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Contents

"Relics of the Amorites" or "Things Indifferent"? Peter Martyr Vermigli's Authority and the Threat of Schism in the Elizabethan Vestiarian Controversy

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In the days and months following the accession of Elizabeth Tudor to the throne of England, correspondence exchanged between Peter Martyr Vermigli and various disciples of his among the Marian exiles reveals the spectre of schism looming within evangelical ranks of the Church of England. In letters to Vermigli, Thomas Sampson articulates the uncertainty felt by many of the returning exiles concerning the eventual shape of the expected new religious settlement. Sampson, who in exile had visited both Zürich and Geneva before his return to England in 1559, was a clear candidate for appointment to the bench of bishops.[1] Yet he bemoans the prospect and asks for the great man's advice on how to proceed.[2] Vermigli advises a cautious and moderate course, and encourages Sampson not to "let go any opportunity of directing things in a proper manner."[3] A year later, after the enactment of the Settlement statutes, John Jewel, close associate of the Italian reformer from Oxford days, fellow exile in Zürich, and soon to be appointed bishop of Salisbury, writes to the master lamenting the continued use of the "scenic apparatus of divine worship" and the "theatrical habits" of the clergy: "These are indeed, as you very properly observe, the relics of the Amorites... and I wish that sometime or other they may be taken away, and extirpated even to the lowest roots."[4] In another letter to Vermigli of 2nd January 1560, Sampson sounds the alarm: "O, my father!" he writes,

> What can I hope for, when the ministry of Christ is banished from court? While the crucifix is allowed, with lights burning before it?... What can I hope, when three of our lately appointed bishops are to officiate at the table of the Lord, one as a priest, another as deacon, and a third as subdeacon, before the image of the crucifix, or at least not far from it, with candles, and habited in the golden vestments of the papacy... What hope is there of any good, when our party are disposed to look for religion in these dumb remnants of idolatry, and not from the preaching of the lively word of God? I will propose this single question for your resolution... Should we not rather quit the ministry of the word and sacraments, than that these relics of the Amorites should be admitted? Certain

> of our friends, indeed, appear in some measure inclined to regard these things as matters of indifference: for my own part, I am altogether of opinion, that should this be enjoined, we ought rather to suffer deprivation.

In his response of 1st February 1560, Vermigli exhorts Sampson very firmly against schism "for if you, who are as it were pillars, shall decline taking upon yourselves the performance of ecclesiastical offices, not only will the churches be destitute of pastors, but you will give place to wolves and anti-Christs" (*ZL* 84). Vermigli is hopeful that some of the defects of the Settlement may be corrected, though perhaps not all. With an echo of an argument made by Thomas Cranmer during the Edwardine Vestiarian disputation between John Hooper and Nicholas Ridley, Vermigli urges Sampson to conform to the vestments rubric: "As to the square cap and Episcopal habit in ordinary use, I do not think that there is need of much dispute, seeing it is unattended by superstition, and in that kingdom especially there may be a *political reason* for its use."[5] Among the bishops present at the liturgy in the Chapel Royal so vividly described by Sampson were the recently consecrated Marian exiles Edmund Grindal, Richard Cox, and Edwin Sandys.[6] Together with them, many returned exiles of evangelical persuasion, including Jewel, affirmed their decision to conform to use of the "Babylonish garments" required by the Act of Uniformity despite the objections many had made in the early days of the new regime. Others, including Sampson, remained in dissent.[7] Throughout the mounting controversy over the continued use of distinctive clerical attire and traditional forms of ceremonial, the so-called "relics of the Amorites," Peter Martyr Vermigli was frequently consulted by both sides of the dispute, and appeals to his authority, as we shall see, continued by members of both the conformist and non-conformist parties long after his death in 1562.

By 1563, the divergence of views is plainly reflected in the tone of two letters sent to Heinrich Bullinger by Jewel and Sampson respectively. According to Jewel, things "are going on successfully both as to the affairs of religion, and of state"[8] while to Sampson, writing just a few months later, "affairs in England are in a most unhappy state; I apprehend worse evils, not to say the worst: but we must meanwhile serve the Lord Christ."[9] By the mid-1560s, controversy over the provisions of the Elizabethan Act of Uniformity had begun to reach a higher pitch. In 1564 the Queen wrote to Archbishop Parker deploring that "diversity, variety, contention, and vain love of singularity, either in our ministers or in the people, must needs provoke the displeasure of Almighty God, and be to us, having the burden of government, discomfortable, heavy, and troublesome; and finally must needs bring danger of ruin to our people and country."[10] Elizabeth chastises the Primate that "these errors, tending to breed some schism or deformity in the church, should have been stayed and appeased." Perceiving that the causes of schism have begun to increase, Elizabeth declares her royal purpose:

> We, considering the authority given to us of Almighty God for the defence of the public peace, concord and truth of this his Church, and how we are answerable for the same to the seat of his high justice, mean not to endure or suffer any longer these evils thus to proceed, spread, and increase in our realm, but have certainly determined to have all such diversities, varieties, and novelties amongst them of the clergy and our people as breed nothing but contention, offence, and breach of common charity, and are also against the laws, good usages, and ordinances of our realm, to be reformed and repressed and brought to one manner of uniformity through our whole realm and dominions, that our people may thereby quietly honour and serve Almighty God in truth, concord, peace, and quietness...

The controversy over vestments and the ornaments rubric proved to be a breaking point for English Protestantism largely because the Queen's insistence upon conformity prompted prominent figures like Sampson openly to question their submission to the Supreme Governor of the church and to propose seeking further reforms by other means.[11] By March 1566, with the publication of Matthew Parker's *Advertisements* in direct response to the Queen's reprimand, the threat of schism had become considerably more palpable. In a letter to Bullinger, Sampson puts the question of the Elizabethan Vestiarian Controversy with great clarity.[12] He begins by alluding to the Edwardine "contest about habits, in which Cranmer, Ridley, and Hooper, most holy martyrs of Christ were formerly wont to skirmish" and follows up with twelve key questions: 1. Should a distinctive clerical habit be required in a truly reformed church? 2. Is such prescription consistent with Christian liberty? 3. Are "things indifferent" subject to coercion and 4. may new ceremonies be introduced? 5. Were Jewish "sacerdotal" practices not abolished by Christ; 6. can rites be borrowed from idolaters for use in the reformed church; 7. can conformity to such rites be a matter of necessity? 8. What if the ceremonies occasion offence? 9. What if they are unedifying? 10. May such ceremonies be prescribed by the Prince without the assent of the clergy? In the final two questions the immanent threat of schism comes to the fore. Sampson contemplates separation with the summary inquiry 11. "whether a man ought thus to obey the decrees of the church; or on account of non-compliance, supposing there is no alternative, to be cast out of the ministry?" And 12. "whether good pastors, of unblemished life and doctrine, may rightfully be removed from the ministry on account of non-compliance with such ceremonies?"

Bullinger's reply landed like a bomb-shell.[13] In response to every one of Sampson's twelve questions, and to another similar set of questions put by Sampson's colleague Laurence Humphrey, President of Magdalene College, Oxford, Bullinger sided with Parker and the Queen, both in his own name and also on behalf of Rudolph Gualter. He affirms that clerical habits are "things indifferent," acceptable "for the sake of decency, and comeliness of appearance, or dignity and order," that they are allowable as "civil matters," agreeable with "the light of nature," and that the Queen's majesty has

complete authority in the matter.[14] Bullinger dismisses any suggestion that separation or schism might be justified on the grounds of opposition to the provisions of the Act of Uniformity:

> Though I would rather no ceremonies, excepting such as are necessary, should be obtruded upon the church, yet I must confess in the man time that regulations respecting them, though possibly not altogether necessary, and sometimes, it may be, useless, ought not forthwith to be condemned as impious, and to excite disorder and schism in the church; seeing that they are not of a superstitious character, and also that in their very nature they are matters of indifference... For if the edifying of the church is the chief thing to be regarded in this matter, we shall do the church a greater injury be deserting it than by wearing the habits... I exhort you all, by Jesus Christ our Lord, the Saviour, head, and king of his church, that every one of you should duly consider with himself, whether he will not more edify the church of Christ by regarding the use of habits for the sake of order and decency, as a matter of indifference, and which hitherto has tended somewhat to the harmony and advantage of the church; than by leaving the church, on account of the Vestiarian controversy, to be occupied hereafter, if not by evident wolves, at least by ill-qualified and evil ministers.[15]

For Bullinger, certainly no friend of popish ceremony and other such "relics of the Amorites," the necessary requirement of preaching the gospel nonetheless takes unconditional priority over the retention or abolition of things "of themselves" indifferent. Separation is a greater injury than the burden of conformity.

At several points in his letter, Bullinger appeals directly to the authority of Peter Martyr. Indeed the arguments mounted are for the most part derived from a letter written by the Italian reformer to John Hooper sixteen years earlier.[16] During the crisis stemming from his refusal to be consecrated Bishop of Gloucester according to the prescribed ceremonies and wearing the canonical dress, Hooper had himself requested Martyr's counsel on the question of his nonconformity.[17] It should be remembered that Hooper had lived at Zürich in the late 1540s where he became a friend of Bullinger. After returning to England, where he was hailed as "England's future Zwingli," Hooper was made chaplain to Protector Somerset and nominated to the bishopric of Gloucester in 1550.[18] After engaging in an extended disputation with Nicholas Ridley on the lawfulness of "those Aaronic habits" and being confined for almost three weeks in the Fleet Prison by order of the Privy Council, Hooper submitted unconditionally and was duly consecrated to his See.[19] In a letter to Martin Bucer, Vermigli relates how he had met with Hooper on three separate occasions at Lambeth Palace and how he "exerted every effort to break down his determination" in order to secure his conformity.[20] Against this background of Edwardine Vestiarian strife antagonists on both sides of the Elizabethan debate of the mid-1560s honed their polemics.

Vermigli's importance in all of this is underscored by the wider use made of his writing on the Vestiarian question by proponents on both sides.

In *The Unfolding of the Pope's Attyre*, the first salvo in a furious spate of polemical tracts published in response to Parker's *Advertisements*, Robert Crowley invokes the Florentine's authority in a full-frontal assault on the ceremonies.[21] Crowley points out quite correctly that Vermigli was willing to endure the "remnaunts of the Amorites" for a season, but nevertheless looked forward to their eventual abolition.[22] Crowley even cites Ridley and Jewel in support of his nonconformity. In a tract published shortly afterwards intended to refute Crowley, both Martyr's and Bucer's letters to Hooper of 1550 are reprinted.[23] On 3rd May 1566, just two days after the reply to Sampson and Humphrey, Bullinger and Gualter had sent a blind copy of the letter to Bishop Robert Horne and asked that it be sent on to Grindal, Jewel, Parkhurst, Sandys, and Pilkington, all of whom had been Bullinger's guests as exiles in Zürich, and all of whom were now sitting side by side on the Elizabethan bench of bishops.[24] The letter was published, in some degree to the consternation of its authors, who had been compelled to take sides in a confrontation between their mutual friends.[25] As Walter Phillips has argued, from this point forward Bullinger and Gualter were cast in the role of defenders of the Elizabethan Settlement while the opponents of conformity, such as Sampson and Humphrey, were "compelled to look more and more to Geneva" for succour.[26]

Appeals to the authority of Vermigli were by no means restricted to supporters of the Establishment. His name appears on the masthead of two more counter blasts in the pamphlet war of 1566, one on either side of the dispute. The letter to Hooper appears once again in a conformist tract titled *Whether it be mortall sinne to transgresse civil lawes which be the commaundementes of civill magistrates,* which bears all the marks of government approval, published by Richard Jugge, the Queen's printer and, like *A brief examination for the tyme,* may even have been composed by Parker himself.[27] The tract reprints both Bullinger's letter to Sampson and Humphrey and the letter to Bishop Horne as well as a number of tracts related to the Edwardine controversy of 1550, including Vermigli's letter to Hooper. The latter, nonconformist tract is addressed anonymously to "all such as unfainedly hate (in zeale of a Godly love) all monuments, and remnauntes of Idolatrie" and follows the now well established model of an assemblage of "gleanings" from various "learned men," Vermigli included.[28] That Vermigli's authority was of considerable consequence in the Elizabethan Vestiarian debate there can be no doubt.

What does remain something of a puzzle, however, is the apparent ease with which Vermigli is cited as an authority on either side of what is undoubtedly the bitterest clash of ecclesiological principle to face the Church of England in the first decade following the enactment of the Elizabethan Settlement. Let us look more closely at the argument of his letter to Hooper. From the outset Peter Martyr expresses his agreement with Hooper's main purpose:

> At first I took no small pleasure in your singular and ardent zeal, with which you endeavour that the Christian religion may again approach to chaste and simple purity. For what ought to be more desired by all godly men, than that all things may by little and little be cut off which have scarcely anything or nothing that can be turned to solid edification, and which by godly minds are rather considered to be redundant, and, in a manner, superfluous? To speack, indeed, about myself, I take it ill to be torn from that plain and pure custom which you have known that we all for a long time used at Strasburg, where the distinctions of vestments as to holy services had been taken away, even as I ever most of all approved that custom as the more pure, and mostly savouring of the apostolic Church.[29]

Yet for all his agreement with Hooper on "the chief and principal point", Vermigli refuses to allow that the use of traditional vestments and ceremonies is "fatal" or contrary to Scripture on the ground that they are of themselves "altogether indifferent." Vermigli is careful to distinguish personal judgement and sensibility from the expression of public will.[30] Furthermore, vehement contention leads to a dangerous confusion of the "necessary points" of salvation with matters indifferent and merely accessory. "Sometimes in these indifferent matters some things, although they be grievous and burdensome, are to be borne so long as it is not permitted by law to deviate from them; lest, if we content for them more bitterly than we ought, this may be a hindrance to the advancement of the Gospel, and those things which are in their nature indifferent may, by our vehement contention, be represented as ungodly."[31] For Vermigli opposition to the ornaments rubric is simply bad strategy from an evangelical standpoint. "Since a change is being introduced in necessary points of religion, and that with so great difficulty, if we should also speak of those things as ungodly which are indifferent, the minds of almost all men would be so turned away from us, that they would no longer show themselves to be attentive and patient hearers of sound doctrine and necessary sermons." Moreover, opposition to the *adiaphora* as ungodly leads to a condemnation of many Churches "not alien from the Gospel."

Vermigli proceeds to address Hooper's several arguments against the adiaphoristic principle. First is the contention that the Gospel abolishes the ceremonies of the Law. Vermigli assents to the replacement of the Aaronic sacraments by the Eucharist, but adds that certain acts, "agreeable to the light of nature," are nevertheless continued, such as the payment of tithes, the singing of psalms, the custom of prophesying, and the observance of feast days in commemoration of the nativity, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. "Should all these things be abolished, because they are traces of the old law? All things of Aaron's priesthood have not been so abolished, that none of them can be retained or used."[32] For Vermigli, extreme opposition to the ceremonies imperils Christian liberty.[33] In the spirit of this liberty pagan cultic practices were taken over by the early Christians and use of vestments such as the pallium affirmed by the Fathers long before the establishment of the "papal tyranny." Even verses of the

pagan poets "dedicated to the Muses and to various gods" were employed by Church writers "when they were profitable, beautiful, and true." The detested vestments are indeed a human invention, yet all human inventions, Vermigli argues, are not at once to be condemned.[34] On the contrary, symbols and signs are appropriate to Christian worship. "The Church's ministers are the angels and messengers of God, as Malachi testifies; and the angels have almost always appeared clothed in white vestments. How shall we deprive the Church of this liberty," Vermigli asks, "of being able to signify anything by her actions and ceremonies?" He goes on to compare this symbolic function to the sacraments themselves: "To this end the symbols of sacraments seem to be devised, that even by the very sight and sense we may be drawn to think on Divine things. Neither do I think that tyranny is instantly brought in, if any indifferent thing be appointed to be done in the Church... indifferent things cannot defile those who live with a pure and sincere mind and conscience."[35]

Vermigli's staunch support of Vestiarian conformity is all the more remarkable for being in a profound sense contrary to his personal inclination and sensibility. Given that the principle of Christian liberty was itself at stake in this controversy, the theologically reasonable course demanded a thorough defence of Cranmer's policy. Vermigli's position is grounded in his interpretation of the first principles of Reformed ecclesiological orthodoxy, especially with regard to the crucial distinction between matters necessary and matters merely accessory to salvation. By keeping these two matters in clear and evangelical distinction, he allows himself to be led by what might be described as a "theological necessity" to a conclusion which came to epitomize the very substance of the Elizabethan Settlement. Diarmaid MacCulloch and Scott Wenig have recently restated the old Tractarian canard that the Elizabethan Church of England sought to achieve a middle way between Rome and Geneva, the so-called Anglican *via media*.[36] According to MacCulloch, the Settlement of 1559 represents a "theological cuckoo in the nest." That is to say, the Church of England was an essentially "Catholic" structure operated by a "Reformed" clerical leadership. On this view of the matter, "the story of Anglicanism, and the story of the discomfiture of Elizabeth's first bishops, is the result of the fact that this tension between Catholic structure and Protestant theology was never resolved."[37] In this interpretation of the Elizabethan Settlement, the criticism levelled against the Establishment by such radical critics as Thomas Sampson, Laurence Humphrey, and Robert Crowley are simply assumed to be representative of "Reformed orthodoxy." On our reading of Vermigli's and Bullinger's contribution to the Vestiarian controversy, however, the question is raised whether the claim to orthodoxy may in fact lie more plausibly with the Queen and her loyal bishops. Vermigli's letter to Hooper, along with Bullinger's to Sampson and Humphrey, suggests that far from intruding a evangelical cuckoo in a Romish nest, the architects of the Elizabethan Settlement may have succeeded in framing an order of impeccable ecclesiological orthodoxy.

Notes

[1] Surviving correspondence reveals that he was in fact considered for the See of Norwich.

[2] In a letter dated 17th December 1558, just a few weeks after the accession, Sampson expresses doubt whether an Episcopal appointment can be accepted in good conscience: "I cannot take upon myself the government of the Church until, after having made an entire reformation in all ecclesiastical functions, she [i.e. the Queen] will concede to the clergy the right of ordering all things according to the word of God, both as regards doctrine and discipline..." (*ZL*, 2-3).

[3] *ZL*, *PMV* to *TS*, 15th July 1559. In a subsequent letter to Sampson of 4th November 1559, Vermigli writes: "But although I have always been opposed to the use of ornaments of this kind, yet as I perceived the present danger of your being deprived of the office of preaching, and that there will perhaps be some hope that, like as altars and images have been removed, so this resemblance of the mass may also be taken away, provided you and others who may obtain bishopricks, will direct all your endeavours to that object (which would make less progress, should another succeed in your place, but would rather defend, cherish, and maintain them) therefore was I the slower in advising you rather to refuse a bishoprick, than to consent to the use of those garments" (*ZL* 66).

[4] See *ZL* 67. Jewel reports to Peter Martyr in November 1559 that "religion among us is in the same state which I have often described to you before. The doctrine is every where most pure; but as to ceremonies and maskings, there is a little too much foolery. That little silver cross, of ill-omened origin, still maintains its place in the Queen's Chapel" (*ZL* 69). The expression "relics of the Amorites" is an allusion to Joshua 7 which recounts the transgression of the covenant by Achan. Israel, under the command of Joshua, has just been defeated in battle by the Amorites, and it emerges that the source of this loss is the secret possession of "an accursed thing," i.e. spoils previously taken from the Amorites against Yahweh's command, 7:20, 21: "Achan answered Joshua, and said, Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and thus have I done: When I saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, then I coveted them, and took them..." The strength of Israel is thus linked with the avoidance of all contact with these relics. Joshua punishes Achan with death by stoning and he, the relics, and all his property are burned in the valley of Achor. Vermigli refers to the "relics of Popery" in a letter to Sampson of 4th November 1559 (*ZL* 66).

[5] Vermigli to Sampson, 1st February 1560 (*ZL* 84). In a letter written to Martin Bucer concerning Hooper's non-conformity, Cranmer puts the question "Whether he that shall affirm that it is unlawful, or shall refuse to wear these vestments, offends against God; inasmuch as he says, that that is unclean which God has sanctified; and against the magistrate, inasmuch as he violates the *political order*?"

[6] Parker, Grindal, Sandys, and Cox were consecrated on 19th and 21st December 1559.

[7] According to John Strype, "Cox, Grindal, Horne, Sandys, Jewel, Parkhurst, and Bentham [all of them returned exiles and appointed bishops under the Settlement of 1559] concluded unanimously after consultation not to desert their ministry for some rites that were but a few, and not evil in themselves, especially since the doctrine of the gospel remained pure and entire." See *Annals* I, i, 263. In a letter to Heinrich Bullinger dated 10th July 1560, Thomas Lever writes: "The same order of public prayer, and of other ceremonies in the Church which existed under Edward the sixth, is now restored among us by the authority of the Queen and Parliament; for such is the name of our great council. In the injunctions, however, published by the Queen after the sitting of Parliament, there are prescribed to the clergy some ornaments, such as the mass-priests formerly had and still retain. A great number of the clergy, all of whom had heretofore laid them aside, are now resuming similar habits, and wear them, as they say, *for the sake of obedience...* Many of us English, who lived together in the same house at Zürich, are now of necessity dispersed all over England, and at a great distance from each other. It is, however, impossible but that we shall all of us retain a grateful remembrance of that exceeding hospitality and beneficence, which Zürich exhibited to us under your patronage, with so much comfort and benevolence and friendly regard.

[8] 5th March 1563 (*ZL* 167).

[9] 26th July 1563 (*ZL* 175).

[10] See *Correspondence of Matthew Parker*, PS (Cambridge, 1853), 223-227. The Queen further charges her metropolitan with the task of ensuring that "the clergy observe, keep, and maintain such order and uniformity in all the external rites and ceremonies, both for the Church and for their own persons, as by laws, good usages, and orders, are already allowed, well provided, and established. And if any superior officers shall be found hereto disagreeable, if otherwise your discretion or authority shall not serve to reform them, We will that you shall duly inform us thereof, to the end we may give in delayed order for the same; for we intend to have no dissension or variety grow by suffering of persons which maintain dissension to remain in authority; for so the sovereign authority which we have under Almighty God should be violate and made frustrate, and we might be well thought to bear the sword in vain."

[11] See Scott Wenig, *Straightening the Altars: The Ecclesiastical Vision and Pastoral Achievements of the Progressive Bishops under Elizabeth I, 1559-1579* (New York, 2000), 111ff.

[12] Sampson to Bullinger, 16th February 1566 (*ZL* 211-213).

[13] Heinrich Bullinger to Laurence Humphrey and Thomas Sampson, 1st May 1566 (*ZL* 214-224). For a full discussion of the letter see Walter Phillips, "Henry Bullinger and the Elizabethan Vestiarian Controversy: An Analysis of Influence," *Journal of Religious History* 2 (1981), 363-384.

[14] See *ZL* 222: "I can easily believe that wise and politic men are urgent for a conformity of rites, because they think it will tend to concord, and there may be one and same church throughout all England; wherein, provided nothing sinful is intermixed, I do not see why you should oppose yourselves with hostility to harmless regulations of that kind."

[15] *ZL* 221-223.

[16] Vermigli to Hooper, 4th November 1550, MSS of John More, Bishop of Ely, Cambridge University Library, Mm 4.14, Art.2. See also Petri Martyris *Epistolae Theologicae*, London 1583, fol. 1085; translated by Anthonie Marten in Peter Martyr, Divine Epistles, London 1583, fo. 116, col. 2. See also John Strype, *Memorials of Archbishop Cranmer* (Oxford, 18??), I, 304-307. The text of the letter in English translation is also printed in Gorham, *Gleanings*, 187-196.

[17] Hooper to Martyr See Hooper to Bullinger, 29th June 1550 (*OL* 87), where he explains his refusal "both by reason of the shameful and impious form of the oath, which all who choose to undertake the function of a bishop are compelled to put up with, and also on acct of those Aaronic habits which they still retain in that calling, and are used to wear, not only at the administration of the sacraments, but also at public prayers." For a full account of the episode see J. H. Primus, *The Vestments Controversy: An Historical Study of the Earliest Tensions within the Church of England in the Reigns of Edward VI and Elizabeth* (Kampen: J. H. Kok, 1960), chapter 1.

[18] Letter from Micronius to Pellican, Simler Collection of MSS, S. 70, 136, Zentralbibliothek Zürich. See Primus, *The Vestments Controversy,* 5.

[19] Hooper was committed to the Fleet on 27th January 1551: "Upon a letter from tharchebusshop of Canterbury, that Mr. Hoper can not be brought to any conformytie, but rather persevering in his obstinacie coveteth to prescribe order and necessarie lawes of his heade, it was agree he shulde be committed to the Fleete." *Acts of the Privy Council*, 199-200. Nearly three weeks later Hooper wrote a letter of submission. See Bishop Hooper to Archbishop Cranmer, 15th February 1550, in George C. Gorham, *Gleanings of a Few Scattered Ears, during the period of the Reformation in England and of the Times immediately succeeding; AD 1533 – AD 1588* (London Bell and Daldy, 1857), 233-35.

[20] Vermigli to Bucer, 10th January 1551, Gorham, *Gleanings*, 231-233.

[21] Robert Crowley, *A briefe discourse against the outwarde apparell and Ministring Garmentes of the Popishe Church*, 1566. See sig. cii verso: "And Peter Martyr, whose iudgement hath in this matter bene oftentimes asked, dothe more than once in his writings call [the ceremonies] *Reliquias Amorraeorum*, leavings or remnaunts of the Amorites. And although he do in some case thinke that they maye be borne with for a season: yet in our case, he would not have them suffered to remaine in the Church of Christ." See Strype, *Annals*, I.ii.163.

[22] This argument for a "temporizing" solution is characteristic of Vermigli's letters to Sampson in 1559 and 1560. See, e.g., Vermigli to Sampson, 4th November 1559: "Though I have always

been opposed to the use of ornaments of this kind, yet as I perceived the present danger of your being deprived of the office of preaching, and that there will perhaps be some hope that, like as altars and images have been removed, so this resemblance of the mass may also be taken away, provided you and others who may obtain bishopricks, will direct all your endeavours to that object, (which would make less progress, should another succeed in your place, who not only might be indifferent about putting away those relics, but would rather defend, cherish, and maintain them..." (*ZL* 65-67).

[23] The tract, attributed to Archbishop Matthew Parker himself, appeared under the title *A brief examination for the tyme, of a certaine declaration, lately put in print, in the name and defence of certaine Ministers in London, refusing to weare the apparel prescribed by the lawes and orders of the Realme...* (London: Richard Jugge, 1566): "In the ende is reported, the judgement of two notable learned fathers, M. doctour Bucer, and M. doctour Martir, sometime in eyther universities here of England the kynges readers and professours of divinitie, translated out of the originals, written by their owne handes, purposely debating this controversie. Paul. Rom. 14, I besech you brethren marke them which cause division, and geve occasions of evyll, contrary to the doct which ye have learned, and avoyde them: for they that are such serve not the Lorde Jesus Christ, but their own bellyes, and with sweete and flattering wordes deceive the hartes of the Innocentes."

[24] See Bullinger to Horne: "We send our letter on the Vestiarian controversy, written by us to the learned men, and our honoured godly brethren, N. and M. [viz. Sampson and Humphrey]. And we send it to you that ye may understand that we would not have any private communication with the brethren, without the knowledge of you, the principal ministers" (*ZL* 224).

[25] See Grindal and Horn to Bullinger and Gualter (*ZL* I 175), which announces the publication of Bullinger's letter.

[26] Phillips, "Henry Bullinger and the Elizabethan Vestiarian Controversy," 382.

[27] *Whether it be mortall sinne to transgresse civil lawes which be the commaundementes of civill magistrates. The judgement of Philip Melancton in his Epitome of morall Philosophie. The resolution of D. Henry Bullinger, and D. Rod[olph] Gualter, of D. Martin Bucer, and D. Peter Martyr, concerning thapparel of Ministers, and other indifferent things* (London: Richard Jugge, Printer to the Queenes Maiestie, 1566).

[28] *The Fortresse of Fathers, ernestlie defending the puritie of Religion, and Ceremonies, by the trew exposition of certaine places of Scripture: against such as wold bring in an Abuse of Idol stouff, and of thinges indifferent, and do appoinct th'authority of Princes and Prelates larger then the trueth is.* Translated out of Latine into English for there sakes that understand no Latine by I. B. 1566.

[29] *Epistolae Theologicae*, 1085; Gorham, *Gleanings*, 188; see also *Whether it be mortall sinne*, 61. For an account of a Reformed church purged of all images, statues, altars, ornaments and music see Ludwig Lavater's description of the practice of the Church of Zürich in *De Ritibus et Institutis Ecclesiae Tigurinae*, Zürich 1559, Art. 6, fol. 3: "Templa Tigurinorum ab omnibus simulachris & statuis repurgata sunt. Altaria nulla habent, sed tantum necessaria instrumenta: veluti, cathedram sacram, subsellia, baptisterium, mensam quae apponitur in medium quando celebranda est coena, lucernas, quarum usus est hyemne quando contractiores sunt dies) in antelucanis coetibus. Templa non corruscant auro, argento, gemmis, ebore. Haec enim non vera sunt templorum ornamenta. Organa & alia instrumenta musica, in temples nulla sunt, eo quod ex eorum strepitu, verborum dei nihil intelligatur. Vexilla quoque & alia anathemata ex temples sublata sunt" [quoted Primus, 4].

[30] "Although, as I said, I do not think a diversity of vestments ought to be maintained in holy services, nevertheless I would by no means say it was ungodly (*impius*), so as to venture to condemn whomsoever I should see using it. Certainly, if I were so persuaded, I would never have communicated here with the Church in England, in which a diversity of this kind has been maintained to this day." Gorham, *Gleanings*, 188-189.

[31] Gorham, *Gleanings*, 189.

[32] Gorham, *Gleanings*, 191.

[33] Gorham, *Gleanings*, 192: "Doubtless we must take care, that we afflict not the Church of Christ with undue bondage of being able to adopt nothing which is of the Pope. Certainly our

forefather received the temples of idols, and turned them into holy mansions in which Christ should be worshipped. And the revenues that were consecrated to the gods of the heathen, to theatrical plays, and to vestal virgins, they took for maintaining ministers of the Church; whereas these things had formerly served, not merely Antichrist, but the devil. Moreover, even the verses of the poets, which had been dedicated to the muses and to various gods, or to the acting of fables in the theatre, to appease the gods, when they were profitable, beautiful, and true were used by Church writers; and that by the example of the Apostle, who did not disdain to cite Menander, Aratus, and Epimenides, and that in the holy Scripture itself which he delivered; and those word which otherwise were profane he adapted to Divine worship."

[34] Gorham, *Gleanings*, 194.
[35] Gorham, *Gleanings*, 195.
[36] Scott Wenig, *Straightening the Altars: The Ecclesiastical Vision and Pastoral Achievements of the Progressive Bishops under Elizabeth I, 1559-1579* (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 10: "Forced by their own theologically-based Erastianism to submit to Crown's will, the bishops' drive for an authentically Reformed English church was undermined at the national level."
[37] Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Ref in England, 1547-1603*, 2nd edn (New York, 2000), 29.

Orthodox and Evangelicals: Cooperation or Confrontation?

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The issue concerning the relation between Orthodox and Evangelicals is very complex due to the fact that neither the Orthodox, nor the Evangelicals represent monolithic churches that speak with one universally recognized voice. Additionally, the nature of the relationship between them is significantly different in the Orthodox Diaspora than in Orthodox countries.

Within the limits of this paper, it is impossible to explore all possible relations between all Eastern Churches and all Evangelical Churches with their distinctive theologies, missiologies and practices. The alternative, then, is an over-generalized approach which does justice neither to the Orthodox, nor to the Evangelicals due to the fact that it overlooks exactly the specific aspects of the Orthodox-Evangelical relations in each country. Aware of the risk of such an approach, I will explore in this paper the Orthodox-Evangelical relations from a threefold perspective: methodological, theological, and sociological.

The Methodological Perspective

From the patristic period, the East and the West have adopted distinct theological paradigms. Generally speaking, while the West follows the creation-fall-redemption approach, the East follows the creation-deification model. In other words, if the West considers that the Christ-event deals primarily with the problem of sin in order to secure redemption for sinners, the East sees the Christ-event as

> An ineffable descent of God to the ultimate limit of our fallen human condition, even unto death, a descent of God which opens to men a path of ascent, the unlimited vistas of the union of the created beings with the Divinity.[1]

Lossky believes that the patristic sentence: "God made Himself man, that man might become God" sums up the essence of Christianity for the Orthodox Church.[2]

Cataphatic and Apophatic Approaches

In order to explain the difference between the Eastern and Western approaches to theology, Lossky introduces two pairs of concepts: firstly, *katabasis* and *anabasis* and secondly, *oikonomia* and *theologia*.[3]

Oikonomia and *Katabasis: Oikonomia* describes God's movement manwards, which is a movement of descent (*katabasis*). *Oikonomia* is, according to Lossky, the "work of the will [of God], while Trinitarian being belongs to the transcendent nature of God."[4] Consequently, *katabasis* is not a way of knowledge, but only the means whereby "essential goodness, natural sanctity, and royal dignity flows from the Father, through the Only-Begotten, to the Spirit."[5] Moreover, Lossky argues that in the very immanence of His economy, which leads to the incarnation, God remains unknowable.[6]

Theologia and *Anabasis:* In order to know God, one has to follow the way of *theologia,* which is *gnosis* "of God considered in Himself, outside of His creative and redemptive economy." The appropriate methods for *gnosis* are contemplation and silence: contemplation because it is "an exit to the state of a future age, a vision of what is beyond history, a projection of eschatology into the instant", and silence because it "constitutes the language of the world which is coming."[7]

Following Pseudo-Dionysius, Lossky affirms that *gnosis* is a way of spiritual ascent (*anabasis*) beyond all perceptive and rational faculties "in order to be able to attain in perfect ignorance to union with Him who transcend all being and all knowledge."[8] The purpose of this way is not to develop a positive theological system but to attain union with God (*theosis*). This leads us in turn to the distinction between apophatic and cataphatic theologies.

Apophatic and Cataphatic Theologies

Kataphasis

Corresponding to the two movements of God towards man *(katabasis)* and of man towards God *(anabasis),* Lossky affirms that there are two approaches to theology.[9] Cataphatic theology, or positive theology, leads us to some knowledge of God, albeit in an imperfect way. In the words of John of Damascus:

> All that we can say cataphatically concerning God does not show forth His nature but the things that relate to His nature... God does not belong to the class of existing things – not that He has no existence, but that He is above all existing things, nay even about existence itself. For if all forms of knowledge have to do with what exists, assuredly that which is above knowledge must certainly be also above essence – and, conversely, that which is above essence will also be above knowledge.[10]

Affirmative theology begins with the loftier, more congruous comparisons and then proceeds "down" to the less appropriate ones or, as Lossky explains, "a descent from the superior degrees of being to the inferior.[11] In the same vein, Pseudo-Dionysius contends that the imperfection of positive theology resides both in its method and content. Methodologically, "when we made assertions we began with the first things, move down through intermediate terms until we reached the last things."[12] Likewise the cognitive content has a descending character due to the link between concepts and the "level" of theological reflection. In his book *The Mystical Theology,* Pseudo-Dionysius claims that he had analysed this way of theologising in other writings (some of which were either lost or are fictitious):

> In the earlier books my argument travelled downward from the most exalted to the humblest categories, taking in on this downward path an ever-increasing number of ideas which multiplied with every stage of descent.[13]

Thus, in *The Theological Representations,* Pseudo-Dionysius argues that positive theology begins with God's oneness and proceeds down into the multiplicity of affirming the Trinity and the Incarnation.[14] Further, *The Divine Names* affirms the more numerous designations for God which come from mental concepts such as good, existence, life, wisdom, power, and whatever other things pertain to the conceptual names for God.[15] Finally, *The Symbolic Theology* "descends" into the still more pluralized realm of sense perception and its plethora of symbols for the deity such as:

> The images we have of him, of the forms, figures, and instruments proper to him, of the places in which he lives and of the ornaments he wears. I have spoken of his anger, grief, and rage, of how he is said to be drunk and hangover, of his oaths and curses, of his sleeping and waking, and indeed of all those images we have of him, images shaped by the working of the symbolic representations of God. And I feel sure that you have noticed how these latter come much more abundantly that what went before, since *The Theological Representations* and a discussion of the names appropriate to God are inevitably briefer than what can be said in *The Symbolic Theology*.[16]

Further, Pseudo-Dionysius asserts that positive theology originates in the Scriptures which contain the divine truth revealed by God in his man-wards movement of economic descent:

> Let us therefore look as far upward as the light of the sacred scriptures will allow, and, in our reverent awe of what is divine, let us be drawn together toward the divine splendor. For, if we may trust the superlative wisdom and truth of scripture, the things of God are revealed to each mind in proportion to its capacities, and the divine goodness is such that, out of concern for our salvation, it deals out the immeasurable and infinite in limited measure.[17]

However, the concepts or the words of Scripture do not describe God as he is in Himself since He is always beyond everything that exists. For Pseudo-Dionysius, in the words of Scripture "the Transcendent is clothed in the terms of beings, the shape and form of things which have neither, and numerous symbols are employed to convey the varied attributes of what is an imageless and supra-natural simplicity."[18]

Similarly, Lossky argues that whilst God reveals Himself (intelligible attributes) as wisdom, love and goodness, His nature remains unknowable in its depth and therefore our concepts must be always prevented from being enclosed within their limited meaning.[19] In fact, Lossky, following Gregory of Nyssa, argues that "the ladder of cataphatic theology" which discloses the divine names drawn primarily from Scripture are not intended to become rational concepts whereby our minds construct "a positive science of the divine nature", but are rather images or ideas intended to guide us for contemplation of that which transcends all understanding.[20]

Apophasis

Lossky affirms that man's proper response to the economy in which God reveals Himself in creating the world and becoming incarnate, is to confess the transcendent nature of the Trinity in an ascent of thought according to the way of apophatic theology. The negative way of the knowledge of God is an ascendant undertaking of the mind that progressively eliminates all positive attributes of the object it wishes to attain, in order to culminate finally in a kind of apprehension by supreme ignorance of Him who cannot be an object of knowledge.[21]

On the lower steps there are images drawn from the material objects least calculated to lead spirits inexperienced in contemplation into error. It is indeed more difficult, argues Lossky, to identify God with stone or with fire than with intelligence, unity, being or goodness. What seems obvious at the beginning of the ascent, that "God is not fire, He is not stone", becomes less and less obvious as one attains to the height of contemplation, when one has to affirm that "God is not being, He is not good."[22] At each step of ascent one has to guard oneself against the danger of making these loftier images or ideas "an idol of God". Once the heights have been attained, then speculation gradually gives place to contemplation, knowledge to experience, "for in casting of the concepts which shackle the spirit, the apophatic disposition reveals boundless horizons of contemplation at each step of positive theology."[23] Consequently, apophatic theology refuses any attempt to form concepts about God and to organize them in a systematic construct according to human ways of thought. On the contrary, by pointing to mystical union with God, apophatic theology is "an existential attitude, which involves the whole, man... a criterion: the sure sign of an attitude of mind conformed to the truth."[24]

However, if negative theology begins by denying the appropriateness of the human mind and language to knowing God, then one may inquire

concerning the role of Scriptures and dogmas, since these are themselves expressed in concepts. To answer this question, Lossky borrows from Gregory of Nazianzus' metaphorical interpretation of Moses ascent on Mount Sinai and affirms that there are different levels in theology, each one appropriate to differing capacities of human understanding which reach up to the mysteries of God.[25] Gregory of Nazianzus writes:

> God commands me to enter within the cloud and hold converse with Him; if any be an Aaron let him go up with me, and let him stand nearer, being ready, if it must be so, to remain outside the cloud. But if any be a Nadab or an Abihu, or of the order of the elders, let him go up indeed, but let him stand afar off... But if any be of the multitude, who are unworthy of this height of contemplation, if he be altogether impure let him not approach at all, for it would be dangerous to him; but if he be at least temporarily, let him remain below and listen to the voice alone, and the trumpet, the bare words of piety, and let him see the mount smoking and lightening... But if any be an evil and savage beast, and altogether incapable of taking in the matter of contemplation and theology, let him not harmfully and malignantly lurk in this den amongst the woods, to catch hold of some dogma or saying by a sudden spring... but let him stand yet afar off and withdraw from the moment, or he shall be stoned.[26]

In this multi-level theological construct the words of Scripture and of dogma serve primarily as starting and guiding points in an ever-ascending process of contemplation which has deification as its final goal. Thus, Lossky concludes, theology will never be abstract, working through concepts, but contemplative: raising the mind to those realities, which pass all understanding.[27]

From an Evangelical perspective, the apophatic approach to theology raises serious questions regarding the nature of knowledge that is beyond words and logical categories. The encounter with God described by Pseudo-Dionysius as "plunging into the truly mysterious darkness of unknowing", or "one is supremely united by a completely unknowing inactivity of all knowledge, and knows beyond the mind by knowing nothing",[28] does hardly make sense to an Evangelical. For Evangelicals all theological knowledge is based on revelation. For instance, John Stott argues:

> Evangelical Christians begin their thinking with a recognition of the obvious, logical reasonableness of the revelation. Since God is our Creator, infinite in his being, while we are finite creatures of time and space, it stands to reason that we cannot discover him by our own researches or resources. He is altogether beyond us. And since in addition he is the all-holy God, while we are fallen, sinful and under his judgement, there is a chasm between him and us which we from our side could never bridge... We could never know him unless he should take the initiative to make himself known.[29]

Evangelicals believe that God made himself known through general and special revelation. While general revelation was made through nature, special revelation was made through inspiration and incarnation. The

climax of God's revelation was the Word made flesh, the incarnate Son. However, Evangelical believes that the only authentic Christ is the biblical Christ. Stott contends:

> What Scripture has done is to capture him [Christ] in order to present him to all people at all times in all places. The climax of God's revelation should be described as the historic, incarnate Christ and the total biblical witness to him.[30]

In God's special revelation, event and words went together; or in other words, God's revelation is both personal and propositional. Evangelicals also believe in the double authorship of the Bible: divine and human. The Bible is equally the Word of God and the word of man. Because of the kind of book the Bible is, we must approach it in two distinct yet complementary ways. Because it is the word of God, we must read it as we would read *no* other book: on our knees, in a humble, reverent, prayerful and submissive frame of mind. But because the Bible is also the word of men we must read it as we would read *every* other book, thoughtfully and in a "critical" frame of mind.[31] In their approach to theology, Evangelicals submit the authority of Scripture who stands above tradition, experience and human reason.

From the survey of the apophatic and cataphatic approaches to theology it can be observed that they operate with different methods and categories. Thus, the apophatic approach focuses on a direct encounter with God beyond historical realities and consequently uses categories such as essence, energies, mystical union and *theosis*. Alternatively, the Evangelicals speak about knowing God in his self-revelation in Christ to whom Scriptures bears witness. Consequently, categories such as revelation, inspiration, illumination, interpretation and obedience receive a prominent place.

In conclusion, the answer to the question of cooperation or confrontation between Orthodox and Evangelicals must bear in mind the fact that we speak about two distinct worlds. Distinctive theological methods lead to distinct theologies. This becomes clearer when we look at the Orthodox and Evangelical theological perspectives.

The Theological Perspective

From an Orthodox viewpoint the Western Churches, both Catholic and Protestant, have a similar theological frame of reference. For instance, Khomiakov asserts that:

> All Protestants are Crypto-Papists... To use the concise language of algebra, all the West knows but one datum "*a*". Whether it be preceded by the positive sign "+", as with the Romanists, or with the negative sign "−", as with the Protestants, the "*a*" remains the same.[32]

Benz considers that the West developed its theology along the lines of a legal relationship between God and mankind out of which came the doctrine of justification. This legal approach was further extended to ecclesiology, and in the Catholic tradition, also to the doctrine of the ministry, to the role of dogmatic definitions and of canon law.

The Orthodox Approach: Theosis

For the Orthodox, theology is only a means towards an end, that is union with God, or *theosis.* Consequently, the emphasis lies not on developing positive theological systems, but on the mystical aspect of this union. The whole purpose of theological epistemology and ecclesial practice is to help the faithful to attain to deification, or mystical union with God.

In order to explain the nature of this union with God, the Orthodox follow Palamas' ineffable distinction between three aspects of God's being: 1. the permanently unnamable and imparticipable divine essence (*ousia*), then 2. the three divine persons (*hypostaseis*) Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and finally 3. the uncreated energies (*energeiai*) or divine operations, forces proper to and inseparable from God's essence, in which He goes forth from Himself, manifests, communicates and gives Himself.[33]

The mystical union with God according to essence is impossible; if the creature *could* participate in the divine essence, the creature would *be* God, or *homoousios* with God. Thus, Lossky argues:

> If we were able at a given moment to be united with the very essence of God and to participate in it even at the very last degree, we should not be what we are, we should be God by nature. God would then no longer be Trinity, but a myriad of hypostases for He would have as many hypostases as there would be persons participating in His essence.[34]

Only the three Persons of the Trinity are united to each other in the divine essence. Even though we share the same human nature as Christ and receive in Him the name of Sons of God, we do not ourselves become the divine hypostasis of the Son by the fact of incarnation. We are unable, therefore, to participate in either the essence or the hypostases of the Holy Trinity.[35] Union with God according to energy is a *real* participation of creature in the divine life.[36] Lossky argues that,

> In the Church and trough the sacraments our nature enters into union with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Son, the Head of His mystical body. Our humanity becomes consubstantial with the deified humanity, united with the person of Christ.[37]

It is true that by postulating this distinction between essence, person and energies, Palamas was attempting to hold together two claims: firstly, that *theosis* is real, and secondly, that God remains totally *other.* However, such a distinction raises some major theological questions. Ontologically, in spite

of the Palamites' claims to the contrary, this distinction within the being of God runs the risk of compromising the principle of the "unity and simplicity" of the divine essence. To affirm that God's energies interpose between God's essence and the creation leads to the conclusion that there is a duality in God; a "lower" part in which one can participate, and an "upper" part which is totally inaccessible. Or, from another perspective, the idea that within God there are two distinct realities can lead (if pressed toward its logical conclusion), to the implication that there are two gods related to each other in some mysterious way. Meyendorff dismisses both charges arguing that for Palamas "in virtue of the simplicity of His being, God is wholly and entirely present both in His essence and in His energies" and on the other side, "no multiplicity of divine manifestations could affect the unity of God, for God is beyond the categories of whole and parts and while in His essence always remaining unknowable, reveals Himself wholly in each energy as the Living God."[38]

Additionally, it raises the question of the ontological status as well as that of the intra-Trinitarian role of each category (aspect) of God's being. On the economic level, the main problem is to maintain a Trinitarian soteriology, that is, a personal relation with God, whilst affirming that God communicates himself through *non-hypostatic* beings such as the uncreated energies.

The Evangelical Approach: Justification by Faith

From an Evangelical perspective the relation between God and man has to answer the question "How can a lost and guilty sinner stand before a just and holy God?", John Stott argues that,

> This sense of our sinfulness, of the blinding holiness of God, and of the absolute incompatibility of the one with the other, is an essential evangelical characteristic, without which our understanding of the necessity and the nature of the cross is bound to be skewed.[39]

By stressing the reality and horror of sin, Evangelicals point to the cross of Christ as the only way of acceptance with God. The words of the Apostle Paul: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3: 13) affirms that the only way we can be redeemed from the curse of the law is that Christ bore it on our place. This is called "penal substitution." J. I. Packer considers it "a distinguishing mark of the world-wide evangelical fraternity."[40] Likewise J. Stott contends that:

> The cross was a multifaceted achievement, and has many different meanings. It is the ultimate revelation of God's love and justice. It is the decisive conquest of evil. It is the ground of our salvation. It is the supreme example of self-sacrifice. It is the most powerful inspiration to Christian devotion. Moreover, the salvation won by the cross is illustrated in the New Testament by a variety of metaphors

like propitiation, redemption and reconciliation. But evangelical Christians have always insisted that the richest model is justification.[41]

Some contemporary evangelicals argues that justification by Faith appears to us, as it does to all evangelicals, to be the heart and hub, the paradigm and essence, of the whole economy of God's saving grace.[42] Justification is a legal word, borrowed from the court of law. John Stott continues:

> When God justifies sinners, he declares a verdict, in anticipation of the last day, that he has not only forgiven all their sins but has also granted them a righteous standing acceptance in his sight.[43]

Further on, Stott argues that while insisting that "to justify" means "to declare" and not "to make" righteous, Evangelicals emphasize that justification is always accompanied by regeneration. Moreover, this new birth leads inevitably to a new life, this justification to sanctification. Sanctification begins the moment we are justified, but then it grows as the Holy Spirit transforms us into the image of Christ (2 Corinthians 3:18).[44]

In conclusion, deification and justification by faith are two distinct ways to salvation. One focuses on mystical union through the uncreated energies, while the other deals with the legal aspect of the relationship between God and man.

The Sociological Perspective

The historical circumstances during the period which followed the Council of Calcedon (451 AD) placed Byzantium in a pre-eminent and, to some degree, a self-sufficient position, from which it was to develop its theological tradition. Byzantium maintained its Christological commitment to the Council of Chalcedon, and for several centuries kept bridges toward the West intact, in spite of all tensions, political and doctrinal. During this period, however, neither the councils nor the theologians would show particular interest in positive theological systems. According to Meyendorff, with few exceptions, the conciliar statements assume a negative form; they condemned distortions of the Christian truth rather than elaborate its positive content. The greater part of the theological literature was either exegetical or polemical, and in both cases the Christian faith was assumed as a given reality upon which one comments or which one defends.[45]

From another perspective, Hopko argues that although the formal break between the Christian East and West occurred in 1054, from as early as the fourth century AD the Christians of the East had very little contact with the Christians from the West. The Turkish rule, which extended almost over the entire Orthodox world since the fifteenth century (with the fall of Constantinople in 1453) and lasted until the end of the nineteenth century, further estranged the two churches. Consequently, political and cultural exchanges between East and West had been dramatically reduced, and due

to this fact the ideas of the Renaissance, Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment, which are considered to represent the genesis of modern Western culture, stopped short when they reached the borders of the Turkish Empire.[46]

During these centuries of political and theological separation, Hopko argues that the faith and the practice of the Orthodox Church have been preserved unaltered since apostolic times. Whatever our earthly conditions and temporal circumstances, we Orthodox Christians live in the same ecclesial and spiritual world. We identify with the same tradition of faith and life. We worship the same God through the same Christ. We are inspired by the same Spirit in the same church. We celebrate the same liturgy, participate in the same sacraments and say the same prayers. We meditate upon the same scriptures, which we believe to be God's Word inspired by God's Spirit, interpreting them within the same hermeneutical context. We accept the same councils and are guided by the same cannons. We recognize the same teachers and venerate the same saints. We teach the same doctrines defend the same dogmas, and employ the same symbol of faith. In our theology as well as in our worship, we use the same words and images, which we affirm to be "adequate to God" and proper to the experience which we share within God's covenant community and identify in history from the time of Abraham.[47]

According to the Orthodox belief, the uninterrupted continuity with the Apostolic Church is the mark of the true Church. There can be only one church founded by our Lord, and in that Church can be but one single Faith. This one Church is the Orthodox Church; the one Faith is the whole Orthodox doctrine.[48]

Further on, the Orthodox affirm that the Apostolic Tradition can be found today only in their Church, which is the only true church of Christ on earth. Consequently, no appeal to tradition other than the tradition of the Orthodox Church is acceptable. The Eastern Tradition is not one of the regular forms of Tradition, but it is the Holy Tradition of the Church of Christ itself.[49]

Bratsiotis considers that the church would have ceased to be the Church if it had departed from the Holy Tradition. It is the very historical continuity with the Apostolic Church that marks the Orthodoxy as the true faith.[50] Hence the conclusion that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus.*[51] George Florovsky asserts that "outside the Church there is no salvation because *salvation is the Church.*"[52] Similarly, Lossky argues that:

> In the Church and trough the sacraments our nature enters into union with the divine nature in the hypostasis of the Son, the Head of His mystical body. Our humanity becomes consubstantial with the deified humanity, united with the person of Christ.[53]

Consequently, if one does not belong to the Orthodox Church, he or she is not saved due to the fact that the life giving Spirit does not operate outside the canonical boundaries of the Orthodox Church. Bulgakov argues that,

> The Church, in her quality of the Body of Christ, which lives with the life of Christ, is by that fact the domain where the Holy Spirit lives and works. More: the Church is life by the Holy Spirit because it is the Body of Christ.[54]

This exclusively institutionalised ecclesiology leaves little space for co-operation with other churches. Moreover, in the Orthodox countries, the Orthodox Church is also part of the national myth; that is, the Church is associated with national survival, the protection of the culture and identity. Subsequently, religious and national identities are overlapping realities. For example, in order to be a good Romanian one has to be a Romanian Orthodox.[55] Some Orthodox theologians go as far as to argue that nationhood (ethnicity) is a divine principle for the canonical organization of the Church.[56] The outcome of such views is clearly seen in those regions affected by ethnic conflicts. Ethnic cleansing and religious cleansing go hand in hand. Some ultra-nationalist Orthodox advocate one nationhood and one religion within the same national state.

Conclusions

Some Orthodox theologians are aware of the theological problems posed by a purely apophatic approach to theology and consequently attempt to realize a *synthesis* between *apophasis* and *kataphasis*. This new approach creates space for a wider use of the Bible in the life of the Orthodox believers. Thus Timiadis argues:

> To a certain extent the dissatisfaction expressed at the use by the early Fathers of Aristotelian terms, and notably the desire to make less use of terms such as "essence" and "energies", is very understandable. Whatever arguments may be advanced in their favour, they still risk being misunderstood on account of their impersonal character. It might be better to use more intimate and personal expressions, such as "communion with the Holy Spirit", more in line with those of the Old Testament and more connected with the historical Jesus. All modern anxiety about the absence of personal communion in human life with God, could thus be overcome, reassuring man in his loneliness and anguish that he can be visited and sustained, not by vague, immaterial, heavenly forces, but above all by God's personal intervention. A God who is reluctant to be with us, who sends us alternative powers and energies, contradicts the very sense of Christ's Incarnation.[57]

Consequently, there is a shift from exaggerated mysticism to a more Bible-study oriented Orthodox communities. Thus, Kesich affirms that:

> The interest in Biblical research is definitely linked to what is going on in Orthodox parishes. In many Orthodox communities Bible studies are organized and held regularly as church activities... This is a challenge to Orthodox scholars and teachers, to translate their research and to convey in clear terms an

Orthodox perspective within which the people would be able to use, to judge and evaluate new ideas which are appearing so frequently in our pluralistic societies... Revival of interest in the Bible accompanies theological awakening. A theological revival will not occur without genuine interest and active participation in Biblical research.[58]

This is an important point of convergence between Orthodox and Evangelicals in the area of theological methodology.

Regarding *theosis*, the Orthodox way of salvation, Evangelicals must pay the price to study Orthodoxy and unveil from within the theological problems posed by this approach. Already, there are Orthodox theologians, who believe that,

Exaggerated mysticism could lead to the conclusion that God is so far removed from humanity that disparate efforts are required to obtain his intervention. We are then far from the Old Testament promise to make us God's people, the New Israel, the redeemed heirs of His Kingdom, endowed with Pauline *paresia*, brothers of one another by grace and bearers of the Spirit (*pneumatophoroi*) incorporated into Christ's Body and enjoying all the spiritual gifts that membership of the Church provides.[59]

Regarding the Orthodox exclusive ecclesiology, which identifies the canonical boundaries of the Church with the sphere where the Holy Spirit operates, there are disagreements among Orthodox theologians concerning those who do not belong to the Orthodox Church.

Firstly, there is a "rigorous group" who hold that "since Orthodoxy is the Church, anyone who is not an Orthodox cannot be a member of the Church." This view seems to be consistent with the Orthodox teaching that *extra ecclesiam nulla salus,* because the Church mediates the saving grace of Christ through the Holy Spirit. This view leads to strong institutionalism and does not provide space for co-operation with other churches.[60]

Secondly, the "moderate group" holds that it is true to say that Orthodoxy is the Church, but false to infer from this that those who are not Orthodox cannot possibly belong to the Church. This view allows for a little more space for the freedom of the Spirit to operate outside the canonical boundaries of the Church, but it does not clarify the relation between the Spirit and the institution, between the believer and the institution and between the believer and the Spirit. Thus far, the preparatory commission of the great and holy Council of the Orthodox Church has produced a document on the *oikonomia* in the Orthodox Church, in which it is affirmed that "the Holy Spirit acts upon other Christians in very many ways, depending on degree of faith and hope."[61]

Thirdly, a group that could be described as "open ended institutionalism" renders a more favourable attitude for co-operation with those whom do not belong to the Orthodox Church. Zizioulas contends:

It is certainly not easy to exclude from the realm of the operation of the Holy Spirit so many Christians who do not belong to the Orthodox Church. There are

saints outside the Orthodox Church. How can we understand that theologically? How can we account for it without saying that the canonical limits of the Church are not important?[62]

Evangelicals should identify these trends within Eastern Orthodoxy and build bridges that allow for theological discussions. Alternatively, those Evangelicals who live in Orthodox countries dominated by exclusive ecclesiologies and religious nationalism should be ready to pay the price for their faithfulness to the Gospel and the Great Commission. While affirming their identity, Evangelicals should explore all the doors that lead to co-operation with the Orthodox Church. Alternatively, when the situation demands it, Evangelical should be ready serving Christ in a hostile world. We are not only to stand firm in the Gospel ourselves but to fight for it in the public arena as well.

Notes

[1] V. Lossky, *In the Image and Likeness of God* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1985), 97.

[2] See Irenaeus, *Adversus haereses*, v; Athanasius, *De incarntione verbi*, 54; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Poema dogmatica*, 10, 5-9; Gregory of *Nyssa, Oratio catechetica magna,* 25.

[3] V. Lossky, *In the Image*, 15, 97.

[4] V. Lossky, *In the Image*, 15.

[5] V. Lossky, *In the Image*, 16.

[6] V. Lossky, *In the Image*, 15.

[7] V. Lossky, *Orthodox Theology* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1978), 14.

[8] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church* (London, 1973), 27.

[9] Lossky borrows this distinction from Pseudo-Dionysius and John of Damascus. See Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* I. 1, 1000A, in Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Complete Works* (London: SPCK, 1987), 135-141; John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa* I.4, vol. IX, 34.

[10] John of Damascus, *De fide orthodoxa*, 1,4.

[11] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 28.

[12] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* II, 1025B, in *CW*, 138.

[13] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* III, 1033C, in *CW*,139.

[14] Psudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* III, 1032D-I033A, in *CW*, 138-139.

[15] Psudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* III, 1033A, in *CW*, 139.

[16] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology* III, 1033A-I033B, in *CW*, 138-139.

[17] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* I.1, 585B-588A, in *CW*, 49.

[18] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Divine Names* I.4, 592B, in *CW*, 52.

[19] V. Lossky, *Orthodox Theology*, 33.

[20] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 40. See Gregory of Nyssa, *Con. Eunom* (*PG* XLV 939-941).

[21] V. Lossky, *In the Image*, 10.

[22] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 40.

[23] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 40.

[24] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 39.

[25] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 40-41.

[26] Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio XXVIII {theologica II}*, 2 in *NPNF*, 2nd edn, vol. VII, 289.

[27] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 41-42.

[28] Pseudo-Dionysius, *The Mystical Theology*, 167.

[29] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 44.

[30] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 48.

[31] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 61.

[32] A. Khomiakov, in a letter to an English friend, which was printed in W. J. Birkbeck, *Russia and the English Church*, 67, quoted in T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1985), 9.

[33] Gregory Palamas, *Capita physica, theologica, moralia et practica*, 79, *PG* 150, 1173B; III, *PG* 150, 1197A; *Triads,* III.1, 26 in J. Meyendorff (ed.), *Gregory Palamas. The Triads* (New York: Paulist Press, 1983), 607.

[34] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 69-70.

[35] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 70.

[36] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 71.

[37] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 181.

[38] J. Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1974), 125-126.

[39] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 86-87.

[40] A. McGrath, *To Know and Serve God: A Biography of James I. Packer* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1977), 205.

[41] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 92.

[42] R. T. Beckwith, G. E. Duffield and J. I. Packer, *Across the Divide* (Marcham: Manor Press, 1977), 58.

[43] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 93.

[44] J. Stott, *Evangelical Truth*, 95.

[45] J. Meyendorff, *Byzantine Theology* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1974), 3-5.

[46] T. Hopko, *Meeting the Orthodox* (New York: The Orthodox Church in America, 1972), 5. See also T. Ware, *Eustratios Argenti: A Study of the Greek Church under Turkish Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

[47] T. Hopko, "God and Gender: Articulating the Orthodox View" in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 37/2-3 (1993), 141.

[48] F. Gavin, *Some Aspects of Contemporary Orthodox Thought* (Milwaukee: Morehouse Publidshing Co., 1923), 259.

[49] C. Konstantinidis, "The Significance of the Eastern and Western Traditions within Christendom", in C. Patelos (ed.), *The Orthodox Church in the Ecumenical Movement* (Geneva: WCC, 1978), 226.

[50] P. E. Bratsiotis, "The Fundamental Principles and Main Characteristics of the Orthodox Church", in AI. Philippou (ed.), *The Orthodox Ethos* (Oxford: Holywell Press, 1964), 24ff.

[51] Cyprian of Cartage, *Epist.* 71.2.

[52] G. Florovsky, "Sobornost: the Catholicity of the Church", in *The Church of God*, 53. Cf. T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church*, 351.

[53] V. Lossky, *The Mystical Theology*, 181.

[54] S. Bulgakov, *The Orthodox Church*, 2.

[55] See D. Maltin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (Oxford: Blackweell, 1978), 9-10; M. Elliot, "For Christian Understanding Ignorance is not a Bliss", in *East-West Church and Ministry Report* 1/3 (Summer 1993), 1-4.

[56] See I. Ivan, "Etnosul-Neamul: Temei Divin și Principiul Fundamental Canonic al Autocefaliei Bisericești", in N. Corneanu (ed.), *Ortodoxia românească*, 20-34.

[57] E. Timiadis, "God's Immutability and Communicability", in T. F. Torrance (ed.), *Theological Dialogue between Orthodox and Reformed Churches,* vol. 1 (Edinburg: Scottish Academic Press, 1985), 46.

[58] V. Kesich, "The Orthodox Church and Biblical Interpretation", in *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 374 (1993), 351.

[59] E. Timiadis, "God's Immutability", 47.

[60] T. Ware, *The Orthodox Church,* 315-317.

[61] *Towards the Great Council. Introductory Reports of the Inter-Orthodox Commission in Preparation for the Next Great and Holy Council of the Orthodox Church* (London, 1972), 45.

[62] J. Zizioulas, "Orthodox Ecclesiology and the Ecumenical Movement", in *Sourozh* 21 (1985), 22-23.

Bible, Church and Tradition in the Sixteenth-Century Reformation

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Introduction

Today, evangelicals often say that the Bible alone is our authority in faith and practice. It is claimed that tradition has no authority in our churches. We sometimes hear the Reformation described as a contest of Scripture *versus* tradition. That understanding is applied to our view of other Christian communions today, especially Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy: we condemn them because they acknowledge tradition as having a certain authority, and the result (we believe) has been that the teaching of Scripture has been obscured or distorted. In consequence, much modern evangelicalism, especially in the West, rejects the authority of Church and tradition; it tends to assume that the individual reader is capable of understanding the Bible without any human assistance. It is not surprising, therefore, that Orthodox and Roman Catholic writers accuse us of individualism, of believing that individual Christians can understand the Bible for themselves and thus they have no need of the church or of the tradition of Christian theology.

But I want us to think again about our attitude to tradition, because I believe that it is not the attitude of most of the 16th-century Reformers. What did the Reformers say about the authority of the Bible and its relationship to tradition? What was their understanding of the relationship of these to the Church? Why did they produce so many catechisms and confessions of faith? I am not a Reformation specialist, and do not claim originality for the exposition of 16th-century thought which appears here. Neither do I claim originality for much of the contemporary application, but I hope that it may provoke us to thought as we seek to listen to the Scriptures speaking in and to church life today. First of all, I shall attempt to clarify the meaning of the phrase *sola Scriptura*, and then I intend to examine the way in which Bible, Church and tradition were inter-related in the various 16th-century Western approaches to theology. Finally, I want to offer some pointers towards an understanding of how we should see these as related today.

At this point, we must define what we mean by "tradition". Its basic reference is to something "handed down" from one generation to the next.

In this paper, we are thinking in terms of doctrines and practices which have been passed down within the Church. Two scholars, Heiko Oberman and Alister McGrath, have examined differing conceptions of the relationship between Scripture and tradition in Western theology during the Reformation era.[1] However, the criticism of A. N. S. Lane should be noted, that Oberman's analysis (which McGrath follows) omits the role of the Church and thus provides a distorted account of the relationship between Scripture and tradition.[2] If we reflect on our own experience of church life, we see that it is within the Church that a "tradition" of sound teaching and church practice is handed down to us, by such means as preaching, teaching, and writing, as well as through simply living, working, and praying together as fellow-believers. Thus this paper does not merely examine the relationship between Scripture and tradition, but broadens the scope to include the Church, and also the work of the Holy Spirit.

Sola Scriptura?

The humanist movement had stressed the need for scholars to return to the writers of classical antiquity for intellectual, aesthetic and spiritual inspiration. For theologians, this meant a return to the Bible and to the earliest Christian writings, those of the Patristic period. Reformational theology took over this emphasis and developed it, providing a rationale for placing the Bible in a unique position of authority. For the Reformers, Scripture possessed an inherent authority as divinely-revealed, a truth which was brought home to the believer by the witness of the Holy Spirit; thus their approach differed from late-medieval Catholicism, which taught that the authority of the Scriptures was guaranteed by that of the Church. Accordingly, theology needed to return to Scripture as its primary source and supreme authority, since it was deviation from this, which had resulted in the errors prevalent in late-medieval Roman theology.

All other sources of Christian teaching were to be subject to correction in the light of Scripture, whether Fathers, Councils, theologians or popes. The Magisterial Reformers (those, such as Luther and Calvin, who retained the medieval concepts of a Christian society and a territorial church, and so believed that the state should aid the process of reform) still valued the theological tradition of the Church, often appealing to the earlier and more authentic tradition of the Fathers and the early Councils over against later distortions of the tradition seen in the medieval church; but they held that this tradition must be seen as always open to further reform (*semper reformanda*).

This concept of Scripture as supremely authoritative is what is meant by the Latin phrase *sola Scriptura*, one of the four famous slogans summarising Reformational theology, the others being *sola gratia* (by grace alone), *sola fide* (by faith alone), and *solo Christo* (through Christ alone). As far as I know, the phrase was not used by the Reformers

themselves, but such a view of Scripture certainly underlay all the development which took place in particular doctrines, such as soteriology or ecclesiology. So we must stress that 16th-century Protestant thinking about Scripture reflects not only a particular concept of what Scripture is, but also a different way of doing theology from that of Rome or Orthodoxy.

Today, Evangelicals and their critics alike frequently misunderstand *sola Scriptura* as teaching that Scripture is the *only* authority for faith and practice. In fact, we have already explained that what Lutheran and Reformed theologians intended to say was that Scripture is the *supreme* authority, or, to use another word, the *final* authority. This is because it represented God speaking. There were other authorities – the teaching of the Fathers and the Councils, the Church, the ministry (and especially the preaching of the word by the minister), confessions of faith and so on. But all these authorities were seen as subordinate to Scripture; they were not God-breathed, as Scripture was, and they derived their authority from that of the word of God.

Related to the concept of Scripture as supreme authority is the concept of the sufficiency of Scripture. When Reformation theologians spoke of the "sufficiency" of Scripture, they meant that the Bible contained within it all that we need to know in order to be saved. Usually this was qualified by the assertion that some things were stated explicitly, while others, such as the doctrine of the Trinity, were necessary deductions from the teaching of Scripture. The *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England (1571) asserted that:

> Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation (Article 6).

Belief in the sufficiency of Scripture was a major reason for rejecting traditions devised by Roman Catholicism, such as pilgrimages and penances, which were made obligatory for the faithful.[3]

It is only fair to note that many Catholic theologians had also affirmed that all we need to know for salvation was to be drawn from Scripture[4], but their attitude to the Church's theological tradition was not fundamentally critical in the way that the Reformers' attitude was. They did not, on the whole, contemplate the possibility that the tradition itself could have become distorted in the process of handing down, whereas the Reformers insisted that this was exactly what had happened and that the true Christian message had been obscured as a result.

To summarise: *sola Scriptura* did not require the total rejection of the authority of the Church or tradition, but it did mean that these were regarded as subject to correction in the light of Scripture, which contained everything necessary for salvation as the revelation of God. We shall now

look more closely at the relationship between Bible, Church and tradition, keeping in mind the role played by the Holy Spirit.

Bible, Church and Tradition

Roman

While the idea of an extra-Scriptural tradition whose content related to church practice, such as the form of the liturgy, originated very early in church history, later medieval theologians began to think of this tradition as also containing material relating to belief. Previously, Scripture had been seen as containing all Christian doctrine, but needing authoritative interpretation, which was provided by the Church as it drew upon the tradition. The content of tradition was seen as coinciding with that of Scripture: Scripture was sufficient in terms of its content, but required an authoritative interpreter, through whom the Holy Spirit gave understanding.

However, as doctrine developed, it became increasingly difficult to find scriptural support for everything. From the 14th century, a new approach appeared, which was used to justify those beliefs which could not claim scriptural legitimation, such as the immaculate conception of Mary (the belief that she was conceived without the stain of original sin so that Christ could be born of her without himself being tainted by original sin). Lane suggests that this view arose because the church's practice in worship, the *lex orandi*, became the basis on which certain doctrines were put forward, the *lex credendi*.[5] Thus the idea of the immaculate conception of Mary arose out of the Church's worship practices, which represented part of the tradition. So now there were two sources for doctrine – written Scripture and unwritten tradition.

Another late-medieval approach regarded the Spirit speaking through the church as the ultimate authority, which validated both Scripture and the Church's theological tradition. This view originated during the later medieval period, and it seems to have been the approach adopted by the Council of Trent.[6] Trent asserted that the gospel was "the source both of all saving truth and rules of conduct."[7] These were contained in "the written books and the unwritten traditions." Tradition was seen as having been dictated by Christ or the Spirit, just as Scripture had been, and handed down in the Church from one generation to the next. Both Scripture and tradition were handed down and authoritatively interpreted by the Church. The Church now for the first time defined the limits of the canon to include the deutero-canonical books, and also the text which alone possessed authority, the Vulgate, so it could be said that for Roman Catholics there was one ultimate source of doctrine: the Church, as guided by the Holy Spirit. The testimony of the Spirit was located not in the believer (as the Reformers taught), but in the Church's teaching office. This is evident from

the *Profession of the Tridentine Faith* (1564),[8] which required Catholic teachers to accept the Church's apostolic and ecclesiastical traditions, and to interpret Scripture according to the Church's teaching.

As far as contemporary Catholic theology is concerned, we should note that Oberman sees a development of this attitude to tradition as emerging in 19th-century Catholicism, and underlying the doctrinal definitions of the First Vatican Council concerning papal infallibility and Pope Pius XII concerning the assumption of Mary. In it, the teaching of the church *now*, guided by the Spirit, is what is seen as authoritative, and earlier teaching is interpreted in the light of this.[9] Such an approach has made it easier to give legitimacy to doctrinal developments such as papal infallibility (officially defined in 1870) or the bodily assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (defined in 1950).

Reformational

We have said that the Reformation represented a return to the supreme authority of Scripture. Well, how did the Reformers expound the New Testament references to tradition. We may say that they distinguished between two main types of tradition. For example, Calvin interprets the reference in 2 Thessalonians 2:15 to include doctrine, the doctrine which Paul had taught the Thessalonians. However, this was to be distinguished from the kind of tradition which the papists seek to enjoin upon men, which had no basis in Pauline teaching.[10]

The *first* type of tradition was the tradition of apostolic doctrine, grounded on Scripture and summarized in the ecumenical creeds.[11] This was accepted as possessing a legitimate, but subordinate, authority. There was only one source for doctrine – Scripture, "the only judge, rule, and norm".[12] However, within the Church there were reliable guides to help believers understand it correctly. At this point we must remind ourselves that the Reformers had been extensively influenced by humanist thought. Humanism sought to return to the ancient sources (*ad fontes*); for theologians, those sources were the Bible and the early Fathers, who were closest to the New Testament age and therefore more valuable than later theologians such as the schoolmen. The humanist movement had therefore encouraged the study of the writings of the early Fathers. The appeal to the Fathers and the Ecumenical Councils was an important element of the approach of Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and the early Anglicans, but for a different reason. They appealed to the Fathers and the Councils not because of their antiquity, but because these were believed to be in agreement with the teaching of Scripture. As Calvin put it,

> ... although we hold that the Word of God alone lies beyond the sphere of our judgment, and that Fathers and Councils are of authority only in so far as they agree with the rule of the Word, we still give to Councils and Fathers such rank and honour as it is proper for them under Christ to hold.[13]

Thus, for example, Zwingli and Calvin both accepted the three ancient creeds and the decisions of the first four Ecumenical Councils; the same would be true of 16th-century Anglican theology.

There was a polemical motive, as well as a theological one, behind this: the Reformers sought to demonstrate that their theology was in continuity with that of the Fathers, and that Rome had deviated, and was still deviating, from this tradition.[14] The Reformers acknowledged that the Fathers could serve as guides to interpreting Scripture, but they also insisted that the Fathers themselves expected their teaching to be tested in the light of Scripture.[15]

As well as accepting the ancient creeds, the Reformers also expressed their belief in such a tradition by producing their own confessions. Lutherans, Reformed, Presbyterians and Anglicans all produced confessions of faith – something which they would not have done if they had believed, as the Radicals did, that Scripture was the *only* authority. These confessions were seen as having a legitimate, though subordinate, authority, because they provided reliable summaries of apostolic doctrine. The *Formula of Concord* justified the acceptance of the *Augsburg Confession* as authoritative on the ground that this was comparable to the confession in ancient times of the Nicene Creed.[16] Such confessions were attempts to meet the need for a universally accepted form of doctrine which could put an end to the bitter theological controversies which affected the various Protestant churches. For the Reformers, this kind of tradition was of value as a witness to the revelation given in Scripture and an aid to understanding it. It did not, in theory, provide the normative interpretation of Scripture any more than the teaching office of the contemporary church did, nor was it a source of additional truth; rather, it was a subordinate authority, a tool to help the contemporary church understand the Scriptures.

The *second* type of tradition was that which was believed to have been invented by the medieval church and which lacked Scriptural support. Into this category the Reformers placed such practices as pilgrimages and penances, and all non-Scriptural practices laid down as necessary to salvation. The *Augsburg Confession* explains that such traditions obscure the doctrine of salvation through faith, they obscure the commands of God, and they burden consciences.[17] Similarly, Calvin explains that such traditions may represent practices contrary to Scripture, or unknown to Scripture (and thus no part of how God wishes to be worshipped), or they may be good practices insisted upon in a way which Scripture does not do.[18] They displease God and often tend to obscure the teaching of Scripture. Evidently the Reformers went beyond the medieval theologians, because they were prepared to use Scripture to *question* aspects of the Church's tradition: previously "apostolic Scripture" and "apostolic tradition" had been seen as harmonizing with each other, whatever the precise understanding of their relationship.[19]

For the sake of completeness, we should also mention that the Reformers acknowledged that national churches might formulate their own traditions relating to such matters as the order of worship. Such traditions should be observed for the sake of good order.[20] These, however, were justified by appeal to 1 Corinthians 14:40. For example, the Church of England asserted: "The Church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies"[21] – but this resulted in a bitter dispute with the early Puritans, who condemned the insistence upon observing rites which were at best *adiaphora*, "things indifferent".

How did the Reformers' view work out in practice? If anyone was an individualist, it was the early Luther or Zwingli, confident in their belief that the individual reader could interpret Scripture themselves, a belief founded on the clarity of the Word of God and the illumination of the Spirit. They condemned the Catholic Church for not allowing this. It was said that Scripture is clear, self-interpreting, and therefore it should be possible to achieve unity of understanding. However, events proved that this was an unrealistic hope, as theological disagreements proved impossible to resolve. Furthermore, the initial emphasis on the clarity of Scripture was taken much further than the Reformers wished, as the Radicals attempted to get rid of all tradition and start over afresh in their understanding and application of Scripture (for instance, Karlstadt and Müntzer at Wittenberg in 1522). Luther was horrified by what he saw among the Radicals, and reacted by insisting on the need for qualified teachers, and authoritative statements of belief, which could guide readers in interpreting Scripture correctly.

Gradually, a tradition of acceptable interpretation was formed; the sufficiency of Scripture was seen as becoming a reality as the Spirit used the Church to open up the Scriptures. This tradition of correct interpretation was transmitted through such mechanisms as Zwingli's *Prophezei* in Zürich. This was a conference which took place five times each week, at which a group of young theology students worked through the Bible in Latin, Greek and Hebrew to establish the correct exegesis; one of them would also preach a sermon in German. The congregation would have opportunity to comment on the preacher's handling of the text.[22]

This tradition was marked by an attempt to balance the Spirit's work in the individual with his work in the Church. To both Sadoleto and the Spiritualists, Calvin responded that the Spirit must never be divorced from the word. The Word tested Spiritualist claims to inward inspiration, and Catholic claims about the teaching authority of the Church. Experience and the Church must be subject to question; we dare not identify the voice of the Spirit with either, although we acknowledge that he speaks through both.

Authoritative guides to the interpretation of Scripture also began to appear, in the form of commentaries, confessions and catechisms, as well as books such as Calvin's *Institutes*, which were intended as a handbook to help readers to understand the Scriptures (functioning rather like the

second-century *regula fidei*). Great stress was laid on the authoritative interpretation of Scripture offered by the church in the form of its creeds and catechisms, and the preaching of its ministers. The church and its ministers were expected to expound and uphold the doctrinal standards of the tradition to which it belonged.[23] It is interesting to see how "Dr. Luther" came to be venerated by later Lutheran scholars and confessions, and his views regarded as settling controversy. This phenomenon was more pronounced in Lutheran circles than in Reformed ones, perhaps because Luther stood out from his colleagues in a way that Calvin did not, but also because the practice of testing every tradition by Scripture was more firmly entrenched, and led to more radical change, in Reformed circles (though the Anabaptists believed that even there it was limited).

By now, we are probably thinking that there is a tension in the Reformers' thought between the concept of Scripture as the final authority and the authority which in practice was accorded to confessions of faith. The normative status of confessions of faith was harmonised with the *sola Scriptura* principle by positing two types of norm for the Church's belief: Scripture was the *norma normans,* the rule by which all other authorities were measured; confessions were *norma normata*, to be measured against Scripture. In theory, these were functioning merely as aids to the understanding of Scripture, and were subject to correction in the light of it. However, in practice, the creeds and confessions functioned as authoritative interpreters of Scripture in a similar manner to tradition in Catholicism. Because they were far more detailed than early creeds, they tended to define the faith more narrowly, and perhaps to exercise a deadening effect upon the hermeneutical process.

Radical

It is commonly asserted that for most Radical leaders (and here our focus is on the "Evangelical Radicals", also known as Anabaptists), tradition had no value as a guide to our understanding of Scripture. Tradition was often regarded not as an authority but as an evidence of decline from the teaching of the New Testament. (Presumably separation from Christendom entailed separation from its tradition, though I do not know how far this was developed in any explicit way.) However, we shall see that this is a one-sided picture, and that even the Anabaptists eventually began to work with some kind of concept of tradition.

The radicals had no quarrel with the Magisterial belief in Scripture as supreme authority, but their complaint was that the Reformers had not acted consistently with belief in this principle. Indeed, according to the radicals, the Reformers were often more bound by tradition than they realised. Tradition was hindering the Reformers from being consistent with their declared submission to Scripture as the supreme authority. Another problem was the Magisterial affirmation of the concept of "Chirstendom", in which a territorial church was upheld by the state; in practice, the state

often sought greater power over the church, as was the case in Zürich during the introduction of reform in the early 1520s, where the city council seems to have seen itself as the final authority for determining the correct interpretation of Scripture. Reformers would (perhaps unconsciously) have tried to interpret and apply Scripture in a way that was both acceptable to the civil authorities and realistic in that it could be acted upon without overturning the fabric of society.

Infant baptism was a practice which frequently came under radical fire in this respect, and the desperate attempts of theologians to offer a biblical justification for the practice only served to demonstrate to the radicals how tradition-bound the Reformers still were. Luther acknowledged that he retained infant baptism on the basis of tradition, but Calvin sought to provide it with a Scriptural basis, though it has been pointed out that the attempt to base on Scripture a practice which did not grow up until several centuries after the Scriptures were written, could never be convincing.

Many early Anabaptist leaders had been influenced by humanism. So they recognized the importance of returning to the Scriptures as the best source for understanding what Christians should believe and how they should live. What mattered to them was not interpreting Scripture but obeying it; this has been described as a "hermeneutic of obedience". And obeying Scripture meant imitating Christ. This being so, the humblest peasant might possess greater insight into Scripture than the most highly-trained theologian.

However, Alister McGrath[24] goes too far in asserting that the Radicals' approach "unquestionably" placed the judgement of the individual over that of the church. It is true that some more individualistic Radicals felt free to reject traditional interpretations of Scripture, either because the Spirit showed them something different or because these interpretations were seen as contrary to reason. Thus the anti-Trinitarians emerged, committed to doctrines such as justification by faith, but rejecting the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. Nevertheless, the majority of Anabaptists used a hermeneutic which stressed that interpreting the Scriptures is something which believers do *together*, and that it is in such a context that the Spirit gives light. This was one of the main differences between them and the Spiritualists[25], and is in line with the corporate nature of Anabaptist spirituality as a whole, other manifestations of this including the discipling of new believers, the requirement that all in the fellowship be open to correction by others, and the practice of sharing one's goods with those in need.[26]

In principle, then, Anabaptist hermeneutics were to be done in the setting of the community of believers: preaching was complemented by group discussion, questions and answers, and even charismatic prophesying; any member of the congregation was free to contribute, although the contributions of certain brethren were recognized as carrying more weight, because of their godly example and their knowledge of the Scriptures: "For congregational hermeneutics, there is no requirement that

every contribution carry the same weight, but every contribution must be weighed."[27] Acceptable interpretations could be reached by various means, which were not mutually exclusive: the Spirit speaking through an individual, the pronouncements of those recognised as exercising an apostolic or prophetic ministry, the guidance of local leaders, and the consensus of the congregation as a whole.[28]

And once the body had reached an understanding, that understanding was looked upon as authoritative; thus the *Schleitheim Articles*, emerging from a conference in 1527 which sought unity on a range of contentious issues, asserted that any not walking according to the conclusions laid down should not be allowed into membership. We can see, then, that the consensus of the faithful (at local and inter-congregational levels) served as a guide in interpreting Scripture. When such an approach is adopted, the result is that over time a new tradition is built up, even in traditions which reject the idea of tradition. This is exactly what happened among many Radical groupings, as may be inferred from the practice among the Hutterites, for instance, of reading sermons from the movement's first century (and in the original high German as well) rather than preaching new ones.

One weakness of Radical approaches was that, in spite of the existence of a vigorous "spiritualist" tradition, emphasizing the role of the Spirit in inward illumination, often at the expense of the outward word, church and sacraments, mainstream Anabaptists did not really explain what it meant to rely on the Spirit in the process of interpreting Scripture.[29] The role of the Spirit seems to have been understood as relating more to the inward disposition of the interpreter(s), thus linking with the Anabaptist emphasis on a hermeneutic of obedience.

It also appears that some Anabaptists did make explicit use of credal statements. Research has demonstrated that Hubmaier and other South German Anabaptists followed Catholic and Protestant custom in making extensive catechetical use of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed.[30] The Hutterite leader Peter Ridemann wrote an influential *Confession of Faith* (1540), which included a lengthy exposition of the Apostles' Creed. Furthermore, detailed confessions of faith began to be produced by Dutch Mennonites from the late 16th century, an indication of a developing sense that their tradition needed to be safeguarded in this way against the incursion of error. All this means that the widespread modern understanding of Anabaptism as essentially non-credal must be questioned; such an interpretation may say more about its contemporary advocates than about the 16th-century movement.[31] Indeed, one Anabaptist scholar goes so far as to suggest that Anabaptist theological method was not fundamentally different from that of mainstream Protestants or Catholics: whilst they broke with the existing institutional church, that need not imply a rejection in principle of the legitimacy of tradition and a sense of history. All that they were doing was to redefine what counted as legitimate tradition, as a result of redefining the nature of the church.[32] This

interpretation may be going too far, and much of Dyck's evidence is taken from the 17th and 18th centuries; however, it does represent a necessary caution against the tendency to assume that Anabaptist theological method was totally different from that on which many early leaders had been nurtured. This evidence is particular significant for those of us who stand in the "Believers' Church" tradition today.

Bible, Church and Tradition Today

By this stage, we may be asking whether it is ever possible to achieve a tradition-less approach to Scripture. Indeed, is it right to attempt to do so? Looking at the impact of the stream of biblical scholarship which has consciously cut loose from traditional interpretation of Scripture, we may fairly question whether it is. Claiming to have no tradition can itself become a tradition, one whose effects may be the more restrictive for being unacknowledged.

Confessions of faith may not be used in our churches, but are we guided by accepted, and often unwritten, ways of interpreting Scripture? Even if we claim to reject tradition or human creeds, it is still likely that there is in our churches an accepted way of interpreting the Scriptures. For example, I remember preaching on the parable of the Prodigal Son on one occasion, and being told by a deacon afterwards that what I had said was very interesting, but that it was not the accepted Strict Baptist interpretation. And what about the set ways of doing things which every local church has? Often unwritten, new members and visiting preachers are nevertheless expected to conform to these or face congregational disapproval. It seems to me that we would do well to acknowledge that such traditions do exist, and that they play a powerful role in church life. Bringing them to the light in this way is the first step in the process of examining them in the light of divine revelation. Some may need to be abandoned; but I think that many would prove on examination to be worthy of retention, always provided that they are continually open to review as circumstances change and as our understanding of Scripture grows.

We would agree that it is mistaken to do theology without reference to the Scriptures, the work of the Holy Spirit, or the church situation in which God has placed us. (That is a major problem with the dominant model of doing theology in the West – that it pays insufficient attention either to the church context or the Spirit's illumination.) In the same way, I do not think that it is realistic to attempt to do theology without reference to tradition. We may see the first-century church as a model for us, but we must beware of ignoring the twenty centuries which separate the two. When Protestants have tried to do this, they have often repeated the heresies which appeared during the early Christian centuries. This happened among the 16th-century Radicals; it also happened among 17th-century English Baptists and 19th-century Brethren. Evangelicals frequently adopt a negative attitude toward

tradition, but it may help if we try to view tradition as the voice of those through whom the Spirit has worked in previous generations to bring glory to Christ and understanding of the divine revelation. We recognise those through whom he works today, so this should be possible for us.

So we have four elements: Scripture, tradition, the contemporary church, and the Holy Spirit. We have seen how these related in the Reformation era; but the challenge is for us to relate them to each other in our ministry and Christian living today. Let me suggest one way of doing this.

Scripture possesses supreme authority because it alone can be described as God-breathed. The canon of Scripture was recognised by the early church, the text of Scripture has been handed down by the church through the centuries, and the message of Scripture is to be expounded by those so gifted in the church today. In all these, the Holy Spirit is at work, the same Spirit who inspired the original writings; but Scripture stands above the Church because it is the word of God. Individuals and the Church alike stand under the Bible, which is the final authority in all matters of Christian faith and practice.

How does the Spirit work to illuminate the Scriptures? Here we need to strike a balance. On the one hand, examination of the New Testament indicates that certain individuals were recognized as gifted by the Holy Spirit in teaching (cf. Ephesians 4:11). On the other hand, learning took place in a context which allowed multiple contributions, questions and so on (cf. 1 Corinthians 14); it is possible for the Spirit, who blows where he wills, to use any individual to give light on the word, just as he is able to illuminate the individual reading the Scriptures at home. Therefore, it seems that a judicious use of congregational hermeneutics is appropriate today, but without following the Anabaptists in their tendency to reject the work of biblical scholars or the tradition handed down to us from previous generations.

How might we practice congregational hermeneutics? It would seem that one potential model is already a prominent part of Baptist church life in Romania: I refer to the Sunday morning Bible Study, in which some churches allow congregational input, although the study is led from the front. A congregation which is taught how to handle the Scriptures wisely (and that need not involve the ability to understand technical minutiae or the ability to use multitudes of reference books) should be well able to make good use of such an opportunity. The challenge may be to relate what is done in that setting to what happens in the service which follows, and to the sermons preached there.

To balance this congregational approach, we must also recognize that one of the gifts of the ascended Christ to his church is the teacher (Calvin went so far as to institute this as a separate office in his church order). This should affect our approach in two ways. Firstly, the health of our churches suffers if we reject one of the gifts which are given for our building up. Secondly, the teacher functions as part of the church; this is not primarily a

matter of academic ability, but of spiritual gifting (although the two must never be separated, we must put them in the right order) – a point which has often been neglected in Western theological and exegetical methodology.

Perhaps all I can do here is to raise questions rather than offer definitive answers; you must relate these questions to your situation. Nevertheless, I belief that with prayer and thought along the lines I have indicated, it should be possible for us to help our congregations grow in their ability to understand, apply and live out the Scriptures, to the glory of God.

Notes

[1] See Heiko A. Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), 280-9; Alister E. McGrath, *Reformation Thought: An Introduction*, 2nd edn (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 144-7; cf. Euan Cameron, *The European Reformation* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), 89.

[2] A. N. S. Lane, "Scripture, Tradition and Church: An Historical Survey", *Vox Evangelica* IX (1975), 37-8.

[3] Cf. the Lutheran *Smalkald Articles* (1537), III.xv.

[4] For a discussion of this, see Alister McGrath, *The Intellectual Origins of the European Reformation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987), 148-51.

[5] Lane, "Scripture, Tradition and Church", 40-2.

[6] There has been considerable ecumenical debate during the last 50 years about the correct interpretation of Trent's teaching on Scripture and Tradition; for a summary of this debate, see A. N. S. Lane, "Sola Scriptura? Making Sense of a Post-Reformation Slogan", in P. E. Satterthwaite & D. F. Wright (eds), *A Pathway into the Holy Scripture* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 316-17.

[7] *Decree concerning the Canonical Scriptures* (1546).

[8] Also known as the "Creed of the Council of Trent" or the "Creed of Pope Pius IV".

[9] Oberman, *The Dawn of the Reformation*, 289-90.

[10] Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: St Andrew Press, 1965), 411-12.

[11] *Gallican Confession* (1559), Art. V; *Heidelberg Catechism* (1563) Q.23; *Second Helvetic Confession* (1566), chapter XVII; *Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. VIII; *Formula of Concord* (1577), "Epitome", 2.

[12] *Formula of Concord,* "Epitome", 3.

[13] *Reply to Sadoleto* (1539).

[14] Cf. *Augsburg Confession* (1530), Art. XXII.

[15] Cf. *Second Helvetic Confession*, chapter II.

[16] *Formula of Concord*, "Solid Declaration".

[17] *Augsburg Confession,* II.v.

[18] Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries,* vol. 2 (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press), 1972, 156-8 (on Matthew 15.1ff), cf. *Institutes,* 4.10.8.

[19] Cameron, *The European Reformation*, 89.

[20] *Augsburg Confession*, II.v; *Genevan Confession* (1536), Art. 17; *Thirty-nine Articles*, Arts. XX, XXXIV; Calvin, *New Testament Commentaries*, vol. 9 (Edinburgh: St. Andrew Press, 1960), 228 (on 1 Corinthians 11.2).

[21] *Thirty-nine Articles*, Art. XX.

[22] Zwingli's strong emphasis on the need to understand the original languages led one Anabaptist, the former priest and trained theologian Balthasar Hübmaier, to complain with some justification that the Reformers had replaced the papacy with the rule of trained scholars.

[23] Lane, "Sola Scriptura?", 314-15.

[24] McGrath, *Reformation Thought,* 146.

[25] Stuart Murray, *Biblical Interpretation in the Anabaptist Tradition* (Kitchener, Ont.: Pandora Press, 2000), 146.

[26] *ibid.* 157.

[27] *ibid.* 165.
[28] *ibid.* 160.
[29] *ibid.* 136.
[30] Russell Snyder-Penner, "The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Apostles' Creed as early Anabaptist texts", *Mennonite Quarterly Review* LXVIII (1994), 318-35.
[31] Cf. Snyder-Penner, 319-320, 335.
[32] Cornelius J. Dyck, "The Place of Tradition in Dutch Anabaptism", *Church History* 43 (1974), 34-49.

Interpretation and Law: Some Thoughts on Understanding and Application

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This paper critically explores Gadamer's suggestion that law provides the best example of interpretation. He argues that there can be no distinction between meaning and application. We witness realism taking one step back, from the text towards the setting which conditions its exegesis. For Vico too, language is first law, it violently "manages" reality, postponing realism. Yet there is no textually un-mediated way to that reality. This linguistic pragmatism is adapted theologically by George Lindbeck into a post-liberalism which views religion as a language by way of which we perceive reality. The unmistakable tendency in postliberal circles is to assume a dualism between religious scheme and experiential content and to forego a dialectical negotiation between reality and this scheme through which we perceive it, or the setting. Language, constructed not as definitions but as use, imposes itself upon it, rendering it unreachable. Just as we have law only under the influence of its historical applications, we only have God, Scriptures and reality only under their practical and linguistic formalisation in religion.

It is well known that Gadamer capitalises on the Heideggerian heritage in the field of hermeneutics. His decision to make subjectivity central to meaning results in making application inherent to understanding. Understanding is no longer simply discovery, as the reader always brings his own symbolic horizon into the conversation. It presupposes the fusion of the horizons of reader and subject-matter. Hence the task of application cannot really be separated from that of application or use. The inevitable background of interpretation is a shared practice and social action which makes possible the disclosure of something.[1]

The model of legal hermeneutics illuminates the relationship between understanding and application. The classical statement of the relation distinguished between *subtilitas intelligendi* (understanding), *subtilitas explicandi* (interpretation) and *subtilitas applicandi* (application – added by Pietism). Traditionally, Gadamer observes, there has existed a close kinship between the first two, to the exclusion of the third element.[2] Legal and theological hermeneutics, both dealing in application, were thus further inhibited, since both incorporated a basic tension between the fixed text and the sense which resulted by application to the concrete situation:

"A law does not exist in order to be understood historically, but to be concretised in its legal validity by being interpreted. Similarly the Gospel does not exist in order to be understood as a merely historical document, but to be taken in such a way that exercises its saving effect."[3] Gadamer's claim involves two important elements. Firstly, it is a claim made on behalf of a regional hermeneutics (legal and theological). It is therefore not immediately clear if it has a bearing on general hermeneutics, that is, if all understanding is application. Secondly, it is based on literary considerations, i.e., it is derived from the discovery of certain features of the text or behind the text. Gadamer implies that a proper understanding of the text needs to take into consideration the type of claim that it makes. Considering the relationship between these regional instances and literary hermeneutics as such, or philological interpretation, Gadamer finds no real difference in this respect. He discerns a tension between understanding what a text means and understanding how it comes to be applied to a specific situation. The two tasks, the discovery of sense and the creation of sense in application, are not different: "Our thesis is that historical hermeneutics too has a task of application to perform, because it too serves applicable meaning, in that it explicitly and consciously bridges the temporal distance that separates the interpreter from the text and overcomes the alienation of meaning that the text has undergone."[4] This development is significant since understanding and application increasingly seem to be mutually involved in one another. Understanding means that the reader has already concretised the sense of the text with respect to his own symbolic horizon, which is to say that the text has already been applied to his situation. To understand is already to appropriate.

Kathryn Tanner astutely points out that this pragmatic turn towards use does not issue in a neglect of the formal characteristics of texts. Although meaning is gradually being relocated in the space between interpreter and text, "this relational account [...] does not eschew entirely, however, explanation in terms of the text's own properties."[5]

Each interpreter, when approaching a text, is conditioned and constrained by a history of textual effects, that is by a history of application. Such a history involves a sedimentation of meaning, or what Gadamer calls history of effects. Each new textual use contributes something to the meaning of the text in view of the fact that it concretises the text for a given situation, audience, reader. Legal hermeneutics is an instance of such a process. After a laborious argument, Gadamer concludes that the task of the legal historian is not different from the task of the jurist or the normative interpreter. Both readings involve understanding the law according to its possible applications. The jurist, on the one hand, understands the law from the perspective of the case at hand. The legal historian, on the other, without being restricted to a particular case, "seeks to determine the meaning of the law by constructing the whole range of its applications."[6] The historian's is not a straightforwardly reconstructive enterprise, but a

creatively interpretive one.[7] The upshot is that the distinction between meaning and application is eroded in favour of a pragmatist reorientation of hermeneutics. The reality of the law recedes before the practices which constitute its setting. The new applications will enter the history of effects as precedents. It is at this point that Gadamer's proposal is most problematic, for he goes on to say that the application adds new meaning to the law.[8] Meaning is sedimented through application: the content of law (and text) is creatively altered in the wake of its new applications. This is a radical proposal since it would seem that it effectively does away with the objectivity of the text, which seems to have become the absent cause of a complex of actions on the part of the interpreter, not an ontological entity in itself. The issue receives an even more relativistic twist when Gadamer writes that "the judge cannot let himself be bound by what, say, an account of parliamentary proceedings tells him about the intentions of those who first passed the law. Rather, he has to take account of the change in circumstances and hence define afresh the normative function of the law."[9] Authorial intention is not important when seeking the relevant application of law. Since the law, or the classic, is a text with potentially infinite applications, the task of the interpreter is to fit it to ever new circumstances. This requires a certain amount of creativity and imagination. The question is whether by departing from a textual realism and from authorial intention Gadamer opens himself to the charge of relativism.

Kenneth Abraham reminds us that legislatures are corporate authors and do not necessarily speak with a unified intention.[10] Anyone at least familiar with parliamentary proceedings sees the truth of such a reminder. Indeed, laws cannot envisage all contingencies. However, Gadamer avoids the relativist trap by making it clear that this does not give complete creative license to the jurist. The interpretation of the judge is not an "arbitrary revision" for "to understand and to interpret means to discover and recognise a valid meaning."[11] This suggests that Gadamer's pragmatism is crucially tempered by an emphasis on the initiative of the text. Again Tanner gets it right: "the text is somehow still in control of its own reception by way of its internal amplitude."[12] The sedimentation of meaning in the history of effects is not an arbitrary imposition of meaning on top of the text, giving rise to the danger that an accumulation of corrupt practices might eventually obscure the truth of the text. Rather, it is the text itself, in virtue of its being a classic that demands following:

> We can, then, distinguish what is truly common to all forms of hermeneutics: the meaning to be understood is concretised and fully realised only in interpretation, but the interpretive activity considers itself wholly bound by the meaning of the text. Neither jurist nor theologian regards the work of application as making free with the text.[13]

Jean Grondin calls attention to an ambiguity in Gadamer's hermeneutics at this point. While insisting that application is not the same in each case, it is

also loosely defined as the connection between my world and the world of the text.[14] It is doubtful whether the Pietists would have considered this an application. In taking the example of a command, it is clear that Gadamer does not have in mind the same sort of application that postliberals, for example, underscore. To understand a command is to apply it to one's situation. This does not mean that disobedience to the order is identical to misunderstanding it. Quite the contrary: it is precisely because the have understood what the order entails for their world that someone has refused to obey it. Gadamer thus contributes an interesting insight here: one does not necessarily have to be part of a practice in order to understand its concepts. Distinguishing between imagined application and actual application (being part of a practice and acquiring a skill)[15], one may say that it is only the former which is essential to understanding.[16]

It is true that Gadamer universalises the presence of application in all forms of human understanding. Application does not entail an original moment in which one has understood and a subsequent one in which one has applied. However, this "sedimentation of meaning" is not applicable to theological hermeneutics. As we have already pointed out, the context of Gadamer's argument is legal hermeneutics. It is the very nature of law that its applications add meaning to it. It is in this specifically local hermeneutics that new applications add meaning to law. Gadamer does not propose a theory of meaning, but an elucidation of what is the case in a specific hermeneutical context. He is providing us with an intra-textual, in this case intra-legal, description. He does something very similar to what the later Frei does and for two implicit reasons.

The first is a literary-legal consideration: laws are made with the knowledge that they are incomplete and that they need actualisation for specific circumstances. In civil law[17] there is a methodological distinction between general law and special law. General laws are addressed to all citizens of a country, while special laws apply only to certain categories of people. One of the functions of the special laws is to provide the specificity and applicability of general laws by specifying rules for their application to particular categories of people. But on a more theoretical level, there is the principle that no law is able to provide for all its possible applications. Hence the creative task is required by the law's very nature. One may also safely say that it was the very intention of the lawmakers that the content would be modified together with new applications.

The second reason is an institutional one: in the legal profession there are certain rules for arbitration and for the interpretation of laws, one of which is the principle of precedent. The judge is given this power in common law to supplement the law in virtue of future references to the precedent he will have established. Yet Gadamer makes it quite clear that this is an institutionally derived and arbitrary rule. It does not necessarily have an equivalent in all discovery and application of meaning. Therefore the fact that all future applications of one given law in specific circumstances will add something to the content of the law is not deduced

from a general philosophy of language, or theory of meaning. If application does not universally add content to texts, laws, events etc., it is universally present in all understanding. What is not clear for Gadamer is in which cases other than the legal ones does application add meaning. Quite clearly, not in theological hermeneutics:

> Unlike a legal verdict, preaching is not a creative supplement to the text it is interpreting. Hence the Gospel acquires no new content in being preached that could be compared with the power of the judge's verdict to supplement the law.[18]

As in the case of law, the rules for the interaction of meaning and application are given locally and should not be fixed at a general theoretical level. In the case of theological hermeneutics the two considerations are these: a) the Gospel makes it quite clear that it is unique and not to be altered. It is the sufficient word of God and all proclamation, that is application, should submit to it. Furthermore, all proclamation is fallible, whereas the Word is infallible. b) The institutional rules governing meaning and application do not have a theological equivalent to the doctrine of strict precedent, or stare decisis. There is an ad hoc correlation between meaning and application, a local determination of the relation.[19]

Summing up, it may be said that Gadamer denies that one can validly distinguish between the two moments of application and understanding. Theoretical projects such as Emilio Betti's[20] which classify hermeneutics along three lines: cognitive, representational and normative, fail to see the point of all understanding, namely that is forges a relation between the textual world and my world. One cannot separate the cognitive from the representational and both from normative interpretation. Our reading, however, shows that the pragmatic considerations are still, at least formally, under textual constraint. Neither judge nor jurist, neither preacher nor theologian may do away with the text.

Although Gadamer does theoretically privilege the prevenience of the text, methodologically speaking he remains vulnerable, as Kögler shows. If understanding is an event, it is not clear how its results could be made critically available to the agent. The moment of understanding is not separated from that of application by a deliberative time. One does not consciously "take time" to understand a text, with the danger that consciousness will retain no critical control over the understanding one reaches.[21] The interpreter or judge is already immersed in the practices and contexts which shape any text. Is it then not legitimate to say that the judge has his decision made up for him? The discussion about the extent to which the judge is constrained and the extent to which he is free to do away with the text is part of the American legal scene.

One American legal debate is on the issue of whether judges have the right to create new meanings for the law. Ronald Dworkin's views on this matter sparked an interesting exchange with Stanley Fish. In his "How Law is Like Literature"[22] and in *Law's Empire*[23], Dworkin compares the process

of judicial decision making with the writing of a "chain novel" in literature. In the chain novel, a group of novelists undertake the writing of a novel seriatim:[24]

> Each novelist in the chain interprets the chapters he has been given in order to write a new chapter, which is then added to what the next novelist receives, and so on. Each has the job of writing his chapter so as to make the novel being constructed the best it can be, and the complexity of this task models the complexity of deciding a hard case under law as integrity.[25]

In this case interpretation is a matter of looking at what has gone on before, at the way in which previous authors have constructed the subject-matter and deciding how to best continue the enterprise. The governing rule, according to Dworkin, is to make the object the best it can be.[26]

Dworkin is concerned with the prescriptive aspect of the case: judges and authors must[27] interpret in such a manner as to continue the enterprise and make it the best it can be. This implies an active consciousness, rather than interpretive passivity. For Fish, however, this claim betrays a fundamental misunderstanding:

> The force of the account in other words depends on the possibility of judges comporting themselves in ways other than the "chain-enterprise" way. What would it mean for a judge to strike out in a new direction? Dworkin doesn't tell us, but presumably it would mean deciding a case in such a way as to have no relationship with the history of the previous decisions.[28]

There are, Fish argues, certain practices in the community which constrain the judge to make certain decisions and not others. He also believes that Dworkin misunderstands the actual position and possibilities of the writers of a chain-novel. Dworkin would argue that the first writer is the least constrained and has the greatest freedom of all. There is no text before him to be interpreted, nothing binds him to some objective foundation on which he has to build. But the further you go down the chain, the more constrained authors you will find. Fish strongly disagrees with this. The first author is himself constrained by the range of what counts as a start to a novel in the language game of the profession.[29] In such a case, the performance of a given judge is constrained by the competence of his interpretive community. At any given time there are only a number of options open. This is Fish's solution to the tension between freedom and constraint. Fundamentally, this differs from Gadamer's emphasis: it is not the text which constrains the interpreter but the specific grammar of the practice and such a grammar cannot be eluded. The very notion of a judge who would go against the previous history of precedents and give a ruling which does not take this effective history into account is a practical impossibility, "since any decision, to be recognised as a decision by a judge would have to be made in recognisably judicial terms."[30] If a judge would give a decision based on, say, the fact that it is raining outside, such a

statement would not count as a judicial decision. What Fish is saying is quite commonsensical: there are given rules within a community which restrict the range of possible actions. Dissent and harmony can only be recognised as such and can only exist in a ruled context.

If Fish were to stop here he would have had the merit of supplying us with a theory of the regional application of meaning rules. But it is well known that he doesn't. In the process the very notion of the text is erased. To say that rules constrain interpretation is not to say that they do not change. Dworkin raises the issue of an interpreter who gives a philosophical reading of an Agatha Christie detective novel.[31] He argues that such a reading could only change the text of the novel. Fish begs to differ, for it is not the text which does or doesn't allow one to read it in a certain way. It is in fact the rules of the community that constrain interpretation. He is decidedly on the way to doing away with the text on this point.

One may ask what is the relationship between texts and the communal rules for reading them. Only when rules themselves are disconnected from the text as such that one discovers the spectre of Fishean relativism. Together with other legal interpreters, Fish suggests that such a communal grammar cannot be legitimated by appeal to the texts.[32] But rules change, precedents are overturned and a consensus about which rules may be applied in which case cannot be taken for granted. Fish assumes that it is not a matter of dispute which rules to apply in order to decide whether a decision is appropriate. Rules are taken to function univocally and to constrain univocally. Realism has receded from the level of the text to the level of the communitarian grammar, which is taken as absolute and stable, wonderfully transparent to everyone. The irony[33] is, of course, that he does not project indeterminacy on the rules themselves. In the process of shifting the focus from texts to rules for their interpretation, he misses the fact that rules themselves are objects of interpretation and textual in nature.

A conflict of interpretative interests emerges: on the one hand, the text of the law (or the precedent) as a source of constraint, on the other rules of interpretation, legal and political grammar. Just as for Vico there is no reality without human creative making, taking the form of signs, art, language, there is no law without its poetic application to specific disputes. Reality, whether texts, events, people, God, is constantly deferred and textually mediated. Both Fish and Abraham want to force us into an either-or choice. Either we revert to a textual realism or even formalism, or we assume the pragmatic construction of texts and their reduction to a variety of literary interests. Both Ken Abraham[34] and David C. Hoy[35] point out that textualist arguments in the form of literary considerations deconstruct into pragmatist ones: from "this is how the text is" to "this is how we use it."

We think it is instructive to distinguish this from Gadamer's understanding of meaning as application. The difference may consist in the way he understands tradition. While Fish prefers to view the social constraints placed on interpretation synchronically, Gadamer takes

tradition to be what McIntyre would call an argument extended through time. The obvious advantage is that tradition is not set up against the objects of inquiry, but its very emergence is indissolubly connected to what its adherents take to be the subject matter.

Notes

[1] Kögler, *The Power of Dialogue: Critical Hermeneutics After Gadamer and Foucault*, translated by Paul Hendrikson (Cambridge, Mass. and London: MIT Press, 1996), 88.
[2] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 2nd edn (New York: Continuum, 1994), 308.
[3] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 309.
[4] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 311.
[5] Kathryn Tanner, "Scripture as popular text", *Modern Theology* 14/2 (1988), 283.
[6] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 325.
[7] See similar accounts of the task of historiography by Ricoeur, Hayden White, Arthur Danto.
[8] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 330ff.
[9] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 327.
[10] Kenneth S. Abraham, "Statutory interpretation and literary theory: some common concerns of an unlikely pair", in Sanford Levinson and Steven Mailloux, (eds) *Interpreting Law and Literature: A Hermeneutic Reader* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 121.
[11] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 328.
[12] Tanner, "Scripture as Popular Text", 284.
[13] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 332.
[14] Jean Grondin, "Hermeneutics and relativism", in Kathleen Wright (ed.), *Festivals of Interpretation: Essays on Hans-Georg Gadamer's Work* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 315.
[15] This distinction is unfortunately not made explicit by Gadamer, who consequently becomes vulnerable to accusations of subservience to tradition.
[16] What this means in the long run, at least from the perspective of Gadamerian hermeneutics, is that members of different traditions may indeed understand one another, although being part of one tradition may provide one with a greater semantic depth of its own concepts.
[17] The legal system of mostly francophone countries, such as Romania etc.
[18] Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, 330 (my emphasis).
[19] Even in the legal profession there is a dissimilarity in the function of precedent in *common* as opposed to *civil law*. Civil law holds the centrality of statutes and laws and does not have a doctrine of strict precedent. The judge is not constrained by the previous applications of law. In common law, where statutes are less important, *stare decisis* establishes a textual foundation and constraint for future decisions. In this context the sedimentation of legal meaning is most transparent.
[20] For Gadamer's discussion of Betti, see *Truth and Method*, 309-310; "Hermeneutics and historicism" [supplement to *Truth and Method*]. Betti's views are explained in *Teoria Generale dell'interpretazione* (2 vols., Milan, 1955), a partial translation of which can be found Emilio Betti, *Teoria Generale dell'interpretazione,* translated by Susan Noakes, *Modern Language Studies* 12 (1982): 34-43; see also Joseph Bleicher, *Contemporary Hermeneutics: Hermeneutics As Method, Philosophy and Critique* (London: Routledge), 1990.
[21] A more useful account may be found in Ricoeur's notion of *second naiveté*, which involves neither a total submission to the text, nor its violent schematisation by critical theoretical categories. cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, translated by Kathleen McLaughlin/Blamey and David Pellauer (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1984-1988), vol. 1, 77-81; vol. 3, chap. 7; Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil,* translated by Emerson Buchanan (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 349. For an excellent analysis cf. Mark I. Wallace, *The Second Naiveté: Barth, Ricoeur, and the New Yale Theology.* Studies in American Biblical Hermeneutics vol. 6. (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1990), *passim*; Dan R. Stiver, *Theology After Ricoeur: New Directions in Hermeneutical Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press), 2001, 56-78.

[22] To be found in his *A Matter of Principle* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), 1985.

[23] Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[24] Dworkin, *Law's Empire* (Oxford: Hart, 1988), 229ff.

[25] Dworkin, *Law's Empire*, 229.

[26] Dworkin, *Law's Empire*, 53.

[27] Dworkin, Ronald. "Law as interpretation", *Texas Law Review*, 1982, 60, 543.

[28] Fish, "Working on the Chain Gang: Interpretation in Law and Literature", in *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 92-93.

[29] Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 89.

[30] Fish, *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 93.

[31] see Fish's response in *Doing What Comes Naturally*, 95ff.

[32] See for example K. S. Abraham, "Statutory Interpretation and Literary Theory: Some Common Concerns of an Unlikely Pair", 127.

[33] It is ironic since he reminds Owen Fiss of this very textuality; Owen Fiss, "Objectivity and interpretation", in Sanford Levinson and Steven Mailloux (eds), *Interpreting Law and Literature: A Hermeneutic Reader* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), esp. 233 on "disciplining rules"; and Fish's reply, "Fish vs. Fiss", in Levinson and Mailloux (eds), *Interpreting Law and Literature*, 252ff.

[34] *Interpreting Law and Literature*, 122.

[35] David Couzens Hoy, "Interpreting the Law: Hermeneutical and Post-structuralist Perspectives", in Sanford Levinson and Steven Mailloux (eds), *Interpreting Law and Literature: A Hermeneutic Reader* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), 321.

Justification in Elizabethan Theology: Conformity and Non-Conformity

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Introduction

During the reign of Elizabeth I the two conflicting parties within the English Church, the Conformists and the non-Conformists, were represented by some key theological figures. For instance, in the Conformists' camp, John Jewel defended Elizabethan Church against Roman Catholics in his *Apology of the Church of England* (1562) and *Defense of the Apology* (1567). Likewise, John Whitgift defended the Elizabethan Church against Puritanism in his *Answer to the Admonition to Parliament* (1572) and *Defense of the Answer* (1574). Whitgift had written this work against Thomas Cartwright, the leading non-Conformist theologian who was followed by Walter Travers, another famous name among the advocates of Puritanism. It will be argued in this paper that despite some obvious differences between Conformism and non-Conformism which will not be analysed here (notably in the area of ecclesiology), their doctrine of justification is almost identical with only a limited number of divergent points.

John Jewel

The starting point of Jewel's doctrine of justification in his *Apology of the Church of England* is the affirmation of God's grace, manifested in Christ's work as mediator and intercessor. Thus, the incarnation of Christ and his words are essential to justification.[1] Justification begins with God, and God is the one who starts the whole process. Of his own, man can do nothing. Nobody is able to enter God's presence except for Christ alone. Thus, Jewel's doctrine of justification is based upon the firm foundation of Christology:

> Neither have we other mediator and intercessor, by whom we may have access to God the Father, than Jesus Christ, in whose only name all things are obtained at his Father's hand.[2]

Then, Jewel deals with the reality of sinful humanity. According to his evaluation of the problem, every person is born in sin and leads a life of sin so that nobody can claim to have a clean heart. The righteousness of man is unrighteousness by nature, and man is totally unable to enter the presence of God. The most "righteous" person is nothing compared to the righteousness of Christ. This means that the only means of access to God is not by the righteousness of man, but by the righteousness of Christ. In Jewel's theology, the righteousness of Christ alone is able to attain to God's absolute standards of holiness. The law of God is perfect and requires a perfect obedience on the part of man. Man, however, is far from being perfect and cannot, by any means, reach the level of perfect obedience. By natural birth, the perfect obedience required by God to fulfil his perfect law is not even a remote possibility. Man is free to do whatever he wants to obtain God's grace, but no matter what he does, there is absolutely nothing to match the requirements of God. This is simply because God's plan works differently from what man conceives by his natural abilities.

Jewel expresses the reality of justification negatively, by saying that nobody can be justified before God by his own merits or deeds.[3] If nothing from the realm of humanity and nature is able to obtain justification, it means that the only solution lies in the realm above nature, which is the realm of grace.[4] Man's sole escape is to find refuge in God's mercy and love. As such, justification originates in the sphere of grace, and is totally dependent upon the mercy and love of God. These two fundamental attributes of God are manifested in Christ, who is the only one able to obtain the forgiveness of sins by his own blood. Consequently, justification is based upon the atoning death of Christ at the cross. On the other hand, justification is the forgiveness of sins, namely the cancellation of man's unrighteousness. Thus, the righteousness which justifies does not belong to man, but is somehow given to man by God on the basis of Christ's death. Justification also means reconciliation with God the Father through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Justification is a reality which becomes effective firstly in the sight of God. God is the first who needs to be satisfied concerning the restoration of human nature. This outcome is possible only through the work of Christ; man cannot do anything in this respect. Jewel explains clearly that we are "justified before God by only faith, that is to say, only by the merits and the cross of Christ."[5] This is why God himself must persuade the mind of every man that salvation cannot be found in man, but only in God through Christ. Man must be fully convinced that the one who obtains salvation for him is not himself, but God. Moreover, as totally detached from the sphere of human possibilities, justification is infinitely costly to man. He can do nothing to pay for his justification. Only God can provide the necessary payment for man's justification, and this is the blood of Christ which washes away the sin of man. Thus, justification is both the forgiveness of sins and the remission of sins:

> There is no one mortal creature which can be justified by his own deserts in God's sight; and therefore that our only succor and refuge is to fly to the mercy of our Father by Jesus Christ and assuredly to persuade our minds that he is the obtainer of forgiveness for our sins and that by his blood al our spots of sin be washed clean; that he hat pacified and set at one all things by the blood of his cross; that he by the same one only sacrifice which he once offered upon the cross hath brought to effect and fulfilled all things [...][6]

Man's works do not have any merit whatsoever. The only work which has the necessary merit for man's salvation is the death of Christ on the cross. Jewel realizes that the detachment of salvation from the possibility of man might cause some to live in an idle manner, in a total indifference and defiance of any form of morality. Even some Christians might be overcome by such a thought. This gives Jewel the opportunity to introduce his concept of faith, which is the essence of godly living. It is not enough for a Christian to be a Christian if he was baptized. Baptism does not offer justification. Only God offers justification on the basis of faith. In Jewel's thought, faith is not idle, but active and full of life. Faith is the source of good works, and every true Christian should perform good works spontaneously, out of love for God. By faith and through the Holy Spirit, man receives his justification from God. One should know, however, that together with justification, man is also given sanctification by the inner work of the Spirit.

Thus, Jewel explains that, from this perspective, one could speak of a double justification, an idea which he reiterates in his *Defense of the Apology*. The first is justification by grace, described by the apostle Paul, and the second is justification by works, dealt with by the apostle James.[7] Man is thus able to perform good works, but only if Christ himself dwells in him through the Spirit of God. The entire Holy Trinity is involved in man's salvation, which reinforces Jewel's conviction that salvation is totally the work of God, not of man. Thus, it could be argued that justification is based on the work of God in Christ, while sanctification is founded on the believer's union with Christ through the Holy Spirit:

> Besides, though we say we have no meed [or reward] at all by our own works and deeds, but appoint all the means of our salvation to be in Christ alone, yet say we not that for this cause men ought to live loosely and dissolutely; nor that it is enough for a Christian to be baptized only and to believe; as though there were nothing else required at his hand. For true faith is lively and can in no wise be idle. Thus therefore teach we the people that God hath called us, not to follow riot and wantonness, but, as Paul saith, "unto good works to walk in them"; that God hath plucked us out "from the power of darkness, to serve the living God", to cut away all the remnants of sin, and "to work our salvation in fear and trembling"; that it may appear how that the Spirit of sanctification is in our bodies and that Christ himself doth dwell in our hearts.[8]

Justification has its origin in the realm of God, then is made effective in the realm of man to his benefit and finally is perfected in the realm of God

again. The final result of justification is the resurrection of our bodies by virtue of the fact that the Spirit of God has dwelled within us. The finality of justification is eternal life and blessings in the presence of God.[9]

John Whitgift

Like Jewel, Whitgift promotes a doctrine of justification with a clear Christological focus in his *Defense of the Answer to the Admonition.* Whitgift, however, insists on the relationship between justification and sanctification. Firstly, he underlines the difficulty of sanctification, which should not be taken lightly. It is true that God granted us justification based on his free grace, but this does not imply that man does not have to do anything at all. Justification may well be the work of God entirely, but sanctification is both the work of God and the work of man. Every justified believer must be fully aware of his spiritual condition. Although justified, the believer still lives in a body which is affected by sin. Accordingly, he must strive and fight against sin. Every justified believer is simultaneously a saint and a sinner. Whitgift warns that sin must never be ignored. The joy of justification may be easily corrupted by the deceit of sin. By justification and the subsequent sanctification, sin was overpowered, but nobody should lose sight of the power of sin. Carelessness in regard to sin may cause the believer to forget spiritual reality completely. Sin is able to blind every believer if he or she is not aware of its power. Whitgift launches a second warning by mentioning that human nature is biased to sloth. From this perspective, sin weakens the will and detaches the justified believer from the spiritual safety of his relationship with God. Whoever finds himself in this situation is gradually forgetting the significance of Christ and of salvation.[10]

Bearing this possibility in mind, the justified believer should seek Christ diligently. Whitgift explains that Jesus should be sought for the sake of the Spirit, not for the sake of flesh. This means that the believer should prove his justification by an active involvement in sanctification. On the other hand, the justified believer should not seek self-oriented pleasures, but the richness of spiritual life. Whitgift is keenly aware of man's desperate need for God even after justification has been perfected and sanctification initiated. The sin which resides in man's corrupt human nature will try to tempt the believer sooner or later into breaking God's law anew. Though sanctification infers at least a small degree of effort on the believer's part, Whitgift knows that man is so desperately weak that he still needs God's assistance. Thus, sanctification can be carried on solely by means of God's help through the Holy Spirit. The justified believer is able to live a godly life only through the constant support of God's Spirit. Justification may very well be the forgiveness and remission of sin, but it is by no means the cancellation of humanity. The sin which is engraved in the very core of our nature will make its presence known in the life of the justified person. This

is why Whitgift advocates an active spiritual life, based on a living relationship with God through the Spirit, made possible by redemptive work of Christ.[11]

In Whitgift, justification is founded on the grace of God, which is revealed in the work of his Son, Jesus Christ. Whitgift emphasizes that the mercy of God is infinite, which is a hint at the fact that justification is sufficient in itself as a work of God. Man does not have to do anything to perform it. Justification consists of the pardoning of sin and is given by God to humanity in accordance with the will of God. This means that the will of man in obtaining justification has absolutely no significance at all, indeed it is very likely that man does not even want to have God's justification. Whitgift explains that God's mercy is so great that he even forgives ignorance, wilful errors and much more serious sins. Whitgift equates man's mind with the will and asserts that only God is able to alter the mind of man, namely the will, to such extent that he believe in God. Whitgift explains:

> It may please you to understand, that the mercy of God in his Son Jesus Christ is infinite, and that he pardoneth at his good will and pleasure not only misbelief proceeding of ignorance but wilful errors, and sins also, though they be of themselves damnable: he also altereth the mind of man even in a moment; and therefore, as his mercies be infinite, so be his judgments unsearchable.[12]

Because the will of man is not able to choose in favour of justification and only God is able to alter it in this respect, it follows that, for Whitgift, there is no such thing as free will. According to Whitgift, anyone who supports the teaching of free will is opposing the doctrine of the grace of God. Whitgift knows that human beings are frequently tempted to believe in free will, but this is misleading and causes them to misunderstand the reality of justification. However, nothing can prevent the mercy of God or obliterate repentance, which is the gift of God. In other words, sin is not able to fight the power of God, who grants repentance to those he chooses by his will. Furthermore, anyone who believes in free will denies the foundation of faith; actually, he denies Christ himself.[13] Following an evident Reformed understanding, Whitgift writes that all these things can be found in Holy Scripture, which is the perfect Word of God, and has authority in matters of faith.[14] Every single aspect which is necessary to salvation belongs to the Word of God and is plainly presented in Holy Scripture as normative to everyone's faith.[15]

Thomas Cartwright

Because his disputation with Whitgift centred upon Church polity and Scripture, Cartwright's doctrine of justification is remarkably similar to that of Whitgift as indeed are non-Conformist and Conformist soteriologies in general.[16] Thus, like Whitgift, Cartwright acknowledges that justification is

the work of God, not the work of man.[17] In his *A Confutation of the Rhemists Translation*, Cartwright argues that justification points to God's glory, and is not meant to emphasize the merits of men.[18] For example, Cartwright mentions that Adam's justification is placed in faith. It is obvious that Adam could not boast of his merits but only of his grave sins. This is why God decided that the way to salvation should be founded on faith, not on works or their consequent merit. In fact, this was Adam's only chance; otherwise there would have been absolutely no hope for him. Thus, in spite of his most serious sins, Adam could hope to be justified by God due to faith, not works. Faith and works, however, cannot be separated. Faith is proved by good works, which is a clear indication that justification is followed by sanctification.[19]

Justification is based on the justice of Christ and is forensic in essence. Thus, justification is to consider or to account someone righteous as if he were righteous in reality. In Cartwright, justification seems to be preceded by [effectual] calling, because only those who hear the call of God are justified eventually. Because it cannot be separated from sanctification, justification does not only mean to consider or to account righteous but also to make righteous. But in the end, Cartwright is very careful to underline the primacy of justification over sanctification, mainly because the former is totally the work of God, with no human intervention, while the latter is only partially, though necessarily, the work of God as man cooperates with God's grace. Here is Cartwright's wording:

> And we boldly affirme that is more glory to God and commendation to Christ's justice to call and account an evil man just; than to make him of an evil one just in the works that are done by himselfe.[20]

Cartwright is preoccupied to push justification as far as possible from the realm of human abilities. Justification is by faith alone and by imputation. Thus, it means that God considers man to be justified. Man can never consider himself justified in the sight of God. Faith is a gift of God, so man cannot contribute anything to his justification. The entire merit for man's justification does not lie within man's capacities, but within God's power: "By justification through faith alone, or by imputation, glory is taken from men and given unto God."[21]

Cartwright further explains that imputation must be considered in relation to the righteousness of Christ. The righteousness of man does not qualify itself for justification. The only valid righteousness of justification is the righteousness of Christ, which is imputed to man. This means that God considers man to be righteous in his sight based on the righteousness of Christ. Man is unrighteous, but God looks at him through the righteousness of Christ as if man really possessed it. The righteousness of Christ is external to man and remains external to him. There is no way in which man could possibly claim to have even the most insignificant merit for his justification. Only God has the merit for justification, both in considering

man righteous due to the righteousness of Christ, and in sending Christ to suffer for our justification.[22] The immediate result of justification is union with Christ, whereby the justified believer is brought into the presence of God:

> Men are not in themselves righteous. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to them by God. Christ becomes thus our righteousness and we can come into the presence of God.[23]

Cartwright's constant emphasis is that we are justified by faith alone, not by works. Thus, the only aspect which qualifies us to be justified is the righteousness of Christ, which becomes ours by imputation. Cartwright writes that this justice of God is imputed to us freely, by faith. Only imputed justice is true justice. Accordingly, justification is founded on grace.[24] Justification is completely God's work and has two main parts. Firstly, the free remission of sins by Christ, and secondly, the receiving of Christ's righteousness by man through faith, which is the beginning of sanctification.[25]

In *A Commentary Upon the Epistle of St. Paul written to the Colossians*, Cartwright equates salvation with redemption, and mentions justification as a part of it. Again, he stresses the work of God in redemption, which is made possible only through Jesus Christ, the Son of God.[26] It appears that, for Cartwright, redemption has two main aspects: justification and sanctification, which is the end of redemption, and whereby he intends to justify the importance of good works for salvation. Good works do not justify, but they are necessarily required as a proof of justification, or, broadly speaking, of redemption. Good works are the effects of salvation, not its cause, and they reflect the perfect righteousness of Christ, imputed to believers.[27]

Next, Cartwright approaches the importance of sanctification. Man has sanctification in Christ, in the righteousness of Christ, not in himself or in his corrupted righteousness. We are able to perform good works only because of Christ, who is able to satisfy the necessary justice of God. Together with the imputation of Christ's righteousness, something happens within the believer, whose attitude is changed. Cartwright is convinced that the justified believer has a new heart, which means we cannot have justification without sanctification:

> The sum is a more special declaration of the fullness and accomplishments we have in Christ. The parts are, that in Christ we have circumcision inward of the heart, with the outward sign thereof, because we have sanctification and justification.[28]

For Cartwright, justification and sanctification imply dying to sin. In fact, by justification, God had forgiven our sins but then, by sanctification, the justified believer must die constantly to sin. Justification is positional, i.e. in relation to God we are considered to be righteous. Sanctification,

however, which is the proof of justification, is effectual, in other words we must perform good works out of love and consequently be righteous in everyday reality.[29]

Walter Travers

Following Cartwright, Travers connects his doctrine of justification to God, and especially to Christ, who is the only person capable of making satisfaction for our sins. Thus, justification is described as satisfaction for sins. Such a definition offers Travers the opportunity to talk about the person of Christ.

In his *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, Travers writes that our justification does not depend on ourselves, but on Christ and on his works. For Travers, Christ died in order to make propitiation for our sins, which means that he died for our sins in our place. This exchange, which resembles Luther's *commercium admirabile*, is effectual to the entire Church. Travers explains that God redeemed his Church due to the atoning death of Christ. In fact, Christ died that we may have life, and so redemption and, particularly, justification were made possible because Christ was both God and man. This underscoring of Christ's incarnation is actually placing justification in God's sphere of action. Justification was possible because of God, who was actively involved in the work of redemption. Travers here makes a daring equivalence by writing that the blood of Christ was the blood of God, the very foundation of justification. At this point, for Travers, justification means both to make satisfaction and to effect reconciliation between man and God. Furthermore, Travers stresses once more the utmost importance of God in justification. We are justified because God was willing to forgive us and make peace with us. This is what Travers wrote:

> And if any should deny [it] to be proper to the person of Christ to make propitiation for our sins, it may be proved by this that the Apostle Paul saith, "that God redeemed the Church by his blood"; so calling it the blood of God, wherewith the Church is redeemed, because in the same person of Jesus Christ are both the nature of man, whose blood was shed, and the nature of God, which made it of inestimable prize and value, to be effectual to redeem the Church. But the blood of no other person can be called the blood of God, therefore no other person can make satisfaction for sin and reconcile us unto God.[30]

In his *Supplication*, written against Hooker's *A Learned Discourse of Justification*, Travers lists the main points of Hooker's doctrine of justification, which make up the core of his public criticism. Firstly, Hooker reportedly told Travers when the latter urged him to seek the advice of other Church leaders in matters pertaining to doctrine that, concerning the doctrine of predestination, his best author was his own reason.[31] Secondly, Travers wrote that Hooker preached that the assurance of what we believe

by the Word of God was not so certain as the things we perceive by sense.[32] Travers immediately explains that this dogmatic statement should be reversed so that the things we believe by the Word of God may be more certain than the things we perceive by sense or reason.[33] Thirdly, Travers approaches the very sensitive matter of the salvation of Catholic believers which, for Hooker, was of great importance. Thus, Travers explains that Hooker held that the Catholic Church was a true Church of Christ. Moreover, Travers wrote that, for Hooker, the Catholic Church is a holy Church by virtue of the fact that it has professed the revelation of God by his son, Jesus Christ. Travers admits that Hooker never said that the Catholic Church was pure and perfect, but Hooker nevertheless expressed his doubt regarding the impossibility that at least some Catholic believers could be saved. Hooker actually insisted that some Catholics could be granted salvation by God because they were unwillingly ignorant in doctrinal matters.[34] This was a very courageous thing to claim in Elizabethan England, especially for somebody like Hooker who was deeply rooted in the social realities of Elizabethan society.[35] In Travers' opinion, such a teaching is contrary to Scripture, causes prejudice to the faith of Christ, and encourages sinners to continue in their wrong way of life to the destruction of their souls.[36] As such, Travers answered that, according to Scriptures, those Catholic believers, who were dogmatically ignorant because they had been taught that salvation was in part by works, were not saved. However, lest he should be accused of professing a very narrow understanding of salvation, Travers is prepared to admit that, should any Catholics be saved, this is not due to their ignorance, but to their knowledge and faith of the truth.[37] Fourthly, Hooker is believed to have said that Scriptures do not ultimately judge whether a man who died within the Catholic Church should be saved or not. According to what Travers said of Hooker's doctrine, Catholics do have "a faith of Christ" and a "general repentaunce of all their errours", despite their understanding of justification as being partly by works and merits.[38] Fifthly, Travers explained that Hooker had tried to convince his audience that there were only small differences between the doctrine of the Church of Rome and the doctrine of the English Church. Likewise, according to Hooker, Catholics acknowledged all men as sinners, "even the blessed virgen", although some still hold she is free from sin. Furthermore, Catholic teaching has at its core the idea that the righteousness of Christ is the only meritorious cause for the remission of sins. Hooker, however, plainly admitted that the methodology of applying the righteousness of Christ is different in Roman Catholic and English Protestant theology.[39] Sixthly, Hooker asserted that the Church of Rome did not directly overthrow the foundation of justification by Christ alone, in other words Catholics did not wilfully profess a wrong doctrine, but only because of the teachings of their Church leaders. Such a reality drew Hooker closer to the conclusion that salvation was available for Catholic believers.[40] Travers strongly rejected Hooker's assessment of the Catholic doctrine of justification and wrote that Catholic

theology directly denies the salvation of humankind by Christ or by faith alone, without the works of the law.[41] Seventhly, as the last theological argument against his opponent, Travers wrote that Hooker considered the works added to justification by Catholics to be works commanded by God and, therefore, accepted by him. Hooker then reportedly said that anybody who professed Christ together with justification by works should be cheerful as God is not a "captious sophister" but "a mercifull God", who will not condemn the ignorance of those who wholeheartedly confess at least Christ.[42] For Travers, this theory is so preposterous that it does not even deserve to be analysed: "the absurditie of which speech I need not to stand uppon."[43] Put in a nutshell, Travers argued that Hooker erred in his interpretation of predestination, in relying on human reason rather than Scripture as the final authority, in misinterpreting the full meaning of Scripture, in compromising the Reformation principle of justification by faith alone by making good works necessary to salvation, and in forsaking the plain language of the Bible to discourse in the manner of a scholastic philosopher and theologian.[44]

Conclusions

Within the Conformist and the Puritan traditions, the doctrine of justification proves to be a unifying doctrine between the two, with only a few differences. Thus, regardless whether one studies the theology of the Conformists Jewel and Whitgift or of the non-Conformists Cartwright and Travers, the main features of their understanding of justification are basically the same and they all reflect the most important points of Lutheran and Reformed theology. Firstly and most importantly, justification is by grace as an indication that man has nothing to do with the idea or the practical applicability of justification. Regardless whether we talk about being considered righteous or being made righteous, God is essentially present and works effectively in our justification. Man is considered righteous only because God wants to consider him righteous. God considers man righteous only due to the merits of Christ, which he acquired by his work at the cross. By natural birth, man does not have the capacity to display a perfect righteousness, because he is fatally flawed by sin. Thus, he cannot obtain his justification by himself and is in need of external help, which comes from God. God himself looks at man through the perfect righteousness of Christ and sees man as if he were perfect. Actually, he is perfect only because he is in Christ. God imputes the righteousness of Christ to the sinner by faith. At this very moment, when justification is applied practically to man, the process of justification begins, and the justified sinner is made righteous. In order to distinguish biblically between justification and sanctification, or between considering a person righteous and making him or her righteous, Hooker's contemporaries used the theology of Paul and James. Paul writes about justification, or about

man being considered righteous, while James was more preoccupied with sanctification, or man being made righteous. Nevertheless, both realities are fundamentally dependent upon God. Good works, which must be performed necessarily as a proof of justification, have their origin in God. Man is utterly unable to work out his justification and sanctification. Thus, although present in man, faith is not from man, but from God. Man does not have a free will which could enable him to choose God. God chooses man; it does not work otherwise. This is why justification is forensic, because it is decided within the Holy Trinity. This should be an excellent cause of comfort for the believer, because his entire salvation manifested in justification and sanctification is essentially rooted in God. Man, however, must be realistic about the power of sin, which remains within his nature for as long as he lives. Thus, faith as trust must be continually exercised throughout the believer's entire life, because there is no single moment when man does not need the grace of God. The idea of human merit is utterly rejected. Regardless whether one considers justification and/or sanctification, man does not have any merit in supporting them. God alone is the one who can offer man his grace and keep him on the right track during his entire life. Thus, man is predestined by God to benefit from justification and to live according to God's will in sanctification.

There are, however, some differences between justification in the Conformist tradition represented by Jewel and Whitgift on the one hand, and the Puritan tradition of Cartwright and Travers. While Jewel and Whitgift considered the Church of Rome as a true Church of Christ in spite of all her faults, Cartwright and Travers were not willing to accept such a claim. Actually, the problem was deeper, because the Conformists, unlike the Puritans, believed that at least some Catholics had been saved throughout history. They did not consider the merit of man, which is sin, but the grace of God, who is love and graciously predestined some to eternal life in accordance with his own promise to be with his Church until the end.

Notes

[1] John Jewell, *The Works of John Jewel*, John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1847), 1027. For the importance of Christ's words for justification, and especially the importance of faith in Christ's words, see John Jewel, *The Works of John Jewel*, John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1850), 764.
[2] John Jewel, *Apology of the Church of England*, J. E. Booty ed. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), 38.
[3] Jewel, *The Works* (1847), 1025-1026.
[4] *ibid.* 1026.
[5] Jewel, *The Works of John Jewel*, John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1848), 243-244.
[6] Jewel, *Apology*, 38.
[7] Jewel, *The Works* (1848), 244. For more details about the theological distinction between Paul and James in matters of justification, see also John Jewell, *The Works of John Jewel*, John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1850), 765.
[8] Jewel, *Apology*, 38.

[9] *ibid.* 38.

[10] John Whitgift, *The Works of John Whitgift*, John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1853), 582-583.

[11] *ibid.* 583.

[12] Whitgift, *The Works of John Whitgift,* John Ayre ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1851), 188.

[13] *ibid.* 188.

[14] *ibid.* 189.

[15] *ibid.* 188.

[16] For more details about the general doctrine of justification in Protestant theology, see, for instance, Ian Green, *The Christian ABC: Catechisms and Catechizing in England c. 1530-1740* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 398. For more details on Puritan soteriology, see William Haller, *Liberty and Reformation in the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), 168-177, and Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: the Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 75-110.

[17] For more details on the similarities between the Conformists (Whitgift and Hooker) and the Non-Conformists (Cartwright and Travers) in matters of justification by faith see Peter Benedict Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context. Anglican Churchmanship, 1760-1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 257.

[18] Thomas Cartwright, *A Confutation of the Rhemists Translation* (1618), 333.

[19] *ibid.* 332.

[20] *ibid.* 333.

[21] *ibid.* 333.

[22] Thomas Cartwright, *A Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul written to the Colossians* (Edinburgh: James Nichol, 1864), 25.

[23] Cartwright, *A Confutation*, 334.

[24] *ibid.* 485.

[25] *ibid.* 338-339.

[26] Cartwright, *A Commentary*, 13.

[27] *ibid.* 22.

[28] *ibid.* 35.

[29] *ibid.* 37.

[30] Walter Travers, *Vindiciae Ecclesiae Anglicanae or a Justification of the Religion Professed in England* (London: TC&RC, 1630), 60.

[31] Travers, *A Supplication*, in *Works* V (198.21-24).

[32] *ibid.* in *Works* V (200.6-7).

[33] *ibid.* in *Works* V (200.7-11).

[34] *ibid.* in *Works* V (200.12-18).

[35] Arthur S. McGrade, "The Public and the Religious in Hooker's *Polity*", in Robert M. Grant, Martin Marty, Gerald C. Brauer, (eds), *Church History*, vol. XXXVII (The American Society of Church History, 1968), 404. See also Robert Eccleshall, "Richard Hooker and the Peculiarities of the English: The Reception of the *Ecclesiastical Polity* in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries", *History of Political Thought* II/1 (1981), 63.

[36] Travers, *A Supplication*, in *Works* V (200.20-25).

[37] *ibid.* in *Works* V (200.26-201.6).

[38] *ibid.* in *Works* V (201.20-202.4).

[39] *ibid.* in *Works* V (203.14-21).

[40] *ibid.* in *Works* V (203.29-204.3).

[41] *ibid.* in *Works* V (204.10-14).

[42] *ibid.* in *Works* V (206.22-208.5).

[43] *ibid.* in *Works* V (208.6-7).

[44] For details, see Lee W. Gibbs, "Theology, Logic, and Rhetoric in the Temple Controversy between Richard Hooker and Walter Travers", *Anglican Theological Review* LXV/2 (1983), 177-188.

"So Is My Will": Sin, Grace, and Freedom in Milton's *Paradise Lost*

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Allowing *Paradise Lost* and seventeenth-century history and theology to converse unfettered raises serious doubts as to its supposed Arminian soteriology. John Milton's majestic epic can be read and understood theologically without using the inflexibility of *De doctrina christiana* as its translation.[1] It seems the critics that question the prudence of this method are immediately disdained: either as deviants who disbelieve Milton's authorship of the treatise, or as propagandists whose motivations are suspect. As Barbara Lewalski wrote not too long ago, "Miltonists who find *Paradise Lost* to be a grand embodiment of Christian orthodoxy have always sought to distance it on some grounds from the heterodoxies of *Christian Doctrine*."[2] What if one does not see the epic as the epitome of Protestant orthodoxy, but still refuses to append every line of poetry with one from the treatise, must the critic then understand Milton's "late poems to be imbued with those heterodoxies – Antitrinitarianism, Arminianism, Monism – and find them central to the poems' drama and power"?[3] It seems Lewalski has offered us an incontestable package of heterodoxies from which to choose. I contend, however, that careful, socio-historical, theological acuity resists such presumption. It benefits little to dictate the conditions of the debate in dichotomous categories, which, when liberated, will allow us to better understand the epic on its own terms. What then becomes clear is that Milton borrowed freely from both his orthodox and heterodox compatriots. Obviously, bringing in another text – especially one as systematic as a doctrinal treatise – would be tempting and useful in subduing the chaotic ambiguities of poetry. My intent, however, is to not impose such a system upon the poem. The hope of this exercise, then, is to allow the epic to declare its mysteries despite its apparent inconsistencies. This fresh interpretation should nonetheless emerge as a coherent reading in the tradition of Miltonic elitism. That is, Milton wants the plebeians to misread, so he can surprise us with his depth of understanding. Standing far above the petty, polarized arguments of seventeenth-century theologians, this elitist presumes to show us the very mind of God.[4]

Regarding the supposed Arminian underpinnings of the epic, we will focus on the contemporary arguments of Notre Dame's Stephen Fallon. Although well versed in both Milton and seventeenth-century history and

theology, I intend to focus on one of his great theological misstatements, which in turn brings his reading of *Paradise Lost* into question. Precision, in this case, would create a deterrent to exaggeration rather than boredom. Though it will undoubtedly pose a challenge to our preconceived categorical boundaries, the alternative, under/over-statement, can muddle arguments, as well as dangerously perpetuate false theological implications. In other words, precision is crucial if studies in Milton's theology are to persuade. Conversations over a pint at the local pub may not be the most suitable place for such pedantry, but this is the stuff of which academic journals are made. John Shawcross wisely warns against the academic laziness of scholars that think "all Reformed Protestants of the early seventeenth-century were to be categorized as Calvinist or Arminian only."[5] This is not *merely* an attempt to "foster precision in discussions of Milton's theology," this is a call to examine the self, for in the end it is what holds back many scholars from overstating (or understating) the facts, despite their inclinations to do otherwise.[6]

It is no small wonder, then, why with one fell swoop Stephen Fallon manages to undermine his own argument by de-emphasizing the difference between Calvinists and Arminians on one of their foundational tenets: the depravity of man.[7] In doing so, we see that Fallon misunderstands the interdependency of the so-called "five points" (for both parties). He writes concerning the doctrine of depravity under the rubric of seventeenth-century debate: "Fallen human beings can do no good without the aid of grace. There is no disagreement between Calvinists and Arminians on this point."[8] Indeed, though the differences are implicit, Fallon's misinterpretation acts as a simple voice box for the Arminian argument. What does he make of the seventeenth-century polemic levelled against Arminians that accuses them of Pelagianism? (and later semi-Pelagianism).[9] The debates were not simply over the question of free will,[10] rather, they focused on the extent one's moral ability (before regeneration) could strive after spiritual good. Ironically, total depravity, the point on which Fallon exercises the least amount of precision, is the very one upon which the Calvinist's *inability* to resist saving grace as well as the Arminian's *ability* to resist saving grace rests.

To be fair, Fallon does attempt to define Milton's supposed Arminianism in continental terms, making him to be a virtual Jacobus Arminius in relation to predestination.[11] Arminians, however, could hardly agree among themselves on the doctrine of original sin during the seventeenth-century. Arminius has traditionally been understood to have held a more abysmal view of humanity than the next generation of Arminian thinkers after his death in 1609. Many historical theologians have also chosen to distinguish between the two, calling the former "evangelical," and the latter "rational."[12] In order to maintain brevity, we will only mention a few of the more important points. Basically, the rational Arminians denied that guilt accompanied natural inability (to do any spiritual good). They further held that it was only just that God provide universal and sufficient grace, since

mankind could not be held accountable without some degree of ability. God becomes somewhat obligated to provide a cure for sin at this point. Arminius, along with the Wesleyans, held that guilt did attend natural inability, and that God's provision of a cure was regarded as a matter of unmitigated grace.[13] It is necessary and important to take into account language and intent when analysing historical arguments, but it is quite another matter to accept those arguments *ipso facto*. In other words, despite Arminius' belief that he was not at odds with Calvin's doctrine of depravity, given the divergent opinions regarding grace between later Arminians and Calvinists, he was apparently under the wrong impression. For this reason, then, it would not be improper to "drop the term Arminian," when attributing it to Milton himself because it is just as cumbersome as the other expressions Fallon offers.[14] While the plausibility of comparing *Paradise Lost* to the Remonstrant's five points is not being questioned, labelling the epic "Arminian" is, as doing so goes beyond textual evidence.[15] We now turn to the differing doctrines of depravity, including their inextricable relationships to grace.

From the Calvinist point-of-view, humankind, because of the Fall, is unable to believe in the external call of the gospel for salvation. All people, having the immediate imputation of Adam's corruption, are

> conceived in sin and are born children of wrath, unfit for any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in their sins, and slaves to sin; without the grace of the regenerating Holy Spirit they are neither willing nor able to return to God, to reform their distorted nature, *or even to dispose themselves to such reform* (emphasis added).[16]

The symbiotic relationship between total depravity, total inability and irresistible grace within the Calvinist construct should be clear. If man is completely dead in sin, then he/she will always reject the grace of God, unless, of course – and this is the Calvinist's main point – man is regenerated, his/her will made alive, thus inclining the inner disposition towards faith and repentance, an inclination that will at this point always choose to accept the grace of God.

Despite the Arminian contention that man can neither of himself nor of his free will do *anything* truly good until he is born again of God, in Christ, through the Holy Spirit, when compared to the seemingly similar Calvinistic concept, the discrepancies between the two become evident. While Calvinists denied that common grace could ever lead to salvation, the Remonstrants did not

> ... believe that all zeal, care, and diligence applied to the obtaining of salvation *before faith itself and the Spirit of renewal* are vain and ineffectual – indeed, rather harmful to man than useful and fruitful. On the contrary, we hold that to hear the Word of God, to be sorry for sins committed, to desire saving grace and the Spirit of renewal (none of which things man is able to do without grace) are

> not only not harmful and useless, but rather most useful and most necessary for the obtaining of faith and of the Spirit of renewal (emphasis added).[17]

What the Synod denied was the notion that common grace was sufficient. But Episcopius and the others argued quite the opposite – that common grace was adequate to enable man *before faith itself and the Spirit of renewal* to desire the salvation of God. One idea, at the very least, was held in common among the debaters regarding anthropology: the state of a man prior to salvation was unregenerate. This might seem obscenely obvious to the observant reader, but it is important to repeat. To the Calvinist, unregenerate man was entirely unable to pine after the things of God – no matter how much common grace was heaped upon them. There was no "inner power" by which the will converts itself; only God could work effectually to change a man's will. Arminians, on the other hand, as implied from the above, believed that unregenerate man could indeed exert "zeal, care, and diligence" effectively. They further added that this movement of the unbeliever towards God was useful and necessary to secure faith and the Spirit. As a result, the Protestant doctrine of justification faced similar challenges it had almost a century before in Germany: the ground of justification was no longer the imputed righteousness of Christ (the classic Reformed view), but the infused (cooperative) righteousness of both Christ and the believer. Again, despite the resemblance of words used to describe depravity, both sides meant something entirely different from each other: one upheld the autonomy of man, while the other, the self-sufficiency (aseity) of God.[18]

We have seen, albeit briefly, that according to the Arminian, unregenerate man *is* able to hunger and thirst for righteousness, as well as offer a broken and contrite spirit unto God *before* regeneration (with the help of sufficient grace). In this design, faith precedes regeneration, solely through the aid of divine grace. However, that grace always faces possible rejection, for its application to the soul relies on human cooperation.[19] Hence, "resistible" grace results from being *partially* depraved, which essentially means that while all of humanity are born sinners, they are not *totally* dead in sin or deprived of all capacity for spiritual good (i.e. faith in Christ) prior to regeneration.

Allowing Fallon's theological imprecision to go unchallenged is tantamount to applauding the emperor's new clothes. The differences of opinion on depravity cannot be understated. If there was truly "no disagreement between Calvinists and Arminians on this point," then both parties would stand together on the issue of grace, as well. As far as these seventeenth-century debaters were concerned, either regeneration precedes faith wrought by an irresistible grace, or sufficient grace only produces the opportunity to accept or reject salvation. The depth of human depravity is inextricably tied to this issue. Indeed, Fallon's discussion on depravity exposes almost immediately an "inadequate understanding of seventeenth-century theological debate," thus becoming the object of his own derision.[20]

Surely, Fallon is only guilty of oversight, for, as I will contend, the epic is informed by a doctrine of depravity that does not lend itself to an Arminian reading. To further accommodate his view of depravity, Milton poetically manipulates the will of God to decree redemption both conditionally and unconditionally – the former, universally provided through the mediation of Christ, to be offered to all on the condition of faith, and the latter, limited in that God, seeing that of himself no man would believe, elected some to eternal life and decided to give them the necessary grace of faith and repentance. If critics of Milton's theology would spend more time grappling with the divergent opinions regarding human depravity and its implications for both common and specific grace, then something much better than pedantic precision would be fostered, namely, accuracy in tracing the doctrinal contours of this most highly stylised epic. It is no theological treatise, and therefore should not be overly systematized so as to stifle its dynamic liberality. But in our discussion of sin in *Paradise Lost*, we shall see that it defies a wholly Arminian reading – especially regarding resistible grace in the face of election. In other words, the epic at every turn advances the notion that man has an innate bent towards sin, implying therefore that he/she will likely resist universal grace, which, according to the poem, though sufficient, is presented as a hypothetical road to salvation. It also is very clear, when propounding election, that God secures individuals with an irresistible grace.

In keeping with his notorious strategy, Fallon focuses on both *Paradise Lost* and *De doctrina christiana*, using the latter as a gloss upon the theological presuppositions behind the poem in order to bolster evidence that Milton was truly the author of the treatise. Such is not my intent. I have avoided this, not because the treatise is more blatantly anti-Calvinist on some points, but because there is no real reason for reconciling the two (for at times, they are seemingly irreconcilable).[21] Such an approach suggests that the poem can only be understood rightly if read through the lenses of the treatise. Furthermore, the dates of its composition and completion are questionable and, at any rate, earlier than that of *Paradise Lost*, which, if the treatise is applied too rigidly to the epic, disallows progression of thought in a man whose theological opinions on various doctrines shifted with each passing decade. Nor am I sceptical of Milton's authorship of *De doctrina*, I merely wish to treat the epic separately to emphasize that it is not so obviously Arminian as Fallon presumes.

Working from the misguided assumption mentioned above, Fallon compares the theology of *Paradise Lost* with the five points of the Remonstrance, beginning with the "least controversial point, because shared with the Calvinists, [that of] the depravity of the fallen human race."[22] He cites the following from the poem:

Once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthrall'd
By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand

> On even ground against his mortal foe,
> By me upheld, that he may know how frail
> His fall'n condition is, and to me owe
> All his deliv'rance, and to none but me.[23]

It is no secret that Milton held sin to be a deeply permeating and intractable bane upon humanity. He had not held human nature in the highest esteem, and this excerpt shows well his belief that sin exacts slavery on mankind. We also see a possible allusion to St. Paul's assertion of divine governance, "For in him we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28; cf. *PL* 3.178-82), as these lines clearly portray the Father providentially upholding man, and in so doing affects the object's allegiance in lines 180-2, with a confidence not resting on man's cooperation with grace, but an assessment of how utterly "frail/His fall'n condition is," and on that account thank the Father for a redemption ("deliv'rance") wholly affected by his grace. The "even ground," upon which one stands "against his mortal foe," does not take place apart from deliverance. That is, this passage describes the situation of man if and when he or she is regenerated. What is being restored to the object of grace ("once more he shall stand") can only be the ability to stand in opposition to the devil, and even then, only in conjunction with his deliverance.

Fallon suspiciously fails to cite the previous four lines, probably because they further complicate his reading. The Son questions his Father as to whether he was going to allow Satan to "obtain/His end, and frustrate thine" (3.156-7), and bring his "goodness to naught" (3.158), letting him proudly return to hell, having accomplished revenge, or whether he might "Abolish creation, and unmake,/For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?" (3.163-4). We see in these lines the Son leading us to confront once again Milton's theodicy, to "assert Eternal Providence/And justify the ways of God to men" (1.25-6), by stating, "So should thy goodness and thy greatness both/Be question'd and blasphem'd without defence" (3.165-6).[24] The Father replies thusly:

> Son who art alone
> My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
> All hast thou spok'n as my thoughts are, all
> As my Eternal purpose hath decreed:
> Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will,
> *Yet not of will in him, but grace in me*
> *Freely vouchsaf't;* (*PL* 3.169-75; emphasis added).

Clearly, we can see from God's effectual might through the Son to his eternal purpose decreed that humanity "shall not quite be lost," as some will, not by their own inclinations (for, as I am arguing, the epic portrays man as being continually bent towards evil), but by grace wholly divine and freely given. The point here is not *to whom* universal grace is given, or even that when it is given particularly, they who receive will definitely be saved

(both of these points can be argued from this passage); no, rather, these lines consciously demand that *salvation is by the grace of God alone*. Asserting this and a libertarian view of the will would require not a few theological somersaults.[25] It is *sola gratia* poetically defined, though not in the high Calvinistic sense, for it is also true that the epic represents distinctively hybrid positions such as conditional election and universal atonement. From this vantage point we gain another glance at the depravity of man, as the Son speaks of the universal provision of grace for all mankind:

> Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;
> And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
> The speediest of thy winged messengers,
> To visit all thy creatures, and to all
> Comes unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought?
> Happy for her man, so coming; *he her aid*
> *Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost*;
> Atonement for himself or offering meet,
> Indebted and undone, hath none to bring:
> Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
> I offer. (*PL* 3.227-37; emphasis added).

We can infer three points from this passage without doing harm to its plain sense: 1. Grace visits *all* of creation (there is not, however, a distinction here between common and salvific grace)[26]; 2. Man can never seek the aid of grace (i.e. total inability), being dead in sins and lost; 3. The atonement is substitutionary in nature, and, though universally offered to all as sufficient, is not yet efficiently applied. That is, Milton was no universalist when it came to salvation. Clearly, this passage (as does the following) begins to resound with non-Calvinist chords; even still, it is not altogether Arminian. While Fallon wished to emphasize lines 230-1, thus showing that universal grace informs the epic, notice on what condition that grace comes – by the absolute free offering of the Son. We should not miss the fact that this, the Son's speech, is a response to the Father's probing question throughout all the celestial realm: "Say Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?" (3.213). The heavy silence is almost unbearable, as Milton would have us see angelic foreheads beading with sweat, their eyes shifting to and fro at the prospect of God's call: "Which of ye will be mortal to redeem/Man's mortal crime, and just th'unjust to save,/Dwells in all Heaven charity so dear?" (3.214-16). Finally, the Son speaks. Man shall find grace, yet not in a mere abstraction, but in the very flesh of the one who "Freely put off" his glory (3.240). The epic, however, at once shuns the notion that natural man can, despite the offer of universal grace, pine after righteousness (though if he did, salvation would indeed follow, Milton might argue), for the depravity of man, "once dead in sins and lost," runs far too deep to desire God (3.232-3).

The passage in question says nothing of the power of the will to accept anything whatsoever, which in turn works to emphasize its main point: redemption must therefore rest upon the vicarious atonement of Jesus Christ, for man "hath none to bring" (3.234-7). And if mankind is totally unable to seek grace, how then will they avail themselves unto it? The epic is clear at this point: through the substitutionary sacrifice of the Son. What cannot be inferred, however, is whether or not the atonement actually affects anything at all (for this is not even in view here). It is not denying the availability of grace as such, it is denying the idea that man would ever want such a thing. Why does she (grace) come "unprevented, unimplor'd, unsought"? Implicit in the Arminian argument would be an answer like the following: "Because he desires it not enough."[27] But the epic offers nothing to this effect. In fact, it proposes quite the opposite: grace finds its way through the free-will offering of the Son, by means of the atonement. But even then it is not clear whether this grace (and its corollary, the atonement) is sufficient or efficacious. The point is not that these issues in *Paradise Lost* are explicitly anti-Arminian, the point is that they are not thoroughly Arminian.

While those who have been universally called, according to the epic, never seek grace unless God intervenes, others are particularly chosen with a specific grace, making a wholly Arminian reading quite improbable. Fallon cites the following in order to show the epic's libertarian concept of the will that is able to choose or reject generally offered sufficient grace:[28]

> Some I have chosen of peculiar grace
> Elect above the rest; so is my will:
> The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
> Thir sinful state, and to appease betimes
> Th' incensed Deitie, while offer'd grace
> Invites; for I will clear thir senses dark,
> What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts
> To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
> To Prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
> Though but endeavor'd with sincere intent,
> Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
> And I will place within them as a guide
> My Umpire *Conscience*, whom if they will hear,
> Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
> And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
> This my long sufferance and my day of grace
> They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
> But hard be hard'nd, blind be blinded more,
> That they may stumble on, and deeper fall. (*PL* 3.183-201).

It becomes quite apparent at this point that Milton himself has furthered the argument of this essay better than its author. This admittedly difficult passage grows even more enigmatic in an Arminian reading. Neither the Remonstrants or their successors made distinctions between common and

saving grace, as the former was a necessary step enabling one to receive the latter. In this excerpt, however, one thing at the very least is clear: two types of people, as well as two types of grace, are presented. The one, a specific elect; the other, a general group that only faces the opportunity to become a part of the elect. Indeed, an Arminian interpretation at this juncture kicks hard against the goads, as there is nothing structurally within the poem that reinforces anything other than a personal guarantee of salvation. Nothing in the main body of this passage leads us to believe that it merely qualifies the opening two lines, nor does it allude at any point to the idea that the "Elect above the rest" only represents a summons to service (over against individual redemption).

Fallon, however, must find a way to justify this passage in light of his interpretation. In doing so, he not only wreaks violence upon the poem, he assaults the sensibilities of the reader by evacuating Milton's reference to the elect of any real meaning. According to Fallon, "Elect above the rest" should be reduced to self-referential pomposity, "telling us more about Milton's self-conception, and about his need to be outstanding, than about his theology. The hesitation between models betrays his desire to be elect by both birthright and merit."[29] To be sure, Milton projected himself continually in his writings, but Fallon's *reduco* of the opening lines leads to absurdity. By suggesting that Milton's hubris drives him to identify with a super-elect, he avoids the difficulty this passage provides to an Arminian interpretation. One can imagine the poet relishing his place among the chosen: Abraham, Moses, King David, Elijah, with Milton himself sitting in the place of honour, all of them dining around the Lord's table. While this might not have been far from the mind of the prophet-poet, to claim that the Father's speech in these lines is purely self-referential shows how a static commitment can go awry. The only semblance of proof Fallon offers examines a few moments of evident self-regard in *De doctrina*, which then leads him to hastily assert that "the problem with an argument that a Calvinist-leaning conception of a "super-elect" complements or poses a compromise within a generally Arminian framework... *is the Calvinist position is specifically and repeatedly repudiated in the treatise*" (emphasis added).[30] An emerging pattern (and weakness) in Fallon's criticism should be very apparent by now: if *De doctrina* refuses to concur, then the epic must follow suit. Given that Fallon literally gags *Paradise Lost* in this process, thus failing to account theologically for the passage, our remaining time shall be spent engaging the implication of the actual text.

Referring to Charles' execution, A. N. Wilson wrote, "No one in 1649 appeared to think, as a modern theologian might believe, that God was in two minds over the question."[31] He is quite right. Schizophrenia was not commonly attributed to God during the Puritan era. However, he comes close to making a commonly underplayed point. During the religious fervour of the seventeenth-century there was indeed a lot of speculation about the will of God, and whether or not it should be bifurcated regarding eternal decrees. Even during the assembly at Westminster (1643-48), that

bastion of Calvinistic Puritanism, a few theologians raised contentions regarding the scope of Christ's atonement. Numerous instances are recorded where various divines argued that Christ's death paid a price for all – absolutely for the elect and contingently just in case the reprobate believed.[32] Had they been explicitly Arminian or Socinian in their arguments, the Abbey would have witnessed its first tar-and-feathering session. But such was not the case. This in itself shows how the debates over grace and predestination were not as polarized as some critics assume.[33]

The benefit of this inquiry to Wilson's study is of only peripheral import here. Our concern with the "wills" of God, however, do relate directly to the text at hand. To reiterate, we see two types of people, as well as two types of grace, presented in the Father's response to his Son in Book 3. The opening lines (183-4) describe a specific elect; the remainder, a general group that only faces the possibility of becoming the elect. In dealing with the beginning of this speech above, we noted that the Father's initial answer ("So should thy goodness and thy greatness both/Be question'd and blasphem'd without defence," 3.165-6.) describes a redemption applied by his freely given grace alone. He then continues by relating man's nature – "forfeit and enthralled by sin to foul exorbitant desires" (3.176-7) – and maintains once again that redemption is due to no one other than himself (3.180-2). It is true that this scene as a whole comprises the most important passage in the epic regarding the justification of God's ways. But immediately following the lines discussed above (3.165-182), we come to the meat of Milton's theodicy.

Here he provides a genuine attempt to defend the goodness and greatness of God's actions – far more than a "palpable desire to have his merit recognized."[34] Milton, through the Father, allows the reader to perceive the mind of God, a glimpse that only the poet's theological rationalism could catch. By qualifying the first grace as "peculiar," the Father affirms his sovereignty over the elect. He has chosen them above the rest. His words are sure, and he then moves on to discuss the predicament of the others. Inviting them to pray and repent, God offers the rest enough grace to obey his call. There is no doubt that this concept is liable to Arminian accusations. The problem lies in the fact that there is an existing group assured of salvation, indeed, "Elect above the rest." This is completely anti-Arminian, just as much as the conditional election described in lines 185-201 is anti-Calvinist. This latter lot is given the opportunity *if* they use offered grace, *if* they hear God's "Umpire *Conscience*," and *if* well used shall to the end persist and safely arrive. Clearly, in this passage, God intends that all men be given the opportunity of salvation, and the Son's substitutionary atonement (3.234-7) brings this into reality – this is Milton's universalism. It is equally clear, however, that the grace of lines 185-201 (and by implication, the atonement) is not effectual unto salvation; only if the offer of grace is accepted by man in repentance and faith will salvation follow. The problem this poses to an Arminian reading becomes evident when we see that this acceptance is the

fruit of God's special grace, conferred on those only whom he has chosen (3.183-4) – this is the hypothetical aspect of Milton's view.[35] By subtly transposing the atonement and God's intentions, Milton allows the Father's proclamation of universal redemption to determine the nature and scope of the atonement. In other words, in order for the gospel to be preached to all people honestly, then it follows that the atonement (as well as prevenient grace) has universal extent.

Given the epic's patent pessimism regarding original sin, this hypothetical situation will most likely lead to one end: rejection. How, then, can God's actions be justified, if man cannot overcome his inward inclinations? In two ways, Milton suggests. First, the general *massa perditionis* is called to prayer, repentance and obedience. They are responsible to respond; if they reject the gospel, they are fully accountable, for they who actively "neglect and scorn shall never taste" God's day of grace. Desiring to leave a light in the understanding of men, God clears "their senses dark" with which they must govern themselves, thereby leaving their rejection of faith without excuse. The poet unabashedly insists that man, despite his moral inability, is nonetheless naturally able to hear the divine call, and therefore must choose whom to serve. In this section, we see that salvation is clearly possible, but never easy. For after viewing the depth of man's depravity in *Paradise Lost*, we are led in this passage (as well as many others) to believe that redemption is affected absolutely by free grace, and hypothetically through enabling grace (and the atonement). It is now clear that only one thing, according to the epic, can eradicate the hell-bent inclinations of mankind, and effect more than enabling grace ever could: that one thing, Milton writes, is "peculiar grace." Though this aspect of God's will is somewhat obscure and secret, it is revealed through his wilful bestowal of an irresistible grace that secures some "Elect above the rest." We see Milton pushing us to accept a mystifying idea – that God evidently has two wills, one that offers grace to all, making redemption merely possible, and one that secures some with a specific grace unto salvation.[36]

The difficulty in this passage should not be, rather, cannot be, reconciled with an Arminian reading. It can only be resolved by letting Milton stand apart from systematic Arminianism (or Calvinism, or whatever), thus allowing the poet theological creativity, which this self-described prophet, in typical condescending fashion, would have thought transcended all other arguments, including most importantly the polarities existent within seventeenth-century theological debate. At the very least, we have attempted to show that for Milton-theological criticism to continue responsibly, the critic must leave-off superimposing a static label upon the poet. It should also be clear that turning to *De doctrina christiana* to answer every theological question in the epic is both dubious and unnecessary. An inflexible commitment such as this will only lead into the proverbial pitfall of over/understatement. It has been our task, however, to embrace the complexities and seeming inconsistencies found in the text, by

focusing on what Milton might have been promoting in the Father's somewhat puzzling speech in Book 3 – without the problems one encounters with a rigid prior commitment. Through its portrayal of the depravity of man, as well as its elevation of God's grace in salvation, *Paradise Lost* becomes at once an evangelical enterprise. That is, salvation is universally offered, and man must respond accordingly, while resting on grace alone for deliverance. The epic also concerns itself with the implications of depravity: if mankind remains morally unable to love God, how will they ever heed the call? One model suggests that with hard work and judicious use of grace and the Spirit, an individual can attain redemption. Conversely, there are some in the epic who do not have to labour within a hypothetical framework, for they are elected above all others with a specific grace. These seemingly contradictory notions are presented back-to-back for a reason: to depict the mind of God as distinguishing between a universal and conditional, and a limited and unconditional decree. In the former, represented in lines 185-201, God decreed to provide universal salvation through the mediation of Christ (the Son's free-will offering in 3.234-7), inviting all of humanity on the condition of prayer, repentance and obedience. The latter, presented in lines 183-4, God, foreseeing that no man of his own accord *would* believe, freely chose ("so is my will") some to eternal life and decided to give them the necessary grace to ensure their election. It is true that this is the great implication of our argument, but it provides the best explanation for the apparent contradictions in the text. Milton's theodicy, contrary to popular belief, does not rest wholly upon the free will of man (in the libertarian sense of the word) – it is far more Theo-centric than that. In order to justly condemn some, Milton suggests, God must extend his mercy to everyone. *Pro eo*, England's greatest epic justifies the ways of God to men by declaring that the grace of Christ's atonement unto salvation is sufficient for all, but efficient only for the elect, thus representing, at least to the seventeenth-century mind, the quintessential *via media*.

Notes

[1] I discuss this point further below. The reader may find William B. Hunter, Barbara Lewalski, and John T. Shawcross, "The Provenance of the *Christian Doctrine*", in *Studies in English Literature* 32 (1992): 129-66, helpful in gaining a basic understanding of the main arguments.
[2] Barbara Lewalski, "The Provenance", 144.
[3] *ibid*. 144.
[4] John Shawcross also sees Milton assuming this elitist posture, a position of "intellect-ualization that appears as well in the 'indolent rabble' cited in *Ad Patrem* and the 'insolent speech of the multitude and... the vicious throng of readers' dismissed in *Ad Joannem Rousium...*" ("Misreading Milton", *Milton Studies* 33, 1997, 185).
[5] John Shawcross, *John Milton: The Self and the* World, (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 138. Cited in Stephen Fallon, "Milton's Arminianism and the Authorship of *De doctrina christiana*", *Texas Studies in Literature and Language* 41 (1999), 116.
[6] *ibid*. 116. I do not mean to suggest that I can write honestly if my inclinations do not fully concur. Ultimately, we will write from a particular persuasion because we are inclined so to do. I am merely stating that precision can temper our *a priori* assumptions.

[7] Fallon's discussion on the other points, though satisfactory, should be commended only to the reader who is already familiar with the theological issues at hand.

[8] *ibid.* 109.

[9] Just a cursory glance at the *Canons of Dort*, for example, provides sufficient material to reflect upon, not to mention the various treatises aimed at this issue during the seventeenth-century.

[10] For example, libertarianism or compatibilism (see footnote 25).

[11] Fallon, "'Elect above the rest': theology as self-representation in Milton" (Dobranski, Stephen and John P. Rumrich (eds), *Milton and Heresy* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 94.

[12] Most notably in Louis Berkhof, *Reformed Dogmatics* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1937), 160-161. Though Berkhof writes of Wesleyans as "evangelical", Arminius himself shared greater affinities on many points with the former as opposed to the proximate generations of Caroline Anglicans, Cambridge Platonists, and Latitudinarians.

[13] I am not arguing that Milton accommodated this form of Arminianism, though in matters of grace it could be construed this way. His rationalistic view of predestination, however, eventually supplants any affinities he might have had with the continental brand of Arminianism.

[14] Fallon, "Elect above the rest", 94. He cites, for example, "anti-predestination", "opposed to Calvin on predestination", or "libertarian."

[15] Herein lies my main point: the epic is far too ingenious at times to rigidly systematize it.

[16] *The Decision of the Synod of Dort on the Five Main Points of Doctrine in Dispute in the Netherlands*, Third/Fourth Points, Article III (also known as the *Canons of Dort*), quoted from *Ecumenical Creeds and Reformed Confessions*, (Grand Rapids, 1988), 133.

[17] *Opinions of the Remonstrants*, III/IV.iii; quoted from Peter Y. De Jong (ed.), *Crisis in the Reformed Churches* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Fellowship, Inc., 1968), 225-6. Further quotations of the *Opinions* will be taken from this edition. The *Opinions* are not to be confused with the five points of the Remonstrance, though they are an expansion of them, and were submitted to the synod of Dort in December 1618.

[18] Noting this tension between freedom and sovereignty, Milton cautiously proposes that the Calvinists' "over-zealotry" (emphasis on God's absolute power) is the reason they are "taxt with Predestination", and the problem of evil, an omnipotence demanded, however, not "without plea of Scripture" (*Of True Religion*, 1673). Quoted from John Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-1982), 8:424. It should also be noted that many Puritans, not the least of which William Ames, were not content with an unqualified proclamation of God's aseity to settle the problem of salvation. Ames himself was known to have welcomed at least one corrective from the Remonstrants: the accentuation of man's response in the drama of redemption.

[19] *Opinions*, III/IV.v, vi; De Jong, *Crisis in the Reformed Churches*, 226.

[20] Fallon, "Milton's Arminianism", 104.

[21] I am not suggesting that my thesis could not be supported by *De doctrina*, but that is best left for another day. See Paul R. Sellin, "John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and *De doctrina christiana* on Predestination," *Milton Studies* 34: 45-60 (1997), where the author discusses thought-provoking differences between the treatise and the poem on the order of God's decrees – a largely seventeenth-century scholastic concern. While not in agreement with Sellin on many points, he shows enough evidence of the epic's ingenuity to avoid applying to it the term "Arminian."

[22] Fallon, "Milton's Arminianism", 111.

[23] *Paradise Lost* 3.175-82, quoted from *Paradise Lost & Paradise Regained*, Christopher Ricks, ed. (updated bibliography, 1982, New York: Signet Classic, Penguin Books USA, Inc., 1968), 104. Further quotations from Milton's poetry will be taken from this edition.

[24] Fallon desires theodicy to be largely an Arminian enterprise ("Milton's Arminianism", 106), but this clouds the issue. Many other non-Arminians also felt the supposed burden between God's sovereignty and man's responsibility, and dealt with this concern differently than the Arminians. The imperative to bear witness to the justice of God's actions, for some reason, is often meant by critics of *PL* to mean "to question [cynically] God's ways." Such criticism, at its

best, suggests that the poet himself purposefully portrayed God negatively so as to indict popular Protestant theology. As far as this article is concerned, this was not Milton's intent.

[25] I am hereby denying that Milton held consistently to free will in the libertarian sense, though I have not yet decided where exactly on the continuum we can find him regarding this issue. I do, however, lean towards a compatibilist view, mainly because of the poet's unabashed insistence that divine sovereignty and human responsibility do indeed coexist. Fallon time and again matter-of-factly imposes libertarian freedom upon the epic. In doing so, he ignores the fact that both Calvinists and Arminians, after St. Augustine, believed that prelapsarian man was *posse non peccare*, and was therefore able to choose to obey God (or not) simply because his/her inward inclinations were not continually bent towards evil. In order to gloss the epic with libertarian freedom, one must show not merely that the will has the ability to choose between alternatives, but that the will can overcome its strongest inclination and do the opposite. This, I contend, will not be easily found within *Paradise Lost*. John Frame defines compatibilist freedom simply as the "freedom to do what you want to do." He elaborates further that it is called thus because it is compatible with determinism (or anything else for that matter), and that "even if every act we perform is caused by something outside ourselves (such as natural causes or God), we can still be free, for we can still act according to our character and desires" (John M. Frame, *The Doctrine of God*, forthcoming, P&R Publishing, 126). R. K. McGregor Wright defines libertarian freedom as "the belief that the human will has an inherent power to choose with equal ease between alternatives. This belief does not claim that there are no influences that might affect the will, but it does insist that normally the will can overcome these factors and choose in spite of them. Ultimately, the will is free from any necessary causation" (Wright, *No Place For Sovereignty*, 43-44; cited in Frame, 128). Frame goes on to explain the libertarian's principles: "if our decisions are caused by anything or anyone (including our own desires), they are not properly our decisions, and we cannot be held responsible for them. To be responsible, we must be 'able to do otherwise'" (Frame, 128-9).

[26] I am well aware that Arminians made no distinction between the two, seeing the former as a step towards the latter, however, the ambiguity of this and the surrounding context in light of the aforementioned passage (*PL* 3.169-175) resists a dogmatic definition.

[27] I would point the reader to the above citation of the Remonstrant's *Opinions*: "... all zeal, care, and diligence applied to the obtaining of salvation before faith itself and the Spirit of renewal, are... most necessary for the obtaining of faith and of the Spirit of renewal."

[28] Fallon, "Milton's Arminianism", 112ff.

[29] Fallon, "Elect above the rest", 100.

[30] *ibid.* 102.

[31] A. N. Wilson, *The Life of John Milton* (London: Oxford University Press, 1983), 161.

[32] A good starting place into this inquiry can be found in A. F. Mitchell, John Struthers, (eds) *Minutes of the Session of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edinburgh: Wm. Blackwood & Sons, 1974), lvff, xxff, 152ff; and William B. Hetherington, *History of the Westminster Assembly of Divines* (Edmonton, AB: Still Waters Revival Books, 1991), 112-113.

[33] See especially endnote 38 in Fallon, "Milton's Arminianism", 125, where the author responds to John Shawcross' challenge to polar categorization. I quote his reply in full because it gives a good example of Fallon's repeated oversimplifications, which in effect deny the existence of any relevant hybrid positions on predestination: "Also problematic is [Shawcross'] claim that 'While some Calvinists seem to have believed in a strict doctrine of election and thus of absolute grace, others in varying ways and degrees held that grace was not confined to the elect and that election included both those elect from the beginning of time and those who gained salvation through the obedience of faith' (Shawcross, *John Milton*, 138). Calvin repudiated the latter position, and any Calvinist who veered toward it could expect to be attacked as an Arminian. For the Calvinist, election is the *cause* of faith and righteousness and not their reward or result; one cannot in any way 'gain' salvation" [emphasis his]. Fallon speaks rightly about Calvin and the Calvinists, but he misses the historical factuality of Shawcross' point: many seventeenth-century thinkers did diverge from a 'strict' doctrine of election while eluding accusations of Arminianism.

[34] Fallon, "Elect above the rest", 108.

[35] Another passage of import is found in Book 3.300-2, where "... hellish hate/So easily destroyed, and still destroys/In those who, *when they may*, accept not grace" (emphasis added). This is the very same grace offered in 3.187 because it faces the possibility of rejection (i.e. hypothetical); there is no certainty like that found in 3.183-4.

[36] This exceeds the common Reformed distinction between the will as "preceptive" (God's standard of behaviour), and "decretive" (the ultimate and effective will of God that underlies his precepts). Thanks to Professor John Frame for bringing this to my attention. Milton oversteps the then orthodox position by writing into God's eternal decree that Christ did pay a price for all (universal atonement) – absolute intention for the elect, conditional intention for all others in case they do believe. This further serves to underscore Milton's distinction between the intent and extent of the atonement. While he grants that the application of the atonement extends only to an elect, he also argues that because of God's pandemic love for mankind, the target of Christ's sacrifice is every person. Both Calvinists and Arminians would have seen such a separation as untenable.

Matthias Flacius' Theology within the Sixteenth-Century Polemics

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Matthias Flacius Illyricus never published a systematic account of his theology or loci as such, and for his understanding of Christian dogmas we must turn to the many disputations and controversies in which he was involved during his life spent mostly in Germany. The prevalent theme in his whole theological corpus is that of evil and the human incapability to do good without the aid of the grace of God.

As a young man, who left his homeland and the shores of the warm Adriatic Sea, he found himself in gray and rainy Wittenberg, where he experienced a great spiritual crisis. It was during his school years in this Lutheran bastion that his inner formation took place. Flacius' deep struggle with sin, which tormented him and caused him depression and even thoughts of suicide, influenced his way of looking at anthropology. He saw that the real problem of original sin is connected to man's personal relationship with God. August Twesten, follower and successor of Friedrich Schleiermacher in Berlin, called this experience the key to understanding Vlačić's life.[1] After he received comfort from Luther he felt delivered and renewed, but throughout the rest of his theological career he kept returning to this theme, reformulating his own understanding of the doctrine of sin.

Upon finishing his education, Flacius received an academic appointment as a professor of Hebrew and started settling down in Wittenberg. However, his quiet family life was disturbed in the spring of 1547, when the Protestant army lost the battle of Mühlberg and as a result his city capitulated to the Catholics. Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560), who was the new leader of the Lutheran movement, wanted to spare the country of further bloodshed and agreed with the emperor that from now on Evangelicals in Germany would acknowledge the authority of the Pope and his bishops. He agreed to the laws of the Holy Roman Empire, the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims, which stated that some Roman practices and ceremonies will be reintroduced within the Lutheran church. Seeing the issues that Catholics demanded as *adiaphora* or non-essentials, Melanchthon was willing to go along making those concessions in order to satisfy Emperor Charles V. In a letter from December 18, 1548 to one of his friends in Weimar concerning the Leipzig Interim, Melanchthon stated: "That we may retain things essential, we are not rigid in regard to things

non-essential, especially since those rites have to a great extent remained in the churches of these parts... We know that much is said against these concessions; but the desolation of the churches, such as it is occurring in Swabia, would be worse."[2]

Flacius and his close friend Nikolaus Gallus (1515-70) strongly disagreed with their beloved teacher Philipp and started writing against the Interims advising preachers not to accept compliances with the Papists[3]. Flacius tried a number of times to convince Melanchthon about his own belief that giving up any part of the truth would have dire consequences for the church, but he did not succeed. Unwillingly, for the first time in his life, Flacius was entered into opposition and thus started the adiaphoristic controversy. In April 1549, Flacius left Wittenberg resigning from his professorship and moved to Magdeburg, which was a free city[4]. There he joined a group of people led by the mature Bishop Nikolaus von Amsdorf of Naumberg (1483-1565), who was calling for resistance to the Interim Law.

In Magdeburg, Flacius began his propaganda publishing tracts, booklets and pamphlets trying to influence the public to oppose the changes that secular authorities were demanding. He strongly advocated the separation of church and state because government was trying to control and, in his opinion, destroy true religion. Without a strong leader as Luther, the church was in danger of making too many compromises and Flacius thought that once a little bit is given to the adversaries, afterwards they will want more. In 1550 Flacius participated with the pastors of Magdeburg in drafting a confession that contained a doctrine of resistance to the superior magistrates. Lowell Zuck states that "The Magdeburg Confession thus was the first formal assertion of a theory of rightful resistance issued by orthodox Protestants,"[5] even though Martin Bucer (1491-1551) had developed this theory in 1530.

It was not only that a change of ceremonies in the Lutheran churches was required by the Augsburg and Leipzig Interims, but there were also very specific theological departures from Luther's teaching that Flacius saw as the core issue. "Flacius insisted that the controversy was not just over wearing a white surplice, but was doctrinal. Confirmation, he claimed, had been made a means of grace. By the mention of satisfaction in the doctrine of repentance, he said, faith had been ignored. He held that the reintroduction of extreme unction would tempt men to try to perform apostolic miracles. He called for a distinction between Mass and Communion and argued that to have a Corpus Christi celebration is to agree to transubstantiation."[6] Probably the most disturbing point in the whole Interim for Flacius was the watering down of the bondage of the human will in the process of salvation and the "Pelagian" teaching regarding original sin. Prior to the adiaphoristic debate, some quarter of a century before, Luther had disputed in print with the Dutch humanist Erasmus of Rotterdam the topic of the freedom of the will. Since the young Croatian theologian saw his task in defending the truth, which he learned from Luther, for whom "his concept of the bondage of the will was a critical

point of orientation for the whole of his teaching,"[7] he felt that his responsibility was to defend this emphasis. Because of this, he and colleagues in Magdeburg were named Gnesio-Lutherans (from the Greek gnhsioj, which means true), a term which was used to describe orthodox followers of Luther. According to Keller[8], Flacius became the intellectual leader of the group and therefore the nickname *Flacianer* started being used to describe theologians and pastors who were in the first place opposing Philippists, the followers of the Saxon humanist, Melanchthon.

The Majorist Controversy

One of the signers of the Leipzig Interim of December 1548 was the preacher and professor George Major (1502-74). As public disapproval arose within Protestant Germany concerning the Interim, Major began publishing sermons and writing letters trying "to reassure people that nothing had changed in Wittenberg's teaching. Convinced that simply attacking Rome and attesting to the purity of one's own teaching would not suffice, Major also began a systematic attack on Wittenberg's opponents, especially Matthias Flacius Illyricus."[9] Wengert corrects a view held by some Reformation scholars that the beginning of the controversy was a publication by Nicholas von Amsdorf in 1551. Wengert states that the start of the long-drawn debate was Major's personal attack upon Flacius in his work *Auslegung des Glaubens* published already in 1550. Major disliked Flacius because he was a foreigner and did not possess any ecclesiastical office.[10]

The central issue in the scandalous controversy for Wittenberg, to which Major gave his name, was about the necessity of good works in salvation. In his desire to defend himself for his actions and to prove that he was teaching pure doctrine, Major went beyond Luther's stand in assigning to the human will the possibility to apply itself to the grace of God. After his dismissal from the position of superintendency in Eisleben by Count Albrecht, Major published another defense in 1552, where he stated: "This I confess: I have previously taught and still teach and want to teach my whole life, that good works are necessary for salvation; and I say openly and with clear and plain words, that no one will be saved through evil works, and no one will be saved without good works. Therefore it is impossible for a man to be saved without good works."[11]

Major's emphasis was on Christian good deeds, which he believed must be done out of obedience to God, and which played a role in salvation. Flacius felt that Major was departing from Luther's teaching and he wrote a book entitling it *Wider den Evangelisten des heiligen Chorroks D. Geitz Maior* (Against the Evangelist of the Holy Gown, Dr. Miserly Major). Even though Flacius was not a preacher himself, he clearly saw how teaching that good works are needed and in themselves are a cause of salvation, will influence people listening to the sermons in the pews. He thundered: "If

therefore good works are necessary to salvation, and if it is impossible for any one to be saved without them, then tell us, Dr. Major, how can a man be saved who all his life till his last breath has led a sinful life, but now, when about to die, desires to apprehend Christ?"[12]

In the heat of the controversy, Melanchthon distanced himself from Major's theology and refused him permission to publish further in Wittenberg. However, Justus Menius (1499-1558) joined in defending Major's view and found a publisher in Leipzig, so the debate went on with more and more people embroiled in it. A few years later Flacius tried to reconcile with Melanchthon over the adiaphoristic and majoristic battles, but was apparently dumb-founded by Melanchthon's refusal. He wrote in a personal letter to Hubert Languet (1519-82), a Huguenot scholar: "What in the world are we trying to do, or in what does he [Melanchthon] resist us, if not in the condemnation of adiaphorism and of Majorism?"[13]

While these soteriological polemics were still going on, Flacius began his involvement in another theological quarrel concerning the doctrine of justification by faith. It was against a man he knew and respected that he used his pen this time, namely the Nürnberg reformer Andreas Osiander (1498-1553).

The Osiandrist Controversy

After the Augsburg Interim took its effect in Bavaria, Osiander left Nürnberg and went to the northern town of Königsberg, where Duke Albrecht of Prussia (1490-1568) offered him the chair in theology at the newly founded university. At his inaugural disputation in 1549 he espoused his views concerning justification and grace, which got him into trouble with both Lutherans and Calvinists alike.[14] Apparently Osiander disagreed with Luther's concept of forensic justification, where the sinner is pronounced righteous by a just God, but his position had never appeared in print before. It was only when he was given a professorship in theology that he mustered the courage to publicly announce his views. It is believed that he even said: "The lion is dead, now I have to do only with foxes and hares."[15] However, he misjudged the strength of his opponents. Osiander thought that Gnesio-Lutherans and particularly Flacius would come over to his side because they were also resisting the Philippists and the Interim. Duke Albrecht counted on support from Flacius, too, and made him an offer to come to Prussia and become Bishop of Samland.[16] Even though the position and security were certainly appealing to Flacius and his ever growing family, he chose freedom to state what he believed, and therefore he wrote against his former friend Osiander.

Flacius' first publication in this controversy came out in March 1552 and it was dedicated to Count Albrecht under the title *Refutation of the well-known Osiander over the justification of the poor sinner through the essential righteousness of the high majesty of God*.[17] In it he attacked

Osiander's teaching, namely that justification comes to man by God's indwelling or infusion instead of imputation, as Lutherans held. Osiander wrote: "Since we are in Christ through faith and he is in us, we also became the righteousness of God in him, just as he became sin for us [2 Cor. 5:21]. That is, he showered us and filled us with his divine righteousness, as we showered him with our sins, so that God himself and all the angels see only righteousness in us on account of the highest, eternal, and infinite righteousness of Christ, which is His Godhead itself dwelling in us."[18] He goes on to say, "By the fulfillment of the law and by his suffering and death, Christ merited and acquired from God, his heavenly Father, this great and exalted grace: he has not only forgiven our sin and taken the unbearable burden of the law away from us, but also wishes to justify us through faith in Christ, to infuse justification or righteousness, and, through the working of His Holy Spirit and the death of Christ into which we are incorporated by Baptism, to kill, wipe out, and entirely exterminate sin that, though already forgiven, still dwells in our flesh and clings to us."[19]

It was obvious to Flacius that Osiander misunderstood what righteousness meant according to Luther, so he began his *Refutation* with a clear definition of the term: "Our righteousness... is the fulfillment of God's law, which not we, but Christ, true God and true man, accomplished surpassingly and overwhelmingly through his absolute obedience, both by doing that which the law required of us to do, and suffering that which we because of our sins should have suffered, all of this [what Christ did] is given and accredited to us by God through faith."[20]

During the following years Flacius wrote somewhere between fifteen to twenty-five[21] works against Osiander, joining together with Joachim Mörlin (1514-71), Melanchthon, Gallus, Amsdorf, John Calvin (1509-64), and a host of other authors against him. In fact, apart from some theologians in Prussia and Johannes Brenz (1499-1570) in Swabia, almost no one else sided with Osiander's Christology.

The Schwenckfeldian Controversy

Kaspar von Schwenckfeld (1489-1561) was a nobleman from Silesia who claimed spiritual awakening about the same time as Luther. He arrived at a spiritualist interpretation of the Lord's Supper and criticized the Augsburg Confession on the issues of predestination, infant baptism and free will. Schwenckfeld was also very active as an evangelist and succeeded in winning many people over to his own teachings. Flacius engaged in a debate with him between 1553 and 1559 over the role of the Bible and the preached word.[22]

As a matter of fact, Flacius was asked by the preachers in Silesia and Swabia to write against Schwenckfeld[23] because the number of people following him was growing and his latest book published in 1551 called *On the Holy Scriptures* was stirring up much trouble. According to a modern-

day Schwenckfeld biographer and editor of his works in a nineteen-volume *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum*, "therein he contended that the inner word of the spirit must be differentiated from the external word spoken by the preacher; that the living Word of God is not the Scriptures, but Christ and that the Scriptures must be interpreted spiritually".[24]

It did not take much convincing for Flacius by others to write a refutation of Schwenckfeld's theology. After he read his works he completely disliked the spiritualistic approach to the Bible and even made a comment: "Spiritual exegesis fits scripture like a fist fits into an eye."[25] Over the course of the following years Flacius wrote nine books against the Silesian enthusiast, the first one being *On the Holy Scripture and its Effect* with a preface and conclusion by Gallus.[26] This work appeared in three editions, one in Strasbourg, where the preachers of that city published it in order to combat the growing threat from radical followers of Schwenckfeld.

Basically Schwenckfeld was saying that the Bible is not clear, that man cannot use historical and literary approaches in order to understand the Scriptures, but instead the word of God comes to him inwardly and mystically. Schwenckfeld argued that the Ten Commandments cannot be God's word because they were written on a stone or that the words "This is my beloved Son", in Matthew's Gospel are not God's. Flacius replied that "the word is God's whether it is on stone, tablets, paper, pergament, or the human memory, registered, composed, written, or spoken by the human voice."[27]

Schwenckfeld made a differentiation between written word and internal word, the first having been written by man, the second by God himself inside of our hearts. Because of this, the preached word of God has less value and no saving power. Church ceremonies like the Lord's Supper, which Schwenckfeld refused to receive and practice, is of no use to Christians, he stated. On the other hand, Flacius insisted that God deals with human beings only through His external word and sacraments. It is obvious that they were worlds apart in their hermeneutics and as the debate progressed it was more apparent that their theology differed fundamentally as well.

The Second Sacramentarian Controversy[28]

In 1549 Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75) and Calvin agreed to be of one mind concerning the doctrine of the Lord's Supper and they signed a statement called *Consensus Tigurinus* cementing their shared beliefs. This document was published two years later and the already existing enmity between Swiss Reformed churches and Lutherans received a new spark. In 1552 Joachim Westphal (1510-74), a Hamburg pastor, published an attack in Magdeburg on the *Consensus* and accused Swiss Reformers of "reaffirming the sacramentarianism of Zwingli, and he especially objected to their rejection of the Lutheran explanation of Christ's presence in the Supper."[29]

Westphal continued his assault with another book in 1553 to which Calvin responded. By that time, many other pastors and theologians had got involved in writing and defending their understanding of the words "This is my body," and eventually Flacius joined the controversy, too. Together with other Magdeburg ministers he wrote *The Confession of Faith on the Sacrament of the Eucharist, in which the Ministers of the Church of Saxony Defend the Presence of the Body and Blood of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Supper by Solid Argument of Sacred Scripture in Answer to the Book Dedicated to them by John Calvin.*[30]

After Calvin had repeatedly refuted Westphal's arguments in print, he grew tired of it and decided to stop, but his new colleague in Geneva, Theodore Beza (1519-1605), took over writing against Westphal in 1559. Prior to moving to Geneva, Beza was in Lausanne during the 1550s when he tried reconciling theological differences between Lutherans and the Swiss and Savoyard churches. In 1557 Beza and Guillaume Farel (1489-1565) represented Swiss churches in an attempt to heal the religious division with their German counterparts at the colloquy in Göppingen. Beza strove to emphasize the points of agreement and pass over debating the objectionable terms like *substantia and exhibere*,[31] and in the end he and Farel wrote a confession for the Duke Christopher of Württemberg (1515-68), which pleased Lutherans and created a temporary peace. However, soon after Beza moved to Geneva he became more antagonistic toward Lutherans in Germany and it is interesting to note the change in his attitude. It was with Beza that Flacius engaged in polemical writing after Calvin's death, when Beza became the leader of the Genevan church. Namely in 1565 Flacius published a hermeneutical and grammatical book which contained thirty reasons why the presence of Christ is distributed through his body and blood at the Eucharist.[32] After the book came out, Bullinger immediately wrote to Beza that he wanted him to reply to Flacius[33], which Beza did in the following year when he wrote his refutation of Flacius' theses. In subsequent years Flacius and Beza kept writing against each other, becoming more and more hostile and it was clear that their differences were irreconcilable.

Flacius was also involved in trying to combat the spread of the Reformed faith in the province of Palatinate, where Frederick III (1515-76) became elector in 1559. When initial strife concerning the nature of Christ's presence in the Eucharist broke out in Heidelberg between Heshusius, who was a fiery Gnesio-Lutheran and the general superintendent as well as the dean of the faculty, and Wilhelm Klebitz (1533-68), a preacher with Reformed adherences[34], Frederick decided to dismiss them both. In 1562 Frederick commissioned Caspar Olevianus (1536-87) and Zacharias Ursinus (1534-83), both newly appointed to the faculty, to write a confession of faith, which later became known as The Heidelberg Catechism (HC).[35] As soon as the HC was adopted and published in January 1563, Flacius wrote the "Refutation of a small German Calvinist Catechism,"[36] in which his main arguments were directed against the interpretation of the

Lord's Supper in the HC. A year later Flacius tried to discredit Olevianus, who by that time had become the main pastor in Heidelberg and published against him a "Refutation of the four sermons preached by the Sacramentarian called Olevianus."[37] However, Flacius' attempts were unsuccessful because the HC managed to strengthen the move of the Palatinate to the Reformed camp and became a major confession for the future generations of Reformed Christians in many countries. Thus, the Augsburg Confession to which Flacius adhered, lost.

The Synergist Controversy

One of the cornerstones of the Lutheran church was the doctrine *sola fides*, that faith alone justifies. Luther wrote in *De servo arbitrio* in 1525 that even before the fall, the human will is to be compared with a pack animal with either God or Satan as its rider. As a result of Adam's fall into sin, man in himself is completely unable to do anything in order to save or justify himself towards a pure and righteous God. However, after Luther's death in 1546, Melanchthon disagreed with this fundamental teaching by revising his systematic theology, *Loci Communes* in 1548. It was primarily the article on the free will (*locus de libero arbitrio*) that was changed to the greatest extent. Therein he said, "... free will in man is the faculty to apply himself to grace".[38] Because this was published in the year of the Interim when there were other issues which theologians were considering, it went almost unnoticed. In 1555, Johann Pffefinger (1493-1570), professor in Leipzig, stirred up public attention by his work "Five Questions Concerning the Liberty of the Human Will." He contended together with Melanchthon that man must play his part in conversion. Once again, Flacius took up his pen and wrote the "Refutation of Pfeffinger's Propositions on Free Will."[39]

When Flacius wrote this rebuttal he was already living in Jena, where he held the chair in New Testament at the university that was heavily fighting against Wittenberg and Leipzig theologians. The controversy took on a new role, when a fellow professor of Flacius, Victorin Strigel (1524-69) and a city preacher Andreas Hügel (°1499), started supporting Pfeffinger and publicly opposing Flacius from the pulpit and amongst the students in Jena. As a result, Duke John Frederick of Saxony (1529-1595) arrested Strigel and Hügel on March 27, 1559 and kept them in prison until September, when they were ready to amend their doctrinal position on synergism, a term which Flacius had coined for his enemies.[40] Most of the faculty was upset with the Duke's reaction, and they wanted, together with Flacius, to settle the dispute on a theological level by holding a public disputation, which was granted to them in August of the following year at the ducal court in Weimar. Rules were set and both parties submitted their theses for discussion agreeing that the Word of God should be the final authority and decide who is interpreting the Scriptures in an orthodox manner. It was during this disputation that Flacius marred his reputation and until today is

remembered for the things he said during those few summer days. By defending the passivity of man in conversion and trying to uphold the doctrine of original sin, he stated that sin is a substance of the fallen man. Thus, the Flacian controversy began.

The Flacian Controversy

The Weimar Disputation was an effort by secular authorities to resolve a conflict between two theologians, who were leading intellectuals at the university of Jena and also leaders of two different movements. Many people came to attend the hearings, including many Saxon and Thuringian dukes, students from Jena and Wittenberg, pastors and church superintendents and also Flacius' friends and supporters from his Magdeburg days. Chancellor Christian Brück was presiding over the colloquy itself, a man who was close to Strigel and was later influential in securing banishment for Flacius.

The language of the disputation was Latin and since the terms to be used were not clarified, Strigel started using Aristotelian philosophical expressions in order to make his point. Flacius objected to the terminology and asked that biblical phrases be used instead. "He appealed chiefly to Luther and the Bible, and charged Strigel with using philosophical distinctions in the doctrine of sin."[41] Strigel employed the words substance (*substantia*) and accident or quality (*accidens*) and made a great distinction between them. According to him God created desires in human beings and those desires and cravings need to be satisfied. Some of them are fulfilled in good ways and some in evil. The way they are fulfilled is an accident, and that is exactly how he defined original sin. Flacius' answer was, "Original sin is not a quality (*accidens*). Scripture calls it the old man, the flesh, the work of the law written in their hearts (Ro 2:15), a foolish heart, an evil heart, not a quality in the heart."[42] On this Strigel replied, "Original sin is a loss or corruption in all powers and faculties in man, but particularly in these three: in the mind, in the will, and in the heart. Original sin is not a substance nor anything substantial, nor a quantity, but a quality."[43]

The difference was that Strigel viewed man as essentially unchanged after his fall into sin in the Garden of Eden. The only thing that changed was that his quality of righteousness has been replaced by a quality of sinfulness. Flacius argued the opposite, namely that sin has depraved and corrupted man so that he has become an enemy of God. The change that took place after the fall was that original sin has become the substance and the very essence of man and because of it man's ability to know God has been lost.

The debaters kept disagreeing for eight days, often talking past each other. They used the same terminology but apparently meant different things. Schultz thinks that Flacius was trapped into making a statement

that sin is the substance of human nature but that he was still more faithful to the heritage of Luther.[44] Even if Schultz is right in his opinion that was not what the Duke thought, who dismissed Flacius and his like-minded colleagues from Jena in 1561. During the remaining fourteen years of his life Flacius could not find a job anywhere and he kept moving from city to city (Regensburg, Antwerp, Strasbourg, Frankfurt) hoping for a general church synod where he could defend his views. In those years he published many books, expounding his teaching on original sin. Likewise, many books were published by his Philippist opponents who were joined by some of the formerly most committed Gnesio-Lutherans, including Johannes Wigand (1523-87), Tileman Heshusius (1527-88) and Simon Musaeus (1529-82), in attacking and ridiculing Flacius.

Epilogue

As a result of the Flacian controversy, Flacius lost his leadership in the church and those pastors and theology professors who supported him were persecuted and dismissed from their posts. The price to pay for following in the footsteps of Flacius in those days was sometimes high. Many were excommunicated, imprisoned, and to a number of followers even a Christian funeral was denied. Flacius himself was denied a proper burial in Frankfurt am Main where he died in 1575.

In 1580 the Formula of Concord was published, which was a doctrinal document of the Lutheran church. Its purpose was to bring peace to a heavily divided second generation of Lutherans and to settle theological disputes, which arose after Luther's death. In it both Melanchthon's and Flacius' views were rejected (even though their names were not explicitly mentioned) as the Formula tried to find a middle ground between the two extremes.

Flacius' most lasting contributions to Protestantism lie in his outstanding hermeneutical achievements, for which he has been referred to as one of the pioneers in the field, his work in the area of church history, and his theological opus. In the massive work *Clavis Scripturae Sacrae* (Key to the Sacred Scriptures) Flacius was the first to establish that any passage of the Bible should be interpreted considering the purpose and the structure of the whole chapter or a given book, as well as the rule that the literal sense of the text should have a priority over allegories and metaphors. While living in Magdeburg, Flacius thought of a grand plan, which was writing a church history consisting of primary sources in order to prove that throughout the ages there had always been a true church which stayed loyal to the original apostolic faith. He organized a group of scholars and a result was a thirteen-volume church history known as the *Magdeburg Centuries*. In 1556 Flacius published *Catalogus testium veritatis* (Catalog of the Witnesses of Truth), which consisted of documents together with the commentary of Flacius describing the plight of people

throughout history who were striving to preserve the New Testament faith and resisted the Antichrist (Rome). Through close to 400 "witnesses" Flacius tried to show that the Reformation was not something which Luther or Zwingli started, but that there had always been people who wanted to be free from central authority and the politics of Rome and who longed to able to read and interpret Scriptures in their own homes and communities instead of being given a set of dogmas from Rome.

As a theologian Flacius tried to stay loyal to Luther and to his emphasis on the slavery of the human will. "Following Luther more than Melanchthon, Flacius was convinced that the correct theological differentiation is not that of the scholastics between "word" and "spirit", but rather the differentiation of the two voices apparent in both testaments: that of the "law", which speaks judgment, and the "gospel", which speaks forgiveness."[45] A lot of Flacius' theological writing was done in the context of polemics as he tried to defend and protect what he considered to be the truth. Accordingly, most historians of doctrine do not see Flacius as a heretic, but they all admit that Aristotelian terminology, which he employed, produced theological confusion. Karl Barth says that his "doctrine of original sin, that after the fall of man sin had become man's very substance, was not so unreasonable and unacceptable as it was represented by its opponents and later in many histories of dogma."[46] He continues by saying that Flacius rightly rejected the thesis of the synergists that man's sin is only an *accidens*, and concludes with the statement: "That Flacius could be so execrated by his Lutheran contemporaries because of this thesis shows how little Luther's most important insights were understood even within his own Church, and how thoroughly they had been forgotten only two decades after his death."[47]

During his lifetime Flacius wrote and published about 300 books and pamphlets and had possibly the largest library in the sixteenth century. In 1577, two years after he died, his wife Magdalena married Heinrich Petreus (1546-1615), who is said to have made a fortune by selling Flacius' library to Duke Heinrich Julius of Braunschweig (1564-1613) in 1592. It was Flacius' collection of books which led to the creation of one of the largest libraries of that day, started by Duke August (1579-1666). Today the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel is considered to be one of the best libraries in the world for medieval and sixteenth century printed works and manuscripts, and for that Flacius is to be credited.

Notes

[1] August Detlev Twesten, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus, eine Vorlesung* (Berlin: G. Bethge, 1844). Quoted from Oliver K. Olson, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus," in Jill Raitt (ed.), *Shapers of Religious Tradition in Germany, Switzerland and Poland, 1560-1600* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 2.
[2] *CR* Mel 7, 252. Also quoted in Clyde L. Manschreck, "The Role of Melanchthon in the Adiaphora Controversy," *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte* 48 (1957), 165-182, here 170.

[3] "Response of Flacius and Gallus to Some Preachers of Meissen (1549)," letter quoted in Eric Lund (ed.), *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 187-188.

[4] Oliver K. Olson, "Theology of Revolution: Magdeburg, 1550-1551," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 3 (1972), 56-79.

[5] Zuck H. Lowell (ed.), *Documents in Free Church History Christianity and Revolution: Radical Christian Testimonies 1520-1650.* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1975), 136.

[6] Henry W. Reinmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus. A Biographical Sketch," *Concordia Theological Monthly* 35/2 (1964), 69-93, here 73-74.

[7] Robert Kolb, "Nikolaus Gallus' Critique of Philip Melanchthon's Teaching on the Freedom of the Will," *Archive für Reformationsgeschichte* 91 (2000), 87-109, here 88.

[8] Rudolf Keller, "Gnesiolutheraner", in: Theologische Realenzyklopädie, Band 13 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 512.

[9] Timothy Wengert, "Georg Major (1502-1574). Defender of Wittenberg's Faith and Melanchthonian Exegete", in Heinz Scheible (ed.), *Melanchthon in seinen Schülern* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1997), 129-156, here 135-136.

[10] Robert Kolb, *Nikolaus von Amsdorf (1483-1565): Popular Polemics in the Preservation of Luther's Legacy* (Nieuwkoop: B. De Graaf, 1978), 125.

[11] George Major, *Auf des Ehrenwirdigen Herrn Nicolas von Amsdorfs Schrift, so jetzund neulich Mense Novembri 1551 wider Dr. Major öffendtlich im Druck ausgegangen* (Witteberg: Rhau, 1552). Quoted in Robert Kolb, "Georg Major as Controversialist: Polemics in the Late Reformation," *Church History* 45/4 (1976), 455-468, here 459.

[12] Flacius, *Wider den Evangelisten des heiligen Chorroks D. Geitz Maior* ("Basel" [Magdeburg], 1552). Cited by Wilhelm Preger, *Matthias Flacius Illyricus und seine Zeit*, 2 vols. (Erlangen: Theodor Blässing, 1861; reprint, Hildesheim: Georg Olms & Nieuwkoop: B. de Graaf, 1964), 1: 363.

[13] Flacius, "Letter to Hubert Languet, June 21, 1556," Cited by Hans-Werner Gensichen, *We Condemn. How Luther and 16th-Century Lutheranism Condemned False Doctrine.* Translated by Herbert J.A. Bouman (Saint Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1967), 150. The whole letter is reprinted in *CR* 8, 801-803.

[14] Patricia Wilson-Kastner, "Andreas Osianders Theology of Grace in the Perspective of the Influence of Augustine of Hippo," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 10/2 (1979), 72-91, here 79.

[15] Oliver Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2002), 286.

[16] *ibid.* 287. See also Preger, *Matthias Flacius und seine Zeit*, 1: 217.

[17] Flacius, *Verlegung des Bekentnis Osiandri von der Rechtfertigung der armen sünder durch die wesentliche Gerechtigkeit der Hohen Maiestet Gottes allain* (Magdeburg: Christian Rödinger, 1552).

[18] Osiander, *Von dem Einigen Mitler Jesu Christo und Rechtfertigung des Glaubens, Bekantus* (Königsberg, 1551). Cited by Lund, *Documents from the History of Lutheranism, 1517-1750*, 206.

[19] *ibid.* 206.

[20] Flacius, *Verlegung*: "Unsere gerechtigkeit... ist die erfullung des gesetzes Gottes, welche nicht wir, sondern Christus, warer Gott und mensch, durch seinen allervolkommensten gehorsam gantz uberschwencklich und uberreichlich geleistet hat, beide mit thun desjenigen, so das gesetz von uns zuthun hat erfordert, und mit leiden des, das wir von wegen unser sünden hetten leiden sollen, uns aber durch den glauben von Gott geschenkt und zugerechnet wird." Quoted in Gerhard Müller and Gottfried Seebaß (eds), *Andreas Osiander D. Ä. Gesamtausgabe* 10. *Schriften und Briefe September 1551 bis Oktober 1552 sowie Posthumes und Nachträge* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 750.

[21] Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of the Luther's Reform*, 291.

[22] For the detailed view of the debate see Rudolf Keller, *Die Lehre vom Wort Gottes bei Matthias Flacius Illyricus* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus), 1984.

[23] *Corpus Schwenckfeldianorum* 12, 362.

[24] Selina Gerhard Schultz, *Caspar Schwenckfeld von Ossig 1484-1561* (Pennsburg, PA: The Board of Publication of the Schwenkkfelder Church, 1977), 4th edition, first edition published in 1946.

[25] Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of Luther's Reform*, 302.

[26] *Von der h. Schrifft und irer wirckung, wider Caspar Schwenckfeld. Mit einer vermanung Nicolai Galli das ampt Gottlichs worts in ehren zuhaben* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1553).

[27] Flacius, *Von der heiligen Schrifft und irrer wirckung, wider Caspar Schwenckfeld* (Magdeburg: Michael Lotter, 1553). Cited by Olson, *Matthias Flacius and the Survival of the Luther's Reform*, 306.

[28] The first Sacramentarian controversy took place between Luther and Zwingli in 1529 at Marburg Castle. Luther continued attacking the Zürich church after Zwingli's death with accusations that they were heretical concerning the Lord's Supper. In 1545 the church under Bullinger's leadership answered Luther with the *Zürcher Bekenntnis*.

[29] Joseph N. Tylenda, "The Calvin-Westphal Exchange. The Genesis of Calvin's Treatises against Westphal", *Calvin Theological Journal* 9/2 (1974), 182-209, here 183.

[30] Printed in J. Westphal's *Confessio fidei de Eucharistiae Sacramento in qua ministri Eecclesiarum Saxoniae solids argumentis sacrarum literarum astruunt corporis et sanguinis Domini nostri Iesu Christi praesentiam in coena sancta, et de libro Calvini ipsis dedicato respondent* (Magdeburg, 1557).

[31] Amy Nelson Burnett, "Heinrich Bullinger and the Problem of Eucharistic Concord," paper presented at the Internationaler Kongress Heinrich Bullinger (1504-75), Zürich, Switzerland, August 25-29, 2004.

[32] *Des Demonstrationes evidentissimae XXX. Praesentiae, distributionisque corporis ac sanguinis Christi in sacra coena hactenus multis minus cognitae* (Oberursel en Prusse, 1565).

[33] See Bullinger's letter to Beza on May 31, 1565 in *Correspondence de Théodore de Beze, Tome VI*, Henri Meylan, Alain Durfour & Alexandre de Hensler (eds), series: Travaux d'Humansime et Renaissance (Geneve: Librairre Droz, 1970), 95 and also letter dated June 20, 1565 on page 404.

[34] For more on the debate see Wim Janse, "Non-conformist Eucharist Theology: The case of the alleged 'Zwinglian Polemicist' Wilhelm Klebitz (c. 1533-68)," *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis/Dutch Review of Church History* 81-1 (2001), 5-25.

[35] For relationship between Lutherans and Heidelberg, see Lyle D. Bierma, "What Hath Wittenberg to do with Heidelberg? Philip Melanchthon and the Heidelberg Catechism," in Karin Maag (ed.), *Melanchthon in Europe: His Work and Influence Beyond Wittenberg* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1999), 103-21.

[36] Flacius, *Widerlegung eines kleinen deutschen calvinischen Catechismi so in disem MDLXIII Jar, sampt ethlichen andern jerrigen Tractetlin ausgangen: Item, Beweisung, das auch die Unwirdigen den waren Leib vnd Blut Jesu Christi im Abendmal empfahen...* (Regensburg: Heinrich Geissler, 1563).

[37] Flacius, *Widerlegung vier Predigten eines Sakramentariërs mit Zunamen Oleuianus...* (Oberursel: Nikolaus Henricus, 1564).

[38] *CR* 21, 659. Quoted in F. Bente, *Historical Introductions to the Book of Concord* (St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1965), 130.

[39] Flacius, *Refutatio propositionum Pfeffingeri de libero arbitrio... M. Fla. Illyrici de eadem materia controversia* (1558).

[40] Luther D. Peterson, "Synergist Controversy," in Hans J. Hillerbrand (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Reformation*, 4 vols. (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 2: 134.

[41] Reinmann, "Matthias Flacius Illyricus. A Biographical Sketch," 83.

[42] Flacius, *Disputatio De Originali Peccato et Libero Arbitrio* (Jena, 1563), 29. Quoted in Heinrich Vogel, "The Flacian Controversy on Original Sin" in Arnold J. Koelpin (ed.), *No Other Gospel: Essays in Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Formula of Concord 1580-1980* (Milwaukee, WI: Northwestern Publishing House, 1980), 1-15, here 4.

[43] Vogel, "The Flacian Controversy on Original Sin," 4.

[44] Robert C. Schultz, "Original Sin: Accident or Substance: The Paradoxical Significance of FC I, 53-62 in Historical Context" in Lewis W. Spitz and Wenzel Lohff (eds), *Discord, Dialogue, and Concord* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 38-57, here 48.
[45] Tibor Fabiny, *A Keresztény Hermeneutika Kérdései és Története* (Budapest: Hermeneutikai Kutatóközpont, 1998), 245.
[46] Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* III/2 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1980), 27.
[47] *ibid.* 27.

Theodicy as Theophany in the Book of Job

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Introduction

The book of Job is arguably the most complex witness the Old Testament offered on the issue of innocent suffering; and, for some, the most unsettling one! What makes this work even more challenging is the fact that the reader is not just informed, as in a journalistic report, about the tragic events in Job's life. Rather, Job is a beautiful work of Hebrew literature. It is organized with precise intent and betrays a highly trained Jewish mind at work. But what makes the book even more unique is that fact Job is questioning God, and through Job's laments, the author might be "undermining the very foundation" which was accepted by many pious Jews at that time.[1] Why would the God of the covenant suddenly reverse the promise of "reward for righteousness," as apparently happened with Job? We will probe these questions and will offer our own interpretation.

The book begins with a classic introductory narrative: Amv. bAY ai #W[-#rɑβ. hy' h' vyai (*iş haiah bᵉereṭ Uz, Iov şᵉmo;* "There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job").[2] The narrative style begins and end the book as a whole, thus bracketing the poetic section which forms the main body of the book.[3] The narrative changes its scenery with verse 6, which transports the reader into the heavenly realm. It is there that the adversary of Job (!j Fh; *hassatan*) makes the shocking suggestion that, should Job's piety be tested, God will discover that it meant nothing but a natural outgrowth of the wealth and security which Job enjoyed from God. Who would not fear God and be grateful for such a privillege? The heavenly deliberations result in the loss of Job's family and property, and in the "loathsome sores" and the silence of God that tormented him throughout most of the book. The poetic section begins (3:3) with Job cursing the day of his birth and questioning everything – the loyalty of his friends, the meaning of life and justice, and God himself.

Of all the complex literary and religious issues that confront the reader of Job, I have chosen to focus on a certain literary and theological pattern: the *crescendo* movement and the climax of the book, found in the the answer from the "whirlwind." I shall argue that through the request of Job to hear God speak, the author enhanced the expectations of the readers for an eventual confrontation between Job and God, and, implicitly, for a

solution to the problem of innocent suffering. Set in a juridical or simply a polemical context, the demands of Job that God address his situation form part of the literary and theological structure of the book.

Demanding an Answer from God: the Theme of Divine Silence and the Juridical Metaphor

The laments of Job are set in a polemical context and are part of the dialogues carried back and forth between Job and the three friends. Because Job has maintained his innocence from the very beginning, he demands some sort of explanation for his suffering.[4] This is first attempted by Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, who initially came to "condole and comfort him" (אְמَחֲלֹ וَ אֹל -dWh1; *lanud lo ulᵉnahamo*). But these characters appear here as more than comforters. Scholars have recognized them as Jewish sages seeking to comfort but even more to uphold the traditional principle of *divine retribution*: only a person who sinned against God could meet with such a fate.[5] However, unable to alleviate the physical and psychological or spiritual suffering of Job, the comforters' presence only increases the tension and thus builds up the climax for the divine response. Here, I believe, the author employs a theme which, though literary and theologically essential, has not received the attention that it deserves from contemporary scholarship. This is the theme of *divine silence*, or the absence of an explanation from God for the suffering of Job.[6]

One of the main settings that the author used in order to introduce this theme is the "legal courtroom" background.[7] Answering his three friends, Job demands that they prove his guilt and laments the fact that a fragile creature like him has few, if any, chances to justify himself before an overwhelming God, who "will crush me with a storm."[8] However, in several occasions Job pleads with God to reveal Himself or the reasons why he has stricken Job so hard. The following is an attempt to analyse these occurrences and set them within the larger pattern to which they belong.

The first of the *juridical* settings in which one such request occurs is 9:15-16, 19.

9:15 אֲשֶׁר אִם צָדַקְתִּי לֹא אֶעֱנֶה לִמְשֹׁפְטִי אֶתְחַנָּן
(*aşer im ţadakᵉti lo eeneh; limᵉşofti ethanan*)
"Though I am righteous (i.e. not-guilty), I cannot answer him; I shall appeal for compassion to my accuser."

9:16 אִם קָרָאתִי וַיַּעֲנֵנִי לֹא אַאֲמִין כִּי יַאֲזִין קוֹלִי
(*im qarati wayaaneni lo aamin; ki yaazin qoli*)
"If I summon him and He will answer me, I do not believe that He will listen to my voice."

9:19 אִם לְכֹחַ אַמִּיץ הִנֵּה וְאִם לְמִשְׁפָּט מִי יוֹעִדֵנִי
(*im lechoah ammiţ hinneh weim lemişpat mi yoideni*)

"If it's a matter of power, behold, He is mighty! If it's a matter of justice, who can summon Him?"

The verb yTqdc' (*ṭadaqᵉti*, "I am right/righteous/not-guilty," if translated as a Qal perfect) is clearly an indicator of the juridical context surrounding this passage. The legal terminology of this verb is also evident in 11:2 and 13:18: "I have indeed prepared my case; I know I shall be vindicated (qD ċa, *eṭᵉdaq*; 13:18).⁹ The main clause, however, may pose a problem here. The Masoretic hn{ʒ, al{ ("I shall be unable to answer," pers. I, masc. sg.) is translated by the Septuagint as ouk eisakousetai (*ouk eisakousetai*), that is, "he shall not answer" (future, pers. III, masc., sg.). Most commentators retained the Masoretic version, since the surrounding verbs are mostly active, while few others suggested that the Qal should rather be read as a Niphal (passive form, "I am not answered"), in which case the implicit subject of the action becomes God, the one who refuses to answer Job.¹⁰ The second choice – the Niphal translation – would prove attractive insofar as it offers a better explanation for the Septuagint transition from a first person (middle) verb to a third person action, where the subject is God ("He shall not answer").

But the following verse is even more important for the sake of our argument. The form ytär q' (*qarati*) reveals again the concern of the author with legal metaphors, as "El is summoned to court to answer a suit which Job brings against him."¹¹ This time, the proof of divine indifference toward Job's plea is unmistakable: even contemplating the impossible – that he would summon God into a human court – Job would receive no attention from God (see v. 16). A similar meaning is echoed in v. 32: "For he is not a mortal as I am, that I might answer him, that we should come to trial together." Through a skilful combination of rhetorical and religious themes, the author has just begun to build up the crescendo movement that will eventually result in the very revelation of God in chapters 38-41.

The second passage where Job calls on God, using legal terminology, is found in 13:3:

#P (ka, Iae-Ia, xkeAhw⊳rBða]yD: v;-Ia, ynla] ~IWa

("*ulam ani El-ṣadai adaber, wᵉhocheah el el ehᵉpaṭ*")

"But I would speak to Shaddai, and desire to settle my case with God."

Chapter 13 portrays God as an incontestable ruler, one in whose hands "is the life of every living thing" (13:10). He makes nations rise and fall down often, with no reason that human beings like Job can understand. And yet, Job still desires that he argue his case before God, not before the three men who misunderstood and mistreated him (13:4). The adversative conjunction ~I Wa (*ulam*, "but, on the other hand") reveals the contrast between the options Job has faced so far: to hear his friends' lies or to have God speak ("with You are wisdom and strength; ...He has counsel and understanding;" 12:13, 16).¹²

Again, in a "court of law" setting, the author expresses Job's desire to be vindicated by the One with whom it matters the most. The infinitive חִוֹכֵחַ (wᵉhocheah, "to settle" a case from a legal standpoint) – introduced by the coordinative וְ and marking the second stanza of v. 3 – is often used in the Old Testament with the legal sense "to judge, to convict."[13] The author uses the same legal metaphor several times in chapter 13. In spite of the fact that a confrontation with God might kill him (See, He will kill me, ...but I will defend my ways to His face" – 13:15), Job is determined to get a chance and present his case before God: הִנֵּה-נָא עָרַכְתִּי מִשְׁפָּט (hinneh-na arachti mişpat; "Behold, I have prepared a case" – 13:18).[14] Although Job has repeatedly accussed God of dealing unfairly with him, by insisting that God clarify this situation Job concedes that no other but God can pronounce a person innocent.[15]

Chapter 13 ends with Job's agonizing prayer: that God will withdraw His hand from him and not let His dread teriffy him (13:21). Then, God can call (קְרָא, 13:22; the same verb used earlier with a legal meaning "to summon" in a court of law) and Job will answer; or Job will speak and God will reply to him – all legal terms used to describe proceedings in a court of law. And yet, agonizing over the strange silence of God, Job is compelled to see the hiding of God as an implicit condemnation.[16]

The third passage that uses explicit legal language is found in 23:3-5:

מִי-יִתֵּן יָדַעְתִּי וְאֶמְצָאֵהוּ אָבוֹא עַד-תְּכוּנָתוֹ
אֶעֶרְכָה לְפָנָיו מִשְׁפָּט וּפִי אֲמַלֵּא תוֹכָחוֹת
אֵדְעָה מִלִּים יַעֲנֵנִי וְאָבִינָה מַה-יֹּאמַר לִי

(mi itten yadᵉati wᵉemţaehu avo ad tichunato, eerᵉchah lᵉfanav mişpat upi amale tochahot, adᵉah milim yaaneni wᵉavinah mah yomar li)
"Oh, that I knew where I may find Him, I would come to His seat. I would lay the case before Him and fill my mouth with arguments. I would know the words that He will answer to me and understand what He will say to me."

While the two clauses in v. 3 are independent, in v. 4 and 5 the syntax changes. Since the coordinative וְ introduces the second clause, the order of the action Job will take is, first, "setting his case before God," and second, "arguing with him." The same logic applies to v. 5 as well.[17] Gordis, however, interprets v. 3 as the *protasis*, and v. 4-8 as the *apodosis* of a conditional argument delineated by v. 4-8. Though this is nevertheless possible, I would rather confine the conditional argument only to verses 3-5.[18] A possible outline of such an argument may be the following:

[If]   I were to find God, and [If] I were to come close to Him (v. 3).

[Then]   I would lay my case before him.
            I would fill my mouth with arguments (v. 4).
            I would learn about His answer and I would understand what he
            would say to me.

One reason, I believe, why this becomes important is that here, as well as in the texts analysed above, Job's foremost concern is to find God.[19] It is plausible that in this way the author intends to stimulate a sense of expectation in the reader's mind toward the divine-human dialogue, which would then resolve the disturbing questions that Job raised all along. Secondly, the juridical setting is again brought into play here by the usage of tAxk'At (*tochahot*) and jP ymi (*mişpat*). It has already been shown that both words are used frequently in Job and have strong legal connotations.[20] As such this passage too joins with the others to answer the moral and theological questions raised by Job throughout his suffering.

The last passage to be analised here comes from 31:35:

ybßrl vyai bt; K' rpsew>ynhßy: yD: v; ynlT' -!h, yl i [ßme voyl i -!Tyl ymi
(*"mi itten li şomea li, hen tavi, şaddai yaaneni w^esefer katav iş rivi"*)

(*"mi itten li şomea li, hen tavi, şaddai yaaneni wesefer katav iş rivi"*)
("Oh, that I had One who will hear me! Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me! Oh, that I had the indictment that my adversary wrote.")

Several clarifications need to be made before we assess the relevance of this passage for the wider pattern that has been analysed so far. Scholars have usually translated ynlT' (*tavi*) as "mark" or "signature."[21] Others preferred to retain the Vulgate rendition of "desire." The Hebrew !Tyl (to give, allow, be given [as a Niphal, but here we have a Qal Imperfect, modified by the participle [ßme v)has usually been translated as "If I had" (lit., "who would give to me a hearer" or "Oh, that a hearer be given to me"). The LXX uses the verb dwһ (aorist optative – in the phrase dwһ akouρnta, mou, *doei akounta mou*], lit., who would give...?"), which comes close to the Hebrew rendition. In this sense, one may say that what Job wants is somebody that may be assigned to help him.

Brennan's interpretation – though argued from a different perspective – may be helpful in illuminating the author's usage of a juridical imagery. He analyses the participle [ßme vin other Scriptural contexts and argues that here too the word has strong forensic connotations.[22] One incident in the Old Testament (2 Samuel 15:3-4) shows Absalom appealing to those who passed by city gates: "Your suit is good and just, but there is not one to *hear* you" (^ l -!yae [me vr> *w^eşomea ein lecha*). If only I could be appointed judge in the land!" In Brennan's view Job would also want a judge who might compel God to clarify his case against Job."[23]

Evidently the author placed the final request of Job (for a resolution) in a juridical context (also defined by words like bßrl [*riv*, judgment] and rpSe [*sefer*, indictment]).[24] The interrogative pronoun ymi (which introduces the first sentence) reminds one about the passage interpreted above (23:3, "*Oh*, that I knew where I might find him"). Both reflect Job's desire that God address his last request and that he be exonerated from the accessions of guilt. It is as if Job had heard God himself stating in the beginning that Job was "blameless and upright"! Verse 35 marks Job's final appeal for a hearing before God ("the words of Job are ended" – 31:40). The audience

knows that soon either God will speak, or Job will end his laments without having been vindicated. The background for the climax of *theophany* has been prepared.[25] In the next chapters, the reader will hear from Elihu and finally from God. In the concluding part of this argument I will try to analyse the relation between the request of Job and the divine revelation, and the relevance this last episode had for the theological/moral message of the book. But first, notice the following arrangement, as a summary outline of the *crescendo* pattern analysed so far:

JURIDICAL SETTING	CLIMAX	RESOLUTION
1. Job believes that God would not answer if he were to call him, nor would He listen if Job would speak (9:16-17).	God speaks from the whirlwind. Job's request has finally been answered honoured: God addresses Job in person (chs. 38-41).	Job was not told why he suffered in the first place. The mere fact of God's answer in person seems enough to solve the crisis Job heard God's voice and accepted his situation: "I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (42:5).
2. Job wishes that he would speak to God, and that he would present his case before God, if only God would answer to him (13:3, 22).		
3. Job agonizes over the fact that he cannot find God. Had he been able to do so, he would have come close to him and lay his case before Him (23:3-5).		
4. Job cries out to God, but God does not answer him (30:20). Finally, he desires that a Judge be given to him, so that God would answer all his requests, as he believes he will prove his innocence (31:35).		

Conclusion
The Voice from the Whirlwind: Theodicy as Theophany

The speech of God from the whirlwind is very likely the critical point of the structure and message of the book of Job. Yet will not analyse the divine discourse properly without first understanding the juridical dimension of the rhetorical and literary context that precedes the speech.[26] In such a context Job summoned God to appear in person and justify – as Creator and Ruler of the universe – the innocent suffering of Job; or, at least, reveal any guilt that he might have incurred perhaps unknowingly (see especially chapters 9, 13, 23, 30 and 31).[27] If, then, God's speech from the whirlwind may be placed in the same legal setting, it becomes evident that its effect on

the book as a whole is that of a *climax*; that is, it is the discourse which will finally resolve the tension built throughout the preceding chapters.

Nevertheless, as the debate between Scholnik and Alter reveals, the theme that best characterizes this speech is the "lordship of God over creation." And yet, with Scholnik, it should be emphasized that even this sub-context employs legal metaphors in order to continue the rhetorical thrust that characterized the preceding chapters. In 40:2, 7 we read:

hN m[y: HAl a/ xyki Am rAS₦l yD: v;~ [i brh]
(*harov im-ṣaddai issor, mochiah eloah yaanenah*)
"Shall a fault-finder dispute with the Almighty? The one arguing with God shall respond."

yml[jdhir>^ la va, ^ycl' x] rbɡ<k. an'-rz a/
Od; Ti ![m; l. yml[eyvir:F; yj P; vmi rpt T '@ah;
(*ezor-na cᵉgeber halaṭecha, eṣᵉolcha wᵉhodieni, haaf tafer miṣᵉpati, tarᵉṣieni lᵉmaan tiṭᵉdaq*)
"Gird up your loins like a man. I will question you, and you inform me. Will you even frustrate my justice? Will you condemn me that you may be justified?"

Regardless of the content of the message of whirlwind, God evidently accepts Job's challenge and presents himself in the posture required by Job.[28] But the message – although informed by a juridical context – does not appear to fulfil the expectations of Job. Why? What was the author trying to convey through this dual emphasis on "creation" poetry (Scholnik's term) and juridical metaphors? I will conclude this study by reviewing Scholnik's solution and then I will present my own interpretation of the whirlwind discourse.

According to Scholnik, the main charge that Job brought against God was that of qv[' (*aṣaq*, "to oppress") in 10:3a ("Does it seem good to You to oppress...?") – that is, "unlawful appropriation."[29] In other words, Job had been once "a vigorous and prosperous man (29:2-17) who was highly regarded in his community (29:7-9, 21-25); now his property is gone (as in 3:24) and he holds God responsible for the abusive treatment."[30] Secondly, "God is unjust in his role as Judge... While his friends testify that the hero must have committed some offence..., the plaintiff, holding firmly to his innocence, accuses the divine magistrate of injustice." As a result, Scholnik thinks that "God appears before the tribunal to answer the charges Job brings against him." Here the author "adroitly uses poetry about creation to provide the defendant with the opportunity to clear himself." In order to refute Job's charges, God asserts "his rightful title to the universe he created and rules" (41:3), so that Job's claim of property loss be nullified. Schonik shows that in a series of magnificent poetic declarations God proves – often by questioning and "cross examination" – that the birth of creation as well as its continuing survival would be impossible apart from His initiative. Evidently, "poetry about creation is appropriate for refuting Job's charge against God of wrongful deprivation."[31]

Concerning the second charge, Scholnik argues that God corrects Job's idea that justice is the result of God's role as Judge. Rather, by emphasizing "his primary role in the universe" as King, God moves Job to "understand his profound loss as the result of... his divine prerogative to administer a complex kingdom"(?). This, Scholnik believes, conforms with the characterization in the Prologue of God's action toward Job – testing of his subject's loyalty (1:8-11; 2:3-6). Job erroneously viewed divine justice in "human juridical terms," thus perceiving this world as one "in which the wicked are free to operate in the dim night without punishment."[32] Scholnik's interpretation remains one of the most complex attempts to understand the divine discourse in light of its relevance for the book of Job as a whole. There remains, however, one interesting alternative that she has not considered, and which – if tenable – comes as a corrective and improvement to Scholnik's thesis.

In Scholnik's interpretation, God's discourse from the whirlwind has a clear revelatory and transforming effect on Job's state of mind. In particular, this re-evaluation seems to have affected twp components in Job's religious worldview, namely, his understanding of *creation* and *justice*. But a question may be raised here concerning the true cause that finally led to Job's change of mind. If, as Scholnik argues, God's discourse set Job's image in a new light, it must also be true that the divine speeches should have added new elements which would be previously missing from the worldview of Job. But were they?

The following represents a comparative list of "creation" and "ruling" concepts as they appear both in chapters 3-37 (the "human" disputations – before the "divine" speech) and 38-41 (the "divine" disputation):

Chapters 3-37

- God is mighty in strength, removes mountains, shakes the earth, stretches out the heavens.
- He makes the Bear and the Orion.
- God's hands fashioned Job like clay (10:8-9).
- God stretches out the North over the void, hangs the earth upon nothing, binds up the waters in thick clouds, by His power he stills the sea, by His understanding he struck down Rahab, his hand pierced the Leviatan (26:7-13 – Job speaking).
- God draws up the drops of water, scatters lightning around, he commands the snow, the heavy rain, the whirlwinds (36:27-37:13 – Elihu speaking).
- He looks to the ends of earth and sees

Chapters 38-41

- God laid the foundations of the earth, determined its measurements and laid its cornerstone, made the clouds.
- God binds the chains of Pleiades.
- He looses the cords of Orion (38:31).
- He stops the waves, commands to the dawn and the morning, set the bounds for the sea and waves (38:1-11).
- God has cut a channel for the torrents of rain and gives birth to the hoarfrost of heaven (38:25, 29).
- God made the Behemoth and draws out the Leviathan with a hook (40:15; 41:1).
- God has the wisdom to number the clouds and tilt the waterskins of the heavens, and only He knows the ordinances of the heavens (38:31, 37).

everything under the heavens, he gave the wind its weight, apportioned waters by measure (28:23-27 – Job).
- He does things beyond understanding (9:4-10 – Job).
- wisdom, strength, counsel and understanding are with God (12:13 – Job).
- Job does not know the wondrous works of God (37:14-24 – Elihu).

- God sends forth the lightning (38:34).
- Only God comprehends the expanse of the earth (38:18).
- God put wisdom in the inward parts and gave understanding to the mind (38:36).
- "Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?" (God asking Job – 38:32).

It should not be difficult to compare the "creation" language that the author used in both discourses, the *human* (between Job and his friends) and the *divine*. Ironically, many of the concepts used in the whirlwind speech were already present, not only in Elihu's arguments, or in those of Job's friends, but in Job's lamentations. In other words, there is little, if any, new revelatory content that the divine discourse adds to what the poet already included in the human speeches! As such, Scholnik's conclusion – that the transformation of Job occurred precisely as he gained a new understanding of the sovereignty of God over all creation and His kingly rule over the universe – is only partially correct. True, the themes of God's character, wisdom and power, and the place of Job in the fabric of creation – all seemed effective enough to alleviate Job's suffering and reconcile him with God. And yet, since these concepts did not break any new ground in the later part of the book, one should look for something different when asking what is the relevance of the divine discourse for the book of Job. The answer is, I believe, the *divine revelation itself.*

I have argued so far that the author prepared the background for the final confrontation by establishing, through the recurrence of Job's laments, a *crescendo* pattern that eventually occasioned the *climax* of divine revelation. I believe that the *divine theophany*, so long expected by Job – and indirectly anticipate by the readers – was the most profound answer given to the problem of innocent suffering, and also the most effective rhetorical element in the literary structure of the book. Kaufmann too observed that "in the theophany and the discourse with man, God's ultimate grace shines forth, the grace of revelation."[33] Job received the supreme favour not in what God said, but in his very manifestation. For Kaufmann too this the "last, decisive argument." The secret of Job's repentance does not necessarily lie in the content of the divine speech – as essential as that was – but in the fact that the overwhelming and terrifying God addressed the fragile Job in the midst of his suffering. One can now understand better the nature of the requests made by Job (in legal terms) for a hearing from God. This had been the most personal desire that Job had all along. Furthermore, observe the contrast between *hearing* about God – as gaining knowledge and information (Scholnik's point) – and *seeing* God in person.

^yTi[mv. !za o-[mv¶ .
(*l^eşema-ozen ş^ematicha*)
"I have heard of you by the hearing the ear."

^ta (r; ynl y[e hT' [¶ >
(*w^eattah eini rat^echa*)
"But now my eye sees You."

Job asked all along why he suffered. As Scholnik argued, in the same courtroom-setting he finally received an answer and gained a new perspective (one very popular interpretation). And yet, I suspect that the questions that were finally answered here were not so much "why" or "what," but "Who?" As a matter of fact, in the "whirlwind speech" God never gave Job one single explanation on the cause of his suffering. Neither did Job find out about the charge that Satan had made against him – that is, that he would curse God if God took away his most precious things and his health (and which Satan ultimately lost). The pain of divine silence had been eased neither by the biting comments of the three friends nor by Elihu's over confident display of knowledge, regardless of how informative these speeches were. Job needed to hear from God, the Supreme Judge, for "God's reply from the whirlwind is tantamount to the assurance that suffering need not spell isolation from God."[34] The act of "divine descent" as a form of theodicy in Job is paralleled by another "coming" of God: the incarnation of Christ. The revelation by *word* – heard and written – remains invaluable and irreplaceable. Nevertheless, Job as well as the New Covenant, presents the reader with the challenge of a *personal, experiential* understanding of God and His revelation.

Notes

[1] Crenshaw, *Old Testament: Story and Faith* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1992), 307. Note also that, while the majority of Jewish sages "praised Job highly, regarding him as even more righteous than Abraham" (as a model of enduring moral integrity), others – like Rava – spoke "most disparagingly of Job." Thus "Job," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16 vols., C. Roth ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1971), 10:123.

[2] It is important to recognize the qualities that set Job apart from the rest of the people. He was "blameless and upright, and feared God and turned away from evil" ([r (mers ¶>~yhi lá/ arɛ ynl rv y ¶> ~T' allh h; vyai h' hy h¶). This reference is not incidental. The emphasis on the moral/spiritual virtues of Job comes in clear contrast with the fate that befell this man: loosing his property, family, health, and meeting with cold silence (until the very end) from God. This discordance would have shocked a Jewish reader whose faith had been built on the promises of the covenant in Deuteronomy (see esp. Deut 28-30).

[3] In Crenshaw's view, "Job", *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 6 vols., D.N. Freedman ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:859, "this device was widely employed among sages of the Ancient Near East to provide a specific historical framework within which to interpret teachings that has broad applications. For a similar outline see Soggin, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 1987), 449-450.

[4] Sylvia Scholnik, "Poetry in the Courtroom: Job 38-41," *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry*, E. R. Follis ed. (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), 185-204, argues that Job's main complaint was that God deprived him unjustly of family and wealth, and that God must respond – as one who was solely responsible for such an event – to Job's affirmation of innocence. Hence Scholnik

views chapters 38-41 as divine speeches uttered in a "court of law" setting, where God asserts His divine rights not only as owner, but also the very creator of the universe, thereby undermining Job's point that he was unlawfully deprived of property." I shall argue later that Scholnik's point, though well argued and documented, is only partially correct, since the deprivation of property (with all its implications) simply does not stand out as the leading cause of Job's complain against God.

[5] Thus Buttenwiser, *The Book of Job* (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 47, who shows that the comforters "consider his reflections as equivalent to a denial of retributive justice, and accordingly, deem it their religious duty to take him to task." Yet Buttenwiser exaggerates his argument when he explains that they act as "fanatics," heaping upon Job "the most heartless taunts and accusations." It may be true that in the end they will accuse Job of untruthful actions, but their initial response was rather mild, and something that a normal Jewish audience would have expected them to say anyway.

[6] I should add that, although this theme has been recognized by a number of interpreters, it has not been viewed as an element that is essential to the theological message of the Job. I shall argue that due to the absence of the divine explanation, both the suffering of Job and the expectation of the audience are enhanced to the point that only God's own presence will resolve the tension. In fact, the revelation of God appears to be what Job was expecting all along.

[7] Thus Brennan, "The Legal Metaphor in Job 31," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 41 (1979), 37-50. In his analysis, Brennan incorporates materials from Mesopotamian and Egyptian literature in an attempt to illumine the legal setting of Job 31:35 ("Oh, that I had One who will hear me! [*şomea li,* yli [[mevö] Here is my signature! Let the Almighty answer me! [yaanoj ynhÄ{}] Oh, that I had the indictment that my adversary wrote [*vesefer katav iş rivi*] yb[rl vyai bt: K' rpseö). The limitation with Brennan's work is that he does not adequately cover the rest of the verses in which Job invokes the presence of God.

[8] Thus 9:17, ymplÌvy>hr '[' fBÌrva](*aşer bisᵉarah yeşufeni*). The noun hr '[f, which shares the same root with the verbal form r[f (to "sweep" or "whirl away") often describes the notion of destruction as the divine judgment coming in the form of a storm (e.g., Ez 13:11, 13. See "r[f" in Brown/Driver/Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951); *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis* (Software Version; Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2001); cf. also Kohler/Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Software Version, BibleWorks 6 Module, 2004); *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Software Version, BibleWorks 6 Module, 2004). In its immediate context, the idea seems to suggest that it is impossible for God to answer Job, for the only divine answer discernible so far is the very punishment of God.

[9] Thus "qdc", *NIDOTTE*, for qdc used for "forensic notions" that have to do with the adjudication or declaration of right behaviour or status." Note also the legal usage in 2 Sam 15:4, where Absalom stated, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case (jPvmÌ byrl, *riv umişpat*) could come to me and I would see that he gets justice (wyT ÿÞ xhi, *hiţdaqtiv*)." This declaration captures the very anguish of Job, who longed to receive justice according to the law. Note also "qdc", *HALOT*, for the sense of qdc as "being innocent" in the legal sense.

[10] For two different opinions (Dhorme and Fohrer, for a Niphal translation, and Pope, Rowley, and Blommerde, for the Qal translation – "I shall be unable to answer") consult Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 173.

[11] Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1985), 193. We will show later that, even though God himself stated that Job was "blameless and pure," the fact of Job calling on God to lower Himself and justify His ways in front of a mortal reveals the flaws in the character Job. Many modern commentators have glossed over the nuances of arrogance that one can be noticed in the attitude of Job. See also "arq", *HALOT*, for arÞ' used with the sense "to summon" someone "to the instigation or conduct of legal proceedings (Dt 25₈ 1S 22₁₁ Is 44₇ 59₄ Jb 9₁₆ 13₂₂ 14₁₅)," and "arq", *NIDOTTE*, for the formula lÌ arÞ', "used with the judicial meaning "to summon before a court" (e.g., 1 Sam 22:11; Isa 59:4).

[12] Notice also the contrast in v. 3-4: "But I would speak to Shaddai... But you, ...all worthless physicians."

[13] In Isaiah 11:4, the future Davidic King will judge the poor and the meek with righteousness and equity (#ra' _ynb{l . rlv ymB. xyki lhm; *wehochiah bemiṣor leanewey areṭ*), while in Ps 50:21, God lays a charge against the wicked. See "xky", *HALOT*, and *NIDOTTE*, for the possibility that "the original setting for the vb. was in the legal sphere, meaning "to call someone to account, to establish that which is right." Notice also "xky", *TWOT*, with reference to the forensic sense of Job 40:2, specifically the participle mkaµ"he who accuses" God.

[14] The noun jP; vMi (*miṣpat*) is frequently used in the Old Testament with a similar legal sense. Thus the "judgment is God's" (Deut 1:17), as the people are called to emulate the impartial judgment of God in the legal disputes among the Israelites (jP vMB; ~ynl p' llryKi t;all); "You shall not be partial in judgment"). For other related meanings in Job see 8:3; 19:17; 34:17 (as "justice"); 23:4 (as "legal case"); 34:4 (what is "right"). Virtually all commentators recognize the legal dimension of jP; vMl Thus "jP; vMl", *HALOT, NIDOTTE, TWOT*.

[15] Even though Job demands that God give him the chance to prove his innocence, there is a sense in which Job yearns for God to defend him. In 19:25 Job states, ~llq)l' rp l[' -l [; !lr x]m>yx ll a}0yTi[dy ynl a}t (*we ani yadati goali hai weaharon al afar yaqum*; "Yet I know that my Redeemer is alive, and at the last will stand upon the earth"). In a providential way, the words of Job proved to be prophetic. That Christ will finally judge all human beings, redeeming those who believed and waited on him, is one of the most enduring teachings of the New Testament.

[16] The same verb for "hiding" (13:24), with God as subject (ryTs;t; ^yn<p' -hM 1; *lammah fanecha tastir*; "Why do you hide Your face from me?"), is used in Isa 45:15, where God is described as working in hidden ways before the nations, without being seen by them. Even closer to the meaning of Job 13:24 is Isa 8:17, where God is hiding His face from the house of Jacob", which in critical moments would revert to human conspiracy rather than obey God. Though not fully explicit, the idea of *hiding* as divine condemnation seems to have been entertained by the author of the book of Job as well (see also 19:11, where God counts Job as his adversary).

[17] However, the second clause of both v. 4 and 5 may also be explained as a rhetorical device (repetition?) by which the meaning of the first clause is emphasized. Hence, "laying one's case before God" is emphasized again as "filling one's mouth with arguments" and "learning what God will answer" is reduplicated as "understanding what he will say" to Job.

[18] In *The Book of Job* (New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 260. The reason why v. 6-8 may not fit into Gordis' scheme is that v. 6 breaks the *protasis-apodosis* construction by a question: "Would he contend with me in the greatness of his power"?

[19] The same theme is carried out in 23:8-9, where Job reflects on the futility of looking for God; apparently, an attempt that is both sad and comical (going forward and backward, turning on the right while God is on the left, etc.).

[20] See our analysis of xky and jP; ymi. Gordis points to the fact that tlxk llt is used both as a noun and verb "in a forensic sense, as in 6:25, 26; 13:15; 23:7".

[21] The translation of "signature" implies that Job must have had a document that he would present before the closing of the arguments. Others have suggested that since the text does not indicate the existence of such document, the idea of a "mark" or "signature" may point to Job's own words and to his concluding testimony; thus Driver and Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1921), 274-75. But Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 355, argues that "there is, however, no evidence for the use of the names of the letters of the alphabet in this early period or for the addition of a suffix to any name in any period of the language." He also shows that since the text mentions no written document, and for reasons concerning the parallelism and word order of the text, the best translation would not be "signature" but "desire" (following the Vulgate rendition of *desiderium meum* or *desideratio mea*). One objection that may be raised against Gordis is that the Septuagint translates yllΓ as ceiρa ("hand, finger"), which supports the interpretation given by Driver. Furthermore, besides the Vulgate' usage of "desire" there seems to be no authoritative textual witness that may offer support to this correction. However, it is plausible that, since the term "desire" was also used in 13:3 (yet with a different form) its usage here may harmonize better with the context of the passages analysed so far, where Job is shown to have desired that God respond to his repeated calls.

[22] "The Legal Metaphor in Job 31", 49-50. In his view, is related semantically to the Ugaritic *sm'* (hearer of a case) and the Egyptian noun *sdmyw* (judges).

[23] *ibid*. 49-50. On the other hand, for Brennan "Job seems fully aware that his unjust accuser is also his judge" ("I will say to God 'Do not condemn me! Let me know your case against me'" – 10:2). Brennan believes this display of confusion was intentional on the part of the author. As such "this incongruity reduces the legal metaphor to the absurd and thereby reveals the bankruptcy of conceiving the man-God relationship along the lines of legal justice." But there is no bankruptcy in the mind of the author! Brennan fails to understand that Job yearns for God, and no other human beings, to vindicate him. It is true that in his desperation and – yes – arrogance, Job demands that God behave like any other human judge and conform to Job's wishes. But to dismiss the element of justice in the relationship between man and God in Job is a conclusion that the text simply does not warrant! This is made clear by the ending of the book, where God answers Job's demand, reveals Himself to him, and Job repents.

[24] Thus *HALOT*, for byrl as "*case at law:* Ex 23:2; 23:3; 23:6 (E), Dt 21:5 (ṭpm); 25:1; 2 S 15:2; 15:4 (j p ṿmi); Ho 4:1; 12:3; Mi 6:2; 6:2; Je 25:31; Ez 44:24; La 3:36" or simply "*case, cause* Mi 7:9; Je 50:34", tbyrl yrbDl Dt 17:8 *matters of controversy*; 19:17 *dispute* as to guilt." Similarly, *NIDOTTE*, as "byrl refers to a dispute to be adjudicated by judges and/or priests" (e.g., Exod 23:2, where both NIV and NRSV translate byrl as lawsuit; Deut 19:17; 21:5; 25:1, where NIV and NRSV translate byrl as dispute). What remains important is that in "the OT Yahweh is the one who defends the cause (byrl, NIV) of God's people and saves them." Notice that in lament psalms the word is used in the context of "a petition for God to save (for instance, Ps 35:1; 43:1; 119:154; cf. Lam 3:58)." It is, then, not insignificant that Job appeals to again and again – even in his desperation – for a resolution from God.

[25] Notice that even the arguments between Job and his friends form a *crescendo* pattern. One could almost feel that the atmosphere becomes more tense as the friends' accusations reach the point of absurdity. Thus they first sympathize with Job (2:11-13), then argue that Job's children may have sinned (8:4), that Job himself was guilty (11:6), had iniquity (11:11, 14; 16:4-5), exacted pledges from families for no reason (22:5), stripped the naked of their clothing (22:6), withheld bread from the hungry, sent widows away empty handed, and crushed the arms of the orphans (22:7-9), and finally that Job adds rebellion to sin!

[26] In particular, observe that the last, and perhaps the strongest legal appeal that Job made in his concluding speech: "Behold my signature! Let the Almighty answer me," and "the words of Job are ended" (31:35, 40). Since it arrives as a direct response to Job's request (separated only by Elihu's speeches), it is only natural that the discourse of God be included in the same legal setting. Here, Scholnik, "Poetry in the Courtroom: Job 38-41", 186, modifies Alter's idea that the legal context preceding chapters 38-41 is dropped in favour of an "arena of creation" context. She explains that, although the divine argument presents God as Lord over all creation (thus devised not to answer directly the legal challenges of Job) there is no "discontinuity of setting in the drama". Rather, within a "creation" context, God's speech too can function as "testimony in the suit initiated against him by his human opponent."

[27] Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job*, trans. by C. Muenchow (Philadelphia, PA: Fortress, 1981), 106, shows that the two most relevant elements of this speech are the legal proceeding and the lament, both introduced through Job's disputations with his friends.

[28] Scholnik, "Poetry in the Courtroom", 187, observes that "the poet continues to use the root byr in God's answer as he has in the speeches of Job (10:2; 13:6, 19; 23:6; 31:35) and Elihu (33:13), to refer to the hero's lawsuit against his divine opponent." Obviously, Scholnik's characterization of Job as a "hero" must be qualified here!

[29] *ibid*. 189.

[30] *ibid*. 188.

[31] *ibid*. 191.

[32] *ibid*. 196.

[33] *The Religion of Israel from its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, trans. by M. Greenberg (New York: Schoken Books, 1972), 337. Eichrodt too, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vol., trans. by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1967), 2:491, argues that "it is an essential part of Job's satisfaction that he is allowed to see God, and is considered worthy to be addressed by him."

[34] Friedman, "The Book of Job," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 16 vol., C. Roth ed. (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1971), 10:122.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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