and man are one Christ.

Who suffered for our salvation, descended to hell, rose from the dead, ascended to heaven, sat down at the Father's right hand, from where He will come to judge the living and the dead; at whose coming all men will rise again with their bodies, and will render an account of their deeds; and those who have done good will go to eternal life, those who have done evil to eternal fire.

This is the catholic faith. Unless a man believes it faithfully and steadfastly, he cannot be saved. Amen

THE DEFINITION OF CHALCEDON

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.