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Essays on
Theology After Darwin

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EDITORIAL

Volume 6 of the *Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology* continues to build on earlier engagements with issues related to Christianity and science by addressing the question of "Theology after Darwin." In itself, this title encompasses a potentially vast array of topics and methods. But it is also a subset of the broader question of how to pursue (ecclesial) theology under the conditions of Modernity.

In his survey of modern Christian thought, James Livingstone provides a helpful typology of approaches to theology after the Enlightenment. At one end of the spectrum, there are varieties of approach that seek to *accommodate* Christian thought and life to "modern ideas." At the other end are theologies that engage in "vigorous *resistance*." This can take the form either of retreat into a "fortress mentality" (what we might legitimately think of as fundamentalism of one kind or another), or of "highly sophisticated strategies of repristination or restoration of the older tradition of orthodoxy" (as examples, he cites Presbyterianism's Old Princeton, the Roman Catholic Neo-Scholastic revival, and, within Anglicanism, the Oxford Movement). The third, and "rather more pervasive" approach has been "to preserve most of the classical tradition but to *reinterpret* it in constructive new ways so as to assure its congruence and coherence with the received knowledge of modern science, history, and social experience."[1] Livingstone's types do not exist in watertight compartments, and it is perhaps better to think of individual positions as existing somewhere on a continuum. But they are a helpful heuristic nevertheless.

It would be invidious for this editorial to attempt to pigeonhole the different authors and articles in this edition of the journal. Nevertheless, within broadly evangelical boundaries, the authors have been free to follow their own approach. And the approaches and emphases of the different articles do differ from one another, sometimes markedly. They are, however, united by a common desire to edify the church by remaining accountable to the Christian gospel while engaging responsibly with our cultural context "after Darwin."

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[1] James C. Livingston, *Modern Christian Thought. Volume 1: The Enlightenment and Nineteenth Century*, 2nd ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), 2.

In issue 6.2, Matthew O'Reilly orients us to the Bible by providing a critical analysis of Gerd Thiessen's proposed "Darwinian Hermeneutic" for reading Scripture. Joel Lawrence engages Yuval Noah Harari's *Homo Deus* to sound a theological alarm over the technologically driven "new human agenda" but also, more urgently for this journal's readership, over the (lack of) readiness of the contemporary evangelical churches to address faithfully the near-future of humanity. Nathan Chang calls for clarity in thinking about human dignity, which on a properly theological account also includes a recognition of creaturely humility. Gerald Hiestand brings both Irenaeus and Augustine into conversation with evolutionary theory to explore the potential resources each pre-modern bishop offers in engaging a post-Darwinian world. Meanwhile, Nathan Gray Sutanto engages in some intellectual archaeology to demonstrate commonalities between a recent non-historical approach to the Fall and that of Friederich Schleiermacher. Scott Hafemann concludes the volume on a strongly pastoral note, offering a moving and challenging response to the Tohoku Tsunami-Fukushima Devastation of 2011, by means of a theological reading of Jesus' teaching in Luke 13:1-5.

Each article, and each topic addressed, is worthy of consideration on its own terms. But to return briefly to Livingstone's categories outlined above, perhaps another way of orienting ourselves to the contents of this *BET* would be to consider how, individually and collectively, they confirm, challenge, or refine our own approach to faithfully interpreting and applying the gospel within the intellectual, cultural, and ecclesial contexts in which God in His wise goodness has placed us.

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THE NEW TESTAMENT AND EVOLUTIONARY CHRISTOLOGY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF GERD THEISSEN'S DARWINIAN HERMENEUTIC

MATTHEW P. O'REILLY[1]

"Every age has its own outlook."[2] So says C. S. Lewis in a well-known essay making the case for reading old books. His point was that theology is never written in a vacuum. The questions we ask and the answers we give are conditioned by the concerns of our day. Lewis commended the reading of books from earlier periods to safeguard against a narrow-minded focus on the presuppositions of the present day, but his observation may also helpfully remind us how one theory in particular has come to occupy the outlook of our age. Since the 1859 publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, theologians have found themselves in a context that demands a response to the theory of evolution.[3] Some prefer to insulate theology from evolution; others attempt to maintain the integrity of both disciplines and yet integrate their respective insights.[4] In either case, today's theologians do their work in a world marked indelibly by Darwin's influence. His work led to fresh questions that challenged earlier theological formulations, not least with regard to the doctrine of divine providence, teleology, the problem of natural evil, and the interpretation of Scripture.[5]

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[1] Matthew O'Reilly is the pastor of Hope Hull United Methodist Church, Hope Hull, Alabama.

[2] C. S. Lewis, "On the Reading of Old Books," in *God in the Dock* (ed. Walter Hooper; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, 1999), 202.

[3] Charles Darwin, *On the Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection of the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life* (New York: Penguin, 1859, 2003).

[4] F. LeRon Shults, *Christology and Science* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 1. For a survey of theologians who have attempted to integrate evolutionary theory and Christology, see Joel C. Daniels, "Christology, Evolution, and Cultural Change," *Anglican Theological Review* 96.3 (2014): 435-459. He cites Charles Hodge as an example of one who resisted the integration of Darwinism and theology. For studies attempting to integrate evolutionary theory and theology, see Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Science and Christ* (trans., René Hague; New York: Harper & Row, 1968); Karl Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity* (trans., William V. Dych, 2nd ed.; New York: Seabury, 1978); Gerd Theissen, *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach* (trans., John Bowden; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984); Arthur Peacocke, *Theology for a Scientific Age: Being and Becoming-Natural, Divine, and Human, Theology and the Sciences* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993); Celia Deane-Drummond, *Christ and Evolution: Wonder and Wisdom* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Shults, *Christology and Science*.

The area of theology that considers the person and work of Christ in light of Darwin's conclusions is known as "Evolutionary Christology."[6] And among the many scholars who have taken this approach to theology, Gerd Theissen stands out for his attempt to use evolutionary theology as a lens for interpreting the Bible. He is not simply interested in whether biblical studies and the sciences can be integrated. He believes science can shed fresh light on Scripture. Thiessen is well-known for drawing on the social-sciences to interpret the New Testament.[7] With *Biblical Faith: An Evolutionary Approach*, he uses a Darwinian framework with the hope of offering a fresh reading of the Bible.[8] The book has been described as "an extended exegesis on scripture, using the hermeneutic of biological evolution."[9] The aim "is partly to analyze and partly to interpret biblical faith with the help of evolutionary categories."[10] Thiessen finds these categories useful because evolution is the "most comprehensive scientific framework" available.[11] He is fascinated by the theory's attempt to account for all of life, and insists that such a wide-ranging system should not be barred from the "innermost 'sanctuaries' of the tradition."[12]

While Theissen applies his Darwinian hermeneutic to the whole Bible, the focus of the present analysis will be limited to the topic of Christology. For Theissen, the question is this: "Can the New Testament conviction that God has finally revealed himself in Christ be expressed within the framework of an evolutionary theory of religion?"[13] In what follows, the major points of his evolutionary interpretation of early faith in Jesus will be set forth and evaluated. Three features of Thiessen's approach are of particular importance: (1) Jesus as new form of human life, (2) Jesus as protest against natural selection, and (3) Jesus and the question of successful adaptation. As we proceed, it will become increasingly clear that Theissen's "evolutionary approach" consists in transferring the grammar of evolutionary theory from biological evolution to cultural evolution, an approach that can be helpful at times and less so at others. I will conclude with three theses in response to Theissen's approach.

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[5] Daniels, "Christology, Evolution, and Cultural Change," 435; cf. Jerry A. Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True* (New York: Penguin, 2009), 115.

[6] Daniels, "Christology, Evolution, and Cultural Change," 435-436.

[7] See, e.g., Gerd Theissen, *The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity: Essays on Corinth* (trans., John H. Schütz; Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 1982, 2004); Wolfgang Stegemann, Bruce J. Malina, and Gerd Theissen, eds., *The Social Setting of Jesus and the Gospels* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2002).

[8] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, xi.

[9] Daniels, "Christology, Evolution, and Cultural Change," 448.

[10] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, xi.

[11] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, xi.

[12] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, xi.

[13] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 105.

A DECISIVE MUTATION?

Theissen begins his work on Christology with the observation that, "in some passages the New Testament itself interprets the person of Jesus as a new form of life, in which biologically preprogrammed conduct is overcome."[14] He understands Jesus and His teaching to constitute a "mutation" that is uniquely and permanently relevant, a mutation that does not need further change. The problem is that mutations are random and unpredictable, and in biology, there is never a decisive mutation. The burden is on Theissen to show why the mutation that is the life and ministry of Jesus is decisive and should not be subject to further mutation. He is responding to historical-critical readings of the New Testament, which have gone to great lengths to show that it is neither unique nor any more permanently relevant than any other ancient text. This agenda was prosecuted in large part by amassing parallels between the New Testament and other ancient source material. For example, Jesus' command to "Love your enemies" (Matt 5:44) parallels Epictetus' exhortation to love those who strike you (*Diatr.* III, 22.54).[15] To make the case that Jesus is a mutation of human life, it must be shown that His teachings are significantly different from others in their literary and cultural context. For Theissen, just as evolution works with what is available to produce something new, so also Jesus can draw on available ideas and yet yield new teachings and values. Thiessen sees Jesus' uniqueness not in the individual elements of His teaching but in the way He combines those elements.[16] To illustrate, Jesus has very strict norms with regard to sexuality (Mark 10:11), yet He does not shun prostitutes and even describes their entrance into the kingdom of heaven (Matt 21:31). He rejects retaliation, yet He welcomes a zealot as a disciple (Luke 6:15). He pronounces woes on the wealthy (Luke 6:24), yet He befriends the rich tax collector Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10).[17] Theissen argues that these combinations of mandate and grace are unique to the first century. This is the new element, "a 'mutation' of human life."[18]

Here we begin to see how Theissen's Darwinian hermeneutic works. He is not primarily interested in whether evolutionary biology can be reconciled with a biblical creator. Instead, he is focused on how the claim that God is revealed in Jesus of Nazareth can be understood in an age in which evolutionary theory is often the presupposed framework. Theissen is not looking for biological mutations but for cultural and historical mutations. He admits that this is to use the language of "mutation" as a metaphor.[19] That is how his hermeneutic works: what comes to the surface when evolutionary theory is the lens for interpreting New Testament Christology?

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[14] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 106.

[15] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 106.

[16] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 107.

[17] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 107.

[18] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 108.

[19] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 108.

Without objecting to the apparently paradoxical combinations of Jesus' teachings and practices, we must surely ask whether the authors of the New Testament see the combination of demand and grace as the central feature that defines Jesus' uniqueness. Is this the only feature of the person of Christ that distinguishes Him from His context? If there are other unique aspects of His life and teaching, is the tension between demand and grace the most prominent? For example, what are we to make of evidence in the gospels for Jesus' preexistence and divine identity?[20] The argument has been made that Jesus saw His action in the temple as an enacting of God's judgment against it and the national life of Israel that it symbolized.[21] Along with that, Jesus' final entry into Jerusalem can be seen as an intentional embodiment of God's return to Zion.[22] A full discussion of those proposals is beyond the scope of this essay, and taken alone neither temple cleansing nor triumphal entry make Jesus especially distinct among second temple messianic figures. But when *combined* with the New Testament account of Jesus' death and resurrection, the overall uniqueness of those events—not to mention other features of Jesus' ministry—comes into focus. When Jesus was spoken of and written about after His crucifixion, He was not remembered as a tragic would-be messiah who called for a strange combination of law and leniency.[23] The things He did and said take their significance from the events recorded about that first Easter day. The uniqueness of His demands and gracious acceptance of sinners is amplified by the uniqueness of His resurrection. And without that climactic event, we would be right to wonder whether many of us would even know about His surprising interweaving of expectation and acceptance. It would seem that the cumulative force of all that Jesus did and said, along with His resurrection and divine identity, mark His uniqueness. The combination of demand and grace are a piece of that uniqueness, but not the sum of it.

The presence of unique continuing relevance leads to another problem that Thiessen thinks his Darwinian hermeneutic addresses. If the message of Jesus was so unique and unlike anything else, then how did it arise in the first place? And what sense does it make when addressed to its own time? How can it be said to address the circumstances of Jesus' day? Is not the message conditioned and determined by its original context? Peering through his Darwinian lens, Theissen points out that the "evolutionary process leaves room for the unpredictable, so that spontaneity and freedom are possible."[24] He is here responding to those who argue that the rise of Christianity can be explained solely on the basis of a sociology of religion, and he sees his evolutionary approach as offering an account that would satisfy the sociologists without contradicting the beliefs of religious adherents. Theissen finds help in the point that mutations happen spontaneously. They are unpredictable, yet they arise out of genetic material that is already there.[25] They are contextualized innovation. Once again, Theissen draws a line from biology to history, "To put it as vividly as possible: we should not deny that spontaneity and unpredictability which we grant to mutations in the bacterial cultures in our laboratories to the great creative impulses of our own culture."[26] That is not to say that cultural processes are random. Specific solutions are addressed to specific problems. Nevertheless, those solutions come with a great deal of flexibility and can be applied in new ways to new problems.[27]

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[20] Simon J. Gathercole, *The Preexistent Son: Recovering the Christologies of Matthew, Mark, and Luke* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006).

[21] N. T. Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996), 413-428.

[22] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 631-645.

[23] Wright, *Jesus and the Victory of God*, 658-659.

[24] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 108.

We should remember that Theissen is not interested in a strict or literal application of evolutionary terminology to the New Testament. He is not wanting to put bits of text into theoretical boxes. Evolutionary theory is being used as a hermeneutic. What do we see when we read the Bible with this theory in mind? Theissen sees great freedom in the solutions that may be applied to specific cultural problems. And he sees the teachings of Jesus not only as a mutation but also as a direct response to his immediate first-century context. Of constant concern to Jews in the second temple period was their relationship to the larger Hellenistic world. Some groups accentuated the norms of Torah to strengthen the distinction between Jews and Gentiles. Other groups blunted those distinctions and became more open to non-Jews.[28] Theissen sees both tendencies in Jesus. He emphasized the norms in Torah related to retaliation, sex, and honesty. But He also relativized some boundary-marking norms like purity and sabbath regulations. And those who did not live up to the norms were not necessarily excluded. Thus, the ministry of Jesus made room for faithfulness to Jewish identity and opened the way for incorporating Gentiles. This part of the message was the product of Jesus' context.[29]

To summarize, Theissen offers a picture of Jesus that he finds both universally relevant and contextually credible. And to that extent, his work is helpful. He rightly highlights the unique and unprecedented way Jesus combined demand with grace, and his explanation of how Jesus' message addressed itself both to Jew and Gentile audiences is worth our attention. Less compelling is Theissen's metaphorical use of mutation. This way of speaking seems strained at best.[30] He admits that the language of mutation has its limits with regard to Christology. Mutations keep happening, and Theissen rightly wants to speak of the Christ event as decisive, "It is the conviction of the New Testament that in Jesus there took place not only one new beginning alongside others, but the decisive move from a world of disaster to a new creation."[31] Given this significant difference between the cultural events and biological mutations, Theissen's application of the language of mutation to the life and ministry of Jesus is less than fully satisfying.

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[25] Cf. Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 212-213.

[26] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 109.

[27] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 109.

[28] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 109-110. Some caution is in order in when drawing distinctions between Judaism and Hellenism. There is a growing consensus now that the Judaism of the first century should be understand as part of the larger Hellenistic culture not in contrast to it; see the essays in Troels Engberg-Pedersen, ed. *Paul Beyond the Judaism/Hellenism Divide* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2001).

[29] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 110.

[30] Daniels, "Christology, Evolution, and Cultural Change," 448.

FROM SELECTION TO SOLIDARITY

If Theissen's metaphorical reading of Jesus as a mutation of human life leaves something to be desired, his argument that the ministry of Jesus constitutes a protest against the principle of selection carries potential to be more satisfying. Natural selection has been called "The Engine of Evolution."[32] It is also often misunderstood.[33] For one, the term "selection" seems to imply an anthropomorphic sense of intention in the process—you get the idea that someone is acting or directing the process. But that is not what biologists mean by "natural selection."[34] Selection is not a *mechanism*; it is a *process*.[35] That is to say, it is not being directed by anyone, and there is no sense of intention. It is helpful to think about that process in three steps.[36] First, any population that has potential to undergo the process of selection must be variable. There must be different traits that characterize the group, whether it is fur color on mice or fur length on cats. Second, some of that variation must be inheritable; that is, it must be able to be passed on genetically. If the variation is not genetic, it cannot be passed on from one generation to the next. Third, the genetic variation must impact the likelihood that an individual will leave offspring. For example, animals whose fur color better camouflages them are less likely to be destroyed by predators. Animals not as well camouflaged are more likely to be destroyed and less likely to leave offspring. The result is that those with adaptations better suited to their environment survive while others do not. Natural selection is not so much about who is stronger. It is about who is better adapted to their environment and circumstances.[37]

Once again, Theissen draws a line from biology to culture. He applies the label "hard selection" to the process outlined above in which selection takes place by means of death or extinction, whether of individuals or entire species.[38] As culture develops, this "hard selection" is replaced by what Theissen calls "soft selection," which does not involve the selection of human beings in terms of their continuing physical existence. Instead, it does involve their attitudes.[39] Attitudes can change, and individuals can adopt new behaviors, and this can happen without individuals dying or groups becoming extinct. This development does require the capacity to learn, which, according to Theissen, is the most important skill for survival in a culture. The key is this: as cultures develop, natural selection diminishes. But without the ability to learn, cultures revert to hard selection.[40]

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[31] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 112.

[32] Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 111.

[33] Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 116.

[34] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 11.

[35] Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 117.

[36] I am here following Coyne's description of the three-step process; see Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 117.

[37] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 11.

[38] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 13-14.

Taking these observations to the New Testament, Theissen proposes that, "Primitive Christian faith consists in a revolt against selection which often assumes abrupt and bizarre forms."[41] One of the best examples of this revolt comes in the Sermon on the Mount. In Matt 5:43-38, Jesus rejects the attitude of love for neighbor only and hatred for enemy. As an alternative, He calls upon His hearers to love their enemies and pray for their persecutors. In the attitude that hates an enemy, Theissen detects the principle of selection at work: "Selection means aggression against aliens who threaten one's territory."[42] Jesus' alternative vision rejects survival of the fittest. He opposes self-preservation and calls upon His followers to adopt attitudes of self-giving love. We noted above that surviving the process of selection involves the ability to have offspring. For Theissen, the New Testament's praise of eunuchs (Matt 19:10-12) and encouragement of sexual abstention (1 Cor 7) stands in opposition to that principle.[43] Selection also means loyalty to those who share your genes (i.e., your family and kinship group), and it can mean opposition to those outside that group. Jesus elevates kingdom loyalty above the kinship group (Luke 14:26) and calls for solidarity with strangers and enemies (Matt 5:43-48).[44] Selection requires preference for those in positions of seniority, but Jesus expects His followers to abandon ambition for power. Whoever desires to be first must become a servant (Mark 10:44).[45] Selection prefers the healthy and those most fit. Jesus requires care for the weak (Luke 10:29-37).[46] For Theissen, Jesus' protest against the principle of selection comes down to this: "He promises possibilities of life to people who have fewer physical and social opportunities."[47] In the ministry of Jesus, the principle of selection is abandoned in favor of solidarity with the weak.[48]

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[39] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 14.

[40] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 14.

[41] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 114-115.

[42] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 115.

[43] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 115.

[44] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 115.

[45] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 115.

[46] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 115.

[47] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 116.

[48] It should be noted that proponents of evolutionary theory now argue for altruism and solidarity as a function of sociobiological evolution; see, Stephen J. Pope, *The Evolution of Altruism and the Ordering of Love* (Moral Traditions & Moral Arguments; Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 1994). Cf. the critique and alternative approach by Matthew N. Hill, *Evolution and Holiness: Sociobiology, Altruism, and the Quest for Wesleyan Perfection* (Strategic Initiatives in Evangelical Theology; Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2016).

As a German scholar writing after World War II, Theissen is rightly concerned to critique efforts by the Third Reich that aimed to justify the destruction of the Jewish people by appealing to the principle of selection. His motivations are to be commended, and his emphasis on solidarity over selection helpfully shows how the New Testament cannot be used to validate the superiority of one ethnic group over another. This brings Theissen's agenda into focus. He is not primarily interested in reconciling the New Testament with scientific theory. Instead, his aim is to provide a hermeneutic that keeps tyrants from abusing the vulnerable. This is not about aligning portions of the New Testament with portions of evolutionary process. Instead, his project is an exercise in dialectic. He brings scripture into dialogue with science, and he is open to the possibility that the New Testament may sometimes push back against the principles that come with evolutionary theory.

It is worth noting that he associates the message of divine judgment in the Old Testament prophets and John the Baptist with the principle of selection. He sees Jesus as moving from a focus on judgment to salvation.[49] This turns out to be a rather flat reading of both the prophets and Jesus. The prophets often portray the return of Yahweh as both judgment and salvation.[50] In Amos, which is in no way short on judgment, salvation is portrayed as the restoration of the Davidic kingdom (9:11-15). In Malachi, while the day of the Lord is a day of judgment (3:5), it is also a day of purification, refining, and healing (3:2-3; 4:2). And Jesus proclaims a message of salvation, to be sure, but He also insists that He Himself is the eschatological judge who will both save and condemn (Matt 25:21-36). Apart from this, however, Theissen does a good job making his case. The gospel stands against the principle of survival of the fittest when it is applied to culture and society. The kingdom of God is not one in which the fittest survive and the weak are weeded out. On the contrary, the strong are called upon to make concessions and sacrifices for the sake of the weak (Rom 14-15; cf. Phil 2:3-4). The most prominent example of that other-oriented sacrifice is Jesus Himself, "who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave…he became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross" (Phil 2:6-8 NRSV). In this case, reading Scripture with a Darwinian lens results in a critique of Darwinian-influenced social principles.[51]

A SUCCESSFUL ADAPTATION AND A CREDIBLE FAITH

The third and final feature of Theissen's evolutionary Christology involves the question of whether Jesus' proclamation can be credible to modern people. Jesus' objection to selection in favor of solidarity comes in the name of God. That solidarity thus stands in congruence with the "central reality."[52] That is to say, the process of replacing selection with solidarity involves adaptation to an environment that transcends the present order. Jesus provides two primary images for that transcendent reality: God as King and God as Father. God as King is establishing a kingdom in this world. God as Father looks after His beloved creatures. The question, as Theissen puts it, is this: "Does Jesus show here an adequate grasp of the 'central reality'? Or are his attempts at approximation questionable?"[53] Theissen is concerned that modern attitudes of "religious and psychological enlightenment" have cast doubt on the message and ministry of Jesus.[54] From the perspective of doubt, the kingdom of God is seen as an "illusionary utopia" and the portrayal of God as Father is seen as an "illusionary regression."[55] Can a Darwinian hermeneutic help restore some of this lost credibility? Theissen thinks so.

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[49] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 113-114.

[50] See further, James M. Hamilton, *God's Glory in Salvation through Judgment: A Biblical Theology* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010).

[51] For the relationship between natural selection and worldview, see Coyne, *Why Evolution Is True*, 115.

Theissen understands Jesus to have mistakenly expected the immediate appearance of the kingdom of God.[56] Nevertheless, the evolutionary approach aims to help the interpreter find "the truth in this error."[57] Theissen sees all human history as always engaged in the transition between biological evolution and cultural evolution, and the expectation of an imminent kingdom is a "mythical expression" of the sense of being in this transition.[58] The language of "myth" here seems to refer to an event that is not historically factual but is still instructive. The kingdom of God is seen as a myth that gets at the overlap of biological and cultural evolution. This sense of transition was adopted by the early followers of Jesus (Rom 8:19; 1 John 3:2). Their eschatological expectation is to be understood as an expression of the sense that the world is in transition. The Darwinian hermeneutic reveals the actual transition, namely the movement from biological evolution to cultural evolution. Taken this way, the kingdom of God is seen as an attempt to construct a structure of solidarity against the prospect of regression to selection. The idea of God as King can be accepted as truth, despite being mythical, in so far as we are convinced that God will only allow attempts to adapt human life in which the marginalized are the standard for human being.[59] This is consistent with the movement from selection to solidarity.

The problem that arises for Theissen is that he wants Jesus and His movement to maintain a special status in human history but then undermines the ministry of Jesus by attributing significant error to Him. He wants us to learn something from Jesus about the kingdom, even though Jesus got the kingdom wrong. In trying to hear the truth behind the so-called myth, we make ourselves the final arbiters of truth and we miss what Jesus is actually telling us. If Jesus was wrong, and dramatically so, why should we accord special significance to His life and ministry? Why shouldn't we simply write him off as one more misguided religious figure? Looking for the truth behind His false ideas makes Him out to be a failure and further undermines His credibility, which runs counter to what Theissen is aiming to do. In the end, I find this aspect of the overall argument to be self-defeating. Theissen wants to save Jesus' credibility by highlighting His error. That seems an unhelpful way to proceed.

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[52] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 119.
[53] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 119.
[54] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 119.
[55] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 119.
[56] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 119.
[57] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 120.
[58] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 120.
[59] Theissen, *Biblical Faith*, 122-123.

CONCLUSION: THREE THESES IN RESPONSE

1. The Problem of Sin is Not Solved by the Process of Mutation.

In developing his Darwinian Christology, Theissen treats sin as something that is solved by progress, as biologically preprogrammed conduct that must be overcome, and Jesus provides the sort of teaching needed to overcome it. "But," as Lewis remarked, "we must not suppose that even if we succeeded in making everyone nice we should have saved their souls."[60] In the New Testament, sin is not something overcome by the right sort of instruction that leads to needed progress. Sin is portrayed as a power that enslaves human beings (Rom 7:9), and as a power with which human beings participate to their own detriment (Rom 5:12; 6:12-13). That sort of slavery and participation cannot be sorted out through social or biological processes aimed at improving things in general and people in particular. It can only be dealt with by a God who intervenes personally in Jesus and the Spirit to reconcile estranged and hostile human beings to himself (Rom 5:6-11). Humans are rescued from sin by the death and resurrection of Jesus. Human beings are empowered by the Spirit for transformation through the teachings of Jesus only after that rescue, not before.

2. Jesus is not a new type of human life;
Jesus defines true human life.

Thiessen's claim that Jesus represents a new mutation in human evolution fails to adequately account for the way the New Testament describes Him. Jesus is not portrayed as a more advanced or sophisticated human being. He is not the climax in a long line of development and progress. To the contrary, and drawing on Lewis again, New Testament Christology involves "not something arising out of the natural process of events but something coming into nature from the outside."[61] Jesus enters the world of the first century both as the embodiment of the God who created human life and the human being who defines human life. He is the "last Adam" who fulfills the human vocation after the "first Adam" betrayed it. Our participation with sin degrades human life. Indeed, from the perspective of the New Testament, sin could be considered a sub-human experience. That is why Paul calls upon believers to stop sinning and substantiates the claim by asserting their covenantal union with Christ. Sin undermines human being. Jesus defines human being and restores it to us. As the truly human one, Jesus is not the next step in a long line of mutative progress. He is what God intended when He made human beings to bear the divine image.

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[60] C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Touchstone, 1943, 1996), 183.

[61] Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, 187.

3. The Physical Sciences Cannot Frame Metaphysical Providence.

Theissen's attempt to read the Bible through the lens of an evolutionary theory of religion should not be confused with the theistic evolution affirmed by many Christians. Theistic evolution attempts to frame science with theology, to understand the data in light of the witness of Scripture that God made all things and governs all things. This is not what Theissen is out to do. As noted above, his goal is not to align the New Testament with science. Rather, his goal is to consider whether philosophical presuppositions associated with naturalistic Darwinism can be used as a heuristic for reading Christian Scripture. The problem with this is the way it attempts to place the biblical narrative within a naturalistic framework. Note that this move runs in the opposite direction from theistic evolution.

The Bible makes metaphysical claims about the world and God's action in it. The natural sciences lack a method for analyzing metaphysical claims. As a result, a naturalistic framework will always fall short in its attempt to explain God's action in the world. This methodological fault is why Theissen's attempt to read the Bible through an evolutionary theory of religion ultimately fails. Such a theory is grounded on naturalistic understandings of sociology, which depend on a method that rules out metaphysics by presupposition. New Testament Christology, though, depends on the actions of a God who exists outside the realm of what the sciences can observe and who cannot be explained on naturalistic presuppositions or an evolutionary approach.

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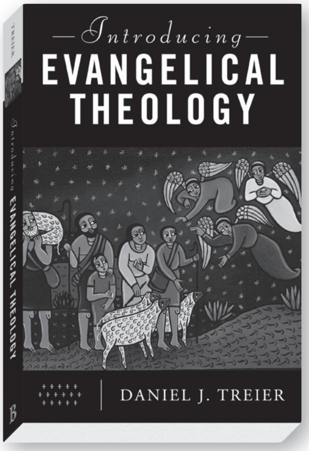
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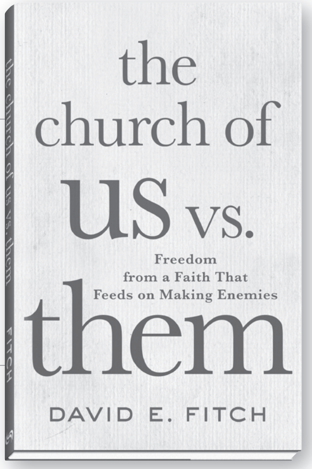
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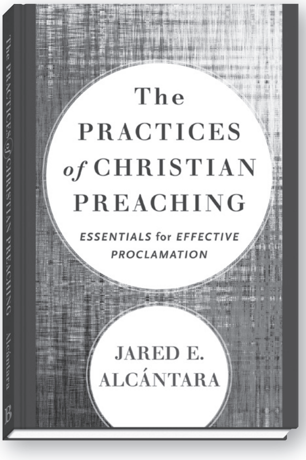
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AFTER *SAPIENS*: PREPARING THE CHURCH FOR THE EVOLUTIONARY FUTURE OF HUMANITY

JOEL D. LAWRENCE[1]

1. PURSUING THE EVOLUTIONARY FUTURE

Over the past few decades, the evangelical church in the United States has been engaging with the impact of evolutionary theory on evangelical theology. Are the truth claims made by evolution compatible with the Biblical declaration of God as the Creator of the universe? How do we interpret Genesis 1 in light of the fossil record? How do we square the Biblical account of a historical Adam with the discoveries of genetics? These, and many others, are important questions, and pastors must be engaged in the conversation about the evolutionary past and its impact on the way followers of Jesus entrusted to our care engage these difficult matters.

But as the church looks to the evolutionary *past*, powerful corporations and technologists are busy pursuing the evolutionary *future*, shaping that future based on the conviction that humanity must secure our destiny by augmenting and evolving human life through technology. These thinkers and corporations are committed to the idea that evolution has not stopped at *homo sapiens* but is advancing toward the next stage of development. As Yuval Noah Harari writes, "For 4 billion years natural selection has been tweaking and tinkering with…bodies, so that we have gone from amoeba to reptiles to mammals to Sapiens. Yet there is no reason to think that Sapiens is the last station."[2] Now, rather than wait on the gradual process of biological evolution, humans can take control through technological innovation, in which advances in science are utilized to ward off the forces that threaten life and hinder evolution. As such, technology is at work to create the evolutionary future.

The purpose of this essay is to offer a pastoral reflection on the future of humanity being pursued by technology and business, and to call the church to be prepared for this future. To do this, I will engage as my primary conversation partner Yuval Harari's 2017 book *Homo Deus: A Brief History*

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[1] Joel D. Lawrence is the senior pastor of Senior Pastor, Central Baptist Church, St Paul, MN

[2] Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (New York: HarperCollins, 2017), 44.

of Tomorrow.[3] Harari, a secular Jewish historian at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, claims that humanity is at the cusp of a revolution that promises to be of an entirely different order than earlier moments in human evolution. Earlier revolutions changed the way *homo sapiens* lived and interacted with the world, but the next revolution is pursuing a new way of being human. Technology is working to create a future in which humanity will evolve into a new species, *homo deus*, the next stage of human evolution created by the pursuit of "the new human agenda," a quest that seeks immortality, perpetual happiness, and the upgrading of human life to "divinity."[4]

Unquestionably, the pursuit of the evolutionary future will raise critical questions for what it means to follow Jesus. Even if humanity is unable to upgrade into a new species, the pace of technological change will cause upheavals in economics, politics, and business, altering the way humans live. As shepherds of Christ's church, it is incumbent upon us to be prepared for the challenges coming to our flocks through humanity's pursuit of the evolutionary future and to prepare them to be faithful to Christ's Lordship in a world "after *sapiens*." But how should we do this?

Throughout her history, the church has engaged with the issue of technology. Theological reflection on technology has often been framed within the context of the cultural mandate.[5] In this approach, technology is viewed as essential to God's created order, a gift from God to aid humanity in the goodness of earthy life and our stewardship of God's creation. But the technological future, driven, as we will see below, by a humanism that rejects the notion of a Creator God and replaces Him with humanity, combined with the extraordinary possibilities of technological innovation, brings new challenges to the church and our relationship to technology. This doesn't mean that the church will have to eschew all technology in the future, but it does mean that the categories through which we view technological advance (itself a very telling phrase) must be rethought in light of new realities. In my view, the framework of the cultural mandate, while offering helpful insights into the Biblical vision of humanity, is no longer the best framework for viewing technology theologically.[6] The humanism undergirding the pursuit of the evolutionary future, and the attendant liberalism it has birthed, means we must approach the question of technology is new ways. So where do we go from here?

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[3] This book is a follow up to Harari's 2014 book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (New York: HarperCollins, 2014).

[4] It is important to note that Harari is not making predictions. Rather, he is describing the current pursuits of technology and science and describing possible futures based on the current pursuits. Harari is quick to note that we are not currently able to speak with clarity about what our world will look like in 100 years, but we know that it will be radically different from the world we inhabit today, perhaps more different from life today than life today is from 100 years ago.

[5] On the cultural mandate, see William Edgar, *Created and Creating: A Biblical Theology of Culture* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2015); Andy Crouch, *Culture Making: Recovering Our Creative Calling* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2008); Adam Ashkoff, "Faith and Technology," <https://medium.com/the-masters-university/faith-technology-ad6c1a962492>.

[6] It is beyond the scope of this paper to provide a full argument on this point. I will summarize my view by saying that the cultural mandate is a product of the church in cultural authority, as it assumes that the church will have power to shape culture. As I will argue

I agree with Harari that the coming technological revolution will be of a wholly different order than technological revolutions of the past. As such, we need to hold a conversation of a different order. I propose that to do this, the church needs to be clear about the core ideologies driving the pursuit of the evolutionary future, and from this to ask how we, a people set apart to be witnesses to the rule of Christ, interact with those ideologies. Thus, my desire in this essay is to call the church to understand these underlying ideologies and their impact on the church, in order to set the church in a position from which we can better prepare for the evolutionary future.

To do this, I will begin by exploring Harari's "new human agenda." What are the main pursuits of the new human agenda? What is the vision of the evolutionary future being pursued through technology? Following this, we will turn our attention to the underlying ideologies driving the new human agenda—humanism and liberalism. I will then focus on the church and demonstrate that the church is unprepared for the coming technological future, not simply because we are not paying attention to what is happening, but more fundamentally because the ideologies driving the new human agenda have infiltrated the church, resulting in a capture of the church by what I call the American Prosperity Gospel. Through this, I will show that the capture of the church by the American Prosperity Gospel has weakened the church's ability to prepare for the future. I will conclude with a call for pastors to lead our congregations to embrace the cross for the sake of our witness to Christ in the world "after *sapiens*."

2. THE NEW HUMAN AGENDA

Humanity is on the verge of a major technological revolution. Over the past 200 years, advances in technology have radically transformed human life. But what if these changes are just the appetizer? What if the past 200 years will pale in comparison to technological transformation in the next 200? This, according to futurists, is assured.[7] As humanity brings the old human agenda to its conclusion, we can now give our attention to the new human agenda, and so pursue the evolutionary future of *homo deus*.

According to Harari, the old human agenda was dominated by the unending pursuit of survival. Continually threated by plague, war, and

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later, especially in my conclusion, the church's new reality of no longer having the cultural power we once held necessitates a rethinking of theologies that assume authority in the world, including the cultural mandate.

[7] Though the literature on the future of technological development is vast, I would recommend the following books for those interested in pursuing these themes further: Gerd Leonhard, *Technology vs. Humanity: The Coming Clash Between Man and Machine* (London: Fast Future Publishing Ltd, 2016); Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near* (New York: Penguin, 2005); James Barrat, *Our Final Invention: Artificial Intelligence and the End of the Human Era* (New York, St Martins Press, 2013); and Max Tegmark, *Life 3.0: Being Human in the Age of Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Vintage Books, 2017).

famine, the life of *homo sapiens* was a continual quest to secure existence. But now humanity has warded off the threats to our survival, and can move on from the old human agenda to the new human agenda.[8] Harari describes this transition as follows:

> At the dawn of the third millennium, humanity wakes up, stretching its limbs and rubbing its eyes. Remnants of some awful nightmare are still drifting across its mind. "There was something with barbed wire, and huge mushroom clouds. Oh well, it was just a bad dream." Going to the bathroom, humanity washes its face, examines its wrinkles in the mirror, makes a cup of coffee and opens the diary. "Let's see what's on the agenda today."[9]

The nightmare of the past is behind us. A bright new future awaits us in which humans are free to pursue a new agenda: "Having raised humanity above the beastly level of survival struggles, we will now aim to upgrade humans into gods, and turn *homo sapiens* into *homo deus*."[10] Now large corporations, research institutions, and technology firms are turning their collective attention to three items on the new agenda that, when accomplished, will lead humanity to a new way of being: the pursuit of immortality, perpetual happiness, and divinity.

1. SEEKING IMMORTALITY

At the heart of the pursuit of immortality is the conviction that homo sapiens is glitchy.[11] Yes, evolution has produced something beautiful in creating humans, and yes, these humans have themselves created beautiful things. But, like a Microsoft operating system, glitches run amok, and viruses cause havoc. The primary glitch is the one we fear most: Death.

In a materialistic view, death occurs when genetic mutations create conditions in which the human body can no longer support life. So, bullet point #1 on the new human agenda: fix the glitches that lead to death.[12] And, lest we think this is the stuff of science fiction, right now, in Silicon Valley, the attempt to fix the glitches is in full swing. Google has invested billions in Calico Labs, a research institution whose mission is to "harness advanced technologies to increase our understanding of the biology that controls lifespan,"[13] unlocking the secrets of cellular biology with the intent to “solve death.”[14] One of the main advances by which technologists are seeking to solve death is in the field of nanotechnology.[15] Currently, when cancer is discovered in the human body, chemotherapy or immunotherapy are employed to stop cancer cells from multiplying. But what if the multiplication of cancer cells is halted before this process begins? What if we could inject an armada of microscopic cancer-seeking robots into our bloodstream with a mission to discover anomalous cells and destroy them before they multiply? What if these same robots, when not seeking cancer, could simply do maintenance and so stop the process of cellular degeneration that leads to aging? If we are able to do this, we could enact a future in which death, that great glitch of human biology, is overcome, and thus achieve immortality.

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[8] Though Harari recognizes that the threats of plague, war, and famine have not been completely eliminated, he demonstrates how greatly diminished these challenges are in the world today compared with the rest of human history. See Harari, *Homo Deus*, 1-19.

[9] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 1.

[10] Harari, *Homo Deus,* 21.

[11] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 23.

[12] In reality, what Harari is describing here is not immortality but a-mortality. Humans could still die if a piano falls on them or they are hit by a car (though that will be far less likely in a world of autonomous vehicles), but no longer would they be susceptible to death because of the glitches of the human body.

[13] See <https://www.calicolabs.com>, accessed on Dec. 7, 2018.

2. THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Item #2 on the new human agenda is the pursuit of happiness. This ideal is, of course, enshrined in the Declaration of Independence. It has defined meaning and purpose for late modern humanity, and so given modern *homo sapiens* a *telos*. As such, if there is something that threatens human happiness, our core ideology demands that it be removed. But how? You guessed it: technological evolution.

Until now, humankind’s pursuit of happiness has been deeply frustrating. For *homo sapiens*, “it appears that our happiness bangs against some mysterious glass ceiling that does not allow it to grow despite all our unprecedented accomplishments.”[16] How can we shatter that glass ceiling? By understanding that *homo sapiens* is a complex machine filled with biochemical reactions that regulate our sensations, and that this biochemistry is, again, glitchy. When chemicals get out of whack, humans experience sensations of sadness. But “according to the life sciences, happiness and suffering are nothing but different balances of bodily sensations.”[17] We may feel depressed if we lose a job, but by manipulating our biochemistry, depression can be alleviated, and we could “ensure lasting contentment” by “rigging the system.”[18] Though we have drugs that seek to control biochemical imbalances, Harari writes, “Drugs are just the beginning. In research labs experts are already working on more sophisticated ways of manipulating human biochemistry, such as sending direct electrical stimuli to appropriate spots in the brain, or genetically engineering the blueprints of our bodies."[19]

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[14] See <https://www.calicolabs.com>, accessed on Dec. 7, 2018. “Calico is a research and development company whose mission is to harness advanced technologies to increase our understanding of the biology that controls lifespan. We will use that knowledge to devise interventions that enable people to lead longer and healthier lives. Executing on this mission will require an unprecedented level of interdisciplinary effort and a long-term focus for which funding is already in place.” However, this does not quite tell the whole tale. According to Arion McNichol, the purpose of Calico is “to solve death.” McNichol, “How Google’s Calico Labs Aims to Fight Aging and ‘Solve Death’”, CNN, October 3, 2014, quoted in Harari, *Homo Deus*, 24.

[15] A helpful website for gaining an overview of the potential applications of nanotechnology in medicine can be found at <http://www.understandingnano.com/medicine.html>.

[16] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 35.

[17] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 35-36.

[18] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 39.

In addition to biochemical manipulation, there is also massive growth in Virtual Reality technologies. Do you desire to flee the world in which you feel depressed? Then plug your brain into the internet and travel anywhere in the world. Want to surf the North Shore of Oahu this morning and stand on the Great Wall of China this afternoon? Then plug in your VR headset and experience the thrill of travel. Are you feeling lonely? Then join other virtual friends in a virtual world in which you can be anyone you choose. Are you unsatisfied with sex? Then put on your VR headset and connect to a virtual sex partner, or partners, who will do whatever you wish, allowing you to explore your sexuality in ways that promise fulfillment. In the future, it will be possible for humans to live in virtual worlds through which they pursue perpetual happiness.

3. Becoming Gods

"In seeking bliss and immortality, humans are in fact trying to upgrade themselves into gods."[20] Harari describes the pursuit of divinity in terms of taking for ourselves that which *homo sapiens* has wrongly assumed belongs to God/gods. For most of human history, humans have held a belief in a powerful being or beings who rule over human affairs. If a plague occurred, it was because the gods were unhappy. If a devastating war erupted between tribes, each appealed to their gods for victory. And when death came, it was due to the mysterious plan of God. As such, humans believed themselves to be helpless, unable to control our world or our destiny. But then humans figured out that plagues are curable, wars avoidable, and death, well, we have not solved that one yet, but we are making tremendous strides. Rather than submit to the will of the gods, humans now must take upon ourselves the task of mastering history that we might extend life and ensure happiness. Thus, the pursuit of divinity is the pursuit of power over the forces that afflict humankind.

3. THE IDEOLOGIES OF THE NEW HUMAN AGENDA

If the church is going to be in a position to engage the challenges arising from the new human agenda, it is essential that we understand the ideological commitments driving the agenda. While the church should not stand against technology as a matter of principle, we must be aware of ways in which humanity is using technology and ask what is at stake in this pursuit.[21]

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[19] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 41.

[20] Harari, *Homo Deus*, 43.

[21] An important guide for the church's engagement with technology in the 21st century is Jacques Ellul, who is best known for his sociological and theological analysis of what he

The primary ideology that undergirds the pursuit of the evolutionary future of *homo deus* is humanism .[22] Humanism declares that humanity is the highest good, and that humanity must determine and secure meaning and purpose for ourselves out of our own resources and without reference to some transcendent Being (or beings). Secular humanism arose in the western world during the Enlightenment, which rejected the dominant theological vision of the medieval and Reformation worlds that a Sovereign, all-powerful God has ordered the affairs of humans and is directing history toward a *telos*, the Kingdom of God. In the absence of such a vision of God, humanism replaces God with itself, and therefore declares that history is under our control. It is up to us to determine meaning for ourselves, and it is our responsibility to shape history in a way that ensures we can achieve the meaning we desire. Humanism views history as a human project, driven by the desire to create a secure world in which we are free to pursue our self-created purposes.

Deeply connected to humanism is liberalism, the political ideology that arises out of humanism and translates the convictions of humanism into the political realm.[23] Because history is a human project under our control, we must not look to some transcendent realm as the place for securing political authority, but rather look to "we the people." The will of the people is the basis for political rule, not a Divine Right of Kings. And, since all people are created equal, and all people have the right to self-rule, the political project of liberalism proclaims liberation from any rule other than that of the will of the people, and also proclaims the right of all people to participate in the political process, and so direct that process toward the ends chosen by "we the people."

By taking power over history and seeking to bend it to our purposes, humanism, and the liberalism it births, declares the *telos* that we saw earlier on the new human agenda: happiness. Defining happiness as the ultimate purpose of life is inevitable if humanity is declared to be the highest good; what else would we rather be than happy? If we believe that happiness is in our power to secure and is our ultimate *telos*, then what should we do when happiness is threatened? What should we do when death, suffering, and disease intrude upon our happiness and deal out misery? Naturally we should strive to eliminate anything that places a barrier between us and happiness. Therefore, humanism and liberalism together demand that we put our finances, political power, and ingenuity toward solving the problems

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calls *technique*, the ideological and methodological commitments of the modern world. See especially Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1964).

[22] By humanism, I mean the secular humanism that has arisen in the Western world in the modern period that values humanity as the highest good. See Harari, *Homo Deus*, 65-68.

[23] On this, see Patrick Deneen, *Why Liberalism Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018). In this book Deneen helpfully makes the connection between liberalism as a political philosophy and the rise of technology. Also see Alan Ryan, *On Politics: A History of Political Thought from Herodotus to the Present* (New York: Penguin, 2013), especially his chapters on Hobbes (Ch 12, 411-452) and Locke (Ch 13, 453-496).

of disease, aging, boredom, loneliness, sexual dissatisfaction, death, and anything else that threatens happiness.

In the ideologies of humanism and liberalism, the fundamental drive of the new human agenda is clearly seen: as we look to the future, humanity will continue to seek to become *homo deus* through technological advancement. This pursuit will place challenging questions before the church about how we are to engage with technology and what this will mean for our presence in the world. It is to these challenges that we now turn.

4. THE AMERICAN PROSPERITY GOSPEL

The turn to technological messianism[24] and the longing for divinity through technological progress seen in the pursuit of *homo deus* must frame the way the church engages the new human agenda. To do so, we must address ways we are unprepared for the challenges that are coming. In my view, we are unprepared not simply because we are not paying adequate attention to those innovations (though we are not), but because the church has been infiltrated by secular humanism and liberalism, the ideologies that we have seen are at the heart of the pursuit of *homo deus*. This infiltration makes it difficult for us to see the challenges that the evolutionary future poses for the church's ability to witness to Christ. I want to demonstrate the infiltration of humanism and liberalism by describing how they have taken form in the church in what I believe is *the* American heresy, the false teaching I call the American Prosperity Gospel.

When we think of "the prosperity gospel," chances are we think of preachers on TBN who wear slick suits and have even slicker hair . In this version of the prosperity gospel, which is better termed the Financial Prosperity Gospel, people are promised healing and success by means of "planting seeds," i.e., sending money to preachers. If you do not receive the blessing, it is not the fault of the preacher, of course; your faith in God was not strong enough. Try again, send more, and have more faith in God. This is certainly the most blatant form of the prosperity gospel and is rejected by the majority of theologians and pastors. But I suggest that it is but one branch growing on the tree that is the American Prosperity Gospel.

Churches that reject crassness of the Financial Prosperity Gospel are still vulnerable to the subtleties of the American Prosperity Gospel and the influence of humanism and liberalism it contains. Believing the Declaration of Independence when it declares that we have the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness," American Christianity has adopted this philosophy as part and parcel with what it means to be Christian. In so doing, we have assumed, subtly or not so subtly, that God's purpose is to secure those rights, and so happiness, for His people.[25] The American Prosperity Gospel has caused the church to seek power, driven by the notion that Christianity is to have authority to rule over the moral norms of the broader culture. Throughout American history, the church has held a cultural position in which we have had power to establish *our* right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, i.e., to establish Christianity as the dominant influence on the morality of America. In this, the church secured for herself a culture in which Christian views on, say, sexuality have not been at odds with but have been enforced by the larger culture. And so the American Gospel has been, from the beginning, a Prosperity Gospel: We pray for God to prosper America, we sing about God's blessing of America, and we view America as an exceptional instrument in the will and purposes of God. All of this has led the church to the place where we have grown accustomed to power, coming to expect that the Christian life yields authority, and that therefore suffering is a sign that things are not as they ought to be.

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[24] See Mark Shea, *Technological Messianism*, <https://catholicexchange.com/technological-messianism>, accessed Nov. 24, 2018.

[25] Through this we can see how the evangelical church's pursuit of "relevance" and church growth over the past 40 years is rooted in the American Prosperity Gospel. The idea that

But the end of Christendom has come, and the culture has moved away from the church. Now, the culture is pursuing the agendas of humanism and liberalism in ways that make it clear that they are not, in fact, consistent with the gospel.[26] Now, the church is losing the power we have been accustomed to. What are we to do? For many, the answer is that the church should fight to hold onto power in society. For others, the church should conform the gospel to the values of the culture in order that it might be helpful for the agendas of the culture, i.e., so that "Christianity" can have a place in building the humanist future. But neither of these projects fundamentally questions the American Prosperity Gospel. And because we are unknowingly aligned with the very ideologies driving that project, we do not have a secure foundation from which to question the project of creating *homo deus.*

5. THE CHURCH'S AGENDA IN THE WORLD "AFTER SAPIENS"

The desire for humans to upgrade into gods, to become *homo deus*, is as old as Eden. But now the new human agenda, undergirded by humanism and rapidly advancing technology, is placing vast powers in the hands of humans seeking godlikeness in ways that up until now have been

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God exists to be relevant to our life places humanity in the center of life, with God has our servant, who must demonstrate his relevance to us by ensuring our happiness and welfare.

[26] In his book *The Unintended Reformation*, Brad Gregory demonstrates how the ideals of the Reformation were transmuted into something much different through the development of the Enlightenment. The church has all too often assumed a continuity with the biblical ideals of the Reformation, assuming that, as the story has often been told, the modern west is built on Christian ideals of liberty, equality, etc. But, while the terminology of the Reformation has carried into the late modern area, the ideas have been drastically reinterpreted. The church has not yet fully reckoned with the great difference between, say, a biblical vision of freedom and a western liberal vision of freedom. Modern history has been a Trojan horse through which the church has been infiltrated with ideals that sound as if they are consistent with the gospel, but in fact are not. See Brad S. Gregory, *The Unintended Reformation: How a Religious Revolution Secularized Society* (Cambridge: The Belknap Press, 2012).

unimaginable. Through our capture by the American Prosperity Gospel, the church has been weakened in her ability to see and respond to the challenges to our ability to witness to the Lordship of Christ as humanity pursues the evolutionary future. In this conclusion, I want to reflect on the church's agenda in the world "after *sapiens*."

As a church, we must be clear that the new human agenda and our ecclesial agenda are incompatible in fundamental ways. Having been captured by the American Prosperity Gospel and its promise of power, we have been led to believe that God's purpose for us is to maintain our control over the larger culture, to expect the "blessing" of God that we have so long asked for in our prayers. But this is not, in fact the purpose of God, nor is it the calling of the church. The church must be clear about our agenda: we are called to bear the cross, refusing, like our Savior, to pursue the powers offered by this world, including the technological powers seeking *homo deus.* In doing this, we will have to wrestle with difficult and potentially divisive questions: at what point does our commitment to following Jesus mean that we cannot follow the new human agenda? At what point does discipleship mean that we will have to opt out of technologies that can promise relief from suffering, or extend life? At what point will our witness to Christ depend upon our willingness to continue to be *homo sapiens,* even when technology is opening new vistas for the evolutionary future? At what point will our witness to Christ depend on our willingness to stand with those who cannot afford the upgrade to *homo deus,* even if we could?

I believe that, in order to be faithful witnesses to Christ's Lordship, we must resist the siren song of *homo deus*. This will be difficult because the American church has been geared toward power and prosperity; if we are to resist the pursuit of *homo deus* we will be called, in ways we never have been before, to embrace weakness. The evangelical church has never had to be a stranger in our own land. We have never had to embrace weakness at the fundamental level of being outcasts. We have not been trained to embrace weakness, but rather have been trained, through the American Prosperity Gospel, to expect power. As we look to the future, as we uncouple ourselves from humanism, liberalism, and the power we have come to expect as our inheritance, we will, in new ways, be called to be bear the weakness of the cross, and in so doing, live as witnesses of Christ's Lordship in a world seeking godlikeness through technological evolution, a world "after *sapiens*."

τέχνη [techne]

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ON THE ORIGIN OF HUMAN DIGNITY AND HUMILITY: CONSIDERING THE *IMAGO DEI* AND DUST IN HUMAN ORIGINS

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Consider three well-known public debates on human origins in the last hundred-fifty years. First, on June 30, 1860, seven months after the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, a legendary exchange at the British Association for the Advancement of Science took place. John Draper of New York University had just finished presenting what many considered a long and dry paper, but then Anglican bishop Samuel Wilberforce began to spice things up. He supposedly stood up, argued with an arrogant tone about the errors of evolution, and then indirectly asked biologist Thomas Huxley whether he was willing to trace his grandmother's descent to an ape.[2] Wilberforce appealed to the Victorian morality that a lady should never be insulted. It was one thing to say something about a grandfather descending from an ape, but it would have been quite shocking to say the same a about a grandmother. Several accounts told varied stories about how "Darwin's Bulldog" replied, but Huxley recorded his own response in a letter:

> If…the question is put to me, would I rather have a miserable ape for a grandfather or a man highly endowed by nature and possessed of great means of influence and yet who employs these faculties and that influence for the mere purpose of introducing ridicule into a grave scientific discussion—I unhesitatingly affirm my preference for the ape.[3]

This story is told again and again to put a wedge between science and religion. Many claimed this witty dismal was an embarrassing moment for anti-evolutionists; others praised the bishop for standing up for what they perceived as truth. But what is truly lamentable is that both sides missed out discussing legitimate concerns about human dignity and humility, and this set up an unhelpful pattern for future generations.

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[2] Isabella Sidgwick, "A Grandmother's Tale," *Macmillan's Magazine* 78, no. 468 (1898): 433-434.

[3] Quoted in Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (London: SCM Press, 1987; reprinted, Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2010), 11. For various accounts see J.R. Lucas, "Wilberforce and Huxley: A Legendary Encounter," *The Historical Journal* 22, no. 2 (1979): 313-330; and J. Vernon Jensen, "Return to the Wilberforce—Huxley Debate," *The British Journal for the History of Science* 21, no. 2 (1988): 161-179. The reason why there are varied accounts may very well be because they were invented myths to advance personal agendas. See Alister McGrath, *The Twilight of Atheism: The Rise and Fall of Disbelief in the Modern World* (New York: Double Day, 2004), 80-83.

Second in 1925, the same vigorous spirit erupted at the Scopes Monkey Trial. Prosecutor William Jennings Bryan ridiculed a picture of an evolution family tree found in a textbook, which caused several members of the audience to chuckle. They quickly stopped, when Bryan shifted to a grave tone and passionately argued:

> Tell me that the parents of this day have not any right to declare that children are not to be taught this doctrine? Shall not be taken down from the high plane upon which God put man? Shall be detached from the throne of God and be compelled to link their ancestors with the jungle, tell that to these children?[4]

Although the prosecution eventually won the trial, the press dismissed Bryan's underlying reasoning that sharing a common ancestor with lower creatures demolishes human dignity, and moreover returned the ridicule and scorn back onto him. This led the court of public opinion in American culture to side for the most part with the defense. And once again, both parties not only passed over a needed discussion on human dignity and humility, but also disregarded these important traits by the way they debated.

Third, over ninety years later, young Earth creationism advocate Ken Ham held a widely viewed public debate with science popularizer Bill Nye. Soon after, Ham taped a tour he gave to Nye of his colossal new exhibition called the Ark Encounter. As expected, debates ensued. At one point, Ham asked his counterpart, "Are we animals?" Clearly this was not purely a scientific question, but an existential one concerning human dignity and distinctiveness. Since Nye's agenda was to promote science, his thought process obdurately stuck to the realm of empirical observation of nature, and accordingly his face displayed a visible annoyance, showing that Ham's point was lost on him. So Nye answered what he thought was obvious: "Yes. We're mammals." Later, Nye could be seen describing human origins to a skeptical young girl in the crowd as a long process of natural selection. Ham took the opportunity to reinforce his original question with a similar personal appeal that Wilberforce had made with grandmothers and Bryan had made with parents: "Are you saying *this little girl* is just an animal?" Being confronted with an actual human being, Nye quickly retorted, "The word 'just' I disagree with. She's a wonderful, beautiful animal."[5] At this point Nye instinctively felt it necessary to acknowledge some sort of value to this homo sapien, but on a mission to encourage people to consider the natural evidences to explain human origins, "the Science Guy" insisted on identifying her as an animal. Here again with neither side giving in to the other's agenda, we see the familiar old pattern from the days of Wilberforce vs. Huxley and the State of Tennessee vs. John T. Scopes.

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[4] Quoted in Jeffrey P. Moran, *American Genesis: The Antievolution Controversies from Scopes to Creation Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 99.

[5] "Bill Nye tours the Ark Encounter" (2017) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T9A-F8JEFyY> [last accessed December 29, 2017].

These three problematic snapshots share a common thread. Yes, they represent unhelpful ways of interacting, failure to listen humbly, and a false dichotomy between science and theology. But for our present focus here we will cut through the rhetoric and consider the legitimate concerns both sides overlooked. One side wanted to protect human dignity and distinctiveness because they feared that evolution would supposedly strip them away. Not only is the loss of dignity theoretically unsettling to the Christian mind, but also it is practically dangerous since, for example, the strength of protecting human rights depends on discerning the value of human life. Conversely, what was missed from the other side was a right call for humility. Observation of nature in any scientific discipline consistently shows that human beings are never placed at the center of the universe, which is no surprise to Christians who espouse a God-centered theology. This is perhaps why Darwin pondered in *Origins*, "I see no good reason why the views given in this volume should shock the religious feelings of anyone."[6] Yet dismissals with little to no consideration of concerns of the other side abounded for years. The problem with these three debates is the reductionist assumption that one must choose to emphasize either the dignity or humility of human beings.

Let us narrow the focus to the in-house debate within the church. If the church is to embody the kingdom of God to the world, she needs to engage theological issues and celebrate creation in a manner better than we have seen in the scenarios above. The church will never fully agree, on this side of the Parousia, but she can disagree well, bearing the fruit the Spirit and humbly learning from one another in the search for truth. A closer look at history shows that the discussion on human origins had never been limited to the views of young Earth creationism and secular evolution.[7] Today diverse think tanks like Biologos, American Scientific Affiliation, Discovery Institute, Reasons to Believe, the Institute for Creation Research, or Answers in Genesis show us that this discussion is much more complex and far more interesting than might be assumed. However, the task here is not to argue for any one of the varying views of creation, but to make a proposition to consider a theological common ground in the ongoing debate, because at the heart of this consideration is a pastoral concern for the unity of the church. At a basic level, the church can agree that human value is of inestimable worth because all human beings are created in the image of God. However, whether one agrees with evolution or not, Darwin compels Christians to push the thought further and refine what we mean by this. The years of debate on what exactly was the mode of creation exposed some faulty assumptions concerning human dignity. Specifically, we should ask, where do we theologically locate the origin of human dignity? And follow up that question with, why are human beings given dignity at all?

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[6] Charles Darwin, *On the Origins of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: Grant Richards, 1902), 432.

[7] See Bradley J. Gundlach, *Process and Providence: The Evolution Question at Princeton, 1845-1929* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2013); Michael Ruse, *The Evolution Wars: A Guide to the Debates* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001); David N. Livingston, *Adam's Ancestors: Race, Religion, and the Politics of Human Origins* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); James R. Moore, *The Post-Darwinian Controversies: A Study of the Protestant Struggle to Come to Terms with Darwin in Great Britain and America 1870-1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979); or Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

In brief, the argument of this article is that the dignity of a human being is rooted *exclusively* in the teleological reality of the *imago Dei*, which is given for no other reason than grace in the process of creation. Scripture holds a healthy tension between both dignity and humility in human beings, since respectively every person is fashioned in the image of God and at the same time molded from dust—whether this is interpreted literally or figuratively. This means any interpretations of how humans came into being, human capabilities, or anything else besides the unmerited gift of being made in the image of God should be excluded as a basis for human dignity. The status "child of God" bestowed by grace in new creation is a recapitulation of the status "image of God" given by grace in original creation.

I. CREATED IN DIGNITY: IMAGE AND LIKENESS

Regardless of one's opinion on the mode of creation, the church can at least agree with Wilberforce, Bryan, and Ham, in insisting on protecting human dignity and distinction. Emil Brunner observed, "We all feel that there is something distinctive about man, that he belongs to a 'higher' category than the rest of creation."[8] Even Bill Nye, who insists that human beings are really nothing but animals, would expect people to treat him in a distinctively "human" fashion and would most likely protest if he were ever to be leashed like a dog against his own will. Brunner further added, "Even when [a cynic] expiates upon his nihilistic views, in which he pours ridicule upon this 'distinctive' element in man, he demands a hearing as one who proclaims valid, absolutely valid truth—an attitude which is not very fitting for a being who is nothing more than a 'degenerate cerebrating animal.'"[9] Dignity is demanded in modern Western society whether one is a Christian or not. Like Thomas Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence, many hold the Enlightenment view that the universal equality of human value is self-evident, but world history is filled with many acts of violence and abuse that testifies that this may not be so obvious. In fact, Brian Tierney effectively argued against the view that the idea of natural rights sprang from the Enlightenment by pointing to prior church laws from the 1150s containing ideas of a natural law of universal human dignity.[10] At the heart of these church laws, the theological basis for the idea of undergirding respect and protection for all people had rested on the doctrine of the *imago Dei*. Even if the doctrine is forgotten or rejected today, it at least serves as the historical basis in Western civilization.

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[8] Emil Brunner, *Man in Revolt: A Christian Anthropology*, trans. Olive Wyon (London: Lutterworth, 1939), 82.

[9] Brunner, *Man in Revolt*, 82.

Clement of Alexandria observed long before the Enlightenment that the root of all human dignity is "the greatness of the dignity of God," "[f]or the living creature which is of high value, is made sacred by that which is worth all, or rather which has no equivalent, in virtue of the exceeding sanctity of the latter."[11] In other words, human dignity is not arbitrarily self-prescribed. It is derivative. It is especially given by God as He created humanity in His image. To be in God's image means that humanity is not only supposed to be a reflection of God, but also enjoys a special connection to God. It was the *imago Dei* that God cited as the basis to forbid murder (Gen. 9:6). Likewise, James the brother of Jesus reminded readers that people exist as "the likeness of God" to show the inconsistency of blessing God on the one hand, and yet cursing people on the other (Jas. 3:9). Incidentally, both passages demonstrate that the Fall did nothing to eradicate the status of the *imago Dei*. Whether or not that enduring image is corrupted or damaged in some ways after the Fall is another debate.[12] Nevertheless, it remains true for all people that to commit any type of violence or harmful acts upon another person is an affront to God—such is the dignity of human beings.

Not only asserting value, the *imago Dei* in Genesis 1:26-28 also confers upon human beings responsibility to build a fruitful society and exercise stewardship over all things. Many scholars recognize the parallel of the *imago Dei* to the ancient Near Eastern concept of the emperor identified as the lone image of a god. What Genesis did to differentiate itself was to democratize the divine image, effectively making all humans God's vice-regents on earth. They were to be like earthly images of the king strategically placed throughout the kingdom to remind people of His rule and reign. Hence in the same way desecrating the king's images would desecrate the king himself, to bring harm upon any person would be an attempt to bring harm to God Himself. As God's representative this makes human life sacred.[13] So as Christian tradition has long maintained, the *imago Dei* should be the locus to consider when it comes to locating human dignity and humility.

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[10] Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights: Studies on Natural Rights, Natural Law, and Church Law 1150-1625* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001).

[11] Quoted in R. Kendall Soulen and Linda Woodhead, eds., *God and Human Dignity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 5. See Clement, *Stromata* 7.5. It must be said that neither Clement nor any of the church fathers coined the phrase human dignity as modern Westerners understand it today. It is far beyond the scope of this article to do a complete survey. For an informative examination of the emergence of modern conceptions of human dignity see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[12] See Gerald Bray, "God and Our Image," in *Grace and Truth in the Secular Age*, ed. Timothy Bradshaw (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 49-50; "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (1991): 223-225; and John Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 147-150.

Where things get muddled in the three scenarios above is pondering how they understood the role the *imago Dei* plays in relation to the rest of creation. The three anti-evolutionists put much emphasis in safeguarding human dignity by demarcating absolute distinctions from the animal kingdom. So much so that there was consistent impassioned offense at the suggestion of being connected in any way to lower creatures. This raises the question then: Does a reading of Genesis 1:26-28 necessarily lead one to conclude that the *imago Dei* is about how people are unlike animals? It is true that the creation of human beings disrupted the pattern set forth in Genesis 1:21-25 when it was repeatedly told that animals were created "according to their kinds." As one reads through this rhythm of creation, one might also anticipate humans to be created according to their kind as well, but this changed dramatically with God's declaration: "Let us make man in our image, *after our likeness*" (Gen. 1:26). This variance certainly confirms humankind's distinctiveness, but is it enough to argue that the *imago Dei* is simply about how people are unlike animals? Traditionally there has been a long list of interpreters who thought along this line. Augustine taught that the part of the human that imaged God unlike other animate creatures was the mind remembering, understanding, and loving God.[14] Like many of the church fathers he differentiated between the words "image" (*tselem*) and "likeness" (*demūt*). He followed Irenaeus, who believed that the former referred to the natural qualities while the latter referred to the supernatural graces that made the redeemed godlike in things like ethics. Thomas Aquinas followed Augustine in emphasizing the mind as to what differentiated people from animals. Animals may image God in some vestigial ways, but what stands out in the human being is the intellect and that is sufficient enough to be considered an image.[15] John Calvin went beyond the mind and placed the soul as the primary seat of the *imago Dei*, but still insisted with his theological forefathers that, "God's image...ought to be sought only in those marks of excellence with which God had distinguished Adam over all other living creatures."[16] Naturally, emphasizing the excellence of the soul or the mind led to further debates on whether or not the body should be included in the *imago Dei*. For example, J. Gresham Machen reasoned, "The 'image of God' cannot well refer to man's body, because God is spirit; it must therefore refer to man's soul."[17] One might deduce further that this was yet another way to differentiate humans from animals: both have bodies, but only humans are given souls endowed with a *sensus divinitatis*. Clearly then, the three scenarios continued this long-standing tradition of emphasizing human excellence over animals as the primary identifier of distinctiveness.

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[13] For an elaboration of the ancient Near Eastern concept, see J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005).

[14] Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 12.1.1-12.4.4;14.12.15.

[15] Thomas Aquinas, *The Summa Theologica*, 1.93.2, 6.

[16] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 2.12.6.

[17] J. Gresham Machen, *The Christian View of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), 169.

However, the problem is if we limit defining the *imago Dei* to unique human qualities it would potentially exclude a great deal of people. A baby cannot yet reason. Handicapped persons are disabled from doing a variety of things. One may wonder how homeless people contribute to the cultural mandate of Genesis 1:28. Yet scripture makes much of caring for the helpless and the poor (for example, Ex. 22:22; Lv. 19:10; Dt. 10:18; 1 Sm. 2:8; Est. 9:22; Ps. 68:5; Prv. 22:22; Is. 1:17; Jer. 22:3; Ezk. 16:49; Am. 2:6-7; Zec. 7:10; Mal. 3:5; Mt. 19:21; Mk. 12:40; Lk. 14:13; Acts 10:4; Rm. 15:26; Gal. 2:10; 1 Tim. 5:3; Jas. 1:27; 1 Jn. 3:17-18). From Moses to the apostle John, charity and benevolence never merely relied on the sentimental values of humanitarianism but responded to the value of needy human beings weighted in the immutable status of being made in the image of God. Apart from the divine-human connection of the *imago Dei,* it would make little sense to read Solomon instructing, "Whoever is generous to the poor lends to the Lord" (Prv. 19:17).[18] Along the same line, the *imago Dei* also gives light to the parable of the goats and the sheep when the Son of Man, sitting on His throne declared, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40). These texts show that being impoverished in abilities or materials do nothing to take away the privilege of being made in the image of God, and therefore the poor, lacking all kinds of excellencies, are still created with dignity worthy of care, respect, and protection. So although one ought not diminish the importance of God-given human functions, such as worshiping God, loving one's neighbors, exercising dominion over creation, etc., there is insufficient exegetical basis that God confers the status of *imago Dei* because of particular attributes that make human beings stand out in the animal kingdom.[19] As John Kilner commented, "Select attributes (even if godlike) are not what are in God's image; persons as a whole are."[20]

Kilner further observed that if one were to survey a history of definitions of what it means to be made in the image of God, one might find theologians falling into one of two categories: (1) either they expect too little or (2) they expect too much from the doctrine.[21] The former may be the case because there are surprisingly very few scriptural references to the *imago Dei* with of course no systematic treatment of a working definition. However, G.C. Berkouwer observed that the *imago Dei* is noted in places that have special importance and urgency, and therefore maintain its significance and warrant special attention.[22] Richard Lints offers an even more helpful commentary after also observing the surprising silence as to the substance of the divine-human reflection:

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[18] All biblical citations are from the English Standard Version of the Bible.

[19] See also John F. Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny: Humanity in the Image of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015), 109-110; Michael Williams, "Man and Beast," *Presbyterion* 34, no. 1 (2008): 15; Charles Sherlock, *The Doctrine of Humanity*, Contours of Christian Theology (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 37; Gerald Bray, "The Significance of God's Image in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 42, no. 2 (1991): 223-225.

[20] John F. Kilner, ed., *Why People Matter: A Christian Engagement with Rival Views of Human Significance* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017), 149. Concerning the argument for including all the faculties of a human being, including the body, as the image of God see Anthony A. Hoekema, *Created in God's Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 68.

[21] Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny*, 37-ff.

> At most the reflection in the early chapters of Genesis instructs us how we are to read the rest of the canon though not necessarily what we will find there. Reflection is a hermeneutical principle more than a substantive theological one…Paying attention to reflections in the canon is to pay attention to the way in which the human narrative reflects the larger divine narrative.[23]

Therefore the *imago Dei* is less focused on the specific ontology of human origins and attributes, and more concerned with the theology of human identity.[24]

Kilner's second category in which Christians expect too much from the doctrine is also pertinent here. He observed that due to a lack of strong scriptural definition of *imago Dei*, "some commentators have filled the perceived void by reading into the idea whatever is central to their theology."[25] John Thompson could add, "Genesis 1:26 does, in fact, serve usefully as a 'weathervane.' An interpreter's explanation of the *imago Dei* often points to his or her larger theological agenda."[26] For Wilberforce, Bryan, and Ham, the weathervane of the *imago Dei* was pointed squarely at their interpretation of human dignity. They filled in the perceived void of a clear definition of the *imago Dei* with an argument that dignity is firmly attached to a mode of creation that is special and immediate. However, the problem is not their specific view of how human beings were created. That is a different debate. What is questionable from reading Genesis 1 and 2 is deriving human dignity from a certain mode of creation. It cannot be emphasized enough how important it is to locate the precise anchor of human dignity. The parable of the goats and the sheep makes quite clear that it is a serious task to maintain and protect human dignity and theological errors concerning the *imago Dei* in church history have not always been harmless. Sometimes misapplications such as exploiting creation, making justification for war, denying women as part of the image of God, pondering if black people (African or Aboriginal) or "dusky" people

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[22] G. C. Berkouwer, *Man: The Image of God*, Studies in Dogmatics, trans. Dirk W. Jellema (1962; reprinted, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984), 67.

[23] Richard Lints, *Identity and Idolatry: The Image of God and Its Inversion* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015), 22.

[24] See David H. Kelsey, "Personal Bodies: A Theological Anthropological Proposal," in *Personal Identity in Theological Perspective*, eds. Richard Lints, Michael S. Horton, and Mark R. Talbot (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 139-158.

[25] Kilner, *Dignity and Destiny,* 43.

[26] John Thompson, "*Creata ad Imaginem Dei, Liecet Secundo Gradu;* Woman as the Image of God According to John Calvin," *Harvard Theological Review* 81 (1988): 143.

(Asians) or "savages" are really made in the image of God, etc., have all tainted church history. Sometimes in theology dealing with the doctrine of dignity crosses over into sins of pride and arrogance. A theological buffer against encroaching pride is needed before we can interact more fruitfully with Wilberforce, Bryan, and Ham's interpretation of human dignity based on a mode of creation.

II. CREATED FROM HUMILITY: DUST AND BREATH

Arthur Schopenhauer once critiqued, "Another fundamental error of Christianity is that it has in an unnatural fashion sundered mankind from the *animal world* to which it essentially belongs."[27] He would be right to observe that a theology that completely rends human beings from animals goes too far, but he painted Christianity with broad strokes (as he tended to do) and was erroneous to categorize humans as "essentially" animals. This falls into the trap of a false dichotomy choosing to emphasize either the dignity or humility of human beings. Genesis and the rest of canon not only demand human dignity and distinctiveness, but also provide much needed perspective on humility. For one thing, that humans and land animals were both created on the sixth day, literally or figuratively, suggests that they are not completely distinct from one another. Yet absolute distinctiveness is what is implied with Wilberforce, Bryan, and Ham's arguments. The three anti-evolutionists seemed to conclude that human dignity requires a *de novo* creationism, a mode of creation that starts from scratch—distinct and separate from the rest of creation. In other words, a dignified creature should require a distinct mode of creation, because anything else might call into question God's power and wisdom. Wilberforce commented in his book review of Darwin's *Origins*:

> Man's derived supremacy over the earth; man's power of articulate speech; man's gift of reason; man's free-will and responsibility; man's fall and man's redemption; the incarnation of the Eternal Son; the indwelling of the Eternal Spirit,—all are equally and utterly *irreconcilable with the degrading notion of the brute origin of him who was created in the image of God…*[28]

Similarly, Bryan commented in his book *In His Image*:

> I believe there is such a menace to fundamental morality. The hypothesis to which the name of Darwin has been given—*the hypothesis that links man to the lower forms of life and makes him a lineal descendant of the brute*—is obscuring God and weakening all the virtues that rest upon the religious tie between God and man.

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[27] Arthur Schopenhauer, *Essays and Aphorisms*, ed. and trans. R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Penguin, 1970), 187 (emphasis original).

[28] Samuel Wilberforce, review of *On the Origin of Species, by means of Natural Selection; or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*, by Charles Darwin, *Quarterly Review* 108 (1860): 135 (emphasis added).

> I venture to call attention to the demoralizing influence exerted by this doctrine.[29]

With so much focus on protecting human dignity, silence remains when it comes to acknowledging the fact that the biblical narrative of Adam's mode of creation actually starts out in humility: "Then the LORD God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7). Humanity's origin is a story of dignity rising from the dust of utter humility.

Objections that Aquinas countered in his *Summa Theologica* recognized the humility contained in Genesis 2:7. But like the three anti-evolutionists, they presupposed that the human body is nobler than all other creation, and thus—in accordance with the Platonic view that the spirit is nobler than the material—insisted that the human body should be made from a heavenly body rather than from an earthly body. After all, they reasoned, would it not testify all the more to God's wisdom and power if he had made Adam *ex nihilo* rather than from "the slime of the earth?"[30] There is no mistaking that "slime" (*limus*), which is a curious translation for "dust" (*āpār*) in the Vulgate, is not a flattering source of material for Adam's creation. Very much like the three scenarios above, there is an insistence that man's mode of creation ought to come from a dignified source if humans are to maintain his or her dignity.

But as Aquinas rightly and simply replies from the Vulgate, "On the contrary, it is written (Gen. ii. 7): *God made man of the slime of the earth.*"[31] If we can put aside the debate over whether this verse is a literal claim for material origins or a figurative archetype, we see that even a literal reading shows that Adam was not a heavenly creature made *ex nihilo.*[32] There was still a narrative process of forming the man of dust from the ground, a process he shared with trees (Gen. 2:9) and animals (Gen. 2:19). Whether one interprets this process to be a few seconds or a few million years of divinely superintended evolution, the source of Adam's creation can hardly be a source of dignity, but rather a reminder of humility. Any language of the image of God in chapter 2 is conspicuously missing. It may be one thing to disagree with the theory of evolution, but it is a wonder why the three anti-evolutionists would be so offended at the idea of being linked to a "brute," since dust is a far more humbling origin if one were to read Genesis 2:7 literally.

Dust consistently serves as a humbling literary device throughout scripture. Victor Hamilton observes, "Especially interesting for possible connection with Genesis 2:7 are those passages which speak of an exaltation from dust, with the dust representing pre-royal status (1 K. 16:2), poverty (1 Sam. 2:8; Ps. 113:7), and death (Isa. 26:19; Dan. 12:2). To 'be raised from the dust' means to be elevated to royal office, to rise above poverty, to find life."[33] Part of the serpent's curse is to eat dust for all the days of its life (Gen. 3:14). Qoheleth pessimistically observes that humans and animals both share the same origin of dust and they both will return to dust (Ecc. 3:19-20). Job pleaded with God, "Remember that you have made me like clay;" and then asked, "and will you return me to the dust" (Job 10:9)? Indeed, God Himself is ever mindful that humans are but dust (Ps. 103:14). And that is the counterbalance to keep intruding pride in check: humans—dignified and distinct images of God—were not narrated to be made from gold, silver, or any other precious materials as one might expect of royal images in the ancient Near East, but from dust.[34] Therefore we do well to heed C.S. Lewis's words: "Nothing in man is either worse or better for being shared with the beasts."[35]

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[29] William Jennings Bryan, *In His Image* (New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1922), 88 (emphasis added).

[30] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 91.1.

[31] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, 91.1.

[32] For arguments for reading "forming the man of dust" as an archetypal claim rather than a claim of material origin, see John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Adam and Eve: Genesis 2-3 and the Human Origins Debate* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2015), 70-81.

We can step back then and see that Genesis 2 is the inverse of Genesis 1 when it comes to dignity and humility. The former is focused on humanity's humility raised to dignity as God breathed into the man of dust; the latter is focused on a person's dignity as he or she is made in the image of God. Yet in the end, humankind is just that: a humble divine likeness, and not the actual divine. As Richard Lint quipped, "We are the way we are because God is the way he is, and we are the way we are because we are not God."[36]

III. REVERSE RECAPITULATION OF GRACE

Now we are left asking with David, "What is man that you are mindful of him" (Ps. 8:4)? What is it about human beings that God would fashion them in His image, providing them with inestimable dignity? Why did He intend their course toward a destiny filled with purpose and glory? We have already established that scripture does not specify any particular traits in humans as the constitutive reason for the *imago Dei*. Moreover, humans are identified with the dust. Why shape them and give them breath? To add a voice to these questions, Irenaeus could be helpful here. Granted, modern Bible commentators commonly question his exegetical differentiation between the terms "image" and "likeness" in Genesis 1:26. Also a vast majority of theologians influenced by an Augustinian interpretation of a perfect paradise and a ruined Fall would no doubt be uncomfortable with Irenaeus' interpretation that the first humans were both made childlike and imperfect from the beginning. Irenaeus reasoned that since only God is perfect, the sovereign plan was always for humans to grow continuously and eventually conquer already existing mortality with immortality, the corruptible with the incorruptible, and receive the image of God after having knowledge of good and evil.[37] However, like all pastor-theologians, Irenaeus' thoughts were complex and we need not throw out the baby with the bath water, if indeed some of his thoughts might be deemed bath water.

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[33] Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1-17*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 158.

[34] See John M. Soden, "From the Dust: Creating Adam in the Historical Context," *Bibliotecha Sacra* 172 (2015): 45-66.

[35] C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (1960; reprinted, New York: Harcourt, 1988), 31.

[36] Lint, *Identity and Idolatry*, 21.

Relevant for us here is his model of "recapitulation" (*anakephalaiosis*), a theological expression for how the incarnation of Christ works to correct humanity based on an extensive interpretation of Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. We need not go into the many details of this theology, but to sum it up, he examines the parallel between what Adam did in the Garden of Eden and what Jesus (the second Adam) did throughout His life and death. As fountainheads of humanity and in solidarity with them, Adam introduced corruption to all his posterity, while Jesus as the new head reversed the corruption of sin.[38] The hope that Irenaeus emphasized was a restoration of creation as a whole.

Looking to Christ as a recapitulation—so that we may work our way back to understand why humans are made in the image of God—we see that those who submit to being under His headship are delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the Son (Col. 1:13). More appropriate to the image motif, John declares that they are given the right to become "children of God" (Jn. 1:12). This new identity is loaded with meaning. As children of God, faithful Christians are set on a pathway to grow more and more like the second Adam in the same way Seth was said to be Adam's own likeness and after his own image (Gen. 5:3). Paul tells us that God's purpose all along was to conform humanity specifically to the image of Christ: "For those whom [God] foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers" (Rom. 8:29). Whereas humans are made *in* the image of God, Christ, unlike the rest of humanity, *is* the image of God (2 Cor. 4:4; Col. 1:15) as the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature (Heb. 1:3).

Here is the key question: How does one or the invisible church enjoy the correcting effects of Christ's work in recapitulation in order to become children of God? John tells us that the children of God are born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man" (Jn. 1:13). Along the same line, Protestants famously pick up Paul's insistence that salvation comes not from any of our doings or by works (Eph. 2:8, 9). By God's will, the new status or identity, and all the privileges and responsibilities that go along with it are by grace through faith. It is a gift. If we allow that this new creation is a recapitulation of original creation then we can work our way back and conclude that the grace of new creation is a recapitulation of the "blessing" God bestowed on humanity in original creation: "Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created" (Gen. 5:2). To be made in the image of God, therefore, is a gift. It is by grace, so that no one may boast. Any or all abilities are effectively ruled out as the qualifying reason for receiving the status and privilege of *imago Dei*.[39]

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[37] Irenaeus, *Against Heresy* 4.38.1-4.

[38] For helpful summaries see J.N.D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1978), 170-174; Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Traditions and Reform* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 73-78; and Eric Osborn, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93-ff.

CONCLUSION

As the church and the academy in partnership continue to discuss, wrestle with, and ponder the questions of human origins in light of evidences from scripture and creation, I argue that they ought to ground the dignity of a human being exclusively in the *imago Dei*, which is given by God for no other reason than grace in the process of creation. Scripture makes it clear that humans are uniquely connected to both the Creator and creation, giving them both divine dignity and appropriate humility. This is not just an abstract doctrine. Having a proper perspective on dignity and humility leads to real consequences concerning environmental and neighborly ethics in accordance with the cultural mandate: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion" over all the creatures of the earth (Gen. 1:28). If one were to lean too much toward distinctiveness, then one faces the perils of neglecting the call for humans to be good stewards over creation of which they are very much a part; if one tilts the other way by overemphasizing being part of creation, then the hazards of misanthropy are a very real possibility. In contrast, to fly on the wings of both dignity and humility soars above the province of pride and abuse, which can allow for an open and fruitful discussion over questions surrounding science and theology. As many have unfortunately seen, the debates in private or public settings can get pretty ugly. Accusations of unorthodoxy or fundamentalism tend to get thrown around and very little progress can be made. One has to wonder if Christian thinkers kept in mind that all people are made in the image of God, and therefore vested with great dignity, how much more fruitful progress could be made in respectful debates. If contributors humbled themselves because they remember that they are people of dust, and especially in light of the Fall know that they will return to dust, how many more gains would they make from appreciating the different angles concerning scripture and science? It would be worth finding out.

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[39] See Joshua M. Moritz, "Chosen from Among the Animals: The End of Human Uniqueness and the Election of the Image of God" (PhD dissertation, Graduate Theological Union, 2011).

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THE IRENAEUS OPTION: HOW IRENAEUS DOES (AND DOES NOT) REDUCE THE TENSION BETWEEN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY AND EVOLUTIONARY SCIENCE

GERALD HIESTAND[1]

In 1966 John Hick, in his book, *Evil and the God of Love*,[2] famously argued that Augustine's allegedly heavy-handed view of sin and corruption resulted in a failed theodicy and a villain God. Irenaeus, Hick suggested, was the better way forward. In Hick's view, Irenaeus presented a kinder, more sympathetic God; one who labored over time and with great patience, working to bring the messiness of creation into its full maturity. Key to Hick's thesis was the idea that Augustine insisted on an "absolute perfection" for the original creation, while Irenaeus more modestly suggested that God's original creation consisted of a "provisional goodness" that matured over time into an absolute perfection. Hick's primary concern in the "Irenaeus vs. Augustine" contest was theodicy. But Hick's division has been frequently cited as a way to address the tension that exists between the modern evolutionary account of human origins and Christian theology.[3] Following Hick's basic premise, it has often been suggested that Irenaeus' notion of "provisional goodness" is a better option than Augustine's "absolute perfection" for reducing the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science.[4]

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[1] Gerald Hiestand is the senior pastor of Calvary Memorial Church in Oak Park, Illinois.

[2] John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, repr. (New York: Palgrave McMillan, 2007). See especially pp. 211-18. For a thorough going critique of Hick, see R. Douglas Geivett, *Evil and the Evidence for God: The Challenge of John Hick's Theodicy* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993).

[3] It should be noted at the outset that these are not the same questions. Depending on the primary questions put to Irenaeus and Augustine—whether questions focused on theodicy, on one hand, or questions about reducing the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science on the other—these two church fathers will variously offer challenges or opportunities to current theological agendas.

[4] See for example, Colin Gunton, *The Triune Creator: A Historic and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998). Throughout his book, Gunton favors the Irenaean account of creation over and against Augustine. Also Christopher Southgate, *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2008). Southgate acknowledges the difficulty of the Augustinian account and works to provide an evolution-sensitive theodicy with respect to animal pain. He makes frequent reference to Irenaeus (mediated largely through Gunton) as an aid in constructing a non-Augustinian

Often such claims are made in passing, without sufficient attention to the details of Irenaeus' system (or Augustine's, for that matter).[5] This paper will provide an executive summary of the limits and possibilities of the "Irenaeus Option" over and against Augustine suggesting that Irenaeus' theological framework does indeed reduce some of the tension between Christian theology and science, even if it is not the panacea often implied in the passing comments of pro-evolutionary theologians.

The paper is divided into three main sections, with each section examining one of the primary tension points that exist between Christian theology and contemporary science, namely: 1) contemporary science's developmental account of human origins, 2) Christian theology's account of the relationship between human sin and human death, and 3) Christian theology's account of the relationship between human sin and animal death.

1. HUMAN DEVELOPMENT IN IRENAEUS AND AUGUSTINE

As noted above, one of the key aspects of Irenaeus' system is his emphasis on development and growth—particularly with respect to anthropology. According to Irenaeus, it is only through "long periods" of development that human beings become what God has all along intended. "His wisdom

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paradigm. Also W. Sibley Towner, "Interpretations and Reinterpretations of the Fall," in Francis A. Eigo, ed., *Modern Biblical Scholarship: Its Impact on Theology and Proclamation* (Villanova: Villanova University Press, 1984), 53-85. Towner uses Milton as an expression of the Augustinian position on evil and sin in order to establish the tension between the Darwinian and Augustinian accounts of human origins, suggesting instead that we should follow Irenaeus. So too Peter Enns in his *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids: Brazos Press, 2012). Enns suggests that Irenaeus gives us a better framework for reading Genesis than Augustine, insofar as Irenaeus reads Gen 1-3 as "wisdom" literature—a pedagogical example of how we need patience and humble trust in God.

[5] Hick himself recognizes that Irenaeus does not fully and explicitly expound the "Irenaean" theodicy that Hick ascribes to his name. Hick acknowledges that, "Irenaeus' name does not belong to this type of theodicy as clearly and indisputably as Augustine's name belongs to the predominant theodicy of Western Christendom," (*Evil and the God of Love*, 215). However, many of those who draw upon Hick's work seem to assume that Hick's Irenaean theodicy is one and the same as Irenaeus' actual system. See for example, Richard Swinburne's "An Irenaean Approach to Evil" in Stanly P. Rosenberg, gen. ed., and Michael Burdett, Michael Lloyd, and Benno Van Den Toren, eds., *Finding Ourselves After Darwin: Conversations on the Image of God, Original Sin, and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 280-92. Swinburne states in an introductory note to his essay, "The theodicy presented in this paper is called 'Irenaean' since Irenaeus bishop of Lyons, taught that God made a world containing both good and evil in order that people might have the opportunity to freely choose the good." The remainder of the chapter makes no mention of Irenaeus' system. The cogency of Swinburne's chapter aside, Irenaeus did not hold that God created the world containing both good and evil. For a more careful analysis, see, in the same volume, Andrew M. McCoy, "The Irenaean Approach to Original Sin through Christ's Redemption", 160-72. McCoy's essay is one of the few chapter length essays that works out the difference between Irenaeus and Augustine on this matter. I am generally sympathetic with McCoy's analysis and will draw upon his work throughout this essay. See also my "A More Modest Adam: An Exploration of Irenaeus' Anthropology in Light of the Darwinian Account of Pre-Fall Death" in *The Bulletin of Ecclesial Theology*, vol 5.1 (June 2018), 55-72.

[is shown] in his having made created things parts of one harmonious and consistent whole; and those things which, through his super-eminent kindness, receive growth and a long period of existence, do reflect the glory of the uncreated One, of that God who bestows what is good ungrudgingly."[6] This process of development is not a necessity due to the fall, but is a necessary corollary of the fact that creation (including human beings) is mutable and finite. Not even God could have created perfect (i.e., complete, finished)[7] creatures—for creatures are, by definition, mutable, and thus inevitably fall short of the glory of God.

> But created things must be inferior to him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect [ὑστεροῦνται του τελείου].[8]

This creaturely limitation, however, is not God's problem, but ours. Answering the Gnostic critique that Irenaeus' God was incapable of creating a perfect creature, Irenaeus neatly responds by suggesting that God is capable of creating perfect creatures, but creatures are not capable of being so created.

> For just as it certainly is in the power of a mother to give strong food to her infant [βρέφει], but the [infant] is not yet able to receive substantial nourishment; so also it was possible for God himself to have made humanity perfect [τέλειον] from the first, but humanity could not receive this, being as yet a child [νήπιος].[9]

Yet just as children can be weaned over time and grow capable of eating solid food, so too creatures can grow over time and become capable of embracing perfection. This growth into perfection is achieved chiefly through the incarnation. Through participation in Christ's true humanity, human beings are able to participate in God's own immutable life, and thus become what God all along intended.

> For he formed him for growth and increase, as the Scripture says: "Increase and multiply." And in this respect God differs from humanity, that God indeed makes, but humanity is made; and truly, he who makes is always the same; but that which is made must

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[6] *Haer*. 4.38.3. On this point see also McCoy, "The Irenaean Approach," 160-61. For the Latin text of *Adversus Haereses* (hereafter, *Haer.*), I have followed the relevant volumes in Rousseau, ed., *Sources Chrétiennes* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf). For the Greek text I have followed W. Wigan Harvey, *Saint Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons: Five Books Against Heresies*, 2 vols. (Rochester: St. Irenaeus Press, 2013). The English translations of *Adversus Haereses* I have revised and updated as necessary from A. Roberts and W. H. Rambaut in *Ante Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, Repr. (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1985). The English translation for *Epideixis* (hereafter, Epid.) used throughout is Armitage Robinson's 1920 translation from the Armenian.

[7] Here the concept of "perfection" (τέλειος) should be understood in a Greco-Roman philosophical sense, wherein the perfect thing is that which cannot be improved.

[8] *Haer.* 4.38.1-2. See also *Epid.* 12.

[9] *Haer.* 4.38.1.

> receive both beginning, and middle, and addition, and increase. And God does indeed create after a skillful manner, while [as regards humanity] it is created skillfully. God also is truly perfect in all things, himself equal and similar to himself, as he is all light, and all mind, and all substance, and the fount of all good; but humanity receives advancement and increase towards God.[10]

Irenaeus' concept of development takes us deep into key aspects of his overall soteriological system: namely his Christology, his view of theosis, his understanding of the *imago and simultudo Dei*, his idea that Adam and Eve were created as little children,[11] and the typological nature of humanity.[12] Notable in all of this is Irenaeus' idea that humans beings are typologically created according to the image of the incarnate (i.e., embodied) Son of God, who is Himself the true human being. As Minns aptly states, "Adam was consequent on Christ, and not the other way around".[13] Thus mortal humans only become true humans insofar as they come to participate in the deified humanity of the immortal Son of God, the original and only true human being. In this way created humans achieve their full potential "in Christ" only in the eschatological future, when at last they "take hold of the Word, and ascend to him, passing beyond the angels [*supergrediens angelos*], and are made after the image and likeness of God."[14] The important point here is that for Irenaeus, the chief soteriological dilemma is an ontological dilemma, even apart from sin; human beings at the time of creation are not yet fully human. Only through long ages of development is humanity able to become truly human and embrace the destiny that God all along intended.

Irenaeus' strong emphasis on human beings as typologically pointing to, and realizing their full potential in, the incarnate Son opens up room for Christian anthropological reflection that emphasizes progress and development (such as we find in evolutionary accounts). This basic "development" framework closes the gap between Christian anthropology/theology and evolutionary science, insofar as evolutionary science likewise insists on a developmental anthropology.[15]

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[10] *Haer.* 4.11.1-2. For more on this same theme see also *Haer.* 4.38.1-3.

[11] In his commentary, Ian MacKenzie rightly notes the link between human infancy and Irenaeus' maturation theme, "This idea of the potential of growth of Adam from infancy to the fullness of human stature in the Word, and therefore in perfect community of union with God, whereby Adam will be made like unto God points to an integral and characteristic of Irenaeus' theology; namely that humanity is given the opportunity to grow and advance in the knowledge of God." See MacKenzie, *Irenaeus' Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching: A Theological Commentary and Translation* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 116. For a thorough treatment of this topic, see Matthew Steenberg, "Children in Paradise: Adam and Eve as 'Infant' in Irenaeus of Lyons," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, Vol. 12.1 (Spring 2004): 1-22.

[12] I develop these themes at length in Gerald Hiestand, "'Passing Beyond the Angels': The Interconnection Between Irenaeus' Account of the Devil and His Doctrine of Creation," Unpublished PhD diss., University of Reading, 2017, 65-94. So too Gustaf Wingren, *Man and Incarnation*: *A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus* (trans. Ross Mackensie; 1947; repr., Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2004); and Matthew Steenberg, *Of God and Man: Theology as Anthropology from Irenaeus to Athanasius* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 16-51.

[13] Minns, *Irenaeus: An Introduction* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 100.

[14] *Haer.* 5.36.3.

Irenaeus' typological framework for understanding humanity's development stands in fairly sharp relief with Augustine's account of humanity's original creation. For Augustine, humanity is created more or less complete and mature. Augustine is aware of Irenaeus' idea that human beings are created as children; and though he acknowledges it as a possibility, he thinks it unlikely.[16] Adam, at the time of creation, is an adult male in possession of original righteousness (with respect to his soul). While Augustine does indeed insist that the final state of eschatological humanity is superior to that of Adam in his original righteousness (i.e., protological Adam was able not to sin; eschatological Adam is not able to sin), this tends be more of a "confirmation" in original righteousness via divine grace, rather than a development into an entirely new way of being (such as we find in Irenaeus).

It is important to distinguish between the body and the soul when considering Augustine's concept of anthropological development. For Augustine, Adam's natural body would have been changed into a spiritual body (matching that of the angels) had he not sinned. Interpreting 1 Corinthians 15, Augustine suggests that the resurrected body is not a return to Adam's natural state prior to sin, but an elevation of Adam's original natural body into a spiritual body.[17] Thus with respect to the body, we do indeed see movement in Augustine. Yet for Augustine, the change of the body from natural to spiritual would have happened suddenly and miraculously as an act of God, rather than gradually and developmentally. Further, with respect to the soul, there was no need for any change or development, only a confirmation in the original righteousness Adam possessed at the time of creation.[18] Had Adam not sinned, his soul would not have been "elevated" to some superior state (such as is the case with the body), but rather would have been confirmed in its original created righteousness. Thus for Augustine, with respect to the body, there is anthropological change; but with respect to the soul, there is no change or development; only "confirmation" in the original state.

When considered together, the gap between Augustine and evolutionary science is greater than the gap between Irenaeus and evolutionary science. Irenaeus' paradigm has a strong emphasis on the need for human development and growth—both physically and spiritually. This emphasis reduces the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science in that Irenaeus views God's ideal for humanity as located in Adam's eschatological future, rather than a return to (and confirmation in) Adam's protological past, such as we find in Augustine. This strong emphasis on human development is, in my opinion, the clearest point of continuity between evolutionary science and Irenaeus.[19] Here Irenaeus' anthropologically- and eschatologically-focused paradigm offers an easier way forward than Augustine for those wishing to integrate Christian theology and evolutionary science.

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[15] Thus Hick suggests a "two stage" creation process. The first stage is when God makes, through the evolutionary process, *homo sapiens*; the second stage is when God makes *homo sapiens* into mature moral creatures. See Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, 253-61. "The picture with which we are working is thus developmental and teleological" (256).

[16] Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 6.18.

[17] Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 6.19, 24, 27.

[18] Augustine, *Gen. litt.* 6.28.

2. WRECKED, NOT FALLEN: IRENAEUS' ACCOUNT OF THE ADAM'S SIN AND HUMAN DEATH

For Irenaeus, sin is less of a "fall" than what we find in Augustine. The main distinction to be noted here (as we have seen above) is between an Augustinian notion of original perfection, wherein Adam and Eve were created as mature human beings, set against Irenaeus' notion of provisional goodness, wherein Adam and Eve are created as infantile "pre-humans" on a trajectory toward mature perfection. As such, in Augustine, sin results in a "fall" away from mature perfection. For Augustine, sin thus represents a radical disjuncture in God's original plan for humanity and creation. Human beings as we presently find ourselves are not as God made originally made us. Augustine paints the picture of an idyllic world prior to Adam's sin. He writes:

> Man in Eden lived in the enjoyment of God and he was good by a communication of the goodness of God. His life was free from want, and he was free to prolong his life as long as he chose. There were food and drink to keep away hunger and thirst and the tree of life to stave off death from senescence. There was not a sign or a seed of decay in man's body that could be a source of any physical pain. Not a sickness assailed him from within, and he feared no harm from without. His body was perfectly healthy and his soul completely at peace. And as in Eden itself there was never a day too hot or too cold, so in Adam, who lived there, no fear or desire was ever so passionate as to worry his will. Of sorrows there was none at all and of joys none that was vain, although a perpetual joy that was genuine flowed from the presence of God, because God was loved with a "charity from a pure heart and a good conscience and faith unfeigned." Family affection was ensured by purity of love; body and mind worked in perfect accord; and there was an effortless observance of the law of God. Finally, neither leisure nor labor had ever to suffer from boredom or sloth.[20]

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[19] McCoy observes, "No issue is more central to readings of Irenaeus that seek to address evolutionary concerns by using his theology as an alternative to Augustine on original sin than the fact that Irenaeus speaks of humanity as created "imperfect."" The *Irenaean Approach*, 168.

[20] Augustine, *Civ.* 14.26. All English translations of *De civitate Dei* are taken from Saint Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Gerald Walsh and Grace Monahan (Washington, D. C.: The Catholic University Press of America, 1952). Augustine's hermeneutic tends toward a literal reading of Genesis, to include an affirmation of the "giants" in Genesis 6, as well as the long lives detailed in Genesis 5. See *Civ.* 15.9.

God created humanity perfect, untouched by suffering, sorrow and death. Had humanity persisted in obedience to God, this blessed state would have continued until "another, more perfect happiness had been given, like that which the blessed angels enjoy, a happiness which would have excluded even the possibility of death."[21] But alas, Adam and Eve did not persist in obedience. All subsequent human death, struggle, suffering, and pain are the consequence of their sin. Augustine's strong emphasis on sin as the cause of the ruin of human felicity results in strong discontinuity between God's original pre-sin humanity, and the post-sin humanity that we now embody.

Attempts to distance Irenaeus from Augustine on this point overreach.[22] Irenaeus, just as much as Augustine, views human corruption and death as resulting from sin. Adam and Eve, while not created perfectly complete (such as we find in Augustine) were nonetheless created full of goodness, and without corruption or sin. Irenaeus' idea that humanity was created as infantile was not meant to suggest any sense of corruptibility in humanity. Humanity was made in God's image by God's own two hands, from the finest stuff of earth, and mingled with God's own power.

> But man He formed with His own hands, taking from the earth that which was purest and finest, and mingling in measure His own power with the earth. For He traced His own form on the formation, that which should be seen should be of divine form: for (as) the image of God was man formed and set on the earth. And that he might become living, He breathed on his face the breath of life; that both for the breath and for the formation man should be like unto God.[23]

Like Augustine, Irenaeus views death and corruption as a direct consequence of the fall.[24] For both Irenaeus and Augustine, the happiness of humanity at creation is marred and ruined by sin. "And when they were put out of Paradise, Adam and his wife Eve fell into many troubles of anxious grief, going about with sorrow and toil and lamentation in this world."[25] Had humanity not broken the divine prohibition regarding the tree of knowledge, death would not have entered the human experience.

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[21] Augustine, *Civ.* 14.10.

[22] As McCoy properly notes, "Over and against the way in which he is read by Swinburne and Hick, Irenaeus holds together his developmental approach to creation with the scriptural belief that sin and death are the result of human disobedience on the part of Adam and Eve." See Andrew McCoy, "Irenaeus, Augustine, and Evolutionary Science." Hick himself (*Evil and the God of Love*, 215), while careful to note that Irenaeus' has "crosscurrents" in his thought that sound more like Augustine, nonetheless overstates the case when he suggests that for Irenaeus (and contra Augustine), God made the world containing both good and evil as a means of growing and maturing humanity. This is not correct. For both Irenaeus and Augustine, God made the world good and without suffering. Evil is a result of human sin. God uses evil to bring about good. Augustine perhaps emphasizes the evilness of evil more so than Irenaeus, and Irenaeus perhaps emphasizes the good use of evil more so than Augustine. But the difference is only one of emphasis, not substance. See John C. Cavadini's essay, "Two Ancient Christian Views of Suffering and Death" in George Kalantzis and Matthew Levering, eds., *Christian Dying: Witnesses from the Tradition* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2018), 94-114. Cavadini offers an insightful and pastorally sensitive essay on the subject of death that draws from Irenaeus and Augustine's respective views, ultimately concluding that their views are complementary, even if distinct.

[23] Irenaeus, *Epid.* 11.

[24] See *Epid.* 15, and *Haer.* 3.23.6. "Wherefore also [God] drove him out of Paradise, and removed him far from the tree of life."

On the whole, the idea of a world full of human death prior to Adam's sin would have run very much against the grain of Irenaeus' primary soteriological account. For Irenaeus, death, far from being a normative aspect of human existence, is the great curse that Christ's incarnation must overcome. While Irenaeus does indeed insist that God is able to turn death on its head and use it as a backward blessing to release sinful human beings from their sin and for teaching patience (as does Augustine),[26] Irenaeus never suggests that death is a necessary precondition of human beings, or part of God's original intention. Adam and Eve, had they persisted in creaturely humility and obedience, would have come to their full maturity (i.e., theosis) apart from death and suffering.[27]

Further, the idea of pre-sin death would have undercut Irenaeus' argument against the Gnostics, who were aggressively insisting that human embodiment and the material world were evils (along Platonic and Stoic lines) to be rejected, and so too the "god" (demiurge) who made it. Irenaeus was deeply concerned throughout his writings to repeatedly stress the goodness of the world—both in its pre-sin condition, but even more forcefully in its post-sin condition. The idea that God created a world originally full of death and suffering would have played into the hands of the Gnostics, and would have been as problematic for Irenaeus as it was for Augustine.

Yet there is a relevant, even if subtle difference to be noted here between Irenaeus and Augustine, based on their respective anthropologies. For Irenaeus, the corruption and death due to sin represents a detour in humanity's journey toward maturity and perfection. Thus for Irenaeus, sin is more of a wreck, an interruption on the way to glory, rather than a fall from the heights of glory. Because of sin, we have not yet completed the journey we began. The main effect of all of this is to reduce the discontinuity between the original Adam and the present Adam. Human beings as we currently find ourselves are not demi-gods fallen from glory, such as we see in Augustine, but more modestly wayward creatures struggling along on our way to glory. This anthropological framework pushes the focus of Irenaeus' soteriological narrative toward the eschaton as its primary focus. From an Irenaean perspective, sinful humanity does not mourn the loss of a mature and pristine past, since our past was never perfectly complete, nor is a return to our past the way forward to glory.

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[25] Irenaeus, *Epid*, 17.

[26] Augustine, *Civ.* 13.6

[27] Cavadini, *Christian Dying*, suggests more discontinuity between Irenaeus and Augustine on this point than is warranted. Irenaeus and Augustine both view death in punitive terms, and both affirm that God can use death to bring about a good end, even while death remains in itself an evil. Any difference between Irenaeus and Augustine on this point is one of emphasis, not substance.

On the whole, Irenaeus' account of sin as a "wreck" at the beginning of the journey toward maturity, rather than a "fall" from maturity, is a more anthropologically modest starting point than what we find in Augustine, and serves to create less tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science than the Augustinian account. In an evolutionary account, there was never a "golden age" of humanity, no "Springtime… always, forever spring."[28] There is no pristine past that stands in strong contrast to the present: the primordial man and the modern man are of one continuous piece. On this account, it is quite difficult to speak of human beings as "fallen," because humanity has, since its beginning, never occupied a place from which to fall; indeed, on this view, humanity has been making incremental progress and actually emerging with an increasing complexity.

This evolutionary insistence that there was never a golden age for humanity represents a significant point of discontinuity between Augustine and Irenaeus on one hand, and evolutionary anthropology on the other. The perspective of neither church father is easily integrated into an evolutionary account at this point. But the distance is perhaps greater for Augustine, given his more exalted anthropological starting point. For Irenaeus, there is less discontinuity between the primordial Adam and the present Adam. Humanity was not created high enough to fall; and Irenaeus' account of sin, while not without impact on human ontology, does not generally posit as strong a contrast between past and present as we find in Augustine. In this respect, Irenaeus reduces—even if he does not eliminate—the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science.

III. "RED IN TOOTH AND CLAW:" ADAM'S SIN AND ANIMAL DEATH

A number of scholars have suggested that Irenaeus' paradigm leaves more room than Augustine's for considering natural evil as a necessary and intended aspect of God's original creation. Crucial to this distinction, however, is a clear understanding of what one means by "natural evil." The term is often used in theodicy discussions to refer to non-human pain and suffering, to include, most especially, animal death and predation.

Both Augustine and Irenaeus together insist that human death is a consequence of human sin. But Augustine maintained, in ways that Irenaeus did not, that animal death was not to be considered a natural evil, and would have occurred even independent of human sin. He writes:

> Of course, in the case of beasts, trees, and other mutable and mortal creatures which lack not merely an intellect, but even sensation or life itself, it would be ridiculous to condemn in them the defects which destroy their corruptible nature. For, it was by the will of

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[28] Ovid, *Met.* 1.109. See also Hesiod's *Op.* 109-210, where he speaks of the "five ages of man," the first of which is the golden age, followed by the silver age, the bronze age, the age of heroes, and the iron age (the present age). Like Augustine, Hesiod speculates that the past was better than the present, though for Hesiod the digression to the modern iron age has been gradual, rather than the result of a cataclysmic fall.

> the Creator that they received that measure of being whereby their comings and goings and fleeting existences should contribute to that special, if lowly, loveliness of our earthly seasons which chimes with the harmony of the universe. For, there was never any need for the things of earth either to rival those of heaven or to remain uncreated merely because the latter are better. It is, in fact, the very law of transitory things that, here on earth where such things are at home, some should be born while others die, the weak should give way to the strong and the victims should nourish the life of the victors.[29]

For Augustine, human sin occurs early in the historical narrative. Thus for Augustine, it is not clear that animals did, in fact, die prior to human sin—only that animal death would have occurred independent of human sin. Further, Augustine's comments here show that he views animal predation—not merely animal death—as likewise consistent with God's good, pre-sin creation.[30] He goes on to explain further in the following chapter:

> All natures, then, are good simply because they exist and, therefore, have each its own measure of being, its own beauty, even, in a way, its own peace. And when each is in the place assigned by the order of nature, it best preserves the full measure of being that was given to it. Beings not made for eternal life, changing for better or for worse according as they promote the good and improvement of things to which, by the law of the Creator, they serve as means, follow the direction of Divine Providence and tend toward the particular end which forms a part of the general plan for governing the universe. This means that the dissolution which brings mutable and mortal things to their death is not so much a process of annihilation as a progress toward something they were designed to become. The conclusion from all this is that God is never to be blamed for any defects that offend us, but should ever be praised for all the perfection we see in the natures He has made.[31]

Though animal death and suffering may appear a "natural" evil to us, this is only because we too have likewise fallen prey to mortality. We must not suppose, Augustine insists, that the cycle of life and death associated with the animal and plant world is something to be lamented. "If the beauty of this order fails to delight us, it is because we ourselves, by reason of our mortality, are so enmeshed in this corner of the cosmos that we fail to perceive the beauty of a total pattern in which the particular parts, which seem ugly to us, blend in so harmonious and beautiful a way."[32] Here Augustine is no refuge for the young earth creationist, or for anyone looking for patristic support that all death is subsequent to human sin.

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[29] Augustine, *Civ.* 12.4. See all of 12.4 for more along the same lines. Thomas Aquinas likewise viewed animal death as a natural occurrence independent of human sin. See *Summa Theologiæ*, Part 1, question 96, article 1, reply to objection 2.

[30] Christopher Southgate, like Hick, finds Augustine unpersuasive on this point, and insists that Augustine has too readily side-stepped the theodicy implications of animal pain and death. See Southgate, *Groaning*, 3.

[31] Augustine, *Civ.* 12.5.

Irenaeus, on the other hand, makes explicit his belief that the non-human creation is impacted negatively because of human sin, to include animal death. In the same way that sin prevented humanity from blossoming into full maturity, so too human sin has prevented the material world from reaching its intended zenith. Because of Adam's failure in the garden, the development of the earth has stalled out and will only be carried forward and realized in the last days during the millennial kingdom and then most fully in the eternal age.[33] During this time, the earth will be returned to its original condition. He writes:

> Inasmuch, therefore, as the opinions of certain [persons] are derived from heretical discourses, they are both ignorant of God's dispensations, and of the mystery of the resurrection of the just, and of the kingdom which is the commencement [*principium*] of incorruption, by means of which kingdom those who shall be worthy are accustomed gradually to partake of God [*capere Deum*]; and it is necessary to tell them respecting those things, that it becomes the righteous first to receive the promise of the inheritance which God promised to the fathers, and to reign in it, when they rise again to behold God in this creation which is renovated [*in conditione hac quae renovatur*], and that the judgment should take place afterwards. For it is just that in that very creation in which they toiled or were afflicted, being proved in every way by suffering, they should receive the reward of their suffering; and that in the creation in which they were slain because of their love to God, in that they should be revived again; and that in the creation in which they endured servitude, in that they should reign. For God is rich in all things, and all things are his. It is fitting, therefore, that the creation itself, being restored to its primeval condition [*redintegratam ad pristinum*], should without restraint be under the dominion of the righteous; and the apostle has made this plain in the Epistle to the Romans, when he thus speaks: "For the expectation of the creation waits for the manifestation of the children of God. For the creation has been subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; since the creation itself shall also be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God."[34]

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[32] Augustine, *Civ.* 12.4. C.f. 7.13. Athanasius seems to suggest something similar in *Inc.* 3, where he states that God created humanity in His image, contrary to how He created the other creatures, so that humanity would not fall prey to mortality. Presumably then, the other creatures were not intended by God to live forever.

[33] For more on Irenaeus' account of the millennial kingdom, see my, "And Behold It Was Very Good: St. Irenaeus' Doctrine of Creation" in *BET*, vol. 6.1 (June 2019).

[34] *Haer.* 5.32.1. The remaining chapters (up until 5.35.2, where he begins to discuss the new heavens and earth) are an extended development and apologetic for the claims he has made here.

According to Irenaeus, God will "renovate" creation to "its primeval condition," returning it to its Edenic state. Irenaeus will go on to state that this "primeval condition" includes the restoration of the animal world, and its harmonious relationship with each other, and its subjection to humanity's benevolent lordship.[35] Moreover, days will come "in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretes of wine."[36] Thus for Irenaeus, the eschatological "kingdom" (the one thousand years that precedes the eternal age) is a return to the world prior to Adam's sin. The protological and eschatological world is a world unmarked by death—either human or animal.

Irenaeus' reading of the creation account is in keeping with traditional Christian theological accounts that put all death—animal and human—on the far side of Adam's sin. Augustine clearly is more at ease with the idea of animal death apart from human sin. Thus with respect to the question of pre-sin, non-human death, Irenaeus's stated position, and his overall connection between sin and death, does not help to significantly reduce the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science.

IV. CONCLUSION

So is the "Irenaeus Option" really a better option for Christian theologians wishing to integrate Christian theology and evolutionary science? It depends, of course, on what aspect of Irenaeus' thought one wishes to draw upon. As we have seen, Irenaeus' overall system, when set in conversation with Augustine's, provides a useful framework for rethinking how Christian theology can engage with evolutionary science. Our first point of examination—Irenaeus' emphasis on human growth and development, the focus of Hick's appropriation of Irenaeus—Irenaeus provides a useful alternative to Augustine's more static account of the original creation. On our second point regarding the connection between Adam's sin and human death, however, both Irenaeus and Augustine, despite the differences in their respective accounts, tell pretty much the same story. Human death is the direct result of human sin. Neither Irenaeus nor Augustine are, at this point, easily integrated into contemporary evolutionary accounts. Finally, on our third point, respecting the relationship between Adam's sin and animal death, Irenaeus' explicit position is decidedly at odds with contemporary science. Augustine's paradigm, however, allows for animal death independent of the human sin, and provides a more amicable point of contact.

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[35] *Haer.* 5.33.4. Irenaeus arrives at this conclusion through a literal reading of Isaiah 11:6-9 and 65:25.

[36] *Haer.* 5.33.3. This fecund vision is drawn from the "elders who saw John."

Taken on the whole, Irenaeus reduces the tension at certain points but exacerbates it at others.[37] The same is true for Augustine. Both theologians provide opportunities and challenges for Christian theology's engagement with contemporary science. Pursuing the "Irenaeus Option" should be done responsibly and with an accurate awareness of the limits of such an approach. Too often a strong rejection of the Augustinian narrative, and an embrace of an "Irenaean" replacement, fails to recognize how much Augustine and Irenaeus share in common. Christian theologians who are concerned to reduce the tension between Christian theology and evolutionary science do well to look to the unique contributions of both Irenaeus and Augustine, rather than insisting on one paradigm over and against the other.

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[37] Along these lines, F. LeRon Shults, *Christology and Science* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 38-44, notes that some theologians favor Irenaeus over Augustine, but correctly observes that Irenaeus cannot solve every problem. Likewise Hans Madueme and Michael Reeves, "Threads in a Seamless Garment: Original Sin in Systematic Theology," in Madueme and Reeves, eds., *Adam, the Fall, and Original Sin: Theological, Biblical, and Scientific Perspectives* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), 209-24. Madueme and Reeves note that some theologians prefer Irenaeus over Augustine, but that Irenaeus is not the easy solution some think him to be.

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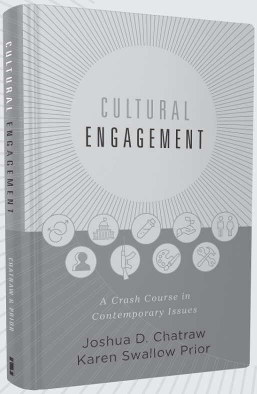

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ECHOES OF SCHLEIERMACHER IN NONHISTORICAL MODELS OF GENESIS 1-3[1]

NATHANIEL GRAY SUTANTO[2]

Evolutionary theory has continued to gather new evidence and data at a pace that has long created a sense of fear and perplexity in theologians and scientists alike. Anecdotes abound on the desire of clerical institutions to choke out the voice of scientific progress, and of ardent scientists decrying God's existence and predicting religion's inevitable expiration date. The issues are complex, but they do often centralize on the question of the historical accuracy of Genesis 1-3. If the data evinces that there was no pristine age, and thus no fall from innocence to decay, then what are the dogmatic consequences of this for our doctrines of God, humanity, sin, and evil? If Genesis 1-3 does indeed present a historical narrative, then how should Christians think of the purportedly overwhelming data that these fields of science continue to convey? Dogmatic, apologetic, and, indeed, personal stakes are high, so theologians and scientists do well to continue to engage in this dialogue with a sense of urgency.

While some continue to argue that traditional conceptions of original sin can accommodate and make best sense of both the biblical and scientific data, others contend that revisions of those traditional doctrines are necessary.[3] The recent volume, *Finding Ourselves After Darwin*, continues this trajectory of dialogue. Fatigued by the heated nature of the debate, the editors seek to present a range of theological options on the key loci of the image of God, original sin, and the entrance of evil in light of the contemporary scientific evidences, showing that Christians have a range of theological theories and traditions from which to draw as they wrestle with these issues. Indeed, essays are curated for the purposes of "creating space at the interface of theological anthropology and evolutionary science."[4] To that end, the volume distinguishes between "doctrine and theological theory":

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[1] I'm grateful to Darian Lockett, Edward Klink III, and Matthew Mason for their comments on earlier drafts.

[2] Nathaniel Gray Sutanto is a teaching elder at Covenant City Church, Jakarta, Indonesia.

[3] On a recent example of the former, see, for example, C. John Collins, "Adam as Federal Head of Humankind," in Stanley P. Rosenberg (ed.), *Finding Ourselves after Darwin: Conversations in the Image of God, Original Sin, and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2018), 143-159; on the latter, see Oliver Crisp, "On Original Sin," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 17 (2015): 252-266. Cf. My own essay "Herman Bavinck on the Image of God and Original Sin," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 18 (2016): 174-90.

> I use "doctrine" here in the technical sense according to the original meaning of the word—that is "what the Christian community *teaches* concerning her faith." And I use "theological theory" here to denote theories that theologians have developed to explain and make sense of these doctrines, or teachings of the church.[5]

An example for the former, a *doctrine*, is the confession of the Lord's Supper, or of the Trinity, whereas the latter, a *theological theory*, seeks to make sense of those doctrines by providing the metaphysical furnishing they require. On the doctrine of original sin in particular, the authors seek to explore "new opportunities for constructive dialogue", often by re-investigating classical sources (like the essays on Irenaeus or Augustine within the book), or by exploring alternative models.[6]

The purpose of this paper, however, is to focus on the essay by Christopher M. Hays, which proposes a nonhistorical approach with regard to the fall and original sin, and to argue that several salient features of his proposal echoes the dogmatic contributions of Friedrich Schleiermacher in the nineteenth century. Specifically, three features of his construal echo the Berlin theologian:

(1) Genesis 1-3 does not convey a historical account of the fall but rather a paradigmatic and moral account of sin's dangers and origins.

(2) A rejection of original guilt and a retention of sin's universality by way of an appeal to its origins in the development of human consciousness.

(3) The construal of the "seeds" of sin as primordially basic in the human being.

I will continue to appeal to these three features in the essay below. The significance of this thesis is that, despite writing an essay that is motivated by recent scientific findings of a post-Darwinian world, and that contains no explicit references to the father of liberal theology[7], the nonhistorical approach to original sin is not a creative or fresh model, but rather forms an uncanny resemblance to an older dogmatic approach from a particular tradition, albeit written in a different cosmetic dress and triggered by newer intellectual conditions.

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[4] Stanley P. Rosenberg, "Making Space in a Post-Darwinian World: Theology and Science in Apposition," in Rosenberg (ed.), *Finding Ourselves after Darwin*, 10.

[5] Benno van den Toren, "Distinguishing Doctrine and Theological Theory: Creating Space at the Interface of Modern Science and the Christian Tradition," in Rosenberg (ed.), *Finding Ourselves after Darwin*, 13.

[6] Benno van den Toren, "Original Sin and Evolution," in Rosenberg (ed.), *Finding Ourselves after Darwin*, 113.

[7] Schleiermacher himself, of course, was born decades after Darwin's era.

To be clear, this brief essay is not therefore a critique of Hays or Schliermacher's approaches, nor of nonhistorical models in general. Rather, the purpose here could be considered in one of two ways. Considered as modestly historical and descriptive, this article simply observes the conceptual similarities between Hays's contemporary nonhistorical model and Schleiermacher's original contributions. Alternatively, my thesis could be construed, more ambitiously, to present a conceptual thesis. Considered in this way, I suggest that, insofar as one takes up a nonhistorical model of original sin and then seeks to account for the universality or existence of sin without reference to a historical fall, one might well end up echoing the constructive efforts of Friedrich Schleiermacher. To repeat, this is not meant to be a critique of Schleiermacher or Hays, or an attempt to argue that their dogmatic sketches are false. In many ways, it could be considered as a praise of Schleiermacher's genius: his attempt to account for the existence of sin apart from a historical fall seems to sketch such a logically magnetic option that others who attempt the same might end up echoing his construction. It could also be considered as an encouragement to those thinkers that seek to offer nonhistorical readings of Genesis 1-3: these readings have a perhaps unintentional ally in Schleiermacher.

The rest of this paper proceeds in three steps: an exposition of those salient features in Hays's essay, a retrieval of Schleiermacher's account in connection with Hays's, and then a brief conclusion.

I. CHRISTOPHER HAYS' "NONHISTORICAL APPROACH"

Feature (1) of Hays's approach is the thesis of his essay: "one can indeed affirm the Christian doctrine of sin without believing in the historicity of Adam and Eve."[8] Hays first draws a distinction between the historicity of the events and the truth they contain, analogous to the truth of the New Testament's many nonhistorical parables, and then proceeds to offer genre-related, internal, and scientific reasons to reject the historicity of the Genesis narrative. The genre-related reason involves observing Genesis's similarities to other ANE texts that are taken to be nonhistorical, such as the "Atrahasis Epic, the Enuma Elish, the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Memphite Theology."[9] Genesis, along with these texts, involves immortality-conferring foods and a deceptive animal, presents divine knowledge in association with sex, and associates humanity's origins with dust. Further, etiologies abound in Genesis: the origins of a snake travelling on its belly is explained by way of a divine curse, Sabbath and marriage are simply instituted by divine commands, and so on. These genre-related phenomena convey that Genesis 1-3 was written to communicate moral and theological lessons rather than a historical description.

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[8] Christopher M. Hays: "A Nonhistorical Approach: The Universality of Sin without the Originating Sin," in Stanley P. Rosenberg (ed.), *Finding Ourselves after Darwin: Conversations in the Image of God, Original Sin, and the Problem of Evil* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic: 2018), 187.

[9] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 188.

Secondly, there are internal reasons to take the nonhistorical reading. Hays presents the common interpretation that Genesis 1 and 2 communicate "conflicting accounts of the sequences of creation"[10], and that Adam's name is likely intended to be symbolic. Again, this conveys that the text was written for purposes other than historicity.

Thirdly, there are scientific reasons to reject historical readings of the fall. In contrast to findings that indicate a pristine condition that was ruined by a cosmic fall, "evolutionary science suggests that instincts toward violence, sexual promiscuity, and selfishness are part of our evolutionary inheritance…So the idea that humans did not have a sinful impulse prior to their fall runs contrary to evolutionary theory."[11] Further, rather than evidence that roots the origins of humanity in a first couple, Hays observes the data that humanity originated from a bottleneck community of about ten-thousand hominids. Death, too, has been shown to be present from the very beginning as an "integral" aspect of creaturely existence and generation.[12] Hays couples these observations with an appeal to Calvin's purported doctrine of divine accommodation, according to which "God communicates in ways that are comprehensible within the parameters of his audience's historical moment."[13]

Just like parables, then, the purpose of the Genesis narrative is to communicate theological and paradigmatic truths that are conveyed in a narrative form: "the purpose of the story of the snake losing its legs is not to explain the historical origin of slithering but to warn against the dangers of tempting others to sin."[14] In sum: "we can feel comfortable with the logical possibility that a biblical text might reflect the suppositions of its prescientific authors and still communicate truly about God and his relationship with humanity."[15]

Feature (2) of Hays's approach follows as a consequence of an acceptance of feature (1). After a caution against hermeneutical cherry-picking —a method that seemingly arbitrarily picks out which aspects of Genesis 1-3 are historical and which are not, Hays moves to draw the implications of his reading for the doctrine of sin. He identifies five key elements of the doctrine: (a) our culpability for sin (b) the universality of sin (c) concupiscence, or humanity's corruption which leads them inevitably to sin (d) Adam and Eve's first sin as the originating sin and (e) original guilt, which teaches that humans are to be punished as guilty for the originating sin of Adam and Eve.[16]

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[10] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 189.

[11] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 190.

[12] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 191.

[13] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 191. Hays's deployment of this important doctrine depends on Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words: An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008).

[14] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 189.

[15] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 192.

[16] Hays's original description of originating guilt here is imprecise: "All humans are culpable of the *sins* of Adam and Eve and thus worthy of punishment, even if they have

Hays eliminates elements (d) and (e), as their rejection is simply the logical consequence of denying Genesis 1-3's historicity: "for one cannot be guilty of something that never happened."[17] Elements (a)-(c), however, remain intact. The first sin, then, is not the originator of other sins, for:

> That person would not have been the progenitor of all subsequent sins (1) because they would not have been the progenitor of all subsequent humans (2) because they were not the first beings to commit the sinful action. Rather, the sinful action committed (be it violent, gluttonous, sexual, etc.) would have been the sort of action that the rest of the species or community had long since been committing; our first sinner would simply have been the first to be morally aware that his or her action was wrong…I do not think we should confuse the logically necessary first sin with the Christian notion of a single originating sin.[18]

Notice, then, that for a sin to first count as sin depends not on whether it is a culpable act because it violates divine character or some revealed law, but rather on whether the perpetrators were able to be *conscious* of sin. The presence of sin depends not simply on the act of sin but on the sinner's awareness or psyche—a sin-consciousness, if you will.

Moreover, after offering a re-reading of Paul's argument in Romans 5 to the effect that Paul was making erroneous historical assumptions about Adam's existence, Hays maintains that Christ's redemption is still necessary simply because of the culpability of actual sin and the universal character of its presence.[19] It follows, then, that sinners are culpable not for Adam's sin, but for their own (citing Paul's claim in Rom. 5:12 that "death spread to all because all have sinned"). Guilt comes not from imputation but from actual sins, and that guilt remains in need of Christ's redeeming work.

Finally, feature (3) of Hays's account also follows from the first two. The transmission of sin is not explained by the intrusion of an alien evil into an otherwise good creation, but rather by an appeal to *concupiscence*. Hays's version of concupiscence, however, is of a distinctly evolutionary variety rather than of the traditionally catholic sort.[20] Without an appeal to a historical fall, he argues that humanity's concupiscence is the result

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not yet personally committed sins (as in the case of children who die in infancy)." Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 194. This is mistaken. Traditional accounts of original sin that trace original guilt to Adam and Eve do not regard human beings as guilty for the *sins* of Adam and Eve *simpliciter*, but rather as guilty on account of that originating sin which led to humanity's fall. Hays's phrasing could imply that human beings are held accountable for all of Adam's and Eve's sins after the fall—but this is false, and in any case not the traditional construal. See, for example, the Westminster Confession of Faith, 6. 1 and 3.

[17] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 194.

[18] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 195.

[19] "But the truthfulness of Paul's argument about Christ's work does not hang on the historical veracity of the rhetorical foil [that is, the appeal to a fall narrative in Romans 5] he uses to celebrate redemption in Christ." Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 198.

[20] Roughly, a Roman catholic account of concupiscence denotes that a tendency toward sin characterizes the lower appetite of human nature.

of generations of the violent and selfish practices favored by natural selection. When human beings emerged, then, they are "spring-loaded toward behaviors that, among morally conscious beings, are properly categorized as sinful…In brief, evolutionary biology contributes to concupiscence; our physicality as humans explain our *aversion ad Deo* ('aversion to God')".[21] The second reason concupiscence is transmitted is our sociological and cultural location as communal beings. We inherit and imitate dispositions that run contrary to the good. If we link these with our distance from God and the influence of supernatural forces that bring about temptation, Hays argues that we can thus provide a robust understanding of sin's origins without an appeal to a historical fall. Concupiscence, or humanity's corruption, then, are part and parcel of humanity's original make-up—a state out of which they need redemption and healing.

2. SCHLEIERMACHER ON ORIGINAL SIN.

All three of those basic features are salient aspects of Schleiermacher's doctrine of original sin. Indeed, a revision of this doctrine in particular was seen to be programmatic for a new set of intellectual circumstances that placed pressures on the academic credentials of theology in the modern era.[22] While Schleiermacher was motivated by pre-Darwinian impulses, the currents of his day also pushed him to reconsider the veracity of traditional accounts of original sin. As the exposition of Schleiermacher unfolds below, one should also receive the impression that here is a more fully-orbed and developed doctrine of original sin compared with Hays's, and one which developed with differing circumstances and motivations. The point I express here is thus not one of strict identity between the accounts of Hays and Schleiermacher, but rather of conceptual similarity.

One ought to keep in mind Schleiermacher's basic definition of sin before we explicate his account of original sin. For Schleiermacher, sin arises developmentally and depends upon the emergence of one's consciousness of it. Human creatures began to exist with a sensuous, or sensible, consciousness,[23] and later developed the capacity for a religious consciousness, a consciousness of God as the *Whence* on which creatures are absolutely dependent.[24] Sin occurs when the sensible self-consciousness obstructs the presence of the higher self-consciousness.[25] In other words, sin emerges when the consciousness of our absolute dependence on God, or our "God-consciousness," is forgotten due to our preoccupation with the mundane tasks and ends of ordinary (sensuous) life. Sin is all 'that has hindered the free development of God-consciousness."[26] The result is what Schleiermacher terms *Gottvergessenheit*—a God-forgetfulness, or, better, a state of consciousness that represents an "obliviousness as to God."[27] The rupturing of God-consciousness by way of pre-occupation with sensible life leads to an experiencing of life as "pervaded with oppositions"—that is, an opposition between our freedom in action on the one hand, and, on the other, our dependence on the objective factors of sensible life that impinge upon us, and which are not due to our choices.[28]

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[21] Hays, "A Nonhistorical Approach," 200-201.

[22] On these intellectual conditions, see Thomas Albert Howard, *Protestant Theology and the Making of the Modern German University* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Johannes Zachhuber, *Theology as Science in Nineteenth-Century Germany: From F.C. Baur to Ernst Troeltsch* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Zachary Purvis, *Theology and the University in Nineteenth-Century Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016). Herman Bavinck comments on the impact of these intellectual currents from within the Dutch context in *Verslag der Handelingen van de Eerste Kamer, 12 Maart 1913*, 432-433; See also Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 1, *Prolegomena*, John Bolt (ed.), John Vriend (trans.), (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 49 (hereafter RD), and 'Theology and Religious Studies', in *Essays on Religion, Science and Society*, John Bolt (ed.), Harry Boonstra and Gerrit Sheeres (trans.), (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2008), 49-60.

[23] See Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Christian Faith: A New Translation and Critical Edition*, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Terrence N. Tice (eds.), Terrence N. Tice, Catherine L. Kelsey, and Edwina Lawler, (trans.) (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2016), §4.3-4 [cited hereafter as CF]. This passage indicates, the sensible life or self-consciousness is the sphere of relative

The sensible self-consciousness, which represents Schleiermacher's interpretation of the flesh, has an advantage over the higher consciousness (or, the Spirit) because it precedes it in the order of human evolution.[29]

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freedom and dependence. Or, as Kevin Hector aptly summarized: "Schleiermacher understands the world, and our place in it, in terms of the relative opposition between freedom and dependence, and so recognizable as relative, in light of that which absolutely transcends both… Schleiermacher gathers the entire realm of relative freedom and dependence into the category of 'sensible life', and terms one's awareness of this realm 'sensible self-consciousness.'" *The Theological Project of Modernism: Faith and Mineness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 105.

[24] It is worth noting that Schleiermacher's account of sin is highly Christocentric, and can only be comprehended in relation to its opposition to the redemption found in Christ. An explication of Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin in relation to the atonement would bring this out more explicitly, but it is not within the scope of the present chapter. "Thus sin and grace are indissolubly linked in Schleiermacher's thought. Even while sin is discussed apart from grace for the sake of presentation, the treatment always remains proleptic—a reflection of the condition anterior to redemption, in which sin still holds sway." Kevin M. Vander Schel, "Friedrich Schleiermacher" in the *T&T Clark Companion to the Doctrine of Sin,* eds. Keith L. Johnson and David Lauber (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), 254.

[25] "This means that we become conscious in such a way that just as God-consciousness is awakened in a human being, sin will also come into consciousness." Schleiermacher, CF, §67.2.

[26] Schleiermacher, CF, §66.1.

[27] Schleiermacher, CF, §11.2. As the editors helpfully explain: "This word could be rendered literally as 'God-forgetfulness' but in German *Vergessenheit* means 'oblivion', i.e., left completely out of mind. Something simply 'forgotten' (*vergessen*) would have to have been somehow in mind, somehow consciously noticed and acknowledged, in the first place. This is not a requirement here."

[28] Hector, *Theological Project of Modernism*, 106 (see also pages 110-111).

[29] "… the strength of resistance that flesh produces and that is expressed in consciousness of sin depends on the head start which flesh would already have gained at that earlier time. Yet, by all means, the extent of that head start also would have its basis in connection with collective life." Schleiermacher, *CF*, §67.2. Here, Derek Nelson describes the flesh's advantage as a kind of "'squatter's rights' on the territory of the self" due to its 'developmental anteriority." "Schleiermacher and Ritschl on Individual and Social Sin," *Journal for the History of Modern Theology* 16 (2009): 135. It is important to note that the mundane activities of the sensuous consciousness are not sinful in themselves, however, but only become an occasion for the consciousness of sin when it obstructs the vitality of God-consciousness.

Sin thus emerges not only when the capacity for God-consciousness has developed, but specifically when "the self is unable to integrate the religious self-consciousness with the lower ones."[30]

Implicit in the above definition is the rejection of a historical fall from which an alteration of human nature was the result—feature (1) above. His reasons here are less to do with genre-related, internal, or empirically-scientific reasons, and more to do with what he considered to be properly dogmatic concerns.

Schleiermacher rejects the historicity of a fall for several reasons, not least because he held that exegesis is outside the bounds of the dogmatician's terrain.[31] First, he argued that denying a primal transition from innocence to depravity is required to explain why the original pair would sin in the first place. If the first human beings truly did have a nature free from the seeds of sin, then why would they have listened to Satan's "whispering innuendos"?[32] Indeed, it seems logical to infer that "such an inclination toward sin would therefore have to have existed in the first human beings already before the first sin, because otherwise no susceptibility to temptation could have taken place."[33] Hence, though one might maintain that the original human beings were culpable for perpetuating sin's influence to future generations, "nothing new or special" happened to their natures as a result of the "first sin."[34] Again: "Adam would have to have broken away from God already before his first sin", such that "one could not say that nature had been altered by the first sin."[35] It might be tempting at this point to infer that this makes God the author of an original sinfulness, creating humanity as sinners to begin with. But this is to miss that Schleiermacher redefined the "original perfection of humanity" as simply the innate capacity to "appropriate grace."[36] Schleiermacher argues that the capacity to sin is innately within every human creature—a capacity not introduced by a fall—and takes this to be relatively compatible with the supposition of the catholic Christian faith, according to which the original human beings were able to sin or not to sin.[37]

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[30] Nelson, "Schleiermacher and Ritschl on Individual and Social Sin," 135. B. A. Gerrish warns against the mistake of thinking that Schleiermacher's view consists in defining sin as only present alongside with the consciousness of sin: "he obviously did not mean to say that sin is purely subjective—without source or ground. The 'germ' of sin is everything that arrests the development of the consciousness of God, whether acknowledged as sin or not (§66)." *Christian Faith: Dogmatics in Outline* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2014), 83, n. 9. This is in response to a reading typified by Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 2, *Anthropology* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999), 140. Cf. Annette Aubert, *German Roots of Nineteenth Century-American Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 49, 198. This point indicates one important respect in which Schleiermacher's doctrine of sin is more complex and pervasive than Hays's.

[31] Schleiermacher, CF, §72.5.

[32] Schleiermacher, CF, §72.2.

[33] Schleiermacher, CF, §72.2. "Accordingly, Schleiermacher finds no true explanation for the beginnings of sin in the narrative of the first pair in the Garden, since their susceptibility to the serpent's temptation still implies some prior inclination to sinfulness." Vander Schel, "Schleiermacher," 255.

[34] Schleiermacher, CF, §72.3.

[35] Schleiermacher, CF, §72.3. So, Paul T. Nimmo: "[Schleiermacher] does… suggest that nothing peculiar or novel took place in Adam and Eve; in the first sin, 'they were simply the first born of sinfulness.'" "Sin and Reconciliation," in the *Oxford Handbook of Nineteenth Century Theology*, eds. Joel D. S. Rasmussen, Judith Wolfe, Johannes Zachhuber (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017), 647. Nimmo is citing pages 295 and 299 of the 1999 edition of the *Christian Faith*.

Second, Schleiermacher thinks it irrational to claim that individuals can be held responsible for an alien and imputed sin; individuals should only be culpable for actual sins. While this is feature (2) in our classification, he argues that this is another reason to hold to feature (1). Here, Schleiermacher explicitly critiques both classical realist and federalist accounts of the imputation and transmission of Adam's sin as "entirely arbitrary and wholly groundless":[38]

> [W]e can be glad to dispense with all of those artificially constructed theories, which also chiefly bear the tendency to focus on divine justice in the imputing of Adam's sin to his descendants and thereby on assigning punishment for it. To dispense with them is all the more warrantable for two reasons. First, they can be dispensed with, in part, insofar as they would also have added to their account of all human beings' participating in Adam's sin by referring to a specific theory concerning how individual souls originated—as in that which assumes that all human beings are included in the very existence of Adam—whereas in our own domain of existence we would lack all grounds or means for setting forth such a theory. Second, they can be dispensed with, in part, insofar as, in an extremely arbitrary manner, these theories consider God's command to be a covenant contracted with the entire human race but embraced in the person of Adam. In these theories, thus the judicial consequences of violating the covenant would fall on Adam's heirs as well, a process that subsumes human beings' relationship with God and God's reckoning under the concept of an external, judicial relationship, and thereafter that view has also born a most deleterious influence on people's conception of how redemption works.[39]

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[36] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §69 n. 14. See also §59-60.

[37] As Nelson tersely summarized, for Schleiermacher "[t]o say that creation is 'good' is basically to affirm that God has made creatures that can come to know and love God. That is to say, goodness is not a state of moral activity, but a framework for moral possibility. Creation is 'perfect' when it is, in principle, perfectible." "Schleiermacher and Ritschl on Individual and Social Sin," 134. By contrast, confessional Reformed theology recognized a distinction between humanity in the state of integrity and fallen humanity, and saw that in the former there was not a "germ" or "seed" of sin (contra Schleiermacher), but simply the *possibility* to sin, which in turn corrupted human nature. See, here, Bavinck, RD, 3: 66-9.

[38] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.4.

[39] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.4. In that same section, he went on: "if the first human beings had laudably withstood the first test, no second one would have been laid before them, but at that point they, and we with them, would have remained exempt from all temptation forever more. Rather, it is the case that the temptation indicated in the Mosaic narrative is very skimpy."

Hence, Schleiermacher thought that placing the weight of the entire human race and history on two individuals would be an unreasonable act. Why should God place the direction of human nature “within one small sphere of activity”, indeed, on two “inexperienced individuals who would also have had no presentiment whatsoever regarding any such importance of that event?”[40]

What, then, is the message communicated by the Mosaic narrative? The story of the fall is simply a paradigmatic account of how sin is perpetuated, inherited, and actualized. Adam and Eve demonstrated that everywhere sin always “had the same features.”[41] Eve represented the taking over of the sensible consciousness, blocking God-consciousness, while Adam represented “how sin comes to be taken up in an imitative process… and yet how this activity presupposes a God-forgetfulness, even if it be based on a mere distraction.”[42] In short, Eve was a paradigm of a kind of originating and actual sin, whereas Adam displayed an originated sin, indicating that the influence of sin pre-exists actual acts and perpetuates it. This was no state of integrity, but rather the state of every human nature “apart from the process of redemption, a human nature that is exactly the same throughout, with no exception.”[43]

There is then a deeply social and ethical explanation for original sin in Schleiermacher’s model.[44] Denying a historical fall means significantly redefining the meaning of the term “original” in original sin. Originating original sin, then, does not refer to the primal act that led to the guilt and corruption of humanity, but rather to the sins of a previous generation that led to the imitation of those sins in the succeeding generation. Originated original sin is simply that propensity to sin in the latter generation which has an external ground.[45] Hence, sin spirals forward through the proceeding of sinful generations and social influence.[46]

It follows that original sin does not refer to the imputation of Adam’s sin in guilt or punishment, but rather the collective guilt of all.[47] Humans stand in solidarity in perpetuating sin, and thus collectively guilty as a single unity. As Schleiermacher claimed in an oft-cited statement: "In each individual susceptibility to sin is the work of all, and in all individuals it is the work of each. Indeed, susceptibility to sin is to be understood rightly and fully in this commonality."[48] Again: our guilt "is called a *fault* [*Schuld*] with complete correctness only if it is absolutely considered to be the collective deed of the entire human race in that it cannot likewise be a fault of an individual, at least to the extent that it is engendered in that individual."[49]

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[40] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.4.

[41] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.5.

[42] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.5.

[43] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §72.6.

[44] Nimmo lines up Schleiermacher’s account of sin with other modern accounts which highlight “—as few accounts before—the corporate dimension of creaturely sinfulness, corrupting not only atomized individuals but also social communities and human institutions.” “Sin and Reconciliation,” 656.

[45] “Until then, and only to that degree, original sin is rightly called ‘originated’ because it has its cause outside the individual.” Schleiermacher, *CF*, §71.1.

[46] Sin “is also propagated in others and secured in them by each individual through one’s own free actions, then sinfulness is of a thoroughly collective nature.” Schleiermacher, *CF*, §71.2. Despite this emphasis on the “shared environment”, McFarland insists (in contrast to Hodge’s reading) that Schleiermacher’s account still ultimately makes “each person’s fall [is] ultimately his or her own affair…modern versions cut us loose from Adam and one another in a way that makes original sin *only* our own.” *In Adam’s Fall*, 154.

[47] So, Wyman: Sin “is inherited, not in a biological or Augustinian sense, but socially and historically: individuals are raised by families and in cultures and nations where the common

We can now come to understand Schleiermacher's retrieval of "total depravity."[50] God-forgetfulness spreads from one generation to another, exacerbating our incapacity to do good. Schleiermacher states:

> "In any given individual a susceptibility to sin is present in that individual before any deed of the individual's own, one that is even based beyond the individual's own existence, consists of a complete incapacity for good, which incapacity is removed, in turn, only through the influence of redemption."[51]

There is no perfect action. We strengthen the germ of sin by habitually sinning, and we are mired in the sins of previous generations: "In all human beings actual sin is continually issuing from original sin."[52] Humans unfailingly (or inevitably) sin. Redemption is necessary, and it is precisely the work of Christ and His Spirit that counteracts the pervasiveness of humanity's obliviousness vis-à-vis God.

This, then, is feature (3): the "germ of sin", or, Hays's "concupiscence" is basic to the human person as created. While Schleiermacher does not explicitly ground his understanding of the "seeds of sin" on a biologically evolutionary account of humanity's physical make-up, nor does he appeal to the temptation of supernatural beings as explicitly, he does ground the transmission of sin on communal influence and our "God-forgetfulness"—both of which mirror in part Hays's desire to explain the existence of sin in sociological/cultural influence and our distance from God.

CONCLUSION

This essay does not adjudicate on the veracity of either Schleiermacher's or Hays's models or of the reasons they offer for them. I hope, however,

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life is shaped by individuals and groups whose God-consciousness is always already deficient." Walter E. Wyman Jr., "Sin and Redemption", in *The Cambridge Companion to Friedrich Schleiermacher, ed. Jacqueline Mariña* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 135-6.

[48] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §71.2.

[49] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §71.2. It follows, then, that the redemptive activity of Christ also has a deeply social dimension: "… the totality of sin is the collective act of the whole human race from the very first human being onward. Moreover, this collective act could be overcome only through Christ's efficacious activity also being spread across the entire human race." *CF*, §72.4.

[50] Wyman, "Sin and Redemption," 136.

[51] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §70.

[52] Schleiermacher, *CF*, §73.

to have demonstrated that conceptual similarities, if not identities on certain precise points, exist between the two accounts. If Schleiermacher was motivated by the desire to vindicate the scientific (*Wissenschaftlich*) status of theology by seeking to be faithful to both traditional sources and the historical/empirical methods of the modern university departments, Hays, like many before him, seeks to re-envisage the doctrine of original sin in large part because of the pressures of the biological sciences and historical-exegetical considerations. While Schleiermacher offered a developed doctrine of original sin consistent with a whole nexus of dogmatic propositions, Hays's essay was an initial foray that attempted a brief exegetical—yet dogmatically and scientifically informed—sketch. While these two thinkers offer differing reasons and triggers for their models, they nonetheless conclude with highly similar claims.

To conclude this essay, I repeat my earlier point that these conceptual and descriptive observations are not meant to be critiques of Hays or Schleiermacher. Seen in another angle, this essay can be used to serve as a support to the objective of the editor of the volume in which Hays's essay is found: "to explore whether differing theological traditions may have available resources, or whether there are resources from our own tradition that can be recovered, allowing us to respond to contemporary challenges."[53] The conceptual links I've drawn between the two serve to do exactly that. For those who seek to respond to contemporary challenges by way of taking a nonhistorical approach to the Genesis narrative, they need not look far or attempt to formulate a fresh approach—they already have a theological tradition that can be called home, and with a historically recognized father to boot, and that is the tradition of liberal theology.

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[53] Stanley Rosenberg, "Making Space in a Post-Darwinian World," 8.

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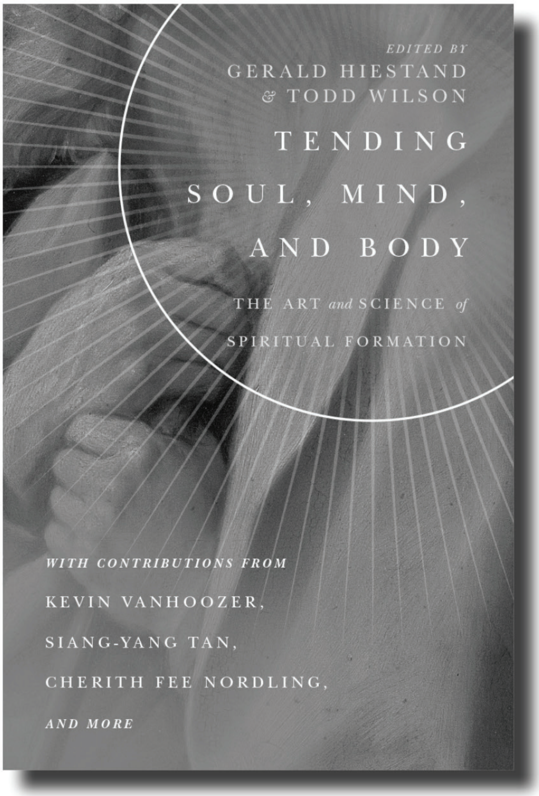
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JESUS AND THE TOHOKU TSUNAMI-FUKUSHIMA DEVASTATION: A REFLECTION ON THE IDENTITY OF JESUS, LUKE 13:1-5, AND "NATURAL DISASTERS"[1]

SCOTT HAFEMANN[2]

On September 1, 2014, *Time Magazine* described the abandoned control room for Reactors 1 and 2 of the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant as the "world's most dangerous room." It is a continuing reminder of the ongoing tragedy of the 9.0 Tohoku earthquake, the fourth most powerful in recorded history. The quake was so powerful that Honshu shifted 2.4 m (8 ft) east and the entire earth moved on its axis by estimates of between 10 and 25 cm (4-10 in)! The tsunami it unleashed hit the northeastern shore of Japan on March 11, 2011 with waves over 130 feet high, killing nearly 20,000 people and displacing untold myriads. And in its aftermath, the resultant destruction of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant again made clear that such "natural disasters" often also expose or lead to human hubris, wrongdoing and greed, which in this case have led indirectly to more than 20,000 additional deaths and 125,000 displaced people. This is Japan's largest single loss of life and material devastation since World War II. And with over a million buildings damaged and whole economies ruined, it is estimated to be the costliest natural disaster in world history. The pain caused by this natural and human catastrophe cannot be described. As an outsider from a different culture, I cannot begin to conceive of what this desolation and anguish continues to mean for the people and land of Japan.

It is also difficult to speak about such a tragedy from a Christian perspective since there is no biblical or theological warrant for claiming to know God's particular purposes in individual people's lives even in "normal" circumstances, not to mention God's ways in world events writ large. Rather, to be a Christian in the face of such tragedies is to place oneself under the wisdom found in the Scriptures, which biblically dependent Christians hold to be God's word written, and to submit to the absolute authority of Jesus Christ, whom biblically faithful Christians hold to be God's word embodied.

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[1] This is an abridged and modified form of my essay, "From Creation to New Creation: Jesus, Judgment, and the Tsunami-Fukushima Disaster," published in Japanese in *The World after 3.11 and the Scriptures: Recovering the Word*, ed. Yuko Fukushima, Ken Omiya, and Tom Sacon, Aoyama Gakuin University Research Institute Series (Tokyo: The Board of Publications United Church of Christ in Japan, 2016), pp. 57-72. It is reused with permission. The essay was first delivered on January 31, 2015 at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, as part of a year-long series of symposia on Christian responses to the Tsunami-Fukushima Disaster.

[2] Scott Hafeman is a retired Reader in New Testament, St. Mary's College, School of Divinity, University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

To give a distinctively Christian perspective on the twofold phenomenon of "natural" and humanly-caused disasters such as the Tohoku earthquake and its aftermath, we will therefore concentrate on the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, as presented in the Bible. Christians hold Jesus to be "*the Christ*" because they are convinced he is the promised, messianic King of Israel, which is what the title "Christ" means. Jesus Christ is also declared to be the "*Lord*" because Christians understand that God also established the King of Israel to be the Sovereign Ruler of all nations through Jesus's resurrection from the dead and return to the place of His authority in God's presence. Moreover, Christians confess that the Lord Jesus Christ is the divine "*Son of God*" because, as the apostle Paul put it, in Jesus, the Messiah and Lord, "all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Colossians 1:19).[3]

Accordingly, to concentrate our attention as Christians on the Lord Jesus Christ when thinking about the disasters of nature and the evil of humanity is not strange or inappropriate. For in reflecting further on the implications of who Jesus is, Paul asserts that:

> ...by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together (Colossians 1:16-17).

Thus, Paul makes clear that, although both in His earthy life and in His bodily resurrected state Jesus was and remains a Jewish man from Palestine, He is also clearly on the "divine side" of the Creator/created distinction. As such, Jesus is the governing agent and goal of "all things" in the created world, including humanity and the unseen world. This includes, of course, all natural and humanly-caused disasters. Christians realize the magnitude and mystery of such a statement.

In the same way, the prologue of the Gospel of John introduces the life and teachings of Jesus with the proclamation that:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:1-3, 14).

John's statement about Jesus as the Word of God in person is a clear allusion back to the very first statement of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, which declares that,

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[3] All Scripture translations are taken from the English Standard Version.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." It consequently also alludes to the subsequent statements in Genesis 1:3–26 that all life, including humanity, and everything needed to sustain it, was created as a result of the fact that "God spoke" (see Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29). This "Word" is now understood to have taken place in and through God's Son. Under the Father's sovereignty, Jesus is thus responsible for the existence and ongoing life of everything in the world.

These early Christian confessions, among many others, declare that since Jesus shares in the divine identity as Creator He is both the one by whom and through whom all things came into existence and the one for whom all things exist as their ultimate Sovereign. In short, by virtue of His divine right, Jesus is the ruler of the world. So in addressing the almost unspeakable reality of a natural devastation and concomitant human evil on the scale of the Tohoku Tsunami-Fukushima disaster, it makes sense to focus our attention on Jesus' own teaching.

To that end, I have decided to focus on an incident from Jesus's earthly life as recorded in the Luke 13:1-5, in which Jesus responds at the same time both to the evil caused by human corruption and to the tragedy of natural disasters:

> [1] There were some present at that very time who told him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. [2] And he answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way? [3] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. [4] Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem? [5] No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

There are five surprises in this passage. The first surprise, which is foundational for all the rest, arises from the text's context. In its original setting in Luke's Gospel, these startling statements, which at first sound so severe, come at a time when Jesus's public popularity had reached its climax. We read in Luke 12:1 that "so many thousands of the people had gathered together [to see and hear Jesus] that they were trampling on one another." But Jesus does not use His platform to puff Himself up. Instead, He attempts to rescue both His disciples and the crowds from the religious nominalism that had gripped the nation by reminding them that God's impending judgment would come unexpectedly upon a people whose driving concern was only security and satisfaction in this world (see Luke 12:2-5, 8, 15, 20-21, 31, 34, 35-40, 49-53, 56, 57-59).

"At that very time" some who were in the crowd attempted to deflect Jesus's warnings by telling Him about the more blatant evil act of the ruthless and corrupt governor, Pilate, who had slaughtered some Galileans, most likely pilgrims, when they came to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem. In so doing, Pilate, whom most Jews rejected for being a half-breed compromiser with the occupying Roman rulers, had committed the sacrilege of killing those who came to worship God. To increase the tragedy even more, this profanity probably happened during Passover, since this is the only time in the Jewish calendar that lay people sacrificed their own animals. Thus, the very feast that celebrated God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt had become the occasion when God did *not* deliver their descendants from the evil oppression of the Romans.

The fact that the world is filled with unjust suffering is, of course, always a source of deep dismay. Behind the people's report to Jesus lurks the ever-nagging existential question of why all this evil exists in the world, especially against innocent people. This question becomes especially acute if someone believes in a good God who is also held to be all-powerful, as the Jews of Jesus's day no doubt did. Faced with the problem of evil, faith often utters a heart-wrenching lament over God's apparent silence during times of severe suffering. Nevertheless, even though the problem of evil remains unsolved, the hope for those who trust in God's sovereignty, love and ultimate justice remains the certainty of the coming, divine judgment that Jesus announced in Luke 12 would take place upon His return. As a result, Jesus exhorted His followers not to fear, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). Evil's scream can be deafening. But it is not the last word. In the context of Jesus's teaching, it went without saying that Pilate will not escape God's righteous wrath.

Jesus's focus in our passage, however, is not on Pilate or on those who suffered under his capricious cruelty. Instead, Jesus's first response in Luke 13:2–3 reflects the reality that such evil can be strangely comforting for those who are not impacted by it, especially if those who suffer belong to another social strata, racial or ethnic identity or economic class (lower *or* higher!). Clearly, God would judge Pilate, but why was it *those Galileans* who suffered so? The unexpressed assumption is that surely their own lives or their culture or their history must have deserved it in some way. It is obviously *those* kinds of people whom God will judge. Jesus's first response thus reveals His suspicion that wrapped up in the people's report of the Galileans' suffering at the hands of Pilate was also the insidious tendency to self-justification.

So the initial surprise is that the report of the Galileans' murder, so troubling and yet perhaps secretly comforting to those who told it, is *not* troubling or comforting to Jesus. No doubt anticipating the crowd's expectation regarding Pilate, Jesus's response is not to mention Pilate at all. Jesus's response to their report is an apparent "non-response" to Pilate's evil and the suffering it caused. Although from Galilee Himself, Jesus does not indignantly pronounce God's judgment against Pilate, nor does He console those who reported Pilate's actions. Instead, surprisingly, Jesus does not act surprised. Rather, Jesus seemingly receives the report of Pilate's evil actions as nothing out of the ordinary, not being worthy even of comment.

The second surprise in the text is that Jesus then makes things worse. As if the slaughter of the Galileans were not enough, Jesus Himself adds to the evil perpetrated by Pilate's barbarism the death and sorrow caused by an apparently well-known "natural" disaster in His day: the collapse of the tower in Siloam that killed 18 bystanders. Here too, as with Pilate's act on Passover, the symbolism may be important. Siloam was a water reservoir for the city of Jerusalem that was protected by this tower. So the very thing which was to protect life became an instrument of death. Moreover, in calling attention to this tragic incident, Jesus links a human, intentional evil with a natural, accidental disaster, just as the Tohoku tsunami combined a natural disaster with the disaster brought about by human duplicity at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

Why can Jesus link together these two events, which seem so unrelated in source and character? To understand Jesus's reference to the tower we must keep in mind a fundamental perspective regarding the created world presupposed throughout the Bible. According to the Scriptures, God created humanity and the rest of the created order to be in interdependent harmony with each other as an expression of their mutual dependence on God. On the one hand, humanity was to reflect God's ultimate rule over the world in its call to steward creation as God's gracious, life-sustaining gift by trusting God's provisions to be satisfying and sufficient; on the other hand, creation was dependent on humanity to exercise its God-dependent dominion over the world without exploiting the created order due to disregard, avarice or anxiety (Genesis 1:3-2:3). However, despite God's sovereign love, manifest in the abundance of His provisions, Adam and Eve rebelled against Him by deciding to depend on themselves for the course of their lives. This, in turn, brought with it the rebellion of the created order against humanity (Genesis 3:17-19). In biblical perspective, the "fallen" character of humanity and creation are consequently inextricably linked: just as humanity now seeks to live independently of God, resisting God's rule, so too the rest of creation now seeks to exist independently of humanity, resisting humanity's now perverted dominion. Both rebellions, taken together, result in a creation now being destroyed by death.

As a result, in the Bible, as in the tsunami that hit Japan on March 11, 2011, water, which is so essential for life, often becomes—in its new guise as a flood—a direct expression of the "fallen" nature of creation. In the primordial garden in Eden before humanity's rebellion, water *comes up from the earth* to resource all creation (Genesis 2:6). And four rivers flow from Eden into the garden *to mark its boundaries within the earth* (Genesis 2:10-14). The water of life thus supplies the garden paradise given to Adam and Eve and sets it apart as the place of God's great provision. In shocking contrast, however, the next time "water" is mentioned in the Scriptures it *comes down from the heavens* to destroy all creatures, including humanity, *by covering the whole earth without boundaries* (see the flood narrative of Genesis, chapters 6–8; see too 2 Peter 3:5-6). Against this backdrop, a "flood" can consequently be used to picture God's judgment against enemies (Exodus 15:5, 8; 2 Samuel 5:20; Nahum 1:8), the deep sorrow that sweeps over us when suffering strikes (Psalm 69:2, 15), and the climactic end of war (Daniel 9:26), while the circumstances surrounding the flood at the time of Noah can be used to signal both God's delay in judgment in the present (Isaiah

54:9; 1 Peter 3:20) as well as God's swift, unexpected judgment coming in the future (Matthew 24:37-44).

Water's role reversal as recounted in the Bible indicates that the created order is currently upside down. Humanity, created in dependence on God, now lives independently of its Creator; the rest of creation, designed to meet humanity's needs, now resists, like weeds in a garden, its efforts to tame it. The water which originally was designed to bring life up from below into the realm of humanity, now brings death down from above, the realm of God's presence, who in the unrestrained rain sends judgment rather than provision. In this way, the Bible witnesses to a "de-creation" of the world as a result of humanity's rebellion against its Creator, signaled initially by God's expelling Adam and Eve from the garden that had provided for and protected them into a world cursed by pain in procuring the fruit both of the womb and of the land (Genesis 3:15-19, 23–24). From the perspective of the Bible, there is therefore no such thing as a "*natural*" disaster that affects only "*nature*"; all disasters are "unnatural," being contrary to God's original design for His creation, and all unnatural disasters impact humanity, being part of the same, inseparably interrelated, divinely ruled world.

This can explain why in Luke 13:1-4 Jesus moves seamlessly, without clarification or pause, from talking about death by the hands of Pilate to talking about death by the hands of the tower—they are both parts of an integrated, albeit now fatally flawed created order. Both events are not "accidents" in the modern sense of the word. In the biblical worldview, there is no sacred/secular distinction. Although the result of very different causes on the historical level, they are ultimately unnatural consequences of a created order, human and non-human, animate and inanimate alike, in which the purposes for which God made them are marred. The planet on which we live is not a morally neutral expression of merely physical and material processes. In Christian perspective, both intentional human inhumanity and unnatural "natural" disasters can rightly be called "evil," not only in the acts themselves and their consequences, especially the suffering they cause, but also in their source.

The third surprise in the text is that Jesus then turns His listeners' attention away from the evil acts themselves to the people devastated by them. Here too Jesus anticipates what many others must have thought who viewed sudden, severe or "senseless" suffering to be God's specific retribution for serious sin. Having avoided such suffering (at least for the moment), they could take comfort in their seeming good "fortune" or "luck." Jesus asks accordingly, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered in this way?...Or those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them: do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who lived in Jerusalem?" (Luke 13:2, 4). The crowds may have been thinking that the answer was "yes," but Jesus's expected answer is clear. They were not worse.

Evil and its suffering of both kinds, whether human or natural in origin, do *not* occur because one person, or social-class, or ethnicity, or type of sin, or nation is being punished as somehow worse morally than another. The Tohoku-tsunami-Fukushima-devastation did not strike Japan because Japan at that time was somehow more liable to divine judgment than any other people or nation. In fact, since *all* disasters are the result of a disordered creational condition that is universal, no one disaster is more revealing than another regarding the character, timing, or location of those impacted. The answer to "why" disasters happen at one place and not another and at one time and not another is extremely complex at the level of human and natural causation, which we leave to the historians, sociologists and scientists to sort out.

At the level of divine providence, however, Jesus declares that the answer to why such disasters take place is the same in every place and at every time. According to Jesus, when it comes to the character of humanity in this world, there is no such thing as an innocent bystander, no matter what happens. If those killed by these particular human and natural disasters were not worse sinners than others, those not killed were also not morally better than those who were killed. Nor were they all morally neutral. This is reflected in the fact that in Luke 13:3,5 Jesus draws a universal need for repentance from both human evil *and* "natural" tragedy. In Jesus's words, which He repeats after both examples of evil, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5). This is a hard declaration. Many people reject the Christ of the Bible for precisely such pronouncements. Yet according to the Christian Scriptures, all people everywhere at all times participate together and equally in the same fallen world. The sudden, unusual suffering and particularly horrendous evil in one place are simply a reminder to all places of the kind of up-side-down world we all participate in and produce since we are all up-side-down ourselves (see, e.g., Psalm 143:2; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:14-21; Romans 3:9-18, 22-23). The unexpected thing is not that such tragedies take place, but that, in God's patient providence, they do not take place constantly. God gives us room to repent.

The point is that the divine judgment of death, whenever it comes, should not be considered unexpected. The tragedies of evil focus our attention on this reality, but they do not change it. In the Bible the death of humanity is never neutral or the "normal" consequence of "natural" causes, since from the beginning the death of those God fashioned in His image is God's curse on their sin (Genesis 2:17; 3:3; compare Psalm 90). So in Luke 13 Jesus sees human death in whatever form and time it comes as a sign pointing to the need to turn away from rebellion against God and back to dependence on God in order to escape God's ultimate judgment presaged in death. Every death around us is a reminder of our own, sooner or later. Sudden and enormous tragedies seem shocking only because we do not take the tragedy of our own impending death seriously.

Indeed, as Ernest Becker has shown in his Pulitzer-Prize winning work, the conscious and unconscious "denial of death" is the great psychological and existential engine driving modern life since, as an unbeliever, the finality of death calls into question every human endeavor.[4] The Nobel Prize winner, Albert Camus, thus realized that if death is faced squarely as the end of all things, then the longing for meaning and hope in a world that cannot give them renders all things inescapably absurd.[5] The only response, for both Becker and Camus, is to endure the world's absurdity as it is, to find some joy in creation per se and to pursue the "art" of one's own acts of recreation. I cannot but wonder if the Japanese art-form of the bonsai tree and garden is not at some level still today a protest against the chaos and disorder of this world when it is left to its "natural" self, as this art-form was in the 10th century story, *The Tale of the Hollow Tree* [*Utsubo Monogatari*].

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[4] *The Denial of Death*, New York: The Free Press, 1973.

Jesus too acknowledges human corruption, circumstantial evil and death to be the way the "fallen" world *is*. And like a bonsai-gardener of life, Jesus too does not accept evil and tragedy as the way the world *should or must be*. Instead, he calls for a change. In Luke 13 Jesus calls all people equally and without distinction to repent of their rebellion against God, regardless of the unequal distribution of human evil and "natural" tragedy in the world. Just as suffering under evil and tragedy is not an index of a person's greater moral guilt, so too ease is not an index of a person's moral superiority. Jesus consequently warns that without repentance those who were *not* impacted by this evil and destruction would "likewise perish."

The fourth surprise is that, in the light of Jesus's call to repentance, the double-tragedies in view take on an ethical significance. Jesus's double call for repentance indicates that He views the world morally, not mechanistically. The ultimate problem in the world of humanity is not a lack within the infra-structure of society, as if we can prevent the evil of men like Pilate merely by providing better education and employment, recovering a deeper sense of public shame and civic duty, establishing stronger police-enforcement and surveillance, or instituting harsher penalties under the rule of law. Nor is the ultimate problem in the physical and animal world a lack of technology and genetic modification, as if we can increasingly prevent tragedies through progress in science, medicine and physiology.

Rather, Jesus' responses throughout Luke 13:1-5, culminating in His call to repentance, reflect the conviction that the ultimate problem is not the tragedy itself—of which it is the deadly symptom—but a fundamental disorientation away from a dependence on God in all of life. Such rebellious independence and self-reliance often hide under the constraints of self-improvement, which is sanctioned by society and which seeks salvation in the progress of scientific and medical technology, a progress that is often viewed as value-free. But from the Christian perspective reflected in our passage, such "progress," measured only in terms of an increasingly pain-free longevity, should not be confused with or substituted for the God-centered redemption, reconciliation and restoration of the broken world. The volcanic eruptions of evil and tragedy remind us that our endeavors are often, if not always, weakly aimed at merely managing our terminal illness. In calling attention away from the blood spilled by Pilate and those killed by the falling tower, Jesus is thereby not treating them as insignificant, but as part of a larger problem that can ultimately be solved only by the moral act of repentance.

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[5] *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, New York: Vintage Books, 1955.

Fifth, and finally, Jesus' words in response to the evil tragedies of death must be put into the larger context of hope. For Christians, the finality of death is not denied, but overcome. Life is therefore not absurd. Indeed, life's redemption beyond the grave informs all of life before it. This too is reflected in Jesus's call for repentance, the very existence of which implies that there must be a reason for living beyond simply trying to avoid the evil and circumstantial suffering of this world for as long as possible. The call to change the way we live *now* in order to pursue a different way of life *in the future* only makes sense if there is a reason to do so beyond what we see in and around us. Hence, the hope implied in repentance means that the horror of the Tohoku tsunami-Fukushima disaster is not a permanent word regarding the "nature" of this world, but an epic preview of how great God's deliverance must be in order to set right a world that has gone so wrong. This will be the biggest surprise of all.

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BOOK REVIEWS

Hans Boersma. *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018. xx + 467 pp. $55.00

The goal of Hans Boersma's *Seeing God: The Beatific Vision in Christian Tradition* is to trace this important theme throughout the Christian tradition, from the patristic era to Jonathan Edwards, in order to reclaim it for the modern church. As has been the case in many of his recent works, fundamental to Boersma's project is the argument that patristic biblical interpretation—and for that matter, most of the Great Tradition—presupposes a "sacramental ontology." That is to say, in a real and important sense, Christ is truly present in creation, in the Scriptures, and in the church. We will return to the importance of this point for his understanding of the beatific vision. It is important to note at the outset that this book is part of Boersma's larger project on the sacramental ontology of the Fathers. Boersma argues that an important part of seeing God is seeing his real presence in his creation now.

Before he begins his historical overview, Boersma situates the beatific vision in current theological discussion. He reviews the place of the beatific vision (or lack thereof) in the works of Hans Urs von Balthasar and Herman Bavinck. While these two scholars diverged in many areas, the Roman Catholic Balthasar and Reformed Protestant Bavinck converged in their lack of emphasis on the beatific vision. This, Boersma argues, is endemic to modern conceptions of the new creation that emphasize "the social, dynamic, and active character of the eschaton." Consequently, "both ended up with a remarkably this-worldly eschatology" (41). Therefore, one of Boersma's main aims in this volume is to reclaim the heavenly aspects of the eschaton, most fundamentally our glorious vision of God.

As he continues to set the stage, in chapter two Boersma summarizes the influence Plato and Plotinus, a third-century Platonist, on the Christian understanding of the beatific vision. For these philosophers, the ultimate aim of humankind is to see the Good or the Beautiful. This goal shares much with the biblical conception of the ultimate goal of God for his creatures; therefore, the Tradition has followed them in many areas. One key difference, however, is the emphasis on the disembodied nature of this ultimate vision in Neoplatonism (75). Much of the discussion among subsequent Christian theologians has been the nature and possibility of an embodied vision of God, both in this life and in the one to come.

Following these introductory chapters, Boersma treats three major eras of church history (patristic, medieval, Reformation/Protestant). In the first section, he interacts with Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine. These two theologians set the stage for much of the rest of the Tradition. Gregory emphasizes the way the ultimate *telos* of humanity defines how we live in the present, including the concept of epektasis, or ever-increasing desire, that begins in this life. Throughout history, the larger question of whether and how we can begin to experience the beatific vision frequently emerges; Gregory suggests that the experiences of this life anticipate the greater vision yet to come. Augustine speaks of the real presence of Christ in the theophanies of the OT and beyond; this continues the emphasis on our experience of the beatific vision in this life while also raising the question of the role of Christ in the beatific vision.

The Christological question is more pointed in the section on medieval understandings of the beatific vision. Thomas Aquinas speaks of our present experience of the beatific vision, yet the final experience of this vision will ultimately move beyond Christology to a vision of the essence of God. Although he agrees with Thomas in many ways, Gregory Palamas argues that our experience of the beatific vision in Christ now is part of the ongoing progress (epektasis) that culminates when we will see Christ fully. That is to say, there is no non-Christological experience of the vision of God. The other chapters on the medieval interpretation of the beatific vision similarly consider the question of the continuity (or lack thereof) between the present and eschatological experience of the beatific vision. Saint Symeon emphasizes the present experience of the vision of God; Saint John of the Cross, the theologian of darkness, was looking for the vision of God in the age to come. Bonaventure concludes that our intellect must eventually be put aside to truly see God, thus emphasizing discontinuity; Nicholas of Cusa sees more continuity in that both our affections and intellect together are purified to experience the vision of God. In the final chapter on the medieval period, Boersma explores the beatific vision in Dante's *Paradiso*. Through much poetic license, Dante describes the experience of epektasis through which we are transformed to behold the very essence of God.

In his treatment of the Protestant view of the beatific vision, Boersma interacts with John Calvin, John Donne, a number of Puritan and Reformed theologians, and finally Jonathan Edwards. While Calvin does not often emphasize the beatific vision, it is present in his commentaries in several places. Like earlier theologians, Calvin emphasizes the real presence of God in various theophanies as an anticipation of the beatific vision. However, like Thomas and many others in the Western tradition, Calvin indicates that in the age to come will we in some way truly see the essence of God. In the poems and sermons of John Donne, he laments the gap between heaven and earth that the early modern period was beginning to create; therefore, he highlights the heavenly nature of the Christian hope to counteract this tendency. Moreover, a key point in Donne is that the vision of God is first a subjective genitive; he first looks at us and this enables us to look at him. In his consideration of Puritan and Dutch Reformed views (chapter eleven), Boersma's primary aim is to demonstrate that Abraham Kuyper, who is often credited (or blamed) for the this-worldly eschatology in the modern Reformed world, affirms the beatific vision; not only does he affirm it, but he shares the Thomistic view that our ultimate vision of God will move beyond Christology to see the very essence of God. In contrast, many Puritans had a much more Christologically robust view of the final beatific vision. Similarly, in the final historical chapter, Boersma demonstrates that Edwards, while following Thomas in many ways, is very similar to patristic and Eastern conceptions of the vision. Christ is always the "grand medium" of the vision of God. Thus, "a sacramental understanding of the beatific vision acknowledges that everything we see with the eyes of the body today is a theophany of God in Jesus Christ, and that everything we will ever see with the eyes of the soul is also a theophany of God in Jesus Christ" (384). From beginning to end, our vision of God is Christological.

In the last part of the book, Boersma offers his own dogmatic account of the beatific vision. His proposal is based on the concept of divine apprenticeship, with God as our teacher. This "divine pedagogy" has four components: God's providential care; the implied completion of the teaching process; the Christological nature of his pedagogy; and finally, the transformative nature of God's teaching. He then explains this proposal in more detail by drawing together several historical figures along with his own careful observations from Scripture. Boersma concludes with a summary of the transformative, Christological nature of the beatific vision that moves toward our own participation in an eternal progress in "the infinite being of God" (429).

There is much to commend about this volume. The book displays significant learning in Boersma's ability to interact with figures from across church history (not to mention his literary knowledge in the discussions of Dante and Donne), yet theological acumen that does not prevent the devotional quality of this doctrine to fade away. One is left longing for more of the vision of God. To that end, Boersma has succeeded in his goal of retrieving and reemphasizing this important doctrine.

We have no space in a review of this length to raise critical questions; however, the one question I was left with is whether Boersma may be guilty of over-harmonizing at times. To be sure, he does not paper over disagreements about various aspects of the beatific vision, yet at times I was left wondering whether other scholars would share his views of some historical figures. For example, I wonder whether some interpreters of Kuyper might dispute Boersma's understanding of the "mystical Kuyper" (pg. 339–50). Nonetheless, different readings are certainly to be expected, and I do not think a different interpretation of this section would damage the overall thesis of the book.

We might raise other issues or questions, but I would heartily commend this book to any pastor or student of Scripture. It not only gave me a clearer understanding of the history of this great doctrine, but it also left me longing to see God in Christ. Any book that accomplishes this goal is worthy of serious attention.

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Dirk Jongkind. *An Introduction to the Greek New Testament Produced at Tyndale House, Cambridge.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2019. 124pp. $13.49

Dirk Jongkind accomplished his goal. Writing a short book to serve as a companion to the recently published Tyndale House Greek New Testament, Jongkind provides a helpful guide to students, clergy and scholars alike in using the Crossway-published Tyndale House Greek New Testament (THGNT). This short work, in eight chapters, provides the reader with an explanation of the rationale for a new edition of the Greek New Testament, a discussion of its underlying Greek textual basis, an argument for why specific texts were utilized and a brief summary of the field of text criticism. For the reader already operating from the textual criticism position of reasoned eclecticism, Jongkind's work, from an evangelical perspective, will serve as a perfect short explanation for the work. However, if a person comes to Jongkind's work from a Majority/Byzantine position or a *Textus Receptus* view, this work will have some disappointing chapters.

In his first chapter, Jongkind seeks to defend the creation of this new edition of the Greek New Testament. Operating from an approximating (vs. preservationist) view of biblical text criticism, Jongkind writes, "…to say that God inspired the words of the New Testament does not mean that God is therefore under an obligation to preserve for us each and every detail. Textual criticism is a discipline of approximation; it is a discipline that strives to improve further the resolution of the image that is painted by the text" (23). He helpfully discusses text critical issues such as the *nomina sacra* in manuscripts as well as the numbers of extant textual variants. Given the short nature of the entire work, and the brevity of the chapter, some readers will not be fully convinced that another edition of the Greek New Testament is warranted, but there are helpful elements in the chapter nonetheless.

Chapters two and three are really where the strength of the work resides. In these two chapters, Jongkind provides a very helpful and clear treatment of the practicalities of utilizing the THGNT. Touching on how to use the apparatus, the unique features of the THGNT, and the predominant manuscripts chosen as the underlying basis of the THGNT, Jongkind provides a very helpful partner to accompany the THNGT. It is in these two chapters that he provides a wealth of information about a field that is admittedly quite complex, in a user-friendly fashion. For anyone who plans to utilize the THGNT regularly, these two chapters are very helpful.

Chapter four begins the discussion of how choices were made in the selection of underlying Greek manuscripts and variants for. He provides a helpful overview of the transmission of the biblical text, specifically as it relates to copyists down through the ages. While most Protestant readers of the work, evangelical, or liberal will not object, it need be said that Jongkind assumes the modern critical text position that older manuscripts are generally better. This is assumed in multiple places, but never fully defended. Admittedly, this is the majority position within the field of text criticism today, and the work is not intended as a full treatment of the issue, but the reader would do well to study this presupposition further in addition to reading this particular work. Four particular examples of current debate are given in this chapter (Mark 16:9-20, John 7:53-8:11, Luke 22:43-44, Luke 23:34a). Helpfully, Jongkind (and the THGNT team) take some divergent paths from other editions of the Greek New Testament, both in inclusion (i.e. Luke 22:43-44) and in apparatus notation (i.e. Luke 22:43-44).

Chapters five and six are designed as a brief defense of why the THGNT did not follow the *Textus Receptus* (Chapter five) or the Majority/Byzantine text (Chapter six). While acknowledging that there is a debate regarding underlying texts is helpful, and recognizing that there are other options is commendable, these two chapters are too short to provide a sufficient defense of the rejection of these texts. Jongkind rightfully states that *Textus Receptus* (TR) advocates largely base their choice on "providential preservation," but he does not provide any of the other text critical information that further buttresses that view (i.e. historical development, variants which were known and yet rejected during the formation of the TR, etc.) This chapter, while necessary, could be strengthened. Similarly, the chapter on why the Majority/Byzantine was not chosen, while more detailed and lengthier than the previous TR chapter, also suffers from omission of necessary information (i.e. patristic sources, assumption that older is better, discussion of regions/text types). Yet, in this chapter, there are some fair and helpful statements included (i.e. 'Argument of Artificiality', p. 97). The final two chapters move from there in short fashion seeking to provide a theological consideration for the THGNT as well as a helpful "Where to Go From Here?" chapter.

Jongkind accomplished his goal. A very practical, accessible companion to the THGNT has been provided, and to write a short, practical work on any issue related to text criticism is a great feat. Jongkind demonstrates his scholarship and skill in this area. Although the work suffers from a few chapters which needed to include more information regarding opposing views of text criticism (i.e. TR and Majority/Byzantine), and the work does assume specific views regarding text criticism in some places (i.e. older manuscripts are better), the work is a helpful addition to the text criticism discussion, and a very helpful companion to the THGNT.

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Jacob Shatzer. *Transhumanism and the Image of God*. Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2019. 192 pp. $22.00.

Worldview awareness for a pastor-theologian is vital, and Transhumanism is the worldview for which a pastor-theologian must gain cultural-fluency during the 21st century. One of the best and most recent sourcebooks, which will catch a pastor-theologian up on this worldview, is Jacob Shatzer's recent book, *Transhumanism and the Image of God*.

This work contains two parts. The first part develops awareness about Transhumanism/Posthumanism. Posthumanism is the idea that "there is a next stage in human evolution" (16). This stage may be guided through the use of technology. "Transhumanism…promotes values that contribute to this change" (16). Chapters one and two introduce a conversation about technology and how it shapes humanity. Shatzer employs James K. A. Smith's cultural liturgies to make readers aware that technological liturgies exist and are designed to foster values of progress, freedom, individualism, and control. These liturgies of progress, freedom, individualism, and control emerge as tropes to be discussed throughout the ensuing chapters. In chapter two Shatzer provides a brief summary of the development and history of Transhumanism. In addition, he leverages the Transhumanist Declaration as a source document to present the worldview's values. Another key source utilized throughout this book is *The Transhumanist Reader* (a primary text on the subject).

In part one Shatzer develops awareness for this worldview in concentric movements of embodied and material presence towards disembodied and immaterial forms of existence. Chapter three explores the vision for morphological freedom. Morphological freedom involves modifying organic reality through biological and technological means such as gene editing or prosthetics that enhance a human's physical and mental capabilities. Chapter four presents the Transhumanist vision for augmented reality, introducing the concept of the hybronaut (one who uses wearable technology for enhancing reality). Chapter five explains Tranhumanist's aims for developing artificial intelligence (both forged laborers and general artificial intelligence). In addition mind uploading is also addressed. In each of these chapters, readers see how current technology—for instance wearable technology like watches and glasses; or the internet, social media, and the gaming industry—introduce visions of Tranhumanism and invite users to consider the advantages of the Tranhumanist worldview.

The second part asks a series of questions and briefs readers on how technological advancements and the Transhumanist worldview are transforming current notions and values of reality. Chapter six asks "What is real?" and discusses changing notions of experience. Chapter seven asks "Where is real?" and discusses changing notions of place. Chapter eight asks "Who is real?" and discusses changing notions of relationships. Chapter nine asks "Am I real?" and discusses changing notions of the self.

To understand what is really going on in these chapters, one illustration shall suffice. In chapter eight's discussion of who is real, Shatzer talks about how artificial intelligence is being used for therapy. Elderly people in nursing homes are given robotic seals in order to foster companionship. This creates a couple challenges. First, elderly people are increasingly seen as "others" who are forgotten and relationally not cared for by immediate family. Second, this relational gap is filled by artificial intelligence. The connection created for the elderly redefines how they see relationships. Non-human artificial intelligence becomes conceived as superior and as a more reliable form of companionship, even a form of companionship from which the elderly may receive unconditional acceptance. Likewise, human caregivers are set free from the "burden" of end-of-life care. This actually creates an emotional intelligence deficit for caregivers who do not give care and reinforces "the denial of death" (c.f. Ernest Becker).

Moreso than the first part, the second part guides readers through the tensions and conflicts that Transhumanism's vision for the future create. These are tensions and conflicts with which the Christian worldview will have to reckon. If anything, this book should help pastor-theologians come to terms with the roots behind the 21st century Secular Anthropological Reformation—a reformation that has put pressure on the Christian worldview to either clarify its understanding of theological-anthropology or accommodate its theological-anthropology to the cultural reformation at hand. It is likely that later we will realize that what is happening in our time is of the same magnitude as the 16th century Protestant Reformation. It is uncanny that one was introduced by the print revolution and the other by the digital revolution.

Shatzer's book is a fine introduction to a Christian take on Transhumanism. Readers will find Shatzer to be conservative towards his adoption of Transhumanism. In truth, Christians will have to negotiate their adoption of Transhumanism along a spectrum of complete isolation (think Quakers) or full synthesis. In reality this worldview employs the boiling frog logic. It starts with wearable tech like AppleWatches and embracing virtual realities like virtual churches. However, a slippery slide is imminent as Transhumanism becomes ubiquitous.

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Larry W. Hurtado, *Honoring the Son: Jesus in Earliest Christian Devotional Practice*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2018. Pp. Vii-95. $15.99 paperback. Snapshots series, edited by Michael F. Bird

Lexham Press has produced a number of new and exciting short books on various biblical and theological subjects. This new work by Larry Hurtado summarizes decades of research and writing in a short, accessible account of Jesus-devotion in earliest Christian worship practices. In less than 100 pages, Hurtado puts to rest all claims for a developing, evolutionary account of Jesus worship in the early church.

Hurtado argues that the earliest *Jewish* Christians, and not simply those from Hellenistic or gentile backgrounds, worshipped Jesus along with (and as) God in a "dyadic" devotional pattern that demonstrated a "mutation" of ancient Jewish monotheism. That is, "the risen/exalted Jesus featured centrally and uniquely with God as virtually a co-recipient of cultic devotion" (43).

The worship of Jesus is attested to in our earliest Christian witnesses (St. Paul's epistles), and Hurtado argues that this must have already been the case before Saul of Taursus met Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Devotion to the risen Jesus is seen in early Christian practices such as prayer (especially by invocation and confession of faith), baptism ("in/into Jesus' name), the Lord's Supper (a central cultic practice), hymns and spiritual songs (focused on the person and work of Jesus), and prophecy (especially the book of Revelation). Worship practices were the most distinguishing and defining aspects of "religion" in the Roman world, according to Hurtado. Collectively, these practices make a strong case for very early Christian devotion to the risen Jesus.

How can this be accounted for in a context of Jewish exclusive monotheism? Hurtado claims that "this early and rapid 'mutation' in typical Jewish devotional practice could have occurred only if the earliest participants felt themselves obliged to take part…they must have come to the conviction that God required them to reverence Jesus, and so the dyadic pattern that emerged was, in their eyes, actually obedience to the one God"(66). How did this conviction come about? It came through powerful religious experiences and Spirit-inspired "charismatic exegesis" of Old Testament texts about God, which were now understood to be about Jesus.

This is the perfect introduction to this topic for all students and laypersons. Many scholars will also benefit from the succinct presentation. Readers will want to pick up Hurtado's larger volumes on this subject as well, but the core argument is summarized here in his most current, accessible language.

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Albert N. Martin. *The Man of God: His Calling and Godly Life.* Pastoral Theology Series, vol. 1. Montville, NJ: Trinity Pulpit Press, 2018. 520 pages. $28.50.

Al Martin served as a preaching pastor at Trinity Baptist Church in New Jersey for 46 years. He was also instrumental in founding a church-based pastoral training center called the Trinity Ministerial Academy. His influence expanded even further through Trinity's Pulpit Tape Ministry, which circulated his lectures around the world. So, when I heard that Martin's lectures on pastoral theology were being published in three volumes, I knew that these would likely become essential reading for anyone aspiring to the office of pastor.

Volume one of the series expounds the fundamentals of pastoral ministry in two parts: the *call* of a man of God, and the *life* of the man of God. Part one goes through the aspiration of pastoral ministry, the qualifications of a pastor, the spiritual gifts and their relation to pastoral calling, and ordination to pastoral office. Part two, with laser-like precision, examines what the life of a pastor ought to be. This includes how a man of God ought to relate to God spiritually, intellectually, physically, and emotionally. He also explores how a man of God ought to relate to his people, himself, his time, his work, and his home.

One of the clear strengths of Martin's work is its thoroughness. For example, he spends 5 chapters (over 100 pages) examining the qualifications for pastoral candidates found in 1 Timothy 3 and related New Testament passages. Each individual qualification is explained exegetically, defined precisely, expounded thoroughly, and applied practically. Readers are given a comprehensive picture of all the ways that a minister ought to strive for excellence.

This rigorous examination of the qualifications and all of their applications can also serve as a potential weakness of this volume. These chapters can quite easily paint a picture of pastoral qualifications and rigor that are so high, so precisely-defined, that no fallen man could ever achieve. As one example, Martin comments regarding physical discipline: "The fact is that you cannot preach with conscience-gripping power…when your paunch is hanging over the pulpit, and jiggling jowls declare your lack of discipline" (84). I know that his aim was certainly not to feel like law, and it probably was not the effect when he originally gave these lectures. However, it's easy to see how such a rigorous examination of a man's life can promote an overly-rigid, unhelpfully-legal interpretation of the pastoral qualifications.

Another strength of this volume is Martin's abundantly-evident knowledge of the relevant Reformed pastoral literature. Indeed, in many ways this is one of the best features of his work: Martin's lectures are, at times, a compendium of some of the best quotes and citations from the leading works of pastoral theology produced since the Protestant Reformation. He frequently cites Charles Spurgeon, Charles Bridges, Richard Baxter, John Owen, Robert Murray M'Cheyne, Patrick Fairbairn, among many others. This volume serves as a great introduction to many classic works of pastoral theology.

However, his survey of and interaction with the relevant literature did expose a glaring omission: he doesn't reference a single theologian before the Protestant Reformation (excluding a single mention of Augustine, which is found within a Richard Baxter quotation). It seems hard to imagine that Gregory the Great's *Pastoral Rule*, Chrysostom's *On the Priesthood*, Cyprian's *On the Church*, or Ambrose's *Duties of Leaders* have nothing to contribute to Martin's pastoral theology, especially when such pre-Reformation figures were formative for so many of the men that Martin does cite. It is the opinion of this reviewer that the first 1500 years of the church did contain faithful pastors, did produce valuable works of pastoral theology, and is worthy of consultation in such a thorough and compendium-like work of pastoral theology.

Martin's first volume in his series is a valuable contribution to the field of pastoral theology. He is comprehensive in his biblical analysis and application, and well versed in the literature of Reformed pastoral theologians. I suspect that this contribution to the field will be useful to aspiring pastors for generations to come.

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Matthew Levering. *Engaging the Doctrine of Creation: Cosmos, Creatures, and the Wise and Good Creator.* Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2017. xi + 372 pp. $31.77

This third volume in Levering's "Engaging the Doctrine of…" series combines deep theological reflection—drawing particularly from the wells of the church fathers and Thomas Aquinas—thoughtful theological exegesis of Scripture, and wise engagement with diverse contemporary interlocutors, both within and without the church. It is not a comprehensive account of creation; as Levering notes, there is no consideration of providence, nor of angels, nor of new creation; nor is there a distinct treatment of *creatio ex nihilo*. Intentionally, Levering does not engage in detail with questions of science and faith. Instead, he meets the prior need for a deep engagement with the Christian doctrine of creation itself.

The book follows John Webster's account of the material order of the doctrine—first the God who has life in himself (chapters 1-2); then the creatures who have life in him (chapters 3-5), and then the temporal unfolding of covenant fellowship between God and creatures (chapters 6-7).

By giving attention to the divine ideas and divine simplicity, the first two chapters establish that God is not merely one (albeit extremely great) being among other beings. Rather, he is the uncreated Creator who has life in and from himself. There is, therefore, an infinite ontological gulf between him and his creation. This does not mean that God is distant from creation. As the wholly free and personal Creator, on whom creation depends at every moment for its existence, God is "more interior to creation than creation is to itself" (p. 57), and created being is utterly gratuitous—the free gift of divine generosity.

These chapters are not for the faint-hearted! Those who lack a reasonably solid understanding of Aquinas's doctrine of God will probably make heavy weather of them. But for those with the necessary equipment they more than repay careful reading.

The remaining chapters are more readily accessible for most pastors.

Chapter 3 asks why there is such apparently wasteful diversity in creation (including billions of creatures that are now dead and species that are extinct). Levering follows Basil the Great's *Hexaemeron*, arguing that Genesis 1 does not offer a scientific account of origins, and therefore does not address the scientific questions of Basil's day or ours. Instead, Basil's literal reading of Genesis 1 argues that everything in creation reveals God's glory. Science then helps Basil (and us) to marvel at the rich diversity of creatures and what they reveal of the infinitely wise and good Creator.

In chapter 4, Levering examines modern interpretations of the image of God as a democratised royal image alongside patristic-medieval exegesis that places it in human capacities to image God's reason, goodness and freedom. He argues that "to share God's rule means to exercise wisdom and generous love [in relation to God, one another, and the whole creation] which is none other than to exercise the powers of the soul." (p. 190)

Chapter 5 examines God's commandment to "be fruitful and multiply," and asks whether it is wise, given the effects of human evil, not least the devastating environmental impacts of explosive population growth. The chapter is a complex and nuanced discussion of the biblical and theological materials, and the ecological reasons that might lead some to abstain from procreation.

As he moves from dogmatic and exegetical reasoning to prudential reasoning, Levering's handling of the arguments is perhaps less secure: this is, in my judgement, the weakest section of the book. I wonder if his discussion of the prudential cases for and against procreation is detailed and specific enough. Given that he can conceive of a time when abstaining from procreation might be wise, I am uncertain on what grounds he thinks now is not yet the time, and how we might know if and when that time has come. Similarly, it was unclear, at least to this reader, how Levering's openness to prudentially non-procreative marriage squares with his apparently absolute rejection of contraception for fear of marriages selfishly turning inwards to lesser goods.

The final two chapters consider creation in relation to the economy of salvation. Chapter 6—rightly in my view—argues that an historical fall, involving real people at a real place and time, is theologically necessary. Also necessary is a doctrine of original sin that acknowledges the unity of all humans in Adam and Eve, human death as a punishment for original sin, and a tight relationship between original sin, the original goodness of creation before sin entered the world, and, consequently, confidence in the wise goodness of the Creator.

The final chapter beautifully portrays the relationship of creation and atonement. Creation is a personal and relational order of justice, which through sin is out of joint with the Creator's intention. But, in God's love and wisdom, Jesus the incarnate Son suffered and made satisfaction for our sin within that order of justice and thus vindicated God's creation plan and achieved the human eschatological vocation of offering creation in its wholeness back to God in praise and thanksgiving.

Overall, Levering gives us truly theological theology. He is deeply attentive to Scripture and the Christian tradition, conversant with an array of contemporary voices, aware of the systematic connections between different doctrines, and alive to their ethical implications. He is also delightfully doxological, engaging the doctrine of creation in ways that lead to awed delight and joyful praise of the wise and good Creator.

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Jonathan Leeman. *How the Nations Rage: Rethinking Faith and Politics in a Divided Age*. Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2018. xii + 251 pp. $22.99

Jonathan Leeman is editorial director of 9Marks and also serves as an elder at Cheverly Baptist Church in suburban Washington, D.C. This book is a popular-level reworking of his *Political Church: The Local Assembly as Embassy of Christ's Rule* (IVP Academic, 2016).

Psalm 2 famously describes the nations as "raging" against the Lord, but some Americans may be shocked to hear Leeman so quickly toss the United States into this group (p. 18). But anytime we are denied what our hearts want, "we rage" (p. 56). The task of the church, according to Leeman, is to resist division amongst ourselves, recognize that we are heaven's ambassadors, and reestablish our churches as its embassies.

The second chapter is probably Leeman's most seminal. He argues that the public square is not a neutral place that rises above religious convictions—it is actually a "battleground of the gods" (p. 23). The American Experiment was the notion that people of many religions could establish a government based on certain shared universal principles. Yet insofar as every person worships, they have a "god" lurking behind their worldview. With that "god" comes a brand of justice and a corresponding concept of equality, freedom, and rights. "Pick your God or gods; out will come your views on justice. Pick your conception of justice; out will come your views on equality, freedom, and rights" (p. 206). Because governments end up serving these various gods, it's foolish to think anyone can separate their politics from their religion. This actually rigs the current political system against Christians insofar as it keeps organized religion out, while allowing unnamed idols in (like a Trojan horse). In the end, some elements of Christian speech—related to family, sexuality and religion specifically—are invariably made to sound irrational and therefore unjust. Since the secularist isn't constrained by having a "church," they can impose their beliefs and morals upon the rest of us.

As Leeman delves into hermeneutics, he builds on the work of Peter J. Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom Through Covenant*. Readers of Scripture are urged to consider "which covenant audience" a biblical passage has in mind and resist treating the Bible like case law. It is more like a Constitution, in that it provides "the rules for making the rules" (p. 79). Aside from some constitutional basics (e.g., do not murder, do not steal, etc.), most political questions of the day are unscripted and occur in what Leeman considers to be wisdom's territory. Perhaps one of the most helpful contributions in the book is Leeman's distinction between "straight-line" and "jagged-line" issues. Sometimes there is a straight line from a core biblical principle to a particular political application. But many other times things are more complex and jagged (p. 93). Far too much political dialogue among Christians today thoughtlessly and divisively treats everything as a straight-line issue. Churches and pastors must resist binding consciences on jagged-line issues. Leeman warns that "[w]hen pastors or churches tie their names to a piece of governmental policy, legislation, or nomination, they effectively tie the name of Jesus to that endeavor" (p. 147). This chapter may prove particularly helpful for pastors trying to navigate the relationship between biblical principles and political issues.

The latter half of the book is much more practical. Leeman suggests that purpose of government is like "guardrails on a mountain highway" (p. 101). It is to provide a platform for justice, peace, and flourishing, even while building a stage for redemption. Churches need good governments, but he warns against putting too much hope in government. Readers are urged to remember that politics in this world will always be what Leeman calls "Sisyphean." In Greek mythology, Sisyphus was a king who was condemned to roll an immense boulder up a hill, watch it roll down again, and repeat this act for eternity. "So it is with our political accomplishments in this world" (p. 171). We should still speak and work faithfully, but also "expect the lions" (p. 173).

Disengagement is never a good option in a democratic society—but Leeman warns that we must be equally wary of capitulation. It's possible to engage rightly on the substance of an issue but be wrong on our strategy and tone. Leeman wraps the knuckles of the Christian Right when he warns against allowing our language to take on an apocalyptic tone. This gives earthly political outcomes "an outsized importance" (p. 164). Leeman also chastises the church for allowing political parties tend to set an agenda that we unquestioningly follow. Parties are good servants but terrible masters—"useful instruments, but awful identities" (p. 131). "One sign that you identify more with your ideological tribe than you do with Jesus is that you cannot hear what's good when it comes from another tribe" (p. 182). He urges every Christian to know their political party's strengths, weaknesses, and idolatrous trajectories. Such awareness will help us hold all our party affiliations with a loose grip, and keep them from domesticating our faith.

Leeman's work is laced with many practical examples drawn from his local church experiences in the D.C. area. Race relations and systemic structures of racial injustice receive a significant amount of attention, and Leeman may get sidetracked with a lengthy discourse on church membership here and there (his 9Marks colors shining through?). Some might nitpick that he veers too frequently into issues of sexuality. But he is essentially following the work of Mary Eberstadt, who has argued that the sexual revolution is the new orthodoxy that has replaced the Judeo-Christian ethic. Apart from a bit of repetitiveness and some odd organization (three lessons followed by twelve more lesson in the same chapter?), the work is otherwise very solid, relatable and highly readable. Leeman has challenged the church to become "heavenly outposts" where a robust vision of justice starts and then spills outward (p. 231). Toward this end I believe he has provided pastors, students and educated laypersons with a deeply thoughtful and helpful resource.

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Eleonore Stump. *Atonement*. *Oxford Studies in Analytic Theology*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. $80.00

Eleonore Stump's recent book *Atonement* spans 538 pages. It is at once rigorously analytic, full of illustrative color, and conversant with the greatest thinkers on its subject matter. It will take the theological world a long time to digest this book, and for years to come it will remain an important dialogue partner for subsequent work on the atonement. In light of the size, scope, and substance of this book, this review can only hope to provide the most cursory orientation to the interested reader, as well as a brief, but fundamental, critical remark.

The doctrine of the atonement is fundamentally about *at onement*, or reconciliation, Stump says, and so the problem the doctrine solves should be thought of as the separation of God and human beings. Stump takes for granted that the unity sought between God and human beings is fundamentally a unity of willing, a reparation of the sinful human will such that it desires union with God. Thus, the atonement must solve for the following issue from a human will that has turned away from God: (1) The current bent of the human will away from loving God and what pleases God, (2) the double effect of guilt: (a) the wrongdoer's fear that others rightly want his harm rather than his good, given what wrong he has done, and (b) the fact that the wrongdoer has caused harm beyond that which he was able to repair, and finally, (3) the experience of shame, wherein one feels oneself to be inherently unworthy of love.

If the doctrine of atonement is to provide a renewed will, the removal of guilt, and the undoing of shame, then there are only two families of live options, Stump assumes: the Anselmian model of the atonement and the Thomistic model of the atonement. Stump sees Anselmian atonement as debt repayment for a penalty incurred, while the Thomistic account consists in God producing "a will for a will that wills the good". The former model, she says, suffers in that, even if one accepts its account of how guilt might be done away with, it does not provide an account of how the human will is thereby changed. The Thomistic model, by contrast, provides an account of the transformation of the will, but without showing any necessary connection to the passion and death of Christ. Given these perceived problems, Stump seeks a fresh understanding of the atonement.

Stump's model of the atonement begins with a Thomistic moral psychology founded in love—love for the good of the beloved, and love for union with the beloved. Since, Stump assumes, the Anselmian model of the atonement introduces a condition that must be met prior to God's love (the payment of sin), then this implies that God is not unchangingly loving toward the sinful human creature. Since God is unchangingly love this account must therefore be rejected. In its place, Stump proceeds to construct an account of atonement that sees atonement as a fundamental change in the human psyche, so that it wills to will to will union with God. God's desire for such union is unceasing and unchanging, and so atonement must take place as a change in human beings. What Stump needs to provide beyond the Thomistic account is how Christ's life, death, and passion are the best, if not essential, way for God to achieve this change in the human psyche.

The union with God that atonement must achieved is, Stump says, a type of "mutual in-ness". This mutual in-ness is initiated by God being within a human psyche in the person of Christ. In fact, Stump argues fascinatingly that Christ experienced the separation of God of *every* human psyche on the cross. What is required to complete atonement is that human beings correspond by having the mind of Christ, willing to will what he wills and thus living a 'life in grace'. Stump argues that this change in the human will cannot be compelled externally by God, since that would be a violation of the will. Instead, God works on the will through the manifestation of his great love in the person of Christ, winning human persons over such that they desire to surrender to grace. Both suffering and the Eucharist serve to aid perseverance—the continuation of a person in the 'life of grace'. What will be of great interest to many is the final section of the book in which Stump argues that this account of the atonement can deal with the problems of guilt and shame in ways that the typical Anselmian and Thomistic accounts cannot.

Those who know the history of Christian doctrine of the atonement will recognize in the foregoing summary echoes of the account of the atonement advanced by Abelard in the twelfth century. Abelard's rejection of an Anselmian account of the atonement was rooted in the conviction that seeing the death of Christ as somehow a debt paid to God's honor would require a change in God's mind toward the sinner, thus violating the impassibility of God. This is a fundamental assumption in Stump's book, too. However, I would contend that Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo* should not be read in this all-too-juridical way. What humanity owes God, Anselm says, is the positive worship a creature owes by its very nature to the Creator—a union of wills, if you will. Human sin itself presents what appears to be an insoluble dilemma for an impassible God—he can either allow sin to persist, giving up on his unchanging will for the goal of his creation, or he can simply undo humanity in wrath, also giving up on his unchanging will for the goal of his creation. What Anselm envisions, however, is God going through with his original will for union with humanity through the incarnation. Christ as the God-HUMAN provides the life of complete honor that no other human has provided, and Christ as the GOD-human absorbs and overcomes the natural consequences of death and hell. What is required, it seems, is for human beings to participate in Christ through the Spirit by being baptized into him and sustained by the eucharistic body of the church.

Stump's book is an impressive feat, and it is worth serious attention by those who are studying the doctrine of the atonement. It will indeed be the topic of much debate. Nevertheless, in my opinion it is a pity that she clears the way for her Abelardian account of the atonement by dismissing Anselm so early on, and without really articulating his position accurately. An interesting line of inquiry going forward would be to see whether and how a better reading of Anselm might prove complementary, and perhaps even fundamental, to the Thomistic account of the atonement.

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Kevin J. Vanhoozer. *Hearers & Doers: A Pastor's Guide to Making Disciples through Scripture and Doctrine*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019. 245 pp. $12.81

Hearers & Doers is the third book in Kevin J. Vanhoozer's unofficial trilogy on "the vocation of the pastor theologian" (p. xi), preceded by *Faith Speaking Understanding* (John Knox, 2014) and *Pictures at a Theological Exhibit* (IVP Academic, 2016). This book, broadly speaking, is written to pastors as (per the subtitle) a "Guide for Making Disciples." In the preface Vanhoozer writes that this book "is intended to help pastors fulfill their Great Commission to make disciples, with emphasis on the importance of teaching disciples to read the Scriptures…theologically" (p. xi). Taken from another angle, Vanhoozer's animating question is "Why should pastors study theology," to which he provocatively answers, "I believe the church today ministers most practically when it teaches people to read the Bible theologically" (p. xxii). Taken as a whole, Vanhoozer's goal for this book is to give pastors an understanding of their calling and goals as ministers of the gospel, to argue for the centrality of scripture and doctrine in Christian ministry, and to outline a programming for producing leveraging scripture for fulfilling that calling.

As readers of Vanhoozer's other works may expect, charming and insightful language and imagery abound in *Hearers & Doers.* The images Vanhoozer employs provide vitality and clarity to the prose, unifying the arguments and making for a pleasurable reading experience. In particular, he infuses the entire book with the language and imagery of physical fitness, giving the titles "Warming Up" and "Working Out" to the two parts of the books, respectively. As such, the book is set up as a workout program of sorts for pastors to guide their congregations into becoming "fit" citizens of God's kingdom.

In the early chapters Vanhoozer argues that Scripture is the pastor's tool for freeing the church from its captivity to cultural idols. Borrowing language from Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, Vanhoozer notes the power of the social imaginary, a "picture that frames our everyday beliefs and practices" (p. 8). He exhorts the pastors to whom he is writing to become students of the cultural context in which they live, dedicating all of chapter two to "examining three formative aspects of contemporary culture: its ruling images of wellness, good diet, and fitness" (p. 42). The role then of pastors is to counter these cultural imaginaries and replace them with scriptural ones. By shaping their imaginations with scripture, pastors can make disciples who are made "fit" to the purpose to which God has called them and able to accomplish their mission in the world. Carrying his central metaphor even further, Vanhoozer argues that disciples cannot attain or maintain fitness without regularly "exercising" their spiritual "core" through scripture and doctrine.

In part two Vanhoozer outlines a "workout plan" that pastors can implement in their congregations to produce fit disciples of Christ's Kingdom. Helpfully, the "exercises" that Vanhoozer commends are neither overly abstract on the one hand nor superficially mechanistic on the other. For instance, the exercises he suggests in chapter five are thoroughly undergirded by and extended discussion on the *solas* of the Reformation (p. 96 ff.) and the centrality of the Word in the life and worship of the church. He aims here to cast a vision for the pastor as a physician who uses the Word to recapture the imagination and heal the "eyes of the heart" of would-be disciples who have been captivated by the cultural social imagination. In chapter six Vanhoozer also rehearses and summarizes his work on the Church as a theater of the gospel (p. 143 ff.). Finally, as he finishes outlining his workout plan with scripture at the center, he spends much of chapter seven articulating a Protestant view of the centrality of scripture's proper context within a generous appeal for unity and "Protestant catholicity" (p. 186). He concludes in chapter eight with an appeal to live and die well in the service and imitation of Christ.

As many have come to expect from Vanhoozer, the vibrancy and liveliness of the writing and metaphors *Hearers & Doers* does not by any means come at the expense of the richness of its ideas. The book hardly ever descends into cheesy or glib prose—if it does at all. A potential drawback of Vanhoozer's work here would only be the amount of ground he seeks to cover in a relatively small number of pages. However, the text's concise but broad vision is also its strength. Some of the most valuable content here consists in the comprehensive charge for pastoral ministry found within. Rather than superficially implementing a new ministry program or teaching strategy, Vanhoozer outlines a rich and theological vision for who a pastor is, what a pastor does, and for what purpose he or she does it. For pastor theologians, this book would serve as a wonderful orientation as they launch into a new season of ministry or hire a new associate staff member. The clear and winsome prose will give occasion for meaningful reflection and conversation with partners in the ministry. For those looking for a primer that is in keeping with the theological vision of ministry advocated by such organizations as The Center for Pastor Theologians, *Hearers & Doers* is a wonderful place to start.

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Michael Horton. *Justification*. Edited by Scott R. Swain and Michael Allen. New Stuties in Dogmatics. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Academic, 2018. 928 pp. $47.39

"I have no idea how many times I have heard or read contemporary theologians and pastors assert with solemn finality that Luther's question 'How can I find a gracious God?' is just not ours today," writes Michael Horton—the J. Gresham Machen Professor of Systematics and Apologetics at Westminster Seminary California—at the outset of his massive, two-volume work *Justification*. "Consequently," he continues, "we can move on as if the question of justification, much less the arcane debates surrounding it, matters little to the average person today. Or can we?" (p. 21). In over 900 pages, Horton answers this question with a resounding "no," by delivering a consistent, exhaustive, and powerful argument that not only can we not move on from the question, but why (and how) its importance is relevant to every age. Throughout this work, and one of its major strengths, Horton returns time and time again to various historical and contemporary interlocuters with the insight and precision of someone who, for decades, has taught, written, expounded, and preached about this important theme with the mind of a theologian and the heart of a pastor.

Volume 1 provides a historic overview of the doctrine with a particular emphasis on setting the stage for the theological upheaval that was the sixteenth century Reformation, and then laying out the ramifications for this renewed interest among Protestant churches going forward. Although writing from within a confessional Reformed tradition, Horton nevertheless articulates the wide-ranging agreement among the various churches for whom this doctrine is a central concern and, as such, will be of interest to anyone looking to better understand why this remains such an important theological issue. Indeed, from the outset, he presents one of the goals of his project, "Say whatever you like about the Protestant Reformers, but they were not obsessed with introspection. On the contrary, they were gripped by the experience of meeting a stranger, an other, to whom they were accountable. Luther didn't fear an inner judgment but a real one on the great stage of history, with banners flying and a fight to the death…One would never invent this sort of religion as therapy for self-improvement, self-empowerment, and tranquility of mind. And regardless, Luther would not have recognized such a religion, much less sympathize with it. If there are lingering doubts about that, I hope that this book lays them to rest" (p. 25).

In volume 2, Horton engages with contemporary arguments surrounding justification with a particular eye toward the (so-called) New Perspective on Paul, Radical Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and the new Finnish interpretation. This volume provides an indispensable treasury of insights and citations that can only come after decades of interaction with the subject matter and, as such, will be an enduring resource for any theological library. Throughout this volume, Horton continually seeks to correct various interpretations of Luther and Calvin, in particular, by maintaining that they are, and have been, consistently misrepresented by their most vocal opponents. "The bulk of contemporary criticism of the Reformation," he writes, "comes from scholars with some background in evangelical-revivalist traditions whose biblical scholarship considerably outweighs their familiarity with the actual texts of confessional Lutheran and Reformed traditions. Consequently, the impressive guns of biblical scholarship are often aimed at straw opponents" (Vol. 2 p. 350n75). Herein lies the real value of this work, because only someone who has spent decades researching, debating, defending, and yes, correcting his/her theology on a particular point can speak with such insight and clarity. It's not hard to imagine the countless hours of conversation and reflection that have gone into each page of this book, where every footnote, every reference, every objection carries within it years and years of interaction with students, congregants, scholars, and friends.

In many ways, this is only a book that Michael Horton could have written, because he has been at the forefront of the defense of justification, a tireless defender of the importance of the Reformation for the sake of the church throughout his entire career, and these two indispensable volumes are the fully ripened fruit of that labor. I was introduced to his work over twenty years ago and have been an avid reader and admirer of his writings and work with *Modern Reformation* and the White Horse Inn ever since. In many ways, it is his example of a man writing with the mind of a theologian and the heart of a pastor that not only inspired me to take up theology, but more importantly, helped open my eyes to behold the amazing grace of the God who justifies the ungodly (Ro. 4:5) out of which the Apostle Paul could write with great confidence that, "nothing in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ro. 8:28). Commenting on this statement, Horton writes, "One need not agree with everything Luther, Calvin, or the other Reformers said to be able to acknowledge that the entire pith of their message was nothing more or less than that Pauline summary. And that is why the Reformation still matters today" (Vol. 1 p. 375).

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Rhys S. Bezzant. *Edwards the Mentor*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019. 216 pp. $74.00.

Since the Yale historian Perry Miller ushered in the Edwards renaissance resulting in Yale's twenty-six volume print publication of a number of Edwards' works and the launch of edwards.yale.edu, where the remaining seventy-three volumes of the Edwards corpus may be accessed—scholars, pastors, and serious lay readers have become acquainted with a number of Edwards' personas. Edwards is known as America's theologian, a first-rate philosopher, revival preacher extraordinaire, and more recently, a premier exegete of the Holy Writ (c.f. Sweeney, *Edwards the Exegete*).

Nonetheless, Rhys Bezzant's recent publication, *Edwards the Mentor*, proves that there is still much to uncover about and learn from Jonathan Edwards. As Bezzant puts it: "the sobriquet of mentor, used among those who were closest to him, points us in a new direction and occasions the goal of this book" (2). The author contends that Edwards' employment as a "pastor-theologian" shaped his practice and his practice shaped his theology. Though one might ask, why use Edwards as a case study? Bezzant swiftly replies, "His adaptation to modern conditions and his resistance to the implications of modern categories of thought make him an excellent case study in cultural engagement as (perhaps) the first modern mentor in the guise of pastor-theologian" (4). Thus, pastor-theologians today should note Edwards' activity as mentor as they consider how to pass on the legacy and labor of thinking theologically in pastoral ministry.

Chapter one of *Edwards the Mentor*, reaching as far back as Greek philosophy, explores the history and legacy of mentoring and Mimesis (the theory and practice of imitation). This chapter also explores the desire of discipline in the modern world along with the power of models found in Puritan practices. Bezzant also discusses more recent predecessors to Edwards, including Martin Luther and Cotton Mather, both of which left an imprint on Edwards' own method of mentoring. This chapter also includes a biography of Edwards' own experience as mentee.

Chapter two corrects a number of misunderstandings we have about Edwards. So many histories characterize Edwards as a socially withdrawn, principally stubborn, and interpersonally inept pastor. Bezzant paints a very different portrait of a relationally charitable and warm mentor, whose home hosted a number of live-in future pastors such as Joseph Bellamy and Samuel Hopkins, among many others. Bezzant's portrayal reveals that, "Christian mentoring for him was a type of friendship, which, as both an end in itself and a means to greater ends, reflected the core reality of the incarnation, offering both communication and communion" (p. 51).

Chapter three examines both how Mimesis played a prominent role in Edwards' mentoring and how Edwards' mentoring practice was undergirded by a theologically thick vision. Edwards appropriated "the first things of the *imago Dei*, the near things of visual stimuli and *imitatio Christi*, and the last things of the beatific vision" in order to "animate his mentoring agenda and establish his integrative reflex" (p. 86). Bezzant explains how this theologically rich understanding of mentoring unifies spiritual and dogmatic theology through classical understandings of theism and an "experiential ballast" (p. 102). Just as Edwards was an expert at integrating philosophy and theology into a coherent lexicon of ideas, his practical theology emulates this sort of integration of theology into practice.

Chapter four unfolds the legacy left by Edwards' mentoring practices—a legacy replete with leaders who shaped the later eighteenth century and much of the nineteenth century. This chapter begins with a brief vignette of Edwards' son, Jonathan Edwards Jr., and goes on to discuss the theological movement birthed from Edwards, which became known as "New Divinity." This movement, in addition to being a doctrinal movement, was also a devotional and disciplinary movement. Those who ascribed to this movement became a social network "with strong bonds of personal affection" (p. 119). Bezzant makes the significant point that this "New Divinity" movement was not just an intellectual movement, but it was a revival movement that catalyzed significant elements of the Second Great Awakening. As a theological movement, "it incorporated ministry vision, evangelical priorities, and pedagogical strategies" (p. 119). This movement fostered an educational alliance that initiated ecclesiastical reform through personal relationships, publications, and cooperative revivalism.

One of the defining features to applaud the resurgence of the pastor-theologian in the early twenty-first century is its ecumenical texture. This texture permits a plurality of ecclesiological backgrounds and theological vantage points to collaborate and learn from one another, opening up rich avenues for mentorship. A careful reading of *Edwards the Mentor* ought to be a priority for those pastor-theologians who wish to integrate a robust mentoring ministry into their vision of pastoral-theology. Quite honestly, this could be the most important book a pastor-theologian reads this year, and the reading exercise may very well reconceptualize how a pastor-theologian enculturates pastor-theology into others.

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