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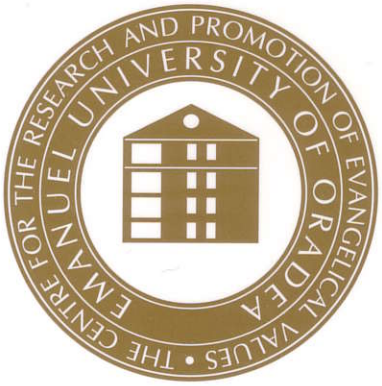

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On Integrating Christian Faith and Human Reason

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ABSTRACT. When Christian philosophers consider the question of how to integrate faith and reason, the sheer number of approaches before us is staggering. From the philosophical side, a large variety of paradigms exist—empiricism, rationalism, commonsense realism, and transcendental idealism, to name a few. On the theological side, the situation is just as complex; from Anglican to Evangelical, Catholic to Orthodox, each theological paradigm is denominationally segregated and integrators are charged with the task of situating themselves among them. In light of the sheer immensity of options before us, the question of how integration can be done with rational integrity has become something of an annual topic at Christian colleges and universities. When bringing philosophy and theology together in the integration of faith and learning, the theoretical options multiply in a way that is beyond the ability of a single person or essay to sort through with specificity or thoroughness. My goal in this paper is to present a modest overview of how I think integration can be done.

KEY WORDS: faith, reason, philosophy, learning, understanding

Introduction

Prior to delving into the specifics of my approach, one of my governing assumptions is important to note. I am convinced truth is neither relative nor a threat to God. My view on integration is based on the conviction that what is true philosophically is necessarily compatible with the Christian faith. To use a common phrase, all truth is God's truth. The main problem in philosophy (Christian or otherwise) is thus not ontological; it is epistemological: How do I know that what I think or believe is

true of reality as such? Put another way: How do I know, when addressing areas of ultimate human concern or areas in which "I" have a vested interest, *that* I know? What I am suggesting is that a difference exists between truth for us and Truth for God (truth with a small "t" and with a capital "T"). This is a significant difference, but not a substantial difference. Things are only one way and truth is most certainly objective. Nevertheless, there is a perspectival difference between God's view of the Truth and our view of truth. The truth for us is something of a subset of Truth for God—true as far as it goes, objective and meaningful, yet incomplete and imperfect. This assumption will guide the discussion of integration that follows.

In what follows, I make the case that what we should seek in the integration of Christian faith and academic learning in philosophy is not a pristine vantage point from which to view God's Truth about the world, but *an optimal vantage point* constituted by a unique blend of firm Christian conviction and tenacious a quest to understand. When we study, teach, and do philosophy under the auspices of Christian faith, we are in essence presenting a case for where we stand in faith, a case that contains both conviction and humility. Argumentation seasoned with humility is argumentation open to reproof and revision. We are thus confessional Christians who seek philosophical understanding through a question and answer process, always providing reasons for belief from the point of view of a firm commitment to biblical essentials, but never so content in the arguments supporting belief that we stop looking for better ones. I believe good philosophy—the kind that deals with life's ultimate questions in a way that is honest and that resonates with truth—is always done under the auspice of faith. What I will argue in the remainder of this essay is that at the heart of the integration of faith and learning in philosophy is a process of *faith seeking understanding*. This analysis begins with various definitions of *philosophy* and ends with my definition of *Christian philosophy*. This definition and the road to it embody my

present position on the integration of faith and learning in philosophy.

Defining Philosophy

Defining philosophy is notoriously difficult. Perhaps no other discipline (save theology) has gone through more transformations of its own self-understanding than the field of philosophy. Philosophy from its very beginning exhibited an array of positions regarding its own self-understanding. Socrates viewed philosophy as the intentional process of *understanding oneself*. The philosophical task was to seek truth through dialogue and, in the process, come to the realization of how little we really know about life's most profound questions. His disciple Plato thought of philosophy as the attempt to discover *ultimate reality* or *absolute truth* (sometimes called "metaphysics"). Philosophy was about reflection on those universal ideas that give rise to the particulars of experience and the subsequent problems that come with them. Plato's student Aristotle understood philosophy to be a teleological movement of the understanding from *awe* and *ignorance* to ultimate *causes* and *principles*. He moved philosophy away from its mystical heritage in Plato and toward a more scientific form.

As philosophy developed, however, it took on a distinctly different form in years after the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For much of the Patristic era and most of the medieval period, including the years leading up to the contemporary (post-Enlightenment) period, philosophy was thought of as the handmaiden to theology. The quest for understanding was considered distinctly Christian, and the exposition of philosophical truth was tantamount to the exposition of Christian truth. Augustine, for example, used philosophy to articulate his Christian worldview. Early on, he expressed confidence that his philosophical findings would be shown to be in keeping with all of Scripture. The extent to which he was right is open to debate (and varied even in his own mind), but what we know for

sure is that, for Augustine, biblical/special revelation provided the framework for the questions and answers of philosophy.

Later, Aquinas did very much the same thing as Augustine. But in so doing, he returned a sense of autonomy to the philosophical enterprise. Francis Schaeffer argues that, with Aquinas, philosophy was given an autonomous sphere from which to work because Aquinas' worldview had no doctrine of sin's "noetic effects."[1] This essentially pulled philosophy away from its theological moorings, giving it legitimacy regardless of the spiritual state of the one who espoused it. Subsequent thinkers carried forward the rational optimism of this doctrine. An analysis of the movement of Western thought from the thirteenth century to the Enlightenment period seems to confirm this newfound autonomy. René Descartes is perhaps the best example. For Descartes, metaphysics in any form is one among many, and the quest for truth is tantamount to a quest for certainty. The philosopher, according to Descartes, must adopt the method of doubt, questioning every claim, building (from the ground up) a philosophical worldview worthy of our commitment.

This definition of philosophy as reasoned autonomy reached its climax in the work of Immanuel Kant. Kant defined the battle cry of the Enlightenment in his famous essay "What is Enlightenment?" According to Kant, all dignified human individuals should exemplify the motto: "Have courage to use your own reason!"[2] For Kant, philosophy is that perspective on reality constituted by the free and open exercise of reason. His excavation of reason included four spheres—the empirical, the moral, the aesthetic, and the religious. Much contemporary philosophy has followed Kant's lead, receiving and developing his thought down two divergent paths—either defining philosophy

[1] Francis Schaeffer, *Escape From Reason* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 1968), 11.

[2] Immanuel Kant, "What is Enlightenment?", *Kant Selections*, ed. Lewis White Beck (New York: The Macmillan Publishing Company, 1988), 462.

in terms of the law of non-contradiction and the meticulous understanding of language (emphasizing the empirical and Kant's early critical writings), or defining philosophy as an evolving process of reason coming to an understanding of the world and ourselves through an historical process of reasoning synthetically (emphasizing the moral, aesthetic, and religious in Kant's later critical writings). The former is often called "Analytic Philosophy" (or sometimes "Anglo-American" philosophy),[3] while the latter is usually called "Continental Philosophy" (emanating from the continent of Europe).[4] The difference between these two philosophical camps is not important for our present purposes.

In recent times, philosophy has been under attack as a discipline whose time in the university has passed. William James' well-known definition of philosophy is a good example. He defined philosophy as "a collective name for questions which have not been answered to the satisfaction of all that have asked them." James' point is that when "conclusive" answers to our questions are found, they move outside philosophy and become part of a science—psychology, physics, astronomy, etc. Thus, as the university of learning has progressively increased the number of fields under consideration, the influence and significance of philosophy has proportionately decreased. So, according to James, philosophy has historically dug its own

[3] Analytic Philosophy takes extreme care with the meanings of words, tends to present arguments in meticulous step-by-step fashion, pays minute attention to logical relations and emphasizes descriptive and clear answers to philosophical answers. Examples of analytic philosophers include Gottlieb Frege, Bertrand Russell, G. E. Moore, Ludwig Wittgenstein (particularly the "early" Wittgenstein), A. J. Ayer, and others.

[4] Continental Philosophy seems to understand itself as carrying on the mainstream tradition of philosophy (from Plato and Aristotle, through Augustine and Aquinas, to Descartes, Leibniz, and Locke). It stresses developmental, re-visionary, and progressive answers to philosophical questions. Examples of Continental philosophers include the German Idealists, Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean Paul Satre, Albert Camus, Gabriel Marcel, and others.

grave. Richard Rorty, a former philosopher turned literary theorist, has characterized postmodernism as the last nail in the coffin of philosophy (or the death of philosophy). If philosophy is, as John Passmore claims, "a critical discussion *of* critical discussion," then it becomes questionable as to whether or not it has a place at the table of human inquiry. When, as Schaeffer argues, nature (i.e., the things of this world) has "eaten up" grace (i.e., the transcendent) completely, a critical discourse about principles underlying the sciences (i.e., metaphysics) becomes what the author of Ecclesiastes calls "a chasing after the wind" (Ecclesiastes 4:4).

Rather than going down this pessimistic road, we will here define philosophy, along with Harold Netland, as "the systematic, rational, critical assessment of basic human beliefs and responses to ultimate questions which perennially occur in human cultures."[5] This definition is fairly safe and might even be accepted by thinkers like Rorty as a general statement of the pragmatic usefulness of the philosophical task. It should be noted that there is nothing particularly Christian about this definitional starting point. Philosophy, on this definition, is a fairly stagnant or benign discipline; it is systematic, rational, and critical, and offers an assessment of our answers to life's ultimate questions. We can easily develop Netland's definition to suit the purposes of integration and facilitate the discussion that will command the lion share of our attention in the rest of this essay.

Defining Faith

As I see it, part of the problem with contemporary philosophy is its quest for the so-called "impartial" vantage point of human reason. Louis Pojman is one of the champions of impartiality in contemporary philosophy. He is fond of arguing for three philosophical maxims based on impartiality. These maxims directly impact the nature and significance of faith and are part of

[5] Harold Netland's classnotes.

the common intellectual creed at most secular universities. The first maxim that Pojman highlights is "always attempt to evaluate the evidence as impartially as possible"; the second is "always be ready to accept the challenge of answering criticisms"; the third is "always remain open to the possibility that you might be wrong and may need to revise, reexamine, or reject anyone of your beliefs."[6] My intention is not to challenge the second and third maxims. Scripture praises the Bereans, for example, who tested the teachings of Paul (Acts 17:10-11), and commends us to always be ready to give reasons for the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15). On these two points, faith and philosophy closely approximate one another. My main point of contention centers on the first maxim. Pojman understands the second and third maxims to be nested in the first, and so the first takes on an added significance to his understanding of the relationship between faith and reason. What does Pojman mean by "being impartial" or by evaluating the evidence from the impartial perspective?

The common rendering of impartiality, and the one that Pojman often seems to adopt, is that it is both neutral and detached. Neutrality implies a conflict of perspectives in which the neutral party does not take sides. Detachment implies stepping back from a dispute and having no commitment to the truth or falsity of either side. "The model of the impartial person," Pojman writes, "is the referee in the game, who, knowing that his wife has just bet their life savings on the underdog, Southern Methodist, still manages to call what any reasonable person would judge to be a fair game."[7] Notice that the criteria of impartiality is "what any reasonable person would judge to be fair." Pojman thus defines impartiality as neutrality and detachment, and identifies such a perspective with that of some theoretically reasonable person. This strategy is, of course, in

[6] Louis Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion. An Anthology*, 3rd edn (Wadsworth Publishing, 1998), 486.
[7] Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion*, 486.

danger of becoming circular. It potentially begs the question of whether or not such a reasonable person is itself a coherent idea and worthy of pursuit as a vantage point for adjudicating disputes between faith and reason. As Pojman puts it, "[An impartial person] does not let his wants or self-interest enter into the judgment he makes."[8] Whether or not such a person is possible is surely debatable, particularly if one follows the orthodox Christian position on the noetic effects of sin.

According to the Apostle Paul, even the regenerate "see but a poor reflection as in a mirror, but then we shall see face to face" (1 Corinthians 13-12).[9] However, the fact that we do see in some capacity is the starting point of Christian philosophy. The vantage point that we seek must have some of the answers and enough of them to help make sense of God, the world, and our place relative to them. The impartial perspective of Pojman, on this insight, appears partially right, but gives too much away to human reason and freedom. Impartiality supplants faith; at least in the way the Christian understands it. The place where the Christian finds many answers is the perspective of God's Word in its written and incarnate forms. This perspective is held on faith to be authoritative. When theoretical "impartiality" competes with this divine perspective, the Christian is warranted in believing God's Word over so-called impartial reasoning, or at the very least deferring judgment until a fresh search of the Word can be conducted and better ways of appropriating faith found.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of Pojman's approach is not that it is any more reasonable than the other possible approaches, but that his approach seems to achieve a kind of moral high ground that makes it appear superior to its rivals. What better way do we have of adjudicating difficult problems concerning complex states of affairs in the integration of faith and facts than to assume a perspective that appeals to "objec-

[8] Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion*, 486.

[9] All references to the Bible in this essay are taken from the NIV.

tive standards" *as if we were neutral*? We cannot escape the possibility that our secret desires may be getting the better of us and are in fact directed away from the truth, but impartiality in the sense of Pojman purports to provide the all-important Archimedean reference point for knowledge. The impartial perspective promises sober-minded judgment, and, if truth can be found, it promises to make sense of our world. Pojman takes it as self-evident that the quest for impartiality is the same as the quest for truth, and that it is inherently good.

Ironically, what is missing from Pojman's approach is a genuine engagement with perspectives on God and the world that are rooted in faith. In reflecting upon the argument for God's existence from religious experience for example, Pojman lists 15 instances of religious experience, noting that among them are included mystics, Buddhists, atheists, Christians, and persons of all sorts. He argues that it is virtually impossible to discern the truth of the various interpretations, and, for this reason, he doubts that religious experience can play an important role in justifying faith.

For the believer or experient, each is valid for him or her, but why should the non-experient accept any of these reports? And why should the experient continue to believe the content of the report himself after it is over and after he notes that there are other possible interpretations of it or that other have had mutually contradictory experiences? It would seem that they should cancel each other out.[10]

What we have here is an example of Pojman's quest for impartiality. He desires rational consensus before faithful commitment.[11] The irony here is that in the attempt to analyze reli-

[10] Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion*, 490.

[11] Pojman's complaint of course is that such reasoning is circular: faith gives rise to experience and experience confirms faith. It is true that this kind of vicious circularity is to be avoided, but what is not so clear is why faith and religious experience might not form a more virtuous circularity, one in which faith and experience open us to the reality that God speaks, relates, and transforms.

gious experience from a philosophical (impartial) vantage point, the essence of faith vanishes as an object of inquiry.

Pojman's work reminds me of my former philosophy professor at the University of Illinois, Robert McKim. He set up the problem of God's hiddenness in my philosophy of religion class as follows.[12] Three supposedly self-evident propositions exist: (1) Neither God's existence nor nature are apparent or obvious; (2) God could, if he choose, allow himself to be known more fully (both his existence and nature); (3) God's lack of clear action results in negative consequences (like religious pluralism). The problem with these supposedly self-evident propositions is that none of them would be accepted by the adherents of most religions. McKim's conclusion from this impartial representation of the problem is that "Theists ought to be somewhat agnostic about the nature of God."[13] The difficulty thinkers like Pojman and McKim run into is that they seek the impossible: to stand nowhere and from that "vantage point" assess religious worldviews. In gauging the religious without engaging religiously, they are in effect choosing a vantage point outside of and thus partial against religious faith.

Christian faith, by contrast, recognizes the need to stand somewhere, to be for or against something, and thus embraces partiality as the inevitable starting place in the search for understanding. As the author of Hebrews says, "Faith is being sure of what we hoped for, and certain of what we do not see. This is what the ancients were commended for" (Hebrews 11:1-2). And again Paul, when speaking of Abraham, says, "Against

[12] All material referring to Robert McKim is taken from my undergraduate class notes and is used by long-standing personal permission. A similar discussion is found in Robert McKim, *Religious Ambiguity and Religious Diversity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 108-116.

[13] Pojman, interestingly, sees this kind of response to be an act of worship. He ask rhetorically, "Is the person who in doubt prays, 'God, if you exist, please show me better evidence,' any less passionate a worshipper than the person who worships without any doubts?" Pojman, *Philosophy of Religion*, 491.

all hope, Abraham in hope believed and so became the father of many nations… Without weakening in his faith, he faced the fact that his body was as good as dead… and that Sarah's womb was also dead. Yet, he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God…" (Romans 4:18-20). The position of Scripture is that faith is of paramount importance to God, and is demanded of us, not subsequent to understanding the world impartially, but so that we might come to understand things the way God does.

Faith Seeking Understanding

Saint Augustine's well-known maxim "Faith Seeking Understanding" takes on very different connotations depending on which of the three words are emphasized. Pojman emphasizes the third word to the detriment of the others. His understanding is characterized by "Faith Seeking *Understanding*." Pojman's approach to philosophy and faith is similar to what is sometimes called "Strong Rationalism."[14] Strong rationalism holds that before a belief system can be reasonably accepted, one must prove that belief system to be true. Strong rationalism relies on reason and intelligence to decide our beliefs. For the strong rationalist, the word "prove" means showing to any reasonable person that our beliefs are in fact true. The philosopher William Clifford (not to be confused with Trinity College's Clifford Williams) is a good example. According to Clifford, it is always wrong (in a moral sense) to believe something without sufficient evidence—of course, he is assuming that we always have theoretical access to a perspective from which to make this determination, and that life affords us such a perspective. If we

[14] Much of the structure and content of this section is adapted from a book I use in my course on Philosophy of Religion (PH 350). The book is Michael Peterson, William Hasker, Bruce Reichenbach, and David Basinger, *Reason & Religious Belief. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd edn (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), Chapter Three. Henceforth, this text will be referred to by its short title only.

believe something without sufficient reason, we are potentially endangering others and ourselves. If we lack the ability to think through a claim, then, according to Clifford, we have should suspend judgment and withhold belief.

Clifford apparently believes that no religious position is able to meet this requirement, so no reasonable person should have religious beliefs.[15] A key question is whether the kind of rational guarantee the strong rationalist seeks is *desirable*? Is not faith in some sense distinct from knowledge and (in this distinction) characterized by a "stepping out"? In stepping out, is there not some conceivable warrant for faith that would defy the proof criteria set up by human reason? Blaise Pascal makes this important clarification about the nature and significance of faith in *Penseés*: "The heart has its reasons which are unknown to reason… It is the heart which is aware of God and not reason. That is what faith is: God perceived intuitively by the heart, not by reason."[16] Even if Clifford is not prone to view the situation the way Pascal does, a further question needs to be asked of his position: Is the kind of rational guarantee the strong rationalist seeks *possible*? Put another way, could any belief system hope to convince all "rational people"? The problem with positions like those of Pojman and Clifford is that they are inevitably driven away from the hope of consensus on which their philosophical system is based. Instead, the positions are ineluctably driven forward to the *belief* that no argument will ever be sufficient to prove a belief system to the satisfaction of the so-called "rational person" or intelligent, thoughtful, interested, neutral bystander. Even scientific naturalism must become just one more worldview in their estimation. In short, neutral vantage points simply do not exist. There is no such

[15] The authors of *Reason and Religious Belief* point out that Locke, Aquinas, Swinburne, and even Descartes seem to have similar strong rationalist requirements, but they also seemed to think that Christianity, properly formulated, could meet those requirements. *Reason & Religious Belief*, 42.

[16] *Pascal's Pensées*, trans. Martin Turnell (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1962), 163.

thing as the pristine perspective for reason, and strong rationalism (even when sprinkled with faith as it is with Pojman) provides an inadequate foundation for faith and learning integration.

If Pojman's approach to philosophy of religion, which seeks an impartial perspective before adjudicating disputes in religion, emphasizes "understanding," then the opposite perspective emphasizes "faith." "*Faith* Seeking Understanding" is an example of what is sometimes called "Strong Fideism." Strong fideism holds that religious belief systems are simply not the kind of things that are subject to rational evaluation. Elements of our belief system like God's existence and God's love for us need no rational justification according to strong fideism. The fundamental assumptions of religious belief are found in the religious beliefs themselves (not in some observation or rational deliberation). Somewhere along the line, perhaps when we are coming into our religious maturity, we must embrace a set of non-negotiable beliefs or assumptions. We accept them without proof not because they are self-evident, but because they are so absolutely basic to our socio-cultural identity that they admit no prior basic assumptions or arguments. The work of Søren Kierkegaard is often interpreted this way. For Kierkegaard, rational argumentation is an approximation process, and every moment that we are without God is wasted. The combination of these two positions makes it imperative that we make the "leap of faith." He advocates the position of "truth as subjectivity." If we could prove God and his love then we would not have faith. Faith, for a strong fideist, is the very purpose of our existence. What is needed is not more argumentation but more commitment.

The immediate question that comes to mind in the case of strong fideism is, if arguments are so useless, then what is faith on such a scheme, except blind subjectivity that borders on theological arbitrariness at its best or theological non-realism at its worst? Faith for the strong fideist runs parallel to faith for the strong rationalist, except faith in the latter case is so de-

pendent on the quest for objectivity that it inevitably slides toward agnosticism and skepticism. Nevertheless, this analysis is fruitful insofar as it sets up a dialectical structure in which the quest for impartiality can move forward without silencing, but instead hearing, the voice of faith. What this means is that we have before us a paradigm for emphasizing the middle term of the maxim—"seeking." We acknowledge that we are human beings in process and that true understanding requires faith (see Deuteronomy 4:29). Faith and seeking, taken together, promise to lead us toward a clearer and deeper understanding of God, the world, and ourselves.

"Faith *Seeking* Understanding" is best described in philosophical terms as either "Critical Rationalism" or "Critical Fideism." We must begin with faith. Faith produces certain basic assumptions about the world and our place in it, as well as guidelines by which to live. By "basic" assumptions, we mean not self-evident or obviously true beliefs—"I am being appeared to bluely as I look into the clear midday sky" is a belief of this kind. Religious faith is instead a combination of commitment with openness to the facts and experiences of the world. Faith maintains a dynamic and healthy tension between the world of sense according to the way I reason and the world of the supersensible according to the eyes of faith. Faith is a firm commitment to where we stand, presenting us with one overarching worldview that incorporates both of these areas into a system. Faith seeking understanding, in this light, might be thought of as a virtuous hermeneutic spiral, dependent on the truth of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us from faith into understanding.[17]

[17] The authors of *Reason and Religious Belief* point out five attributes of critical rationalism that are important to the task of integrating faith and learning in field of philosophy: (1) Use your rational capabilities to the greatest extent possible to evaluate religious beliefs; (2) Make the best case possible and compare it to other cases; (3) Consider the main objections; (4) It may involve looking at beliefs that are so foundational so as to not require arguments; (5) Critical means two things: using reason rigorously and having a

Christian Philosophy and Its Place in the Integration of Faith and Learning

The integrity of Christian philosophy very much depends on the torque and balance afforded by the quest in faith to understand God, the world, and ourselves. Thus, being a "Christian philosopher" means employing a tenacious faith in the context of an equally tenacious quest to understand. In Alvin Plantinga's "Advice to Christian Philosophers," he makes the general observation that autonomy, integrity, and courage are key aspects of being a Christian philosopher.[18] He also points out four specific ways of practicing philosophy Christianly that are worth noting.

First, the calling to be a Christian philosopher means "being a philosopher *of* the Christian community,"[19] argues Plantinga; a Christian philosopher accepts the community's creeds and positions on faith and works from the inside out to transform its self-understanding in ways that resonate with truth.

Second, the Christian philosopher, says Plantinga, should not graft or paste insights onto Christian thought, but instead seek wholeness and integrality, working in new ideas into the purview of the way the community thinks (not in ways that are meant to stand out or "wow," but in ways that build up and chasten).[20]

Third, the Christian philosopher, notes Plantinga, should also claim the right to pre-philosophical assumptions, particu-

modest view of its capabilities. They also point out four criteria for discerning whether or not a belief system is reasonable enough for faith: (1) Is it logically consistent? (2) Is it consistent with known facts? (3) Does it have explanatory power? (4) Does it make a positive difference in the way we live our lives? *Reason & Religious Belief*, 49-51.

[18] Alvin Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers" *Faith and Philosophy*, 1.3 (July 1984), 254.

[19] Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," 255.

[20] Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," 256.

larly in the public or secular arena.[21] This is true especially for those who hold to a "Faith Seeking Understanding" view of integration.

Finally, Plantinga argues that Christian philosophers are to systematize, deepen, and clarify Christian thought.[22] This task is not for the renegade thinker or "Lone Ranger," but for someone who believes in the communion of the saints and places himself or herself under the authority of church and creed.

William Hasker's helpful article, entitled "Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview,"[23] presents two brief but useful discussions that will help situate the integration strategy I advocate. Hasker discusses what faith and learning integration is and is not, and presents three models of integration that represent the choices open to Christian academics. First, according to Hasker, faith-learning integration is not (1) "the cultivation of personal Christian living on the part of the faculty member," (2) "using academic disciplines as a source of illustrations for spiritual truths," (3) "a public relations program designed to convince constituents of the Christian character of an institution," or (4) "[a]bove all, … a 'quick fix' which instantly transforms a college into a model Christian community and its students and faculty into ideal Christian individuals."[24] Hasker's point is to show that faith and learning integration has an identifiable role in the university, and is necessary to the health and vitality of whatever discipline is under consideration. We make a mistake if we think that pious living, pat spiritual answers, and a dynamic personality are in some way central to the integrative task. None of these things will perform the hard work of integration. Those that perform the hard work of integration are faculty members at the university who in faith, seek with all

[21] Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," 256.
[22] Plantinga, "Advice to Christian Philosophers," 268.
[23] William Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration: An Overview," *Christian Scholar Review* (March 1992), 234-248.
[24] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 235-236.

their mind and heart to understand how Christian faith applies to the areas of human inquiry.

Regarding the nature of integration, Hasker defines it as follows: "[Faith and learning integration is] a scholarly project whose goal is to ascertain and to develop integral relationships which exist between Christian faith and human knowledge, particularly as expressed in the various academic disciplines."[25] According to Hasker, integration is at bottom hard scholarly work. It takes a great deal of time and effort to produce work that makes a difference in the scholarly community; it involves basic research that may or may not produce immediate, impacting results. For Hasker, true integration cannot be anticipated, but only cultivated. It involves creating a context in which scholarly work is promoted and expectations are curtailed in favor of the common communal quest to engage our culture through our academic fields of influence. I believe that faith seeking understanding, when it is balanced and doggedly committed to understanding the faith that has been put in us, is not merely compatible with, but perhaps even champion of, the definition of faith and learning integration Hasker outlines.

As far as particular strategies for integration are concerned, Hasker points out three options he thinks are open for the consideration of Christian academics. The first is the compatibilist model. The compatibilist believes that the scholarly task is to show how secular and Christian approaches within a particular discipline can join forces to work together to understand the respective field of inquiry. No fundamental tension exists between the Christian faith and the discipline under consideration. The discipline is allowed to proceed normally, and the compatibilist never challenges its underlying assumptions. The aim of the compatibilist "is to demonstrate and exhibit the unity between them which already exists."[26] In a field like mathematics, for instance, it is easy to see why a Christian academic

[25] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 234.
[26] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 239.

might fruitfully adopt the compatibilist model. There is no conflict between holding onto Christian truth claims (which might be held solely on the basis of *a posteriori* modes on understanding) and mathematical truth claims (which might be held solely on the basis of *a priori* modes of understanding).

On the other end of the spectrum, we find the reconstructionist model of integration. The reconstructionist takes there to be a fundamental tension between the fundamental presuppositions and guiding beliefs of the secular disciplines and those of the Christian faith. The discipline in view is "so deeply permeated with anti-Christian assumptions of secularism, rationalism, and naturalism that he has no choice but to reject them and to begin at the beginning in a 'radical reconstruction of the disciplines on… fully biblical foundations'."[27]

The disciplines reconstructionists handle may retain their respective titles, but they are in fact all new enterprises. The reconstructionist completely replaces the foundational assumptions of secularism with distinctly Christian foundations and methods. The idea is to eventually replace the community of inquirers itself with all new Christian community. The problem, of course, is that the reconstructionist model often has the effect of alienating the secular community and cutting off the Christian community from the broader discussion. To some Christians, however, this cutting off is not a serious loss since the discipline in question is so fundamentally corrupt, misguided, or otherwise faulty.

The transformationalist model of integration takes the relationship between Christian faith and the academic disciplines to be somewhat more strained than does the compatibilist, but not requiring of radical action to resolve. According to Hasker, the transformationalist finds "some basic validity and integrity in the discipline as it is currently constituted… [b]ut he also finds the discipline to be lacking in insights and perspectives which

[27] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 239-240.

are vital to him as a Christian."[28] The transformationalist model begins with the recognition that the discipline in question makes legitimate assumptions, yet is in need of a transformation to a more Christian orientation. This model most closely resembles the case that I advocate. Faith seeking understanding means that the philosopher or philosophy under consideration is never going to present effectively the truth of the gospel (and thus never going to be equipped to integrate faith and learning) unless faith is allowed a seat at the table of human inquiry without philosophical presuppositions, and indeed prior to the presence of philosophical assumption altogether. This does not mean that we are reduced to strong fideism in our approach to truth, but only that the definition of faith espoused in Scripture (its status as gift, substance, power, fruit and so forth) be allowed to stand on its own merits without being reduced to the least common denominator by the philosophical quest for impartiality and the like.

The transformationalist model as I understand it, and have articulated it throughout this essay, can be summarized into seven essential insights. These insights are the essence of faith-learning integration in the field of philosophy as I understand it, and comprise the guidelines or principles under which I teach my classes and relate to students:

1. What is true philosophically is necessarily compatible with the Christian faith (i.e., all truth is God's truth).
2. When other perspectives compete with God's Word over matters important to faith and life, the Christian is warranted in believing the latter over the former, or deferring judgment until a fresh search of the Word can be conducted and better ways of appropriating faith found.
3. Humans should seek an optimal vantage point (i.e., one constituted by a uniquely Christian blend of understanding and faith) for answering life's toughest questions.

[28] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 239.

4. *Faith seeking understanding* is the best model for understanding the relationship between faith and reason and it is at the heart of what I mean by Christian philosophy.
5. Christian thinkers are dependent on the truth of God's Word and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us from mere faith into a deeper understanding of our faith.
6. Sound Christian philosophy must begin with faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, and exhibit the intellectual virtues of logical coherence, explanatory power, humility, and charity in its quest to understand.
7. When we are firmly committed to our standing in Christ, the integration of faith and understanding presents us with a worldview that incorporates both of the world of sense and the world of the supersensible into one system.

Although there is unity to truth, there is, as Hasker puts it, a "*diversity in our ways of knowing* that makes the unity of truth a difficult and demanding achievement for us as humans."[29] Christian faith demands that God's lordship be over all of life. This is why the transformationalist model is so promising in the discipline of philosophy. When we compartmentalize our faith, the result often is the easy acceptance of ideas that conflict with Christian faith. When faith, however, is brought within the purview of the way our disciplines operate in the university, true integration is possible and understanding inevitably comes to those who seek God.

[29] Hasker, "Faith-Learning Integration," 237.

"Dissent Warmed Its Hands at Grimshaw's Fire." William Grimshaw of Haworth and the Baptists of Yorkshire[1]

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ABSTRACT. The paper investigates some fundamental aspects of the life and influence of the Anglican minister William Grimshaw on the Baptist life in Yorkshire. The key points tackled here begin with Grimshaw's early life in Lancashire and Cambridge, when having completed his studies was appointed Anglican minister in a church which was anything but spiritual. It was, however, in this particular congregation that Grimshaw himself became aware of his own need for spiritual renewal. The article also presents Grimshaw's conversion to Christ and his subsequent ministry which eventually led to the Haworth revival. A final aspect has to do with Grimshaw influence on John Fawcett, who seems to have sponsored William Carey's missionary travel to India.

KEY WORDS: conversion, pardon, justification, righteousness, Calvinism

Introduction

The Yorkshireman William Crabtree (1720-1811) never forgot the first time that he heard the preaching of William Grimshaw (1708-1763). It was 1743, when Crabtree was twenty-three, and the Anglican Evangelical was speaking on the Parable of the Prodigal Son. In the course of the sermon, Grimshaw made the observation that "one sin would damn a soul as well as a thou-

[1] The quotation comes from Frank Baker, *William Grimshaw, 1708-1763* (London: The Epworth Press, 1963), 270.

sand."[2] Now, Crabtree had done his apprenticeship as a weaver in what he later described as "a wicked village, next door to hell itself, given to Sabbath breaking, drunkenness, profane cursing and swearing." Nor he had been immune from the sins of his fellow villagers. Upon hearing this one sentence, driven home to his heart by the Spirit of God, he said that he thought his situation was "deplorable." But such was the drawing power of the Spirit of God that he continued to go to Haworth to listen to Grimshaw. In time he was soundly converted and eventually became the first pastor of Westgate Baptist Chapel in Bradford, as well as planting three other West Yorkshire Baptist causes at Halifax, Farsley and Leeds.[3]

Crabtree was one of thousands who blessed God for the day that they first heard Grimshaw and whose powerful preaching was the means of their conversion. The following lecture, in the four-hundredth anniversary of Grimshaw's birth, explores some aspects of Grimshaw's life and ministry, as well as indicating how God used this Anglican cleric to help revive the Baptist interest in Yorkshire.

Early Days in Lancashire and Cambridge

William Grimshaw was born on September 3, 1708, at Brindle, Lancashire, not far from Preston. There is very little reliable data about his early years, though there is some evidence that his parents, nominal Christians at the time, raised him with a sense of moral responsibility to a holy God.[4] At the age of seventeen, Grimshaw went up to Cambridge, where he was admitted to Christ's College—the college of John Milton (1608-1674)—as a sizar (poor student) in April, 1726. The population of Cambridge at the time was some six thousand, a fraction of today's population. It is important to realize that academic standards at

[2] Faith Cook, *William Grimshaw of Haworth* (Edinburgh/Carlisle, Pennsylvania: Banner of Truth Trust, 1997), 232.

[3] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 270; Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 232 ("Farley" should be "Farsley").

[4] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 16-17.

Cambridge during the eighteenth century were not that high. The majority of the professors did not lecture or tutor the students, but spent their time writing and left the direction of the students' academic studies to tutors or tutorial assistants. Academic requirements for completing a degree course were minimal. Moreover, as John Wesley (1703-1791) noted about the moral state of Cambridge University and its counterpart in Oxford: "the moment a young man sets foot in either Oxford or Cambridge he is surrounded by company of all kinds… with loungers and triflers of every sort; with men who no more concern themselves with learning than religion."[5]

During his first couple of years at Cambridge, Grimshaw, however, applied himself to his studies and later described himself at this time as "sober and diligent."[6] But this soon changed as Grimshaw gave way to the moral turpitude of university life. In his own words, he fell in "with bad company" and "learned to drink, swear, and what not."[7] Given his style of living, it is amazing that throughout the latter period of time he hoped to become a clergyman upon graduation. As he put it, he aimed at such because it would give him a steady source of income, a roof over his head and bread upon his plate.[8] What theology he had was of the Deistic variety, in which the robust Christianity of the Reformers and Puritans was subjected to the scrutiny of human reason and all that seemingly could not pass the test of rationality was rejected or played down. Thus the very concept of revelation was discarded along with Trinitarianism and the deity of Christ.[9]

Despite his evident lack of qualifications to be a minister in the Church of England, Grimshaw was ordained in April of 1731 and proceeded to his first charge, what was then the hamlet of Littleborough, three miles north of Rochdale, Lancashire. He was in this parish but a few months. The September of the same year he

[5] Cited J. H. Whiteley, *Wesley's England* (London: Epworth Press, 1945), 269.
[6] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 23.
[7] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 24.
[8] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 24.
[9] Cook, *William Grimshaw of Haworth*, 12-13.

moved six miles further north to Todmorden, where he was ordained a priest in the Anglican Church in 1732. The men and women in his parish were described by one contemporary as "wild, uncouth, rugged as their native hills."[10] But it was here at Todmorden that Grimshaw began to be awakened to the fact that he was in a desperate spiritual state.

Awakened to "the Pardoning Love of God"

The godlessness of Grimshaw's life was all too typical of eighteenth-century clerics. Like many other ministers throughout the length and breadth of England, Grimshaw spent his time fishing and hunting, drinking and playing cards. Instead of being times of spiritual nurture, his pastoral visits were occasions for heavy drinking.[11] And like other ministers of this ilk, he thought nothing of the vows he had made when ordained to preach the gospel and to be the spiritual guide of those in the parish. John Newton (1725-1807), who wrote an early biography of Grimshaw, noted that he did "his duty, as the phrase is, in the church, once on the Lord's day… With this his conscience was satisfied. Whether his flock was satisfied, he neither knew nor cared."[12]

How then was he awakened and converted? In part, the cause of his awakening was the death of a five-week-old girl, the first child of a young couple in the parish, James and Susan Scholfield. The mother awoke one awful morning to find the child she dearly loved stone dead. For a period of time Susan's mind became unhinged and she continued to tend to the child as if it were alive. Grimshaw was called for, but could only advise the parents "to put away all gloomy thoughts, and to get into merry company, and divert themselves, and all would soon be right."[13]

[10] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 28.

[11] Paul and Faith Cook, *Living the Christian Life. Selected thoughts of William Grimshaw of Haworth* (Darlington, England/Webster, New York: Evangelical Press, 2008), 13.

[12] *Memoirs of the Life of the Late Rev. William Grimshaw, A.B.* (London: T. Hamilton, 1814), 8.

[13] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 29-30.

Not surprisingly, this advice proved utterly ineffective to help the parents overcome their grief. Grimshaw was again sent for and this time admitted he did not know what to say to help them.

This realization of a profound lack of spirituality was a first step on the road to change. He now tried to reform his life and began to urge his congregation to lead moral lives. He started praying four times a day, a practice he would continue after his conversion. But as he later admitted, all of this was but an earnest "working out a righteousness of his own," in which he tried to balance the sins of his life with good deeds. He actually kept a folio volume, in which he would record his sins on one page and his good deeds on another, with the hope that at year's end they would balance.[14] Although accurate dating is not possible, it seems he went on like this for seven years, from 1734 to 1741. Sometimes, though, the futility of trying to trying to find salvation through the pathway of good works would overwhelm him and he would despair. Once he actually cried out in the middle of a service: "My friends, we are in a damnable state, and I scarcely know how we are to get out of it."[15] He was beginning to realize, in the words of Frank Baker, that "he could not put himself right with God by a multitude of devotional exercises, however arduous."[16]

During this period of time, in 1735, Grimshaw was married to a widow named Sarah Sutcliffe (1710-1739), whom he loved dearly, but who, after bearing him two children, died at the very young age of twenty-nine.[17] Grimshaw was shattered. He went through months of deep depression—not only mourning for his wife but also sorrowing over his sinful state. He was harassed with sexual temptations, which he resisted, but which left him deeply troubled. Old Deistic notions reappeared. On one occasion, for example, he "was tempted to believe Christ to be but a

[14] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 37.
[15] Cited Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 20.
[16] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 39.
[17] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 34-39; Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 20-22.

meer [*sic*] man." On another, the thought entered his mind that the God of the Bible was "a cruel implacable Being."[18]

But in the midst of his despair God sent him deliverance through "the agency of a man and a book."[19] Although Grimshaw does not specifically identify the man, it may well have been the Yorkshire evangelist, Benjamin Ingham (1712-1772) a friend of John Wesley and the brother-in-law of that wealthy patroness of Evangelical causes, Selina Hastings (1707-1791).[20] Ingham had been ordained in 1735 and had accompanied John and Charles Wesley (1707-1788) as a missionary to the American colony of Georgia. In 1737, after his return to his native town of Ossett in Yorkshire and upon an evangelical conversion, Ingham started to establish what has become known as the Inghamite Methodists after being banned in 1739 from preaching in Anglican churches. By 1755 there were over eighty Inghamite congregations, mainly in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Whether it was Ingham or not, this minister used to ride over to see Grimshaw and rebuke him for his attempts to earn salvation, "Mr. Grimshaw, you are a Jew, you are no believer in Jesus Christ, you are building on the sand."[21]

The book was *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated* by the Puritan divine John Owen (1616-1683).[22] Visiting a friend in 1741, Grimshaw happened to see the book lying on a table. Seeing from the title on the spine that it was a theological work, he picked it up and went to open it to the title page. Then, a strange event happened. As he was opening the book he felt "an uncommmon heat" flush his face. Thinking

[18] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 41.
[19] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 44.
[20] For this identification, see Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 44.
[21] Cited in Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 44. On Ingham, see especially H. M. Pickles, *Benjamin Ingham. Preacher amongst the Dales of Yorkshire, the Forests of Lancashire, and the Fells of Cumbria* (Coventry: H. M. Pickles, 1995).
[22] *The Doctrine of Justification by Faith Through the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Explained, Confirmed, & Vindicated* (London: R. Boulter, 1677).

that the flash of heat must have come from a fire in the fireplace of the room, he turned towards it but realized that it was too far away to have caused the flash of heat. He opened the book again and experienced a second heat flash. He took these flashes of heat to be divine signs that this book would be of special help to him.[23] And so it proved.

In this classic study of the imputed righteousness of Christ, Owen argued that justification meant that the sinner who was justified no longer sought to commend himself to God through his own good deeds, but rested in the fact that the righteousness of Christ was reckoned to him, giving him a spotless holiness purer than an angel's. Reading Owen, Grimshaw was enabled, as he later put it, to "renounce myself, every degree of fancied merit and ability, and to embrace Christ only for my all in all. O what light and comfort did I now enjoy in my own soul, and what a taste of the pardoning love of God!"[24]

A couple of decades later, when the London Evangelical William Romaine (1714-1795) asked Grimshaw for a statement of his doctrinal convictions, Grimshaw stated the following with regard to Christ's imputed righteousness:

> …this very righteousness is sufficient to redeem all mankind; but it only is, and will be imputed to every penitent, believing soul… Glory be to God for free grace. No reason can be assigned for this; only He would have mercy; because He would have mercy… in this righteousness, every member of Christ stands, and will stand, complete, irreprovable,[25] and acceptable in God's sight, both at death and judgement.[26]

[23] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 26-27.

[24] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 46. For a summary of Owen's work, see A. Skevington Wood, *William Grimshaw* (The Annual Lecture of the Evangelical Library; London: The Evangelical Library, 1963), 12-13.

[25] I.e. blameless.

[26] William Grimshaw's Creed, Articles XVI-XVII [Letter to William Romaine, December 8, 1762, in Erasmus Middleton, *Biographia Evangelica* (London: W. Justins, 1786), IV, 411]. The spelling and punctuation have been modernized. For the full creed, see also Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 315-322,

The Haworth Revival

Grimshaw's preaching now began to change as he heralded forth the good news of salvation by faith alone. Within a year of his conversion in 1741, Grimshaw had moved to a new parish, that of Haworth in West Yorkshire. Haworth was an isolated town in what was then a very hilly and bleak part of Yorkshire. Daily existence here was rough and hard, with life expectancy being around twenty-five. Almost half of all the children in the town died before the age of six. Raw sewage flowed down the main street and contaminated the drinking water, and not surprisingly dysentery and typhus were rampant in the town, along with that killer of the eighteenth century, smallpox.[27]

People sought refuge in drink, gambling and violence. According to John Newton, the inhabitants of the town "had little more sense of religion than their cattle, and were wild and uneducated like the mountains and rocks which surrounded them."[28] Hard and independent, few of Grimshaw's parishioners exhibited any Christian virtues.[29] But Grimshaw was just the man to reach them.

Heralding the changes about to take place in the village was the installation of a new pulpit in the parish church, St. Michael and All Angels. On the sounding board above the pulpit can still be read the two verses of Scripture that Grimshaw had engraved on it to graphically display the heart of his ministry: "I am determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2) and "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:21).[30]

Grimshaw was an extremely gifted preacher who could hold the attention of a congregation for up to two hours while he

[27] Faith Cook, "William Grimshaw—Man of faith and action" (Unpublished paper presented to The Carey Conference, Swanwick, Derbyshire, January 9, 2008), 2.

[28] Newton, *Memoirs*, 13-14, 43-44.

[29] Cook, *Living the Christian Life*, 18-19.

[30] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 58.

preached.[31] In part, this was due to the fact that during the course of the sermon he would use what his critics called "market language" to appeal to his hearers' consciences. He was not afraid of using colloquial words in the pulpit or of even coining new ones. Filled with pithy phrases and striking images his style of preaching was well suited to drive home the gospel to the hearts of rough and ready Yorkshire men and women. But the success of his preaching was also due to the sense of the presence of God as he would denounce sin, warn of the dreadful consequences of continuing in it, and urge all and sundry to accept Christ as their only hope of salvation.

Only a handful of Grimshaw's sermons survive. A section of his unpublished treatise "The Admonition of a Sinner" gives one a taste of his preaching style:

> My neighbour, my friend, my heart longs over you. Your manner of life is actually, openly and evidently such that if not seasonably prevented, it will shortly and certainly terminate in your inevitable, intolerable, eternal ruin and destruction… Don't be angry with me, please don't. It's because I love you that I thus address you… I want you without delay to repent of your sins, "to seek the Lord while he may be found, to call upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6-7). Acquaint yourself with him, be at peace with him, through his blood, that thereby good may come to you: pardon, peace, grace, heaven, glory, glory for evermore.[32]

At first, Grimshaw was unaware of the fact that the Haworth Revival was a rivulet in a much larger stream of revival inundating the British Isles in the mid-eighteenth century. But soon he made contact with George Whitefield (1714-1770) and the Wesley brothers, and he became a central figure in the awaken-

[31] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 91; Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 128.

[32] "The Admonition of a Sinner" (Unpublished manuscript held in the John Rylands University Library of Manchester). Cited Esther Bennett, *Heavenly Fire. The life and ministry of William Grimshaw of Haworth (1708-1763)* (Dundas, Ontario: Joshua Press, 2000), 8.

ing. Frank Baker has maintained that apart from the evangelists just mentioned, Grimshaw exercised "probably a more potent influence than that of almost any other religious leader of his time."[33] John Wesley was so taken with Grimshaw's love for Christ and his passion for the salvation of sinners that he once wrote, "A few such as him would make a nation tremble. He carries fire wherever he goes."[34] In fact, Wesley nominated Grimshaw as his successor in leading the Arminian Methodist movement if he and Charles were to predecease Grimshaw.[35]

Within a few months of Grimshaw's arrival in Haworth, the church began to fill with people and conversions become increasingly common. When he had first come to the church in 1742, he had had a dozen or so people taking communion in a church that could seat 1200. Five years later, the church was full and 1200 took communion.[36] By the late 1740s and early 1750s, summer congregations might reach as high as 6000! When Whitefield preached at the church in September 1749, for example, over a thousand took communion and six thousand gathered to hear him preach.[37]

The people came from all around the countryside. Some were reached by Grimshaw himself as he travelled through the week to various nearby towns and villages outside of the boundaries of his own parish. Others came through the preaching of various lay preachers whom he began to employ from 1744 onwards.[38] In any given month of 1751, for instance, Grimshaw reckoned that he might preach some sixty times.[39] From the point of view of Anglicanism, this was highly irregular and a source of worry to neighbouring parish ministers. To prevent Grimshaw acting irregularly, some of them had recourse to aiding and abetting vio-

[33] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 268.
[34] Cited Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 1.
[35] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 1, 172, 247.
[36] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 66.
[37] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 182.
[38] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 85.
[39] Cook, "William Grimshaw—Man of faith and action", 4.

lent persecution. George White (d. 1751), the nearby vicar of Colne, actually raised an army of local thugs, who were pledged "for the defence of the Church of England" and who were determined to wreak violence upon either Grimshaw or one of his lay preachers if they preached in the adjoining parishes.[40] Consider the experience, for example, of Grimshaw's lay preacher Thomas Lee (1727-1786):

> In the year 1752, and during the winter following, the work of God prospered exceedingly; but persecution raged on every side… One day, as I was going through Pateley [Bridge], the captain of the mob [there], who was kept in constant pay, pursued me, and pulled me off my horse. The mob then soon collected about me; and… dragged me into a house by the hair of the head; then pushed me back, with one or two upon me, and threw me with the small of my back upon the edge of the stone stairs. This nearly broke my back; and it was not well for many years after. Thence they dragged me to the common sewer, which carries the dirt of the town to the river. They rolled me in it for some time; then dragged me to the bridge and threw me into the water. They had me mostly on the ground, my strength being quite spent. My wife, with some friends, now came up. Seeing her busy about me, some asked: "What, are you a Methodist?"—gave her several blows which made her bleed at the mouth, and swore they would put her into the river. All this time I lay upon the ground, the mob being undetermined what to do. Some cried out: "Make an end of him"—others were for sparing my life; but the dispute was cut short by their agreeing to put some others into the water. So they took them away, leaving me and my wife together. She endeavoured to raise me up; but, having no strength, I dropped to the ground again, and supported me about a hundred yards; then I was set on horseback, and made a shift to ride softly as far as Michael Granger's house. Here I was stripped from head to foot, and was washed. I left my wet clothes here, and rode to Greenhow Hill, where many were waiting for me; and though much bruised

[40] Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 127. On the persecution, see Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 130-138.

> and very weak, preached a short sermon from Psalm xxxiv.19: "Many are the troubles of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."[41]

"Mad Grimshaw"

In addition to solid biblical proclamation, Grimshaw's methods for raising the spiritual temperature of the Haworth parish also included what Frank Baker has termed "holy pranks," by reason of which some called the Haworth minister "Mad Grimshaw."[42] For example, John Newton recorded that during Sunday worship Grimshaw sometimes had the congregation sing a psalm—later embellishment made it Psalm 119—while he went out and checked the inns in the town to see if there were any drinking there who should have been in church.[43]

Once he apparently sent two of his churchwardens to round up such loiterers. They were slow in returning, so Grimshaw went in search of them. The psalm was long over when footsteps were heard and the two churchwardens appeared shamefaced with Grimshaw behind them. As Grimshaw came into the church, he cried out, "What think you! The churchwardens who went out to detect others and prevent them from sinning I have found in the inn drinking a pint of ale! For shame! For shame! For shame!"[44]

On another occasion Grimshaw was striding over the moors to preach in a village some distance from Haworth. Two ruffians met him on the way and sizing him up as one like themselves—for he was a big man physically, broad-chested and exceptionally strong[45]—they informed him that they were off "to hear Mad Grimshaw. We shall have some rare sport tonight!" Grimshaw pretended to be heading for another destination, but

[41] In Bennett, *Heavenly Fire*, 13.
[42] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 13.
[43] Newton, *Memoirs*, 93-94. For the embellishment, see Cook, *William Grimshaw*, 140-141.
[44] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 212.
[45] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 259.

eventually agreed to accompany them. They had no idea who he truly was until he got to the place where he was to preach and he went into the pulpit. The two would-be hecklers were silenced, "first by fear, then by shame, and lastly by the conviction of their own sinfulness, as he rallied them with the words: 'Come on! We shall have some rare sport tonight!'"[46]

John Newton also tells the account of how Grimshaw put an end to the horse racing that was an annual feature of a fair normally held in mid-October. It was, in Grimshaw's words, "a scene of the grossest and most vulgar riot, profligacy, and confusion." Grimshaw sought in vain to end the races, but he did not succeed until in 1759 he made it a matter of extended prayer. That year, quite contrary to the usual pattern of weather for October, it rained incessantly for five days, from October 12 to the October 17. Newton said that it was reported that "old Grimshaw put a stop to the races by his prayers."[47]

"Dissent Warmed Its Hands at Grimshaw's Fire"[48]

Grimshaw's impact on the Baptist cause in Yorkshire was profound. Like other centres of Baptist witness in England during the eighteenth century, many of the Yorkshire Baptists were moribund prior to Grimshaw's ministry, owing to such things as Hyper-Calvinism and traditionalism. A goodly number of Grimshaw's converts became Baptists, including such Baptist leaders as William Crabtree, mentioned above, Richard Smith (1710-1764) of Wainsgate, James Hartley (1722-1780) of Haworth, and John Parker (1725-1793) of Barnoldswick.[49] Grim-

[46] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 13.

[47] Newton, *Memoirs*, 103-104. See also Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 213-214.

[48] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 270.

[49] For details on Smith and Hartley, see Robin Greenwood, "The Evangelical Revival among Particular Baptists: The Early History of West Lane and Hall Green Baptist Chapels in Haworth, during the Involvement of the Greenwood Family" (unpublished manuscript, 2000), 18-29. For Smith, also see Pickles, *Benjamin Ingham*, 40-42. For Parker, see John Fawcett, "A Sketch of

shaw, though, took it all in his stride and was even able to joke about the fact that "so many of my chickens turn ducks!"[50]

Grimshaw's greatest influence on Baptist life and witness in Yorkshire, however, came through one who was not converted under his preaching, but who regularly went to hear him for a trime, namely John Fawcett (1740-1817). Fawcett was born on January 6, 1740, at Lidget Green, a small village near Bradford in the West Riding of Yorkshire.[51] The death of his father, Stephen Fawcett, when he was but twelve and to whom he was deeply attached, made a deep impression upon him. For some time afterwards he was, his son relates, "deeply agitated by fears" concerning his father's final state and he prayed much about it.[52] Reinforcing this early openness to spiritual matters was Fawcett's ardent reading of the Scriptures and a variety of Puritan classics, including *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan (1628-1688), *A Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live* by Richard Baxter (1615-1691), and the works of John Flavel (*c*.1630-1691). It was not until September, 1755, however, that Fawcett understood and owned as his own the biblical way of salvation by "a God reconciled through the atonement of a suffering Saviour."[53] The key influence at this point was not another author from the Puritan era, but one who has been rightly described as a "revived Puritan," namely George Whitefield.[54]

the Life and Character of The late Mr. John Parker", in John Parker, *Letters to his Friends* (Leeds, 1794), 3-48.

[50] Cited Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 243.

[51] The main source for the life of Fawcett is that drawn up by his son, [John Fawcett, Jr.], *An Account of the Life, Ministry, and Writings of the Late Rev. John Fawcett, D.D.* (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy/Halifax: P. K. Holden, 1818). See also "Memoir of the Author", in *The Miscellaneous Works of the Late John Fawcett, D.D.* (London: W. Jones, 1824), 3-34 and Ian Sellers, "Other Times, Other Ministries: John Fawcett and Alexander McLaren", *The Baptist Quarterly* 32 (1986-1987), 181-187.

[52] [Fawcett, Jr.], *Life, Ministry, and Writings*, 6-7.

[53] [Fawcett, Jr.], *Life, Ministry, and Writings*, 16.

[54] [Fawcett, Jr.], *Life, Ministry, and Writings*, 15-17.

For the two years following, Fawcett frequently used to trudge the nine or so miles over the moors from Bradford to hear Grimshaw and especially made a point of going when the Lord's Supper was to be administered.[55] In 1764 Fawcett was called to succeed Richard Smith as pastor of Wainsgate Baptist Church in Hebden Bridge, where many of the early members, including Smith, had come to Christ under Grimshaw's powerful ministry. Located but five or six miles from Haworth, this church can be considered to be a direct result of the Haworth Revival.

Fawcett's ministry here and then later in a work right in the town of Hebden Bridge was marked by an irenic Calvinism and catholicity—both marks of the life of Grimshaw as well—a robust commitment to theological education—he began an academy for training Baptist ministers—and missions—William Ward (1769-1823), who went out to India to join William Carey (1761-1834) at Serampore, was trained under Fawcett.[56] In fact, without a gift of £200 that Fawcett gave to the fledgling Baptist Missionary Society in 1793, it is quite possible that Carey would not have been able to sail to India that year.[57] In a way, then, Grimshaw played a small role in the onset of the modern missionary movement. And how the Anglican minister of Haworth would have rejoiced to think of the Baptist minister Carey preaching Christ in India, for, as Grimshaw wrote in the creed he sent to William Romaine, Christ's imputed "righteousness is sufficient to redeem all mankind."[58]

[55] [Fawcett, Jr.], *Life, Ministry, and Writings*, 30-31.
[56] Baker, *William Grimshaw*, 271.
[57] George R. Cragg, *Grimshaw of Haworth. A Study in Eighteenth Century Evangelicalism* (London/Edinburgh: Canterbury Press, 1947), 102.
[58] Cragg, *Grimshaw of Haworth*, 103.

The American Churches and the Civil War

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ABSTRACT. The essence of this paper is to show how religion, and especially Protestantism in its Evangelical vein, built the context for the outburst of the American Civil War. The issue of slavery is debated with reference to how the North and the South perceived the problem as well as the economic aspects involved. The author also presents how various Protestants (especially Presbyterians, Methodists and Baptists) related themselves to the question of war and how they justified or rejected the idea of conflict over human freedom. The period following the war is also briefly tackled and particularly the idealization of the culture and religion of the South.

KEY WORDS: war, evangelicals, slavery, abolition, Bible

Introduction

The Civil War (1861-65) is "the central event of American history".[1] As well as being a traumatic conflict for the nation as a whole, it was also (and particularly) one for the Churches. Although it was not a "war of religion" in the traditional sense, it can nevertheless be described as a "religious war". Indeed, James McPherson says that "historians have tended to overlook the degree to which it was a religious war".[2] It was not a war between different religions in the manner of the medieval "Crusades" or the French wars of religion, nor was it a war to determine the nature of the established Church and its constitu-

[1] Peter Parish, *The American Civil War* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1975), 13.
[2] "Afterword", in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. R. M. Miller, H. S. Stout, C. R. Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 409.

tional position, as was the English Civil War.[3] Nevertheless, religion (which for the majority of church attenders in nineteenth-century America meant evangelical Protestantism) provided justification for the war; it shaped people's reactions to military successes and failures; it became the foundation for understanding the war both during its course and afterwards. Mark Noll writes:

> Christianity was everywhere present in the crisis leading to the American Civil War and in the War itself. As during the American Revolution, faith as such was not a cause of the conflict, but it did provide a network of influences which intensified the political, social and cultural differences that brought on the strife. As intense as the religious commitment to the War was, so wide-reaching were the religious effects it precipitated.[4]

We should also note Noll's comment that "the Civil War… was a much more actively religious struggle than the earlier War for Independence".[5] Similarly Robert Handy:

> [The Civil War] was in many important respects a war between evangelicals, north and south. Conspicuous leaders and interpreters of the combat on both sides were products of Anglo-American Protestantism, and freely cited its concepts and sanctions on behalf of the Union or the Confederacy. As the crisis unfolded, the pulpit and the church Press hastened to interpret the dramatic events… With a few exceptions, the evangelical leaders of the warring sections interpreted the cause to which they were committed as holy and righteous.[6]

[3] Of course, religion was not the only factor in these and other such wars.

[4] *A History of Christianity in the United States and Canada* (London: SPCK, 1992), 314.

[5] Mark Noll, *America's God. From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 16.

[6] *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 265f. These remarks should not be taken to mean that *only* evangelicals were involved. Jews and Catholics, for example, were

and Richard Carwardine:

> Although the Civil War had to do with the defense of vested material interests, we may reasonably doubt whether concern over economic interests could of itself have launched that conflict. What engaged the passions of both sections was the moral meaning men and women gave to being "southern" and "northern" and to the systems of free and slave labor each had developed. Evangelicalism, more than any other element, provided the core of these divergent moral perceptions of the appropriate social and economic direction of the Union.[7]

All this is unsurprising, given the extent to which Christianity had permeated all sections of American life and society. From the very beginning of her life as an independent nation, and indeed long before Independence, Christian symbols and language had shaped America's perception of herself and given her a sense of "manifest destiny".[8] In 1630 John Winthrop, first governor of Massachusetts Bay, stressed the importance of the

also caught up in the conflict, as were people with little or no religious allegiance.

[7] Richard Carwardine, *Religion and Politics in Antebellum America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 323.

[8] According to Hugh Brogan and many others, "manifest destiny" was a phrase first used by the journalist John L. O'Sullivan, who in 1845 proclaimed that it was America's "manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions". See H. Brogan, *Longman History of the United States of America* (London: Longman, 1985), 305. However, Linda Hudson claims that the expression was first used by Jane Cazneau (1807-78), a journalist and writer well known (or even "notorious") in nineteenth-century America. See Linda S. Hudson, *Manifest Destiny. A Biography of Jane McManus Storm Cazneau* (Texas, 2001). Regardless of who first coined the phrase, the attitude existed well before 1845, and it was to affect America's perception of herself not only as regards the geographical continent but in the world as a whole; see Sydney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1972), 638, 849-850, 877-8.

"covenant" which the colonists were making with God and he made his famous comment about New England being "a city upon a hill".[9] The kind of messianism seen in sixteenth- and particularly seventeenth-century England was transferred to the New World, which the immigrants and settlers saw as a Promised Land; they were a people blessed by God and given a unique role in the world. In 1702 Cotton Mather published his *Magnalia Christi Americana: or, The Ecclesiastical History of New England*, which is a collection of accounts of the Lord's "great works" in the foundation of the Colonies. Handy quotes Matthew Simpson, a northern Methodist Bishop, as saying (during the Civil War) that "God cannot do without America".[10]

Examples could be multiplied of such "elect nation" thinking. From the beginning the United States did not have a national or established Church in the British sense; nevertheless, Americans readily applied Biblical and Christian categories to their understanding of their life and history as a nation. Nathan Hatch comments that "the most powerful popular movements in the early republic were expressly religious."[11] Although the major framers of the Constitution held to a deist rather than an evangelical version of Protestantism, religious discourse about the new nation readily became evangelical discourse in a context shaped by the growing strength of evangelicalism in the

[9] Perry Miller and Thomas Johnson, *The Puritans—A Sourcebook of Their Writings*, volume 1, revised edn (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 199.

[10] Handy, 266. According to Ahlstrom, Matthew Simpson interpreted the American acquisition of California and the discovery of gold there as a sure sign of God's special role for the United states (*A Religious History of the American People*, 46).

[11] Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 224. One could say that the ultimate version of this "elect nation" thinking was Mormonism, which arose in the 1820s. Here it was not a matter simply of Biblical concepts being applied to America; rather, the Bible is superseded by a superior revelation in which America *is* the Promised Land where God worked his original work and his Son imparted his most important teachings.

republic's first decades.[12] The problem was that, in the course of these decades, "the driving engines of democracy and evangelical religion were creating not a single Christian America but Northern and Southern versions of the godly republic".[13]

An intensity of religious spirit and commitment is to be seen in the remarkable growth of American evangelicalism between the Revolution and the Civil War, in the "revivalism" which was such a prominent feature of early nineteenth-century America, and also in the more traditional and conventional forms of Christianity, whether Protestant or Catholic. This religious intensity is indicated also by the colossal number of Bibles printed and distributed. "Even more than in the eighteenth century, if any book touched the lives of [nineteenth-century] Americans, it was a Bible… Bible language and stories dominated the world of American print."[14]

European Enlightenment thought had certainly crossed the Atlantic, but it did not seriously weaken the influence of the Churches or of the Christian tradition. Rather, with its emphasis on the power of reason the Enlightenment served to stimulate American self-confidence, and with its emphasis on the rights of man it served to stimulate the concern for philanthropy which was inherent in the Christian message, although not always made explicit. The post-Independence period saw a vast amount of activity directed towards alleviating the conditions of the poor, the physically and mentally ill, those in prison, widows, orphans and immigrants. There were campaigns to provide better education for all and there were also moves towards securing equal rights for women. However, there was one humanitarian issue that caused a deep divide

[12] Evangelical Protestantism has been defined as "the principal subculture in antebellum America" (Richard Carwardine, *Religion and Politics in Antebellum America*, xv; cf. 1, 44).
[13] Noll, *America's God*, 194.
[14] David Daniell, *The Bible in English. Its History and Influence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 703.

among Christians, and that issue, slavery, would eventually lead the nation to civil war.

Pre-War Tensions

It should not be thought that, for all Northerners, slavery was an evil which had to be abolished even at the cost of civil war. Probably only a small minority thought in such terms. What disturbed many was the prospect of the *expansion* of slavery into territories which had yet to be incorporated into the United States. At the beginning of the war, many in the North believed that the South's great sin was secession rather than slavery. Northerners regarded secession as rebellion against the "powers-that-be", in other words against the lawful government ordained by God. Biblical rhetoric was often used to justify war to eradicate the sin of rebellion rather than the sin of slavery. As the war progressed, the two issues came to be identified more and more. Many Northerners came to the view that, in a sense, slavery had made war on the United States Constitution, and therefore it deserved to be abolished and the slaves should be emancipated.

There can be no doubt that the issue of slavery generated very deep and powerful emotions—either for or against "the South's peculiar institution". Many Americans felt that the humanitarian and Christian principles which stimulated concern for the underprivileged, and led to the formation of many charitable enterprises and institutions, should be extended to the millions of black people who lived in a state of slavery.[15] It was

[15] According to Ahlstrom, by 1860 there were at least 3.5 million slaves in the United States (*A Religious History of the American People*, 655). Brogan (see page 395) quotes a figure of 31 million for the total US population in 1860. The same statistics are given by J. B. Stewart in *The Oxford Companion to United States History*, ed. Paul S. Boyer (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 130. Stewart points out that, when war broke out, the North's population dwarfed the South's by a ratio of more than two to one—22 million to 9 million (of whom 3.5 million were slaves and were therefore not enlisted in the Confederate armies). J. P. Reidy points out that "between 1790 and 1860

of course possible (and common) for white people to believe in the superiority of the white races over the black while also believing that it was morally wrong for one man to "own" another.[16] God may have given to certain races special gifts, privileges and responsibilities, but in another sense all men were equal in the sight of God. All men were created in the image of God and therefore slavery, which reduces enslaved people to the level of animals or goods, was an affront to God himself. Furthermore, the principles expressed as, "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you", and, "Love your neighbour as yourself", made it self-evident that slavery was wrong. No free man in all honesty would ever want to be a slave himself, so what right had he to maintain others in a state of slavery? Abolitionists also felt that the owning of other human beings had a corrupting influence on the owners themselves—power corrupts and it leads to the desire for more and more power: the slave-owners, so the abolitionists claimed, wanted not only to exercise tyranny over their black labourers but also to extend the slave-owning principle throughout the United States. The abolitionists' arguments were based not only on Christian principles (as they saw them) but also on the example of Great Britain. Largely as a result of evangelical pressure, the British Parliament made the slave trade illegal in 1807, and slavery itself was abolished in the British West Indies in 1834.[17]

the slave population had grown from approximately 7 million to nearly 4 million" (ibid., 717). This growth was seen by many Southerners as a sign of divine blessing.

[16] For example, Harriet Beecher Stowe (1811-96), whose *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did so much to fuel evangelical feeling against slavery (see below), has been described as "hostile to the slave-owners but profoundly racist in her assumptions" (Parish, 50).

[17] In America one of the most powerful statements of evangelical anti-slavery feeling was Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which appeared first in serial form in a magazine in 1851, was first published as a book in 1852 and immediately became a bestseller. As well as attacking slavery in general the work particularly targeted the Fugitive Slave Acts which

However, other Americans—particularly, but by no means exclusively, in the South—also held deep Christian convictions but took a completely different view. Unlike the abolitionists, the defenders of slavery could appeal to the "literal" meaning of Scripture. The Bible, they said, nowhere condemned slavery;[18] indeed, it was part of Ancient Israelite society[19] and it was part of the world order which both Jesus and also the New Testament writers, notably Paul, accepted.[20] Southern slave-

provided for the return of runaway slaves to their masters. Stowe was the daughter of Lyman Beecher, one of America's leading preachers and theologians (he seems to have moved between the Congregational and the Presbyterian Churches), and the wife of a Congregational professor of theology. She lived in the North and had little first-hand knowledge of slavery—she had never even visited the South—but her dramatic (and, according to Southerners, her sentimental and distorted) portrayal of the plight of the black slaves and the wickedness of the white slave-owners did a great deal to strengthen abolitionist feeling among ordinary people (at any rate in the North). Her novel also made her famous across the Atlantic and she went on three tours of Europe in the 1850s. By 1860 *Uncle Tom's Cabin* had been translated into many languages. Daniell points out that, like the "Spirituals" sung by the negroes whose lives she depicts, Stowe's work is steeped in Biblical ideas: "at the root of the book is the understanding that the rock on which personal and national morality is built is the Bible" (*The Bible in English*, 715).

[18] One NT text—1 Timothy 1:10—has been interpreted as meaning that the writer includes "slave traders" among the various evildoers listed. This is the translation found in, for example, the NIV. However, the Greek word *andrapodistēs* could be understood as meaning "a kidnapper". The King James Version, which American evangelicals would have used, translates it here as "menstealers". If the questions ever arose, the slave owners and traders would have denied that Paul's comments had any relevance to them.

[19] Leviticus 25:44-46 and Deuteronomy 20:10-15, for example, became standard "pro-slavery" passages. Also, the explicit reference to servants in the final commandment of the Decalogue seemed to legitimize slaveholding. The whole issue is discussed by Kevin Giles, "The Biblical Argument for Slavery: Can the Bible Mislead? A Case Study in Hermeneutics", *Evangelical Quarterly* 66 (1994). Abolitionists argued that Ancient Israelite slavery bore no resemblance to the cruel, inhuman and degrading bondage imposed on Southern negroes.

[20] There are innumerable instances of this conviction in the religious press and sermons, going back long before the Civil War. For example, in an ad-

holders saw themselves as versions of the ancient Israelite patriarchs, benevolently and paternalistically presiding over a rural idyll, at the head of an extended family consisting of children, grandchildren, "bondmen" and "bondmaids". In the New Testament slaves were exhorted to be obedient to their masters, and masters were urged to treat slaves humanely (Paul's *Letter to Philemon* was a *locus classicus* for the pro-slavery position).

Slavery was part of the God-ordained order of human society (although some Christians defending slavery were at least prepared to see it as being in the same category as poverty, disease, illness or death; namely, ordained or permitted by God even if not particularly desirable from a human perspective!). Because abolitionists were often people known (or believed) to hold "liberal" or "freethinking" religious opinions, defenders of slavery used the tactic of claiming that attacks on slavery were in fact also attacks on the authority of the Bible—a very serious matter in nineteenth-century America. Pro-slavery Christians argued that masters were of course expected to treat their slaves kindly, in accordance with Christian principles. As defenders of the *status quo* they argued that the so-called evils of slavery were not the fault of the institution itself; they were caused by slave-owners who failed in their responsibilities and abused their slaves. Similarly, they said, in human society gen-

dress to the South Carolina legislature in 1822 Richard Furman, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Charleston SC, and one of the most distinguished Baptists in the USA, enunciated the popular "Biblical" defense of slavery. "The right of holding slaves is clearly established in the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example." "Had the holding of slaves been a moral evil, it cannot be supposed that the inspired Apostles, who feared not the faces of men, and were ready to lay down their lives in the cause of their God, would have tolerated it for a moment in the Christian Church." "In proving this subject justifiable by Scriptural authority, its morality is also provided; for the Divine Law never sanctions immoral actions." See the quotations in Bill Leonard, *Baptist Ways* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 186. In his influential *Exposition of the Views of the Baptists* (1823) Furman sought to overcome qualms about slavery among the faithful and called upon slave-owners to regard their slaves as a sacred trust to whom they owed kindness and care.

erally there were many cases of children being ill-treated by their parents, or wives by their husbands, but that did not mean that marriage, parenthood and family life were wrong in themselves. When abolitionists quoted the "Golden Rule" ("Do unto others…") and also the exhortation, "Love your neighbour…", the pro-slavery camp replied that slaves should of course be treated in accordance with these principles; the principles were no proof that slavery should be abolished.

But if the pro-slavery lobby felt that slavery was Biblically justified, how did they justify the enslavement exclusively of *black* people, the fact that only black ("Afro-American") people worked as slaves? Here they were on much less sure ground, because it was difficult to find explicit Biblical arguments in support of *racial* slavery. Some defenders of slavery cited Noah's cursing of Ham (Canaan) in Genesis 9:25-27 and claimed that the black man's subservience was the result of God's judgment upon the (alleged) ancestor of the black races,[21] but this was really a case of reading the Genesis passage through a prism which Mark Noll describes as a "deeply entrenched intuitive racism".[22] Noll also makes the interesting comment:

> Belief that the Curse of Canaan from Genesis 9:25ff applied to blacks in mid-nineteenth-century America still flourished among the people at large, but was largely passé among intellectual elites.[23]

[21] It is impossible to find any exegetical or historical justification for such a deduction. The issue is discussed in detail in Stephen R. Haynes, *Noah's Curse. The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). One of the difficult points in the Biblical story is the fact that, although Ham was the offender, it was actually his son Canaan who was cursed by Noah.

[22] Mark A. Noll, "The Bible and Slavery", in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. R. M. Miller, H. S. Stout, C. R. Wilson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 66. Noll uses the same phrase in *America's God*, 421.

[23] "The Bible and Slavery", 62. See also Noll's comments in *America's God*, 418.

More important than any particular text was "the widespread and deeply engrained conviction that among the peoples of the earth only Africans were uniquely set apart for chattel bondage".[24] Pro-slavery advocates in effect unconsciously blended together two factors: (1) the (apparent) Biblical arguments in support of slavery, and (2) their own commonsense intuitions (or "gut feeling") that the black races were inferior to the white. By the providence of God, they believed, the institution of slavery, if properly and humanely maintained, served to benefit the black races—as slaves black people enjoyed a protection and a security that they could not have in a state of freedom, because of their natural inferiority and therefore inability to cope with the world as efficiently as the white man could. God had ordained that the black races should be the slaves of the white and he had given the white man a stewardship over the black.[25] Again, it should be noted that critics of slavery were also prone to this kind of racism. It was posible to argue for an ending of slavery and also to believe that black people "could not, consistently with the public welfare, be entrusted with the exercise of political power".[26]

In addition to the "Biblical" arguments, slave-owners were also quick to point out what they saw as their critics' hypocrisy. Abolition was a popular cause in the North, where industry, mining and big business were blossoming in the early nineteenth century. The slave-owners pointed out that the industrial

[24] Noll, *America's God*, 421.

[25] In 1859 the Southern Baptist theologian John Leadley Dagg published his *Elements of Moral Science*, in which he defended slavery as an institution condoned and not condemned in Scripture. Dagg also argued that, while slavery had given rise to much evil, God had nevertheless used it to prosper the Africans. See T. George & D. S. Dockery (eds), *Baptist Theologians* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 180f. Dagg's *Manual of Theology* (1857), which also included a "Biblical" defence of slavery, became the first textbook in Systematic Theology to be used in Baptist seminaries in the South.

[26] So said the distinguished Presbyterian theologian Charles Hodge, quoted in Noll, *America's God*, 419.

"wage slaves" of the North lived in far worse conditions than the black slaves on Southern plantations. When the abolitionists argued that an industrial worker or miner was nevertheless a free man and could move from one place to another, the slave-owners replied that such "freedom" was an illusion; being a wage slave in Boston was no better than being one in New York! The pro-slavery lobby also appealed to the antiquity and ubiquity of slavery in human history from its beginnings; slave societies everywhere had proved to be more stable than "free labour" ones.

The problem with slavery was not only that it generated intense passions. It also divided the country geographically. Slavery was "the South's peculiar institution" and the Southern economy depended on it. A study by two American scholars comments:

> The greater part of the South took shape as a slave society, not merely a society that permitted slavery. For southern slaveholders and nonslaveholders alike, slavery left no feature of life untouched. The American South ranks with ancient Greece and Rome among the few genuine slave societies in world history—that is, societies in which slave labor provided the basis of the social structure, the economy, and the culture. Slaves constituted about one third of the population of the South.[27]

As the United States expanded, and new States were formed (especially in the central and western regions), the question of the extension of slavery to new areas of population was a particularly thorny one. The "Missouri Compromise" of 1820-21 ruled that Missouri would be admitted to the Union as a "slave state" but that slavery would be prohibited elsewhere in territories north of latitude 36º30′ (Missouri's southern border). The drawing of precise geographical lines between slave and non-

[27] Elizabeth Fox-Genevese and Eugene D. Genovese, *The Mind of the Master Class. History and Faith in the Southern Slaveholders' Worldview* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 70f.

slave areas led to further tensions and divisions, the most famous of which was the Dred Scott case which was decided in 1857. Dred Scott, a slave, had in the 1830s spent some time in Illinois, a non-slave State, and elsewhere in territory where slavery was forbidden. Years later he sued his new owners for his freedom in the Missouri courts (i.e. in a slave State), on the grounds that the time spent in non-slave areas gave him the right to be free. The United States Supreme Court, under Chief Justice Roger B. Taney who was uncompromisingly pro-slavery, ruled in 1857 that Scott, being a slave and a black man, was not a United States citizen and was not entitled to appeal to the courts. Furthermore, his status should be decided by the State where he was living when the case was processed, i.e. Missouri. In the highly tense political atmosphere of the 1850s the Dred Scott decision immediately deepened divisions over slavery, not least because it declared the Missouri Compromise to be unconstitutional.[28]

The fact of a clear-cut North-South divide, the emergence of two distinct societies and cultures, naturally stimulated the secessionist cause in the Southern States. To many Southerners it became increasingly obvious that secession, i.e. withdrawal from the Union and the establishment of an independent nation, was the only way to protect their economy and to guaran-

[28] Another "Compromise"—of 1850 (it actually became law in September of that year)—had attempted to resolve some of the problems arising from the slavery issue by providing for the admission of California as a free (non-slave) state, the abolition of the slave trade in the District of Columbia, and the organization of the New Mexico and Utah territories without any reference to slavery. Southerners naturally saw these measures as a further undermining of the institution of slavery in preparation for an eventual total abolition throughout the nation. The tense atmosphere was stimulated also by the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854. This act declared that in these territories a decision on slavery would depend on the holding of a referendum. Tensions led to violence between pro- and anti-slavery factions. Kansas was admitted as a free State in 1861, when the Civil War had already begun, and Nebraska in 1867, by which time the war was over and slavery was illegal anywhere in the United States.

tee their distinctive "plantation" way of life and its values. The threat of war was felt for many years before the conflict, but what finally precipitated it was the election in November 1860 of Abraham Lincoln as President. Lincoln was elected on an anti-slavery platform and did not receive a single Electoral College vote from the South.[29] The Southern States decided that, rather than allowing their world to be destroyed by Lincoln's policies, they would withdraw from the Union and set up an independent Confederacy. Lincoln would not accept such a withdrawal. He regarded the South's decision as an act of rebellion and he went to war in order to prevent the dismembering of the Union. The question was, Lincoln said, "whether in a free government the minority have the right to break up the government whenever they choose".[30] For their part, Southerners did not see themselves as rebels but as men and women fighting for a just cause:

> When Southerners, intent upon the defense of slavery and their constitutional rights, came to consider secession their only remaining option, they split into intellectually irreconcilable but politically reconcilable positions. The great majority believed a state had a right to secede, but, whereas some appealed to constitutionally sanctioned state rights, others appealed to the doctrine of resistance to tyranny as annunciated in their forefathers' Declaration of Independence.[31]

[29] Strictly speaking, Lincoln at the time of his election had not committed himself to the total abolition of slavery but only to banning the establishment of the institution in new areas. However, Southerners interpreted a vote for Lincoln as a vote for abolition. Lincoln was the first President from the recently formed Republican Party (established in 1854). The Republicans drew a significant proportion of their support from Northern, anti-slavery evangelicals. Lincoln himself never became a member of any Church, but there is no reason to doubt that he had firm Christian convictions, often expressed in his speeches.

[30] Quoted in James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom. The American Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), vii.

[31] Elizabeth Fox-Genevese and Eugene D. Genovese, 614.

However they rationalised it, Southerners saw the conflict as a struggle for their freedom against a tyrannical rule imposed on them, a foreign rule which threatened to destroy their economy and indeed their whole way of life—a way of life which so obviously embodied the divine order for human society. It was natural to draw a comparison with what had happened in the 1770s and 1780s, a comparison which of course carried a good deal of weight in the United States. During the War of Independence (the "American Revolution") the colonists fought for and won independence from British rule, and they regarded their victory as a sign of divine blessing.[32] In the 1860s many Southerners claimed that they were fighting in a similar cause: like their forefathers they were engaged in a legitimate struggle for freedom. They were not rebelling against legally constituted authority and hence they could not be said to have transgressed the principle of Romans 13. Echoing the words of David in 1 Samuel 17:37, Jefferson Davis, who would soon become the President of the Confederate States, said in January 1861:

> We but tread in the paths of our fathers when we proclaim our independence and take the hazard, not in hostility to others… but from the high and solemn motive of defending and protecting the

[32] The contribution of religious discourse, particularly millenarian rhetoric, to the cause of Independence is discussed by Jonathan Clark, "The American Revolution: A War of Religion?", *History Today* 39 (December 1989). Clark shows how opposition to the tyranny of the papal "Antichrist"—opposition which had been for generations such an important part of Puritanism in both Britain and America—quite readily evolved into the Colonists' belief that opposition to British tyranny was also a godly cause. Desmond Bowen emphasizes the contribution of Ulster Protestant emigrants (mainly Presbyterians) to the revolutionary cause: "The conviction that their new-found liberty in both religious and political affairs was a gift of God increased greatly during the revolutionary war years, and there developed in popular American Protestantism belief in a kind of secular version of 'election'." See D. Bowen, *History and the Shaping of Irish Protestantism* (New York: Peter Lang, 1995), 473.

> rights we inherited, and which it is our duty to transmit unshorn to our children… We will invoke the God of our fathers, who delivered them from the power of the lion [i.e. Britain in the 1770s], to protect us from the ravages of the bear [i.e. the Federal government in the 1860s]; and thus, putting our trust in God and in our own firm hearts and strong arms, we will vindicate the right as best we may.[33]

Some Southern Christians argued that in its Constitution the Confederacy should commit itself specifically to the cause of Christ; in other words, that the Confederacy should be officially proclaimed a "Christian society". Others, however, felt that this would undermine the fundamental principle of separation of Church and State.

As the discussion so far has indicated, the emerging North-South conflict involved many appeals to, and conflicting interpretations of, the Bible. Mark Noll emphasizes "the immense, and immensely complicated, role of biblical authority in creating the two Christian nationalisms that in 1861 fell on each other with a holy vengeance".[34] America, especially in the period between the Revolution and the Civil War, was very much a Bible-reading and Bible-believing nation. Unfortunately, Christians in both North and South read the Bible with a hermeneutic shaped by their particular culture, and they therefore came to very different conclusions about the Bible's teaching on such issues as slavery, freedom and nationhood. In another work Noll comments:

> American national culture had been built in substantial part by voluntary and democratic appropriation of Scripture. Yet if by following such an approach to the Bible there resulted an unbridgeable chasm of opinion about what Scripture actually taught, there were no resources within democratic or voluntary procedures to

[33] Quoted in Shelby Foote, *The American Civil War—A Narrative*, volume 1 (London: Bodley Head, 1991), 5.
[34] Noll, *America's God*, 371.

> resolve the public division of opinion that was created by voluntary and democratic interpretation of the Bible. The Book that made the nation was destroying the nation; the nation that had taken to the Book was rescued not by the Book but by the force of arms.[35]

Conflicts within the Churches

Concerning slavery Sydney Ahlstrom says: "Few subjects, if any, are so fundamental to American religious history".[36] The Civil War of the 1860s was preceded by a series of "civil wars" within the main Churches over this issue. Indeed, the influence of religion in America was such that the divisions within the various denominations contributed greatly to the polarisation of views and attitudes in the nation as a whole. Ahlstrom stresses the role of the Churches in the hardening of attitudes which preceded the War: "They provided the traditional recourse and appeal to the Absolute. They gave moral grandeur to the antislavery cause and divine justification for slavery".[37] Similarly Steven Woodworth writes:

> The rending of the nation's three largest religious denominations along North-South lines was a first harbinger that the issues dividing Americans were becoming more important than those that bound them together.[38]

Likewise Charles Reagan Wilson:

[35] Mark Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 8. Noll also says: "The country had a problem because its most trusted religious authority, the Bible, was sounding an uncertain note" (page 50). Later he sardonically comments: "As things worked out, military coercion determined that, at least for the purposes of American public policy, the Bible did not support slavery" (page 160).
[36] Ahlstrom, 649.
[37] Ahlstrom, 668.
[38] Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On. The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2001), 21.

> The church schisms unleashed angers, fears, and even violence, which further divided the nation's religious people and set the tone for eventual political division.[39]

Presbyterians

American Presbyterianism had long been troubled by divisions between "Old School" and "New School". The Old School emphasized the Church's traditional polity and took very seriously the Reformed principle that matters of Church order were part of divine law (*jus divinum*). They were opposed to anything which they saw as a loosening of Church structures, and hence, for example, they were suspicious of the "Great Awakening" of the eighteenth century and also of the revivalism which was so prominent in the years after 1800. They were concerned too for the preservation of sound doctrine and they were quick to condemn any deviation from the standards of the Westminster Confession and Catechisms. After 1800 the influence of Congregationalism began to create within Presbyterianism a "New School". This was at first a rather unorganized movement which valued the work of the interdenominational societies. "New School" men were prepared to work with believers from other Churches and they saw the value of such joint efforts in areas of the country, for example on the Frontier, where Christian influence was lacking. Furthermore, they wanted "a religious faith more obviously consonant with the Enlightenment ideals that had been woven into the nation's democratic faith"[40], and hence they moved away from traditional Calvinism. In 1837-8 a split occurred which, Ahlstrom says, "can probably be regarded as the first great ecclesiastical South-North separation"[41], although the break did not constitute a neat North-South division. The split was not primarily over the

[39] "Religion and the American Civil War in Comparative Perspective", in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. R. M. Miller, H. S. Stout, C. R. Wilson, 395.

[40] Ahlstrom, 466.

[41] Ahlstrom, 660.

issue of slavery, but to a certain extent the conflict over slavery did contribute to divisions within Presbyterianism. The Old School had a large and influential following in the South, where it had about a third of its membership, whereas the New School had a very small Southern constituency and its main numerical strength was in Northern "abolitionist" areas. Furthermore, the cause of abolition was a natural companion to the New School's inclination towards Enlightenment ideals. In 1850 the New School General Assembly formally rejected the view that slavery was a divinely sanctioned institution, but it was not until 1857 that the few New School presbyteries in the South withdrew to form a separate body.

In 1861 the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America (commonly known as the "Southern Presbyterian Church") came into being. After the war it was reconstituted as the "Presbyterian Church in the United States" (PCUS), when it was joined by a number of congregations which had existed outside the main Southern body. The Northern Presbyterians mostly belonged to what was officially known as the "Presbyterian Church in the United States of America" (PCUSA). The reunion of these two main bodies was only achieved in the 1980s.

Methodists

Methodists were "the most numerous religious movement in America from the Revolution to the Civil War."[42] John Wesley had never devoted much actual time to the anti-slavery cause, or indeed to any other social campaign. He expressed his opposition to slavery in his *Thoughts on Slavery* of 1774 and in his famous extant last letter, written in February 1791 (a few days before his death), in which he encouraged William Wilberforce in his mission to end the slave trade, "the vilest under the sun".[43]

[42] Mark Noll, *America's God*, 5. See also the discussion of the remarkable expansion of American Methodism on 168ff.

[43] Quoted in Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast. John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (London: Epworth Press, 1989), 362.

However, while many Methodists agreed with Wesley, within American Methodism there was also a large number of slave-owners, and indeed slave-owning ministers. In essence American Methodists for a long time agreed to differ: "The [Methodist] church's unity depended on the strict enforcement of silence or neutrality on the slavery question, and for half a century this proved to be possible".[44] The issue remained a matter of local option. However, during the 1840s the divisions became splits. At first the anti-slavery Methodists began to form separate bodies, organizing the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Michigan (1841) and the Wesleyan Methodist Connection in New York (1842-43). Within the parent body, the Methodist Episcopal Church, tensions were brought to a head in 1844-45, when the Southern churches separated to form the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

Baptists

Baptists did not have the kind of centralized structures seen in Presbyterianism and Methodism, and so the concept of a "split" means something rather different in a Baptist context. The chief national agency was really the General Convention for Foreign Missions, founded in 1814 to support the work of Adoniram Judson and other missionaries.[45] For a long time the missions board avoided the slavery issue. However, there were tensions among Baptists just as there were in other denominations. In 1840 abolitionists formed the American Baptist Antislavery Convention, and, as an expression of the opposite view, in 1845 the Southern Baptist Convention came into being.

The Southern Baptist Convention was thus a direct product of tensions over the slavery issue in the antebellum period. Sydney Ahlstrom writes:

[44] Ahlstrom, 661.

[45] It was also known as the Triennial Convention, because of its practice of holding national meetings every three years.

> The Southern Convention was a new departure for American Baptists. It was frankly denominational in spirit and scope, designed by men who did not hesitate to speak of the Baptist "Church" (in the singular). It could undertake multiple tasks and organize appropriate boards as it saw fit. In this very important sense it objectified what had long been latent in the Southern Baptist tradition—what its historians have referred to as a "centralizing ecclesiology". But one cannot discount the long-term basis for hierarchical and authoritarian modes of social organization which were engendered both by slavery and by the major intellectual defenses of it.[46]

The Southern Baptist identity became, like slavery, an integral part of the Southern culture. Leonard quotes Martin Marty's comment that the Convention became "the Catholic Church of the South",[47] and Nancy Ammerman says that it became "the establishment faith of the South".[48] The quintessential Southerner was Baptist (or at least Protestant), white and pro-slavery.

Other Bodies

There were of course many other Christian denominations in the United States, the most important being the Lutheran, the Episcopal, and the Roman Catholic Churches. While there were within these Churches differences of opinion over slavery and the war, such differences did not result in splits. Lutheranism lacked an overall national body, and each territorial or ethnic

[46] Ahlstrom, 664f. Leonard describes the Southern Baptist Convention as "one of the most elaborate systems of denominational connectionalism evident among the people called Baptists". See D. Bebbington (ed.), *The Gospel in the World. International Baptist Studies* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press: 2002), 315.

[47] Bebbington, 316.

[48] ibid., 340. Ammerman suggests that, in becoming the "establishment", Southern Baptists were inclined to forget their Baptist heritage. They tended to show towards those who did not "conform" the same kind of intolerance which Baptists had suffered, and against which they had protested, throughout their history as a Baptist movement.

synod tended to come to terms with controversial issues in its own way. The leadership of the Episcopal and the Roman Catholic Churches adopted a generally passive approach and avoided taking any official position for or against slavery. Individual dioceses adapted themselves to local conditions. Members of these Churches, including the clergy, were of course involved in the conflict in various ways. One of the Episcopal Church's Southern bishops, Leonidas Polk, became a general in the Confederate Army. Father Abram Ryan was a young Catholic priest who served the Confederacy as a chaplain and after the war edited a fiercely pro-Southern newspaper, *Banner of the South*.[49] Randall Miller gives a figure of "roughly 145.000 Irish Catholics" serving in the Northern army,[50] while many fought and died for the South.

Christians during the Conflict

"The conviction that God was on one's own side provided the certainty that drove northerners and southerners apart".[51] It also strengthened their resolve to fight. Sydney Ahlstrom has an interesting comment on the effects of the conviction, common to men on both sides, that they were involved in a divinely-sanctioned crusade:

> More cynical commanders and more despairing men might have been less sure that the Almighty was with them and that victory must surely come. They might have felt a stronger impulse to compromise. Perhaps piety lengthened the war.[52]

Nothing sums up Northern evangelical sentiment over the war better than Julia Ward Howe's poem (which evolved into the

[49] C. R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood. The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 58ff.
[50] "Catholic Religion, Irish Ethnicity, and the Civil War" in *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. R. M. Miller, H. S. Stout, C. R. Wilson, 261.
[51] ibid., "Introduction", 11.
[52] Ahlstrom, 677.

"Battle Hymn of the Republic"), written just after she had visited a Union Army camp during the war's early stages. (Howe was in fact a Unitarian, but this is not particularly evident in her famous hymn.) A sense of the unfolding of a divine drama, and not just a human one, is evident in the first lines and the refrain:

> Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the Lord;
> He is trampling out the vintage where the grapes of wrath are stored;
> He has loosed the fateful lightning of his terrible swift sword;
> His truth is marching on.
> Glory, glory, Hallelujah!… [53]

The war was seen almost as an extension of the saving work of Christ (who was portrayed as the soldiers' model):

> As He died to make men holy, let us die[54] to make men free!

Similar sentiments were expressed by those fighting for the Confederacy. During the decades preceding the Civil War, "the world of southern evangelicals converged with that of southern masters… Primed by decades of proving themselves men of honor in recognizably southern ways, Baptists and Methodists rose readily to defend slavery in the 1830s, secession in the 1850s, and the holy cause of upholding both with force of arms in 1861".[55] The same can be said of the more "socially acceptable" denominations, namely, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians. Southerners generally believed themselves to be citi-

[53] Howe appears to have originally written a poem which was made into a hymn by the use of the tune of "John Brown's body" and the addition of the chorus, "Glory, glory…".
[54] Some versions read, "let us *live*…", which was more appropriate once the war was over!
[55] Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross. The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 248f.

zens of a godly nation, an "Israel"—in contrast to the godless, heathen North—and they were convinced that God would not abandon them.[56] They were, after all, fighting to preserve the divinely ordained pattern of human society in which the descendants of Ham served the descendants of his brothers, a pattern in which the white races fulfil their God-given task of civilizing and protecting the black. The Confederate victories in the campaigns of 1861-62 were seen as evident tokens of divine blessing. In 1863, while victory for the South was still a possibility, a Southern Baptist Convention resolution acknowledged "the hand of God in the preservation of our victories with which he has crowned our arms".[57]

Leonidas Polk, the Episcopal Church's Bishop of Louisiana, saw nothing incongruous in taking up arms for the Southern cause, and he became one of the South's most distinguished army commanders.[58] Polk was killed in action during the war's final year. Commenting on Polk, Shelby Foote writes: "Northerners might express outrage that a man of the cloth… should take up the sword of rebellion; Southerners took his action as strong evidence that the Lord was on their side, and they on His".[59] Another Southern Churchman, Stephen Elliott, declared: "We are fighting to drive away from our sanctuaries the

[56] It is interesting that the Articles of Secession were drafted on the communion table of the First Baptist Church in Columbia, SC, to which the secession convention had moved for want of a space large enough to accommodate the "Rebels".

[57] Quoted in B. J. Leonard, *Baptist Ways. A History* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2003), 198.

[58] Sarah Dorsey, a wealthy Louisiana plantation mistress, presented Polk with a battle flag which depicted the *Labarum*, the Cross of Constantine. She also wrote in a letter to Polk: "We are fighting the Battle of the Cross against the Modern Barbarians who would rob a Christian people of Country, Liberty, and Life". See *Religion and the American Civil War*, ed. R. M. Miller, H. S. Stout, C. R. Wilson, 103.

[59] *The American Civil War—A Narrative*, volume 3 (London: Bodley Head, 1991), 357. Polk was the subject of a biography (indeed hagiography!) written by his son, William M. Polk, published in 1893.

infidel and rationalistic principles which are sweeping over the land and substituting a gospel of the stars and stripes for the gospel of Jesus Christ".[60] Other prominent Southern Christians included General Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson and the man who was to assume overall command of the Army of Northern Virginia, General Robert E. Lee.[61]

In the early stages of the war Southern Christians had no difficulty in ascribing their armies' victories to the hand of God. Matters became more difficult when the war started to go badly for the Confederacy. What was to be seen as one of the South's greatest calamities occurred in May 1863, when Stonewall Jackson died of his wounds. His death was felt as a major blow, and Southern Christians interpreted it as divine judgment, not on Jackson himself but on the sins of the South—not least their sin in idolizing Jackson and "trusting in man rather than God".[62] The series of reverses which beset Southern arms from mid-1863 onwards was interpreted as a time of testing for the South, a time when God was purifying his people and challenging them to mend their ways. Confidence that God would eventually vindicate his people (or at least strident expressions of such confidence) lasted almost to the very end of the conflict.

[60] Quoted in Handy, *A History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, 266

[61] Their stories are told in R. L. Dabney, *Life and Campaigns of General T. J. Jackson*; and J. W. Jones, *Life and Letters of General Robert E. Lee*. Both books are written as Christian biographies and emphasize their subjects' spiritual lives. A little-known figure at the time of the war itself, Cyrus Ingerson Scofield (1843-1921) served in the Tennessee infantry and later in life became famous as a preacher, writer, and advocate of dispensational premillennialism.

[62] What was particularly tragic from the Southern point of view was that Jackson died of wounds inflicted accidentally by his own men, and this happened just after a major Southern victory at the battle of Chancellorsville. Southern Christians felt that God was clearly saying something to them through both the manner and the timing of Jackson's death. Southerners likened Jackson to Oliver Cromwell and saw their army as the rightful heir to Cromwell's Bible-reading army.

In addition to "holy war" rhetoric there was a good deal of religious activity during the conflict. The Churches organized chaplaincy work, in which chaplains did much more than preach to the soldiers. For example, they often ministered to the sick and the wounded. The Churches also arranged collections to provide for the material needs of the fighting men and of their families. In the North particular attention was given to the needs of the increasing numbers of freed slaves.

A great deal of missionary and evangelistic activity was conducted in both armies. The young D. L. Moody and his wife were among those who served as missionaries (in their case, to the Union Army). After the war, Southern writers made much of the religious revivals which affected many soldiers in the Confederate Army, trying to make the point that the Southern soldier was much more inclined to godliness than his Northern counterpart. However, the evidence indicates that the two armies were affected by revivalism on more or less the same scale, although the Southern revivals became much more famous. Camp revival meetings, which had long been a part of the Frontier scene, were a major feature of army life. As well as the words of the preachers the threat of imminent death in battle contributed to many conversions, or at least professions of faith—what happened to some of these conversions once the fighting was over is another matter. The Churches also organized the distribution of large quantities of religious literature. Soldiers in both armies were given pocket New Testaments. Union soldiers had a copy printed by the American Bible Society and distributed by the New York Bible Society; Southern soldiers had one printed and distributed by the Confederate States Bible Society.[63]

[63] "Bible smuggling" took place on a significant scale, as many copies were published in the North but distributed in the South, despite a ban on trade, and some were smuggled in from England into the South despite the Union blockade of Southern ports.

The Aftermath

The war was viewed in retrospect in the same kinds of religious categories as were evident before and during the conflict. Northerners felt that God's cause had triumphed, although many of them also emphasized that God had allowed the North to undergo terrible trials in the war because the Northerners too were guilty of sin—they had, after all, been part of a nation which had tolerated slavery for so long. The assassination of President Lincoln at the end of the war was seen as another divine punishment on the entire nation, North and South. The distinguished theologian Horace Bushnell, a New England Congregationalist, stressed the necessity of seeing the war as an act of God's judgment on the nation as a whole, a war in which the whole nation was purging itself of the corporate sin of slavery, and thus bringing about unity and reconciliation. "He dared to think that the war could be good in some way akin to the way in which Good Friday was good."[64] Philip Schaff, the Church Historian, likewise "saw the possibility of a new and redeemed sense of nationhood rising out of the death and carnage. Reflecting his Hegelian heritage, however, he interpreted the war in a larger sense as having readied America for its great role in the cause of human freedom".[65]

"What freedmen [former slaves] experienced as a crossing of the Red Sea, their former masters experienced as the Babylonian captivity, replete with bitter tears and much gnashing of teeth."[66] Southerners continued to feel that their nation—a quasi-mystical body known as "the Southland"—was a godly and pious one and that the war had been caused by godless

[64] Ahlstrom, 686. Bushnell (1802-76) was a pastor in Connecticut for twenty-five years until ill health forced him to retire in 1859. Well known as a theological writer, his view of Christ's death as an example was particularly controversial.

[65] ibid. Schaff (1819-93) was originally from Switzerland but spent many years teaching at the German Reformed Church's seminary in Mercersburg, Pennsylvania, and later at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

[66] Elizabeth Fox-Genevese and Eugene D. Genovese, 718.

men in the North, but some were in a state of confusion over why God had allowed the godless to triumph. John Bailey Adger, a leading representative of Southern Presbyterianism, argued in the *Southern Presbyterian Review* that Christians in the South were not wrong to believe "honestly and earnestly in the justice of the Southern cause"; rather, "the error of some was in allowing themselves to receive the popular idea… that God must surely bless the right", while forgetting that God in his wisdom often permits suffering and sometimes allows "the righteous to be overthrown".[67] In sermons and religious periodicals the Book of Job, with its theme of the "righteous sufferer", was pressed into service, as were Hebrews 12:6-7, which assured Southerners that the Lord chastens those whom he loves, and Romans 8:28, which assured them that all things would work together for good. While accepting the Confederate defeat as final, many comforted themselves with the thought that God would allow Confederate principles to succeed, perhaps in another form and another time. Inevitably many saw a parallel between the death of the Confederacy and the death of Christ—in both cases evil had apparently triumphed, but eventually God's cause would be vindicated. The defeat was a form of discipline by God, a way of preparing the Southerners for a bright future. Some concluded that God had permitted the South's defeat not because slavery was wrong but because Southerners had failed to evangelize the slaves adequately. Others emphasized a different type of sin. The high prices caused by wartime economic conditions in the South led to accusations of widespread speculation and extortion. One historian comments:

> If the South was plagued by guilt during the war, and if we take Southerners' own written testimony about its source and nature, it

[67] Quoted in Noll, *America's God*, 434. Adger (1810-99) had a long and distinguished career, serving for some twelve years as a missionary in Constantinople before being appointed to the faculty of Columbia Seminary in South Carolina. He edited the *Southern Presbyterian Review* from 1857 to 1885.

> was not guilt over the sin of slavery but rather guilt for imagined economic sins.[68]

The South may have lost the war, and slavery may have been declared illegal throughout the united nation[69], but the old slave-owning mentality persisted. Leonard writes:

> In the search for ways to cope with defeat, Southern Baptists and other Southern Protestants looked to "the religion of the Lost Cause"—the idealization of the South's culture and religion. Defeated politically, the South turned to the cultural superiority of its mythic past.[70]

Leonard quotes another authority, Charles Reagan Wilson, who writes that Protestant ministers

> used the Lost Cause to warn Southerners of their decline from past virtue, to promote moral reform, to encourage conversion to Christianity, and to educate the young in Southern traditions; in the fullness of time, they related it to American values.[71]

Thus the military and political defeat of the Confederacy was, in Southern thinking, more than offset by its spiritual victory. The "Lost Cause" ideology stimulated—and was stimulated by—the belief that the Southern armies had been the "most Christian" armies ever seen in history.[72] At Civil War reunions

[68] Steven E. Woodworth, *While God is Marching On. The Religious World of Civil War Soldiers*, 274f.
[69] In 1865 the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was passed, formally abolishing slavery.
[70] *Baptist Ways. A History*, 204.
[71] ibid. quoting from C. R. Wilson, *Baptized in Blood. The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1980), 11.
[72] This belief was expressed in two highly influential works in particular: William W. Bennett, *A Narrative of the Great Revival Which Prevailed in the Southern Armies* (1876), and J. William Jones, *Christ in the Camp; or, Religion in the Confederate Army* (1887).

and commemorations in the South the Confederate dead were regularly honoured as "martyrs" who had given their lives in a righteous cause. Chief among these martyrs was Stonewall Jackson, who was seen as embodying all that was best in Southern Christian manhood.

The Ku Klux Klan was founded in Tennessee in December 1865, and in its official charge to new recruits, issued in 1867, it stated:

> Our main and fundamental objective is the maintenance of the supremacy of the white race in this Republic. History and physiology teach us that we belong to a race which nature has endowed with an evident superiority over all other races, and that the Maker, in thus elevating us above the common standard of human creation, has intended to give us over inferior races a dominion from which no human laws can permanently derogate.[73]

Although by no means all Southerners approved of the methods and the extremism of the "Klan", most tended to accept that God intended the races to be segregated and that this applied to Church life as much as anything. The South after the war went its religious way, and the chief new ecclesiastical development of the postbellum era was the rise of independent Negro churches. The issue of slavery may have been relegated to the past, but American Christians, particularly in the South, were still having to grapple with the issue of white-black relationships. In the course of the century following the end of the Civil War we can see significant continuities between pro-slavery and pro-segregation arguments. Biblical texts once used

[73] Quoted in Hugh Brogan, *Longman History of the United States of America*, 356. The name of the "clan" contains a strange adaptation of the Greek word *kuklos*, "circle". This violently racist (and anti-Republican) movement went into decline after a few years but was revived around 1916. One factor in its revival was the making of D. W. Griffith's film, *Birth of a Nation*, in 1915. Based on Thomas Dixon's 1905 novel, *The Clansman*, Griffith's film presented an extremely pro-Southern and racist version of the Civil War and its aftermath, and an idealised image of the Ku Klux Klan.

in support of slavery were recycled as Biblical arguments in favour of racial segregation in both Church and society[74]—and evangelicals continued to be divided.

[74] Furthermore, additional "Biblical" arguments were developed by Christian segregationists. Texts which did not have any obvious reference to slavery could nevertheless be made to support segregation. Haynes quotes the example of Carey Daniel, a Baptist preacher who in the 1960s published a sermon entitled "God the Original Segregationist" and who argued that segregation was part of the divine order built into creation—in Genesis 1 we read that God made everything "after its own kind" (*Noah's Curse. The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, 86, 264). Other passages which have figured prominently in American (and South African) racial discourse are Deuteronomy 32:8 and Acts 17:26.

God's Transforming Presence. Spirit Empowered Worship and Its Mediation

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ABSTRACT. While Evangelicals tend to have some sort of traditionally inborn repulsion for sacramentality, they nevertheless seem to long for something more than just the routine performance of sacraments in their churches. This article investigates what lies beneath the Evangelical conviction that sacraments should be exclusively memorial in nature as well as defined by what they are rather than by what they mean. It is argued therefore that Evangelicals should seek the meaning of sacraments beyond their traditional theological limitations into a spiritual reality which does not refrain itself to the ordinance itself. On the contrary, sacraments should be understood as a reality which does not only revive our memory of past events but also places us in the very midst of our own present situation through the confession of sin and the actual encounter with the Holy Trinity.

KEW WORDS: sacraments, Baptist, Lord's Supper, memorialism, church

Introduction

"Christians," my uncle Al used to say, "do not go in for show," referring to the Catholics.[1] We were sanctified by the blood of the Lord, therefore we were saints, like St Francis, but we didn't go in for feasts or ceremonies, involving animals or not. We went in for sitting, all nineteen of us in Uncle Al's and Aunt Flo's living room on Sunday morning and having a plain meet-

[1] This article is a chapter in Andrew Walker and Luke Bretherton (eds), *Remembering Our Future. Exlorations in Deep Church* (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2007), 150-169; published by permission.

ing and singing hymns in our poor thin voices while not far away the Catholics were whooping it up.[2]

As a card-carrying evangelical, and charismatic to boot, I have to confess that there have been a few times when I have felt exactly like the narrator in Garrison Keillor's classic novel *Lake Wobegon Days*: sitting bored in my ever so plain, ever so dull meeting house, wishing I was next door whooping it up with the Catholics in the high mass. And I have felt guilty about that. After all, the doctrine of transubstantiation is not one I subscribe to; furthermore, you could hardly accuse charismatic churches of singing in "poor thin voices". So what provokes this feeling of jealousy?

I think part of the jealousy is to do with a strange irony—pointed out by Kathleen Norris—that one can attend an average Catholic service and hear a gospel, an epistle, a psalm and an Old Testament reading, whereas go to an average Protestant service and one would be hard pressed to hear any Scripture at all, save the reading before the sermon; and this in a churchmanship that claims to be built on *sola scriptura*;[3] hence, the growing attraction of *lectio divina* among contemporary charismatics, eager to be reconnected to the narrative world of Scripture.[4] The main source of my jealousy, however, is rooted in a profound sadness that somewhere along the line we who have been committed to charismatic renewal in the evangelical church have handed over not just the Scriptures, which is indeed ironic, but an instinct for the whole of the classical tradition as contained in the rites and practices of the church, and thereby have lessened, I shall argue, not increased the possibility of spiritual transformation.

[2] Garrison Keillor, *Lake Wobegon Days* (London: Faber and Faber, 1987), 103.

[3] Kathleen Norris, *Amazing Grace. A Vocabulary of Faith* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1998), 189–190.

[4] Examples abound of books seeking to introduce readers to the Benedictine practice of *lectio divina*. For a recent example see David Foster, *Reading with God. Lectio Divina* (London: Continuum, 2005). See also the essay by Ben Quash in this volume.

This is not a recent development. The diminution of sacramentality in contemporary Christianity is as old as the Reformation. Moreover, as Protestantism combined with the Enlightenment, the rupture between material practices and spiritual grace further increased, with the result that Protestants have tended to regard the sacraments as "moralistic reminders of the past work of Christ rather than offering any kind of direct encounter with him today".[5] Indeed, charismatic renewal is a particularly "Schleiermachian" take on that Enlightenment project, expressing itself in a highly subjective faith that has little time for the somewhat tedious and awkward practices of the institutional church and her ministers. In the process, therefore, we have left ourselves with a peculiarly anaemic liturgy that when it is good is very, very good, but when it is bad, is awful.

One could make the same criticism, of course, of fixed or text based forms of liturgical worship. I have been to a fair few intentionally liturgical services and found myself drifting. Though I have hankered at times for the cathedral, and have spent more time than I care to admit wandering around monasteries, it is not long before I miss the energy of a good charismatic praise time. Thus, it seems that those of us who feel these things keenly are consigned to a lifetime of spiritual double-mindedness, oscillating between the two poles of high and low church, but never able to enjoy them together: a high sacramentalism that has a tendency to hierarchical tyranny, with everything mediated through the church, and a free-flowing, energetic non-liturgy, or so it is claimed, that has a tendency to individualism. Moreover, it is not as if the deep church vision is claiming to provide the long-awaited synthesis in some form of blended worship;[6] that would be to confuse what we are trying to do with a particular worship style. What deep church ought

[5] John Drane, "Contemporary Culture and the Reinvention of Sacramental Spirtuality", in G. Rowell and C. Hall (eds), *The Gestures of God. Explorations in Sacramentality* (London: Continuum, 2004), 50.

[6] Robert E. Webber, *Blended Worship. Achieving Substance and Relevance in Worship* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994).

to provoke, however, precisely because it is seeking to reappropriate the canonical basis of the church's faith,[7] is an examination of where our various traditions have, for one reason or another, unhinged themselves from churchly resources that, however we might want to present them stylistically, are indispensable for the journey of faith.[8]

There are no surprises, of course, as to what those resources might include: the word of God, baptism, communion, the laying on of hands and prayer, to name but a few. And what follows is an attempt by one Christian pastor, who remains thoroughly committed to working these things out congregationally as well as academically, to examine the idiosyncrasies of his own charismatic, evangelical tradition and bring to it not so much the riches of a more catholic spirituality, but the inherent power of the given means of grace. For the practices of the church, as they are increasingly called, are not poor substitutes, as I hope to show, for a spiritual power that lies elsewhere. Nor are they something to be merely talked about in the academy. After all, liturgy is something to be performed, not written about.[9] Rather, the practices of the church, be they Eucharistic or kerygmatic—the table or the pulpit—contain in and of themselves the transforming power that is needed for a church pondering the challenges of mission in a postmodern world.

The Sacrament of Worship

Perhaps the most obvious place to start, therefore, in terms of imagining charismatic renewal in dialogue with the concerns of deep church, is with worship, for it is in worship that all the tensions previously noted between form and freedom are seen fully at work. The epitome of worship within charismatic Chris-

[7] See Andrew Walker, Foreword, in William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Renewal* (London: SPCK, 2003).

[8] Brett Webb-Mitchell, *Christly Gestures. Learning to be Members of the Body of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003).

[9] Gordon W. Lathrop, *Holy Things. A Liturgical Theology* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1998), 5.

tianity is to be in a place of corporate singing where the power of the Holy Spirit is so tangible that there is no sermon, no communion, no readings, but simply people prostrate in the presence of the Lord. Indeed, whole tracts of recent revivalist literature endorse this ideal, where, finally, because of the presence of the Spirit, we can do away with the sacramental apparatus of the church altogether. Who needs the encumbrance of a sermon, or a communion table, when you have the immediate presence of God? Or so the argument runs. This instinct is so deep among certain charismatics that the moment, for one reason or another, a sermon is not preached, or communion has to give way to worship, by which we mean singing songs of praise and worship, the general view is that the Spirit must have really moved. Thus, the pastor is asked from time to time if, just for one Sunday at least, we could have "just worship".

To be fair, the request for "just worship" is an innocent one, theologically speaking, arising, it must be said, from a deep and genuine desire to meet with God in the experience of praise and worship. Those outside the charismatic tradition, who have made a habit of taking side-swipes at the superficiality of "happy-clappy" churches, are actually not well placed to understand the depth of feeling, as well as genuine piety, which is contained within such a request. To be sure, there are times when "just worship", meaning uninterrupted singing, might be appropriate. But at another level, to concede to such a request is to call into question the rest of what we do—those awkward things we do Sunday by Sunday, in word, sacrament and prayer—and disturb, moreover, the traditional and biblical relationship between the Spirit and the sacrament. For the Spirit is not simply the irrational side of God; nor a synonym for the immediate presence of God; nor an excuse for a particular worship style. It is simply a mistake to regard the Spirit in this way. Rather, the Spirit is as transcendent as the Father and the Son, and works through the given means of the church—preaching, communion, prayer, the laying on of hands, etc.—in order to

accomplish his purpose.[10] Nevertheless, there remains a popular perception that openness to the Spirit means a commitment to a specifically loose form of worship, and euphemistic for a spirituality of perpetual surprises.

At one level it is understandable how we have arrived at this situation. What is the charismatic renewal movement itself, if not an existential reaction to sacramental and liturgical formalism, leaving in its wake a legacy of suspicion towards the practices of the church that is as deep today as it has ever been. Despite recent attempts to forge a marriage between liturgy and freedom in the Spirit,[11] such a relationship is still something of an oxymoron for many charismatics: to be free in the Spirit is, by definition, to be unrestrained by ecclesiastical formulations. In fact, we might want to express some sympathy with this instinct, for there is indeed a kind of sacramental fastidiousness that is threatening of vital, experiential Christianity. And in so far as this was the problem in mainstream denominationalism in the late sixties, it is difficult to imagine how charismatics could have avoided the kind of dichotomous relationship that now exists between sacraments and the Spirit. Rather similar to the way the doctrine of second blessing developed among Pentecostals, as a way of explaining their own experience, charismatics have also read back into the Scriptures their own experience, and made every reference to liturgy synonymous with dead institutional traditionalism.[12] Sadly, however, thirty years on, many are unprepared to rethink this justifiable reaction, to the extent that there is every chance the opposite problem now exists—a concern that underlies this essay—namely, that a

[10] See Colin E. Gunton, *The Transcendent Lord. The Spirit and the Church in Calvinist and Cappadocian* (London: Congregational and Memorial Trust, 1988).

[11] E.g. John Leach, *Living Liturgy. A Practical Guide to Using Liturgy in Spirit-Led Worship* (Eastbourne: Kingsway, 1997).

[12] Gordon D. Fee, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: The Issue of Separability and Subsequence", in *Gospel and Spirit. Issues in New Testament Hermeneutics* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1991), 107.

Spirit movement too long detached from the given means of grace will simply engender its own brand of legalism, driven by the need for ever more, and ever new, immediate experiences of the Spirit.[13] The reason for this is quite obvious, even if the theological argument is quite complex: simply, that any spirituality of immediacy, of the kind fostered in the renewal movement, without any notion of mediation through the word and sacrament, will end up collapsing into a form of Gnosticism—the very worst kind of legalism—in which holiness can only be achieved through the experience of worship itself, rather than by receiving the given means of grace of the church.[14] This is defended by those in the worship culture by appeal to a pretty powerful argument: namely, that what one is pursuing in what might be termed extravagant worship is radical Christianity, similar to the enthusiasm and primitivism seen in the very earliest chapters of the church. And they have a point. Nevertheless, it remains guilty of perpetuating the myth of charismatic supernaturalism as a foil to the dead formalism of sacramental worship, where, by way of negative contrast, the only demand being placed on the worshipper is simply that of turning up.

As long as this polarisation of enthusiasm and institutionalism persists, and as long as the "lowly yet efficient act"[15] of simply being there in the presence of the sacraments is despised as a sign of spiritual atrophy, it is difficult to envisage how the renewal might avoid some form of cultish behavior.[16] Of course, for those who have inhabited the radical wing of the

[13] Oliver O'Donovan, *Resurrection and Moral Order. An Outline for Evangelical Ethics* (Leicester: Apollos, 1986), 24.

[14] On the susceptibility of Protestantism to Gnostic tendencies see Philip J. Lee, *Against the Protestant Gnostics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

[15] The phrase comes from Anglo-Catholic writer Martin Thornton, *Christian Proficiency* (London: SPCK, 1956), 20.

[16] See John Finney, *Fading Splendour. A Model of Renewal* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000) for a fuller development of this thesis. Finney argues convincingly that unless the radical renewal re-engages with certain aspects of the institutional church, history has shown that it will end up in some form of cultish worship.

church, the "lowly yet efficient act" of being there sounds hopelessly compromised and unnecessarily fixed. The detachment of personal enthusiasm from the act of worship is precisely what charismatic renewal was designed to combat: sacramental deadness of the worst kind. But our point is that unmediated immediacy of the kind found within charismatic singing, meaning music, which in reality is often the only means of grace available within the charismatic worship, presents its own conundrums. For as well as providing huge amounts of energy and space with which to express genuine and heart-felt worship to God, it also has the capacity to foster its own brand of predictability as we move from one song to the next in search of the existential moment. As with all these things, its point of strength becomes its source of weakness. Bereft of the givenness of the tradition, contemporary worship, if we are not careful, degenerates into a non-Trinitarian Pelagianism as worshippers seek to access the divine either through the repetitiveness of the lyrics, or the rhythm of the beat—what one writer terms "reinvented Baalism".[17]

Is this too harsh a description of what is happening in the non-sacramental part of the body of Christ? Of course it is. For what is worship without a sense of the immediate, without the dimension of personal faith and zealous enthusiasm? And what charismatic renewal has brought, largely through its songs, is a much needed riposte to the woeful lack of expectation of those gathering to worship. But unless charismatic renewal is now followed by sacramental renewal, in which music itself is placed within a wider pastoral framework, then all we can predict, as Pannenberg warns us in his own pietistic context, is a descent into a peculiarly unchristian anxiety, for whatever else the sacraments do, they bind us to the revelation of God in Christ, thus relieving us of the burden of constantly having to

[17] Eugene H. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids, MI/Leominster: Eerdmans/Gracewing, 1992), 184–185.

prove our worth.[18] In so far as sacraments are means of grace, that effect grace, and not simply symbols of faith—a view we shall consistently put forward below—they ensure that our worship takes place within the richness of Trinitarian fellowship and not without.

Perhaps the place to start, then, by way of recovery, is to recognise that contemporary worship, to the extent that it fosters a more didactic, dare one say Trinitarian way of going about things—as opposed to its wholly experiential focus at present—has the potential to act as a mediation of the grace of God. Until recently, the trend in charismatic worship has been somewhat undermining of this concept. As unmediated immediacy, charismatic worship has been collapsing into the kind of hyper-spiritualism that accompanies a solely ecstatic view of encounter—the kind that, ironically, puts so many outsiders off because of its seeming disdain of the human and the mundane. But moves have been afoot for a number of years now to correct this imbalance by re-introducing lyrics that celebrate the substantial richness of the gospel that we presently indwell, not to the detriment of emotion, but rather as forerunner of a truly emotional response.[19] After all, it is Paul who exhorts the church to "let the word of Christ dwell in you richly".[20] Significantly, however, the medium of this indwelling word is the singing of "psalms, hymns and Spirit songs".[21] Thus, word and Spirit, in the context of contemporary worship, should not be seen as opponents, competing for the worship space, but rather as allies in forming the minds of those who draw near to sing and make music in their hearts to God. Of course, rhythm, mel-

[18] See Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Christian Spirituality and Sacramental Community* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983).
[19] Robin Parry, *Worshipping Trinity. Coming Back to the Heart of Worship* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), 1–16.
[20] Colossians 3:16.
[21] Gordon D. Fee, *God's Empowering Presence. The Holy Spirit in the Letters of Paul* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1999), 648–657.

ody and harmony are not incidental to this. They have the potential to mediate their own theological message.[22]

The challenge, however, is to bring the lyrics and the melody together so that there is no dissonance between the two, but rather a powerful and meaningful sacrament.

Whether there is a will to effect such a merging of worship and the word remains to be seen. The worship culture in modern charismatic life is such a powerful enterprise that it would require some degree of intentionality on the part of Christian leadership to bring it about. Moreover, it would require a fairly radical shift in theological perception, in order for other things in the life of the church to get a fair crack of the whip. Evangelicals have such a strong suspicion of formal worship that sacraments, almost by definition, negate the experiential, and therefore ought to be sidelined. Hence, the pitiful state of preaching, the less than rigorous rite of baptism, the ragged practice of communion, and the almost total absence of fixed prayer or corporate intercessions because all the time there is a sense that the real action is taking place other than in the sacramental life of the church. Thus, even where there is a healthy regard for preaching, for example, as might exist say among Reformed charismatics, there is often a nagging sense that if one were to be truly open to the Spirit, one would not be taking up so much time sermonising, let alone devoting oneself to the public reading of Scripture. Rather, the Scriptures would be expounded, as a concession to our evangelical heritage, and then the Spirit would be prayed for, as a sign of our charismatic newness. Or to put it another way, the sermon is preached to satisfy the rationality of our faith; worship is offered to express the immediacy of our faith.

[22] For a fuller treatment of the way music interacts with words, bringing "its own particular powers to bear"; see Jeremy Begbie, "Music, Mystery and Sacrament", in G. Rowell and C. Hall (eds), *The Gestures of God. Explorations in Sacramentality* (London: Continuum, 2004), 173–191. Begbie questions the ascription sacrament when it comes to music, but explores the sacramental possibilities of when music interacts with the word of the biblical text.

As long as this false dualism persists it is difficult to see how anything more integrated might arise. For preaching, as the *sacrament* of the word, has always claimed much more than mere rationality. Preaching, in the classical tradition, has the potential to be, in and of itself, without embellishment, and without rhetorical manipulation, a form of mediated immediacy, as the word accomplishes, in the Isaianic sense, "that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it".[23] And since the preaching of the gospel is prior even to the full expression of that gospel in the canon of Scripture, then preaching the Scriptures, and hearing the Scriptures, as opposed to merely reading the Scriptures, is perhaps the most natural thing we can do with our Bibles, and the source of endless possibilities.

The Sacrament of the Word

In that sense we are claiming for preaching something approximating to sacramentality which, though strange to those of us obsessed with communication and information, is precisely how the Reformers understood the ministry of the word. Indeed, so convinced were the Reformers of the power of preaching that as far as the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566 is concerned: *Praedicatio verbi Dei est verbum Dei*: the preaching of the word of God is the word of God.[24] In so far as the preacher is faithful to the text of Scripture and seeks to expound the word in the presence of the congregation, Christ is made present.

Admittedly, this is a lot further than many are prepared to go in their understanding of the preaching ministry of the church. Those who advocate it open themselves up at once to the quasi-magical charge levelled against the Reformers themselves, who were accused of simply transferring sacramental power from the altar to the pulpit. To which charge there is, of

[23] Isaiah 55:10–11.

[24] Quoted in Sidney Greidanus, *The Modern Preacher and the Ancient Text. Interpreting and Preaching Biblical Literature* (Grand Rapids, MI/Leicester: Eerdmans/InterVarsity Press, 1988), 9.

course, a simple rejoinder. As Hansen reminds us, the Spirit does not transfigure our words to the status of canon. Rather, God adopts our words: "He condescends, entering the congregation through the foolishness of our words, as we testify to Christ, expositing the Scriptures, speaking the words which we must believe God provides, all the while knowing how profoundly flawed even our best sermons are."[25] Thus, Hansen provides us with an important note of modesty. However, he also believes that preaching is indeed sacramental. Preaching is not, as Bonhoeffer states so well in his lectures on preaching, "a medium of expression for something else, something that lies behind it, but rather it is the Christ himself walking through his congregation as the Word".[26]

Such a vivid image of Christ walking among the congregation through the proclaimed word demands a much fuller explanation, in terms of sacramental theology, than we are able to give here. While it is traditional even in Reformed thinking about the Lord's Supper to say that not only the *signum*, the sign, but also the *res*, the thing signified, is present,[27] when it comes to preaching it is an audacious claim, and relies upon a number of presuppositions, not least the authority of Scripture itself, for it to work. But why it is so important as an image is that it takes seriously the potential of the given means of the church to actually deliver Christ to the congregation. Rather than seeking an encounter with Christ other than through the frail and often inauspicious practices of the church; or rather than seeking the meaning of the word alongside the event of preaching, as if the medium and the message were two separate

[25] D. Hansen, "Preaching Cats and Dogs", *American Baptist Evangelicals Journal* 7.3 (1999), 20.

[26] Dietrich Bonhoeffer, "Lectures on Homiletics", in Clyde Fant, *Worldly Preaching* (New York, Thomas Nelson, 1975), 101. For a fuller treatment of Bonhoeffer's theology of preaching see D. Hansen, *Christ the Sermon* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker), forthcoming.

[27] Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments* (London: Faber and Faber, 1957), 97.

things; in preaching, we are presented with the actual constraining Christ. Bonhoeffer once again: "The meaning of the proclaimed word however does not lie outside of itself; it is the thing itself. It does not transmit anything else, it does not express anything else, it has no external objectives—rather, it communicates that it is itself; the historical Jesus Christ, who bears humanity upon himself with all its sorrows and its guilt."[28] And this is no less "of the Spirit", nor any less immediate. It is a kind of mediated immediacy, if that does not sound like a contradiction in terms. In short, the church carries within the panoply of given means all that is required for her sustenance and for her mission in the world. As William Willimon states in his inimitable style, and with reference to preaching, "the holy wind at Pentecost is power unto speech".[29]

Speaking in tongues is one thing, and has its own place within the praying life of the church. There is a legitimate claim being made in Pentecostal scholarship for understanding praying in tongues also in sacramental terms.[30] But the thing that is often overlooked in charismatic circles is that the evangelical response on the day of Pentecost was elicited in the final analysis by a sermon.

Of course, it is important to state in any sacramental theology that there are no guarantees in all of this. Perhaps this is why Spirit movements, throughout the history of the church, have often felt so nervous about the sacraments, for they seem to presume an efficacy simply on the basis of a rite being performed. And where this has been the case, it has often been accompanied by some kind of priest-craft, as a healthy sacramentality crosses over into a growing sacerdotalism.[31] The means of

[28] Bonhoeffer, *Lectures on Preaching*, 103.

[29] William H. Willimon, *Proclamation and Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 25.

[30] See K. McDonnell, "The Function of Tongues in Pentecostalism", *One in Christ* 19.4 (1983), 332–354.

[31] John E. Colwell, *Promise and Presence. An Exploration of Sacramental Theology* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2005), 8. Sacerdotalism, as Colwell states, "is generally

grace, in this scenario, cease to be bearers of life, but hangovers of a dead institutionalism, acting out a theology of *ex opere operato* (literally: from the work performed). This may well explain why even Baptists have been reluctant to claim anything approximating to instrumentality, or sacramentality for baptism[32]—or why Nonconformists, in general, seem to end up with something of an apology for communion, amounting to nothing more than mere memorialism—because to claim anything beyond this is to tie up the free sovereignty of the Spirit in liturgical actions that are highly manipulative. But is this any different, we might wonder, in the peculiar rites operating within non-liturgical, non-sacramental churches, where because we claim not to inhabit a liturgy, we become unable, therefore, to subject ourselves to self-critique. As a consequence we end up, in a number of instances at least, with something just as manipulative, only this time played out in personality cults and the need to make something happen.[33] Our claim is that this is no different from the more liturgical setting; and the sadness of the divide that now exists between high church and low church traditions is that true sacramentality—one that pays respect both to the free sovereignty of the Spirit as well as the spiritual dynamic that is invested in the actual practices of the church—remains unexplored.

Possibly one way through the present impasse is to recognise the need for new language and terminology that somehow marries together what has commonly been put asunder, namely enthusiasm and institution. And in this respect it may well be, as

defined as 'priestcraft', an undue stress on the authority and status of a priestly order or class".

[32] Despite the legacy of its own tradition in which there existed, among early Baptists, as Fowler has shown, a high sacramentalism. See Stanley K. Fowler, *More than a Symbol. The British Baptist Recovery of Baptismal Sacramentalism* (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2002).

[33] See Daniel E. Albrecht, "Rites in the Spirit: A Ritual Approach to Pentecostal/Charismatic Spirituality", in *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, supplement (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999).

Colwell has pointed out, that a phrase such as "means of grace" is itself too static in that it depersonalises the dynamic promise of the Spirit that is invested in the practices of the church. This may well be the case, although the terminology is so well enshrined in the tradition that it is difficult to imagine how it might be replaced. More important, therefore, is for us to understand and even explain the dynamics of what is happening in the sacramental life of the church, and thus convince Christian congregations that paying attention to the practices of the church is not at the expense of the Spirit, nor a substitute for immediate and personal faith, but rather the way personal faith is activated, sustained and ecclesiologically rooted.[34]

One way the connection between enthusiasm and ecclesiology has been made in the tradition is to wed the reception of the Spirit to the act of baptism, thus investing the very physical act of water baptism with a spiritual corollary; but this, it seems to me, is to conflate two very distinct sacramental rites into one, and lose to the church both the specific drama of baptism and the powerful reception of the Spirit through the laying on of hands. Even though there is always the danger of cultivating a two-stage initiation, it seems that the Bible conceives a separate and even subsequent rite of passage, namely, Spirit baptism, which to conflate with water baptism is to lose the import of both.[35] Nor is it necessary to do so, for baptism, rightly understood, carries its own intimations of sacramentality, quite apart from the terminology surrounding Spirit baptism, by which we

[34] "Sometimes the question is asked (by people who are more 'evangelical' than 'sacramentalist'): are we saved by faith or by sacraments? Surely this is a false antithesis and alternative. The truth is we are saved by neither, but by God. But He saves us through faith, and therefore partly through the sacraments, which He uses to awaken and strengthen our faith." Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments*, 101.

[35] For a fuller treatment of this subject see Ian Stackhouse, *The Gospel-Driven Church. Retrieving Classical Ministries for Contemporary Revivalism* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2004), 163–195.

understand that in and through the rite of baptism a person is saved.

Beyond Ordinance

Rightly so, Protestants get a little nervous at this point, fearing that the understanding of grace through faith, as the touchstone of Reformation vitality, will be swallowed up in sacramental tyranny. And they have a point, because whatever else we want to claim for sacraments, they must never be regarded as a straight-jacket.[36] The grace of God is indeed prior to any theological enterprise, the predicate of all Christian theology, and can never be manipulated by the sacraments. Indeed, within the tradition itself the vital role of the Holy Spirit in uniting the recipients of the sacraments to the ascended Christ is protected through the invocation of the *epiclesis*. As Calvin taught, and as those who have sought to remain Reformed in their theology have espoused, "the sacraments have no capacity to affect us in any way apart from the Holy Spirit in awakening and assuring our faith through them".[37]

However, even if sacraments cannot effect grace, they can surely be a means by which this grace is effected, containing within themselves the very thing they point to, lest faith be replaced by works.[38] And maybe, despite a great deal of reluctance to admit as much, this is what is being described via the

[36] C. Ellis, "Baptism and the Sacramental Freedom of God", in Paul Fiddes (ed.), *Reflections on the Water. Understanding God and the World through the Baptism of Believers* (Macon: Smyth and Helwys, 1996), 23–45.

[37] L. J. Vander Zee, *Christ, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Recovering the Sacraments for Evangelical Worship* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2004), 55; who also notes that *epiclesis* in Calvin's Eucharistic theology is critical in affirming a doctrine of the real presence, focused on the ascended Christ, rather than the physical elements themselves. Hence, the liking for Calvin of the liturgical phrase, "lift up your hearts," at the Lord's table, as a way of uniting the recipient with Christ in his glorified humanity.

[38] Robert W. Jensen, "The Church and the Sacraments", in C. E. Gunton (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 213.

use of salvific language: namely, that in and through the act of baptism, something is enacted, without which we cannot say that a person is not saved, but by which a transforming encounter can occur with the crucified and risen Christ. In this sense, to translate *eperotema* in 1 Peter 3:21 as pledge—the pledge of a good conscience towards God—is somewhat weak if not misleading, because it has the effect of reducing the divine-human interactions that gather around the baptismal pool to a simple pledge of commitment. To put it crudely, it represents the move from the drama of sacramentality to the flatness of ordinance—something for which Protestants seem to have a special predilection.

Thus, as so often happens in Free Church traditions, we end up falling between two stools: not dismissing the sacraments altogether, like so many Spirit movements have done, but neither celebrating the richness and promise contained within them. We live with an uneasy ambivalence concerning sacraments, and never really have the courage to explore what they mean. This is particularly true when it comes to communion. As good Protestants, and as good Zwinglians at that, we Nonconformists spend so much time saying what communion is not, that we never get round to saying what it is; indeed, so anxious are we to distance ourselves from any suspicion of Romish *hocus pocus*, that even the actual bread and wine itself takes on a kind of blandness, with the rich wine of the kingdom reduced to nothing more than grape-juice.

However, there is a growing movement to stem this tide of wistful memorialism, and to see that sacraments are not an enemy of Christian piety, nor dependent upon piety for them to work, but a means in and of themselves to effect the grace of God.[39] Thus, *eperotema* is translated appeal: the appeal of a good

[39] Schmemann notes the separation of "form" and "essence" in Western sacramentalism, so that the grace of baptism, though it may be regarded as the fruit of Christ's death and resurrection, is not the event itself. Alexander Schmemann, *Of Water and the Spirit. A Liturgical Study of Baptism* (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Press, 1995), 57–59.

conscience towards God,[40] signalling that through very human, visible and tangible churchly actions which eventually become liturgical instincts—in this instance baptism—prayer is made for God to inundate us with the very essence of the gospel itself. Specifically, in baptism, we make an appeal to God for the assurance of sins forgiven that makes baptism a celebration, indeed participation, in the gospel itself, and the crux, therefore, of all Christian imperatives. Likewise, in communion we participate, to use Pauline language,[41] in the body and blood of Christ, to the extent that to drink the cup unworthily is to bring upon oneself a kind of ritualistic judgment. While may sound rather primitive, it ought to raise at least a little stir among Protestants that maybe we have underestimated what happens at the communion table. For even if there is a reluctance to embrace a full-blown sacramentalism, on the basis that our final appeal is to Scripture rather than tradition, it behoves us to admit, on those same grounds, that biblically—not to mention etymologically—to *remember* the Lord means a good deal more than simply looking back on a past event. To remember is in fact to recall, to make present tense, the historical realities of the death of Christ, and in some way to appropriate its efficacy on our behalf in this simple meal. Although this will not require us to reintroduce the altar, it will certainly require us to up the expectations of our congregations who gather, often no more than monthly, in some cases less, around the Lord's table.[42]

The irony in all of this, particularly when it comes to the growing indifference towards communion among charismatics, is that there is a very strong connection between communion and the power of the Spirit within their own revival history. What was the revival at Cain Ridge, Kentucky in 1800—

[40] As an alternative interpretation it has equal historical and linguistic weight. See Wayne Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 164.

[41] 1 Corinthians 10:16–17.

[42] Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments*, 104. See also M. H. Sykes, "The Eucharist as Anamnesis", *The Expository Times* 71 (1960-61), 117.

arguably the mother of all revivals, and the first Protestant shrine that I have ever visited—but the coming together of second generation Scottish Presbyterians for their annual communion season, akin to the great communions that took place in the eighteenth century at places like Cambuslang. And it was precisely in this festive setting of rows and rows of communion tables, singing, weeping and penitence that many testified to the power of the Spirit, out of which three major denominations were spawned.[43] But when I asked a group of American Baptists to say what lay at the heart of the Cain Ridge revival, which as Kentuckians they all treasured as part of their heritage, not one made the link between Pentecostal encounter and faithfulness to the sacrament. Indeed, the same ignorance is on show when modern-day revivalists invoke the name of John Wesley, or Jonathan Edwards, to legitimise the ecstasies of their non-sacramental worship. Although it is true that the eighteenth-century revivals exhort us to a supernaturalism that is more than what is presently on offer, this should never be regarded as less than a commitment to the sacramental rites of the church. In fact rather than lessening their commitment to the sacraments, it seems that for Wesley and Edwards enthusiasm deepened it. In fact, it may even be permissible, following Wesley, to regard the sacraments not only as a "confirming ordinance" but also as a "converting ordinance": in and through the sacraments we are drawn into the fellowship of God so constituted by the sacrifice of Christ.[44] And though Edwards distanced himself somewhat from this view of communion, inherited from his grandfather, Solomon Stoddard, nevertheless he was also able to articulate a high view of the Lord's Supper.[45]

[43] See Leigh E. Schmidt, *Holy Fairs. Scottish Communions and American Revivals in the Early Modern Period* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1989).
[44] Thomas F. Torrance, *The Mediation of Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1983), 107.
[45] George M. Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2003), 352–356.

Conclusion

So all in all, biblically, theologically and historically it is strange that we expect so little of the sacramental life of the church, and have ended up in the renewal movement with a decidedly low sacramentality in worship, by which I mean not simply communion and baptism, but all those other practices we engage in, including the Lord's Prayer and the laying on of hands. Apart from a few important treatments of the healing ministry of the church within the early renewal, the potential of a sacramental understanding of healing that is overtly supernatural yet rooted in the explicit rites of the church remains unexplored. Obsessed as we are with the notion of relevance, and the seeming irrelevance of churchly faith, it seems that we are at pains, in some quarters at least, to make church as much unlike church as possible. But this assumes of course that we know what people want from the church, and that we know for certain that they despise our peculiar churchly rites—which is, of course, a huge assumption. In fact, one woman, whom we might describe as the epitome of a postmodern woman, remarked after one of our services that the thing she wanted most out of the service was the thing we did not provide, namely confession. Although she found the worship lively, and the singing powerful, and even found the sermon interesting, the thing she really wanted was for someone to say some prayers of confession. Admittedly, she had a vague connection with the church from years ago, but for that woman, on that Sunday at least, the thing she really wanted the church to provide was confession of sin.

All of which goes to say that rather than reducing the number of our sacraments to two, or practically nil, in the name of accessibility and relevance, perhaps we should be seeking to expand our sacraments to the full seven, as found in the Catholic list, or at least make more of the ones we have. By so doing, we would be recognising that the greatest prophetic testimony the church can offer the world is simply being herself. The church is not a recruitment agency, a means to an end, but a witness through her own qualitative and spiritual life to the

grace of God. Therefore, alongside innovation, there needs also to be a concerted effort on the part of the missiologists to retrieve the spiritual and theological gestures of the church, for "if history is any indication", as Alston and Lazareth state so forcibly, "the gift of renewal is most frequently given when the church places itself within the realm of possibility, in the context of those means of grace by which, according to the Old and New Testaments, the Spirit works". Thus the renewal of the church begins, at least on a human level, with the recovery of those sources and practices that historically have enabled people to encounter and be encountered by "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit".[46]

[46] W. M. Alston and W. H. Lazareth, "Preface", in W. H. Lazareth (ed.), *Reading the Bible in Faith. Theological Voices from the Pastorate* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), ix–x.

Richard Hooker and Assurance

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ABSTRACT. One of the issues in dispute in England in the 1590s was the importance of Christian assurance. This issue figured prominently in the debates leading to the Lambeth Articles of 1595. Richard Hooker developed a position on assurance beginning from a conventional statement of assurance in the early *Sermons Upon S. Judes Epistle* and ending with significant reservations about assurance in the Learned *Sermon on Certaintie and Pepertuitie of Faith in the Elect* and the *Dublin Fragments*. His pastoral concern was expressed in the comfort to be derived from recognition that one's faith was weak rather than from experienced assurance that one was elect. Hope for salvation is a good sign as is observation of the exercise of love for the neighbour.

KEY WORDS: assurance, doubt, faith, election, salvation

Introduction

Whether or not tradesmen and gossips in late Elizabethan England could discuss predestination, as Izaak Walton had claimed in his *Life of Mr. Richard Hooker*,[1] the question of assurance was undoubtedly a significant popular pastoral matter, the pastoral edge of the whole Reformed emphasis on the sovereignty of God in predestination. To make salvation uncertain or doubtful was tantamount to papistry, as the young William Barrett discovered in Cambridge in 1595.[2] Undoubtedly the Lutheran doctrine of justification by faith alone was interpreted from the be-

[1] *The Works of Richard Hooker*, 7th edn (Oxford, 1888), 1.36.

[2] See H. C. Porter, *Reformation and Reaction in Tudor Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1958).

ginning of the Reformation as a "comforting" doctrine, one that could end the "fear" of God's judgement in the consolation that God in Christ had dealt decisively with human alienation. But Calvin had pushed the logic a little further: for him, assurance and faith go together; where there is no assurance, there is no faith:

> Scripture shows that God's promises are not established unless they are grasped with the full assurance of conscience. Whenever there is doubt or uncertainty, it pronounces them void.[3]

This could mean, for Calvinists, that no one can be considered as justified unless he or she firmly *believes* he or she is justified. There are variations of certainty in the matter, since the certainty varies with the measure of faith given. And, for Calvin, even assured faith is afflicted with doubt: unbelief is sinful, but unbelief can never overcome faith. But the knowledge of faith is more certain and more enduring than sense-knowledge, since it does not arise from the natural human capacity for knowledge, with all the weaknesses of that capacity.[4] In *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle*, Hooker speaks of an infallible internal evidence:

[3] *ICR* III.13.4 (1539), i, 767. See also III.24.6 (1539 as altered in 1559), ii, 972-3. Calvin elsewhere uses the phrase "assurance of salvation", as in IV.14.14 (1539), ii, 1290; III.15.title (1559), i, 788. The vocabulary of "assurance" thus is part of Calvin's account from the beginning, and becomes more firmly entrenched as the *Institutes* developed.

[4] "When we call faith 'knowledge' we do not mean comprehension of the sort that is commonly concerned with those things which fall under human sense perception. For faith is so far above sense that man's mind has to go beyond and rise above itself in order to attain it. Even where the mind has attained it, it does not comprehend what it feels. But while it is persuaded of what it does not grasp, by the very certainty of its persuasion it understands more than if it perceived anything human by its own capacity… The knowledge of faith consists in assurance rather than in comprehension." *ICR* III.2.14 (i, 560f). For further texts and an extended discussion of Calvin's typical position, see Victor A. Shepherd *Nature and Function of Faith* (Macon, 1982), 19-27.

> God hath left us infallible evidence, whereby we may at any time give true and righteous sentence upon our selves. We cannot examine the harts of other men, we may our owne… *I trust, beloved, wee knowe that wee are not reprobates*, because our spirit doth bear us record, that the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is in us… The Lord of his infinite mercy give us hearts plentifully fraught with the treasure of this blessed assurance of faith unto the end.[5]

However, in another sermon, Hooker appears to contradict this contention: the surviving fragments of *A Learned and Comfortable Sermon of the Certaintie and Perpetuitie of Faith in the Elect* seem to take a quite different tack. This sermon attempts to reassure those whose "certainty" and assurance is less than perfect that they should not doubt or despair their state of grace, but treat their very doubts and questionings, their "scruples," as evidence of the faith that is in them. Hooker goes so far as to claim that a pretending to the "Paradisal joy" of absolute certainty, which the view of some unnamed "others" would attempt to induce in the doubtful, is not only fraudulent, but runs the risk of Pharisaical hypocrisy. Hooker distinguishes "the certainty of evidence" from the "certainty of adherence", a Thomistic distinction[6] later used, in interpreting the Lambeth Articles, by Lancelot Andrewes:

[5] *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle*, 13, 14 (Folger Library Edition ["FLE"] 5:28.9-16; 30.7-9). It is important perhaps to note that this infallible evidence in the faithful that they are God's children, this "blessed assurance of faith" is, for Hooker, not indefectible: it can be lost.

[6] Thomas, *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate,* q. 14, a. 1, ad 7. "Certitude can mean two things. The first is firmness of adherence, and with reference to this, faith is more certain than any understanding [of principles] and scientific knowledge. For the first truth, which causes the assent of faith, is a more powerful cause than the light of reason, which causes the assent of understanding or scientific knowledge. The second is the evidence of that to which assent is given. Here, faith does not have certainty, but scientific knowledge and understanding do." St. Thomas Aquinas, *Truth*, trans. James V. McGlynn (Chicago, 1953), vol. ii, 212. See also *ST* II-II, q. 4, a. 8, *respondeo*, especially "certitude can be looked at in two ways. First, on the part of its cause, and thus a thing which has a more certain cause, is itself more certain.

> Certainty of evidence wee call that, when the mind doth assent unto this or that; not because it is true in it selfe, but because the truth therof is cleere, because it is manifest unto us… The other which wee call the certaintie of adherence is when the hart doth cleave and stick unto that which it doth beleeve.[7]

One of a list of erroneous doctrines preached by Master Hooker in the Temple the first of March 1585, and dated March 30, 1585, focused on this distinction:

> The assurance of thinges which we beleve by the worde is not so certaine as of that which we perceive by sense. [15][8]

In this way faith is more certain [than scientific knowledge and the other intellectual virtues], because it is founded on the Divine truth, whereas [they] are based on human reason. Secondly, certitude may be considered on the part of the subject, and thus the more a man's intellect lays hold of a thing, the more certain it is. In this way, faith is less certain, because matters of faith are above the human intellect, whereas objects [of scientific knowledge and the other intellectual virtues] are not. Since, however, a thing is judged simply with regard to its cause, but relatively, with respect to a disposition on the part of the subject, it follows that faith is more certain simply, while the others are more certain relatively, i.e., for us." English Dominican translation (New York, 1947), ii, 1196.

[7] *Certainite* 1 (FLE 5:70.1-4; 70.31-71.1). Compare Lancelot Andrewes' advice to Whitgift on the sixth of the Lambeth Articles. The opinion of the advisers included the note that the certainty here was different from the certainty of evidence; it was not the full and absolute assurance as of the knowledge of first principles; matters of faith were not certain in the same way as matters of evidence and certain knowledge. Nor were they certain in the way such revealed assertions as that Christ died and is the saviour of the world are certain. Lancelot Andrewes, *A Pattern of Catechistical Doctrine and other Minor Works* (Oxford, 1846), 292. Hooker's treatment of the matter of the sixth Lambeth Article will be discussed later.

[8] FLE 5:286.16-17. Compare Strype's third addition to Walton's *Life of Hooker*, *Works* i, 60, where the words of censure are attributed to Walter Travers himself.

This criticism Travers repeated in his *Supplication to the Privy Counsel*.[9] On the sense of "certainty of adherence," Travers described Hooker's views entirely accurately, for in the *Answer to Travers*, Hooker writes:

> The nexte thinge discovered is an opinion aboute the assuraunce of mens perswasyon in matters of faith: I have taughte he saith *That the assurance of thinges which we beleeve by the word is not so certeyne as of that we perceyve by sense.* And is it as certeyne? Yea I taughte as he hym self I truste woulde not denye that the thinges which God doth promys in his worde are surer unto us then any thinge we touche handle or see, but are we so sure and certeyne of them? if we be, why doth God so often prove his promises unto us as he doth by argumentes taken from our sensible experiences? We must be surer of the profe then of the thinge proved, otherwise it is no profe. How is it that if tenne men do all looke uppon the moone, every one of them knoweth it as certenly to be the moone as another: But many beleevinge one and the same promis all have not one and the same fulnesse of perswasion? Howe falleth it out that men beinge assured of any thinge by sense can be no surer of it then they are, whereas the strongest in faith that lyveth uppon the earth hath alwaies neede to labor and stryve, and praie that his assuraunce concerninge heavenly and spirituall thinges maie growe increasse and be augmented?[10]

There had been a shift of emphasis on assurance after Calvin. Calvin himself had insisted that one was never to look to oneself for assurance of salvation, but to Christ, the "mirror of elec-

[9] "Another time uppon like occasion of this doctrine of his, that *the assurance of that we beleeve by the word, is not so certeyne as of that we perceive by sense,* I both taught the doctrine otherwise, namely, the assurance of faith to be greater, which assureth of thinges both above and contrary to all sense and humane understanding, and delt with him also pryvately uppon that point." *Supplication* (FLE 5:200.5-11). In a manuscript found in Lambeth Palace, a contemporary account of Hooker's sermon does not deal with assurance, although it does affirm the perseverance of the elect. (FLE 5:274.34-35)

[10] *Master Hookers Answer to the Supplication* 9 (FLE 5:236.20-237.7).

tion," to find there the persuasion that Christ had died for her or him.[11] But Calvin had also spoken of "transitory faith," given to the non-elect.[12] This might raise doubts about treating one's faith as adequate evidence of one's election. And these doubts gave rise, in England, to an "experimental tradition," that pointed to a *reflex act* to give assurance: a "practicall syllogism of the Holy Ghost," to allow one to know that "hee is in the number of the elect." And this practical syllogism was interpreted, in the words of 2 Peter 1:10, as "making [one's] calling and election sure." The best known exponent of this "experimental predestination" was Hooker's contemporary, William Perkins, whose works were much admired.[13] Here was, then, in Hooker's *Answer to Travers* evidence of a clear challenge to much later sixteenth century spirituality of "assurance."

By placing the degree of assent of the mind in the continuum of the mind's other degrees of commitment, Hooker established that the matters of faith were not so certain as the axioms of mathematics or the evidence of the senses. This must have seemed to invite "papist insecurity." In fact, Hooker did here what few Reformed writers had done: compare the mind's assent in matters of faith with the mind's assent in ordinary matters. His purpose, however, was not to induce uncertainty, but rather, by being honest about the real *subjective* uncertainties on matters of faith in the life of growth in grace, to reassure those who did not seem to find in themselves the certainties their more aggressive Reformed neighbours and preachers treated as

[11] R. T. Kendall, *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (Oxford, 1979), 24-28, 75.
[12] *ICR* III, 2, 11 (i, 555f). Beza spoke of "ineffectual calling," and Perkins of "temporary faith." For Perkins, a reprobate may be called by God, there are some ineffectual calls and five degrees of faith. See Kendall, 22, 36, 67-76.
[13] Perkins in fact pointed in the last case to the "will or desire to believe," as the final evidence for election. In this, he and Hooker approached each other, since this amounts to *hope*; but Hooker had, as we shall see, taken a different track. For Hooker, as for Thomas and Calvin, the evidence was not "subjective" at all, but "objective."

the only means to discern one's own state of election to salvation.

Certaintie and Perpetuitie, although it represents a version of a sermon composed and circulated in manuscript before Hooker came to the Temple,[14] is a fragment of what must have been a substantially longer sermon, and in its current form may have been altered and expanded in the light of the controversy with Travers. Certainly, in its published form, it unhesitatingly describes the certainty of matters of faith *in themselves*, which have greater certainty than other beliefs, although, for the moment at least, less evidence:

> That which wee know ether by sense or by most in fallible demonstration is not so certain as the principles articles and conclusions of Christian faith… Of thinges in them selves most certain, except they be also most evident, our persuasion is not so assured as it is of thinges more evident although in themselves they be lesse certayn… The trueth of somethinges is so evident, that no man which heareth them can doubt of them… If it were so in matters of fayth then as all men have equall certaintie of this, so no beleever should be more scripulous and doubtfull then another. But wee find the contrarie.[15]

Matters of faith (such as the Articles of the Creed) are thus certain in themselves, though less than perfectly evident to human beings at present. There is thus a distinction between an objective certainty of truth and the subjective certainty of evidence. But the certainty of adherence, though greater because it is of the heart and not of the mind alone, has also a place in the continuum of subjective natural processes. For it is related to the good, the object of desire, and the human being clings to these matters of faith because of recognizing them as ends. The will and the enlightened appetite ensure the certainty in this case, going beyond the evidence. But such matters are certain as well

[14] *Answer* 10 (FLE 237:5.7-10).
[15] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5:69.24-70.14).

because the faith is a gift of God, a grace that does not destroy the nature it elevates, but perfects it:

> The reason [that the certainty of adherence is greater than the certainty of evidence] is this: the fayth of a christian man doth apprehend the wordes of the law, the promisses of god, not only as true but also as good, and therefore even then when the evidence which he hath of the trueth is so small that it greaveth him to feele his weaknes in assenting thereunto, yeat is there in him such a sure adharence unto that which he doth but faintly and fearfully beleeve that his spirit *having once truly tasted the heavenly sweetnes* thereof all the world is not able quite and cleane to remove him from it but he striveth with him selfe to hope even against hope to beleeve even against all reason of beleeving, being settled with Job upon this unmoveable resolution… For why? this lesson remayneth for ever imprinted in his hart, *it is good for me to cleave unto god.*[16]

Since the love of God is a gift to the believer, even the grief of the scrupulous at the weakness of her or his faith is evidence of the griever's faith:

> But are they not greeved at ther unbeleefe? they are. Do they not wish it might and also strive that it may be otherwise? wee know they do. Whenc cometh this but from a secret love and liking which they have of those things that are beleeved? No man can love the thinges which in his own opinion are not. And if they thinke those thinges to be, which they show that they love when they desire to beleeve them, then must it needs be that by desiring to beleev they prove them selves true beleevers. For without faith no man thinketh that thinges beleeved are. Which argument all the subtlety of infernall powres will never be able to dissolve. The faith therefor of true believers though it have many and grevous dounfals, yeat doth it still continew invincible, it conquereth and

[16] [Psalm 73:28] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5.71.2-15).

> recovereth it selfe in the end. The dangerous conflictes whereunto it is subject are not able to prevail againste it.[17]

The "infallible internal evidence" alluded to in *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle* has seemed to many to be at variance with the arguments of *Certaintie and Perpetuitie* to which Travers so objected, for, at first glance, it seems difficult to reconcile Hooker's considered opinion that the human being is more certain of the truths of reason and sense than of matters of faith with the view that there is any kind of "infallible" evidence at all. This led earlier editors to doubt the authenticity of the *Sermons Upon S. Judes Epistle*. But these sermons are now known to be as genuine as any other part of Hooker's works.[18] Is there, in fact, a doctrinal discrepancy between *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle* and *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*?

We have seen that there is a shift in emphasis. *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle* defends the infallibility of faith, presumably against some sort of accusation that the Church of England has apostasized in separating itself from the Church of Rome, as *evidence that one can be Christian in the Church of England*, since its members can recognize their own subjective faith, which could not be of the temporary kind in everyone. *Certaintie and Perpetuitie* deals with the quite different matter of the scruples of the doubtful. Here Hooker does assert, as a principle of pastoral comfort, that *the evidence* for matters of faith, and therefore our reasonable assent to them, is always less than complete and perfect. But he does go on to describe an *infallibility* to this albeit incomplete and imperfect faith. The certainty of matters of faith is not only objective, since it is God who gives faith, and God cannot fail, though all human beings be weak, but in some

[17] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5:76.7-21). At this point, Hooker came closest to Perkins' account of assurance through finding in oneself "the will or desire to believe." Kendall, 22, 65.

[18] John Keble in Editor's Preface, 27 (*Works* 1.lv); Francis Paget in *Introduction*, 265; C. J. Sisson, *Judicious Marriage* (Cambridge, 1940), 109ff, 140; Laetitia Yeandle in "Textual Introduction" (FLE 5.1-4).

sense subjective as well, since the natural capacity of desire and will aid the evidence of reason, and will not let the good, which is the object of faith, go; those who doubt nevertheless hope. Hooker thus argues, shockingly, for a sort of natural basis for the perseverance of faith in the elect—an infallible and permanent hope beyond a wavering faith. The argument is at considerable variance from the point of view of the Reformed tradition generally, but he does, through this argument, establish the same "infallible internal evidence" he spoke of in *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle*; similarly, in *A Learned Discourse of Justification*, he balanced his further statement with a traditional distinction between the faith of evidence, which the devils possess, and fear, and the faith which justifies.[19] In both cases, Reformed orthodoxy was maintained, but in *Certaintie and Perpetuitie* there is a surprising accompanying argument about the *natural* basis of assurance.[20]

Further, the "infallible internal evidence" of *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle* turns out to be a conclusion based on *observation* though not on a "reflex act" as in Perkins. For the "evidence" we are to look for is evidence of our love of "the brethren," including presumably our actions on the basis of that love externally and publicly, as the *First Epistle of St John* has it:

> *That we have passed from death to life, we knowe it,* saith St *John, because we love our brethren.* [1 John 3:14][21]

The argument sounds like those of the Calvinist divines like Perkins, but, if pursued, it leads to a very un-Calvinist conclusion: for the "infallibility" is of the *love* observed, not of our *ob-*

[19] *Justification*, 26 (FLE 5:136.30-137.7).
[20] A similar pastoral observation about fear in the sermon *A Remedie Against Sorrow and Feare* pointed out that *fear* is natural and reasonable, and not sinful, unless it leads to security or despair; rather mourners are to be assured that fear is good in that it should lead, with God's grace, to trust in God. *Remedie* (FLE 5.374.21-377.21).
[21] *1 Jude* 13 (5:28.11-13).

servation of the love; *believing* we are "in love and charity" with our neighbour does not mean that we *are*; but *being* so *assures us* infallibly we are saved. Thus *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle* points ahead to *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*, although the vocabulary looks "across" to a contemporary Calvinist pattern. In both cases, the important thing is the objective *certainty* of God's gracious gift of love, or of the articles of the Creed, not any reflexive apprehension or observation of anything going on in us at all.

In *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*, Hooker repeats emphatically the *spiritual* importance of recognizing the subjective fallibility and weakness of mental certainty in matters of faith. The assumption of perfect assurance is a presumptuous assertion that the human being has already achieved glory. The human being has received grace, which gives a confidence (in hope) beyond the evidence of natural "light,"—but this is not angelic light, which must wait for the completion of grace in glorification. The light of nature is perfected by the light of grace by a process that ends in the light of glory:

> The Angells and sprites of the righteous in heaven have certaintie most evident of thinges spirituall, but this they have by the light of glorie. That which wee see by the light of grace thought it be in deede more certain yeat is it not to us so evidently certain as that which sense or the light of nature will not suffer a man to doubt of.[22]

In this, perfect certainty would be like the perfect righteousness of the glorified; it would deserve the reward of final justification; it would make Christ's saving work unnecessary:

> Now the minds of all men being so darkned as they are with the foggie damp of originall corruption, it cannot be that any mans

[22] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5:70.14-19). Compare the perfection of the inherent righteousness of sanctification here in the glorifying righteousness of the world to come in the companion discourse, *Justification* 3 (FLE 5:109.6-11).

> hart living should be ether so enlightned in the knowledg or so established in the love of that wherein his salvation standeth as to be perfect, nether doubting nor shrinking at all. If any such were, what doth let why that man should not be justified by his owne in herent righteousnes? for righteousnes inherent being perfect will justifie, and perfect fayth is apart of perfect righteousnes in herent…[23]

But we walk now by faith mixed with mental doubt, though with hearts invincibly directed to their object in hope, and not by the perfect knowledge of the possession of the object of delight. The faith we have is invincible, since it is from God, but to pretend it is perfect is to adopt the posture of the Pharisee, in the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax-gatherer from Luke 18:9-14, not the imitation of Christ at the point of despair on the Cross in Matthew 27:46:

> Better it is some tymes to *goe down into the pit* with him who beholding darknes and bewaling the losse of inward joy and consolation cryeth from the bottome of the lowest hell *my god my god why hast thou for saken me*, then continually to walke arme in arme with angells, to sit as it were in *Abrahams bosome* and to have no thought no cogitacion but *I thanke my god it is not with me as it is with other men*. No, god wyll have them that shall walke in light to feel now and then what it is to sit in the *shadow of death*. A greeved spirit therefore is no argument of a faithles mind.[24]

Not to recognize the limitations of our current state leads some to despair, if they recognize they have imperfect assurance, and others to presumption, pretending they have no room to grow. At Luke 22:32, Christ prayed that Peter's faith fail not. This text was important in the debates that would take place in Cambridge in 1595. There William Barrett and others argued that the prayer was for Peter alone. Hooker agrees with the position that

[23] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5:71.16-24).
[24] *Cert.* 1 (FLE 5:75.10-19). Compare Mark 15:34.

William Whitaker would take and which Calvin had taken:[25] the prayer applies to all of the elect, those written "in the Book of Life." In the later *Dublin Fragments,* Hooker concentrated on the more telling prayer in John 17:9, 20, which does not speak of faith at all, but of Christ's prayer for those given to him by God, and held that it indeed applied to the elect and that it was a source of great consolation.[26] But for Hooker, although Christ's prayer in Luke 22:32 that faith not fail in the elect is a sure guarantee, those who suppose it precludes our intensive labour are wrong:

> …this oure saftye. No mens condition so sure as oures: the praier of Christ ys more then sufficient, bothe to strenghthen usse be we never so weake, and to overthrow all adversarie power, be it never so stronge and potent. His prayer must not exclude oure labour. There thoughtes ar vaine who thinke there wachinge can preserv the citie which god him selfe is not willinge to keepe. And is not

[25] "Now there is no doubt, when Christ prays for all the elect, that he implores for them the same thing as he did for Peter, that their faith may never fail [Luke 22:32]. From this we infer that they are out of danger of falling away because the Son of God, asking that their godliness be kept constant, did not suffer a refusal." *ICR* III.24.6 (1539 as altered in 1559), ii, 972-3. This was, for the Calvinist tradition, a central text for the doctrine of assurance, and was to be interpreted as applying to all the elect.

[26] *Dublin* 46 (FLE 4:166.22-167.1). This shows Hooker's clear affirmation of the doctrine of the *final* indefectibility of the elect already apparent in the *Lawes*: "…the scripture [Revelation 7:3, 9:4]… describeth them marked of God in the forehead whome his mercie hath undertaken to keepe from finall confusion and shame. Not that God doth sett any corporall marke on his chosen, but to note that he giveth his elect securitie of preservation from reproach…" V.65.7 (FLE 2:307.11-15). "The first thinge of [Christ's] so infused into our hartes in this life is the Spirit of Christ, whereupon because the rest of what kinde so ever doe all both necessarilie depende and infalliblie also ensue…" V.56.11 (FLE 2:243.9-11). "In that prayer for eternall Life which our Saviour knew could not be made without effect, he excepted them for whome he knew his suffrings would be frustrate, and commendeth unto God his owne… That they should be finallie seduced, and cleane drawne away from God, is a thing impossible. Such as utterly depart from them, were never of them." *Dublin* 46 (FLE 4.166.22-167.1). See Porter, 317.

> theres as vaine who thinck that god will kepe the cytie for which they them selves ar not carefull to wach? …Therefor the assurance of my hope I will labor to kepe as a jewell unto the end and by labor through the gratious mediation of his praier I shall kepe yt.[27]

Hooker's view of the relative degrees of assurance becomes crucial in his polemic in the *Lawes* against the scripturalism of the advocates of presbyterian government. We are convinced of the truths of scripture only by being taught by natural means. The greatest certainty we have is from matters of observation; even in matters divine, we must proportion our assent to the degrees of evidence.[28] There are three levels of reason (as healed by grace), and these levels have a descending strength of conviction: intuitive beholding, strong and invincible demonstration, and the way of greatest probability. But in all matters, the reasonable person proportions (mental) assurance to the evidence.[29] This must involve reason to support and interpret scripture, and not scripture alone.

Hooker alludes in the *Lawes*, to the theme of *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*: a wrong view of assurance leads honest souls to de-

[27] *Cert.* 5 (FLE 5:81.7-82.18). Philip Secor, in paraphrasing this passage, has changed "hope" to "faith", but this attempt to make the passage helpful actually obscures Hooker's point. Philip Secor, *The Sermons of Richard Hooker* (London, 2001), 12. Hope, for Hooker, is the mark of those on the way: "[The grace whereby angels and men] might be exempted from possibilitie of sinning belongeth… to their perfection whoe see God in fulnes of glorie, and not to them, whoe as yet serve him under hope." *Dublin* 28 (FLE 4:136.29-137.2).

[28] *Lawes* II.7.5 (FLE 1:179.8-181.4). Nigel Atkinson has suggested that Hooker relies on a Calvinist notion that the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit guarantees our apprehension of the truths of scripture, but Hooker expressly casts doubt on that view. Nigel Atkinson, *Richard Hooker and the Authority of Scripture, Tradition and Reason. Reformed Theologian of the Church of England* (Carlisle, 1997), 108-110; Hooker *Lawes* III.8.15 (FLE 1.232.16-25). See W. David Neelands, "Hooker the Confident non-partisan Reformer", forthcoming.

[29] *Lawes* I.8.5 (FLE 1:85.6-86.23); Preface 3.10 (FLE 1:17.22-18.8).

spair.[30] And this view is related to the whole drift of Book II of the *Lawes*, to vindicate reason, nature and human authority in spiritual matters. For, Hooker argues, unless we are assured by something other than Scripture, we would have no assurance at all.[31] It is trusting in the human testimony of our teachers that leads us to trust Scripture in the first place, the assurance we have in one leading to the assurance we arrive at in the other.[32] And even in interpreting Scripture, we must rely on authority.[33] In other words, consideration of the objective norm of Scripture does not occur isolated from the subjective state of our apprehending it. We come to (mental) belief in the doctrines of the faith in a way precisely commensurate with the way we come to be assured of other things; and we ought to proportion the degree of our assurance in both cases to the degree of the evidence. This does not mean that either Scripture or internal faith is simply "natural" and reasonable: faith cannot fail, and Scripture is perfect for the end for which it was ordained. But both are apprehended as part of a natural process, and to pretend otherwise risks many errors, fanaticism and phariseeism.

The "subjectivism" that is hidden in the disciplinarian argument is not just an epistemological mistake, it is a spiritual problem. For, once the "rule of men's private spirits" is accepted, all disorder must follow. If this direction is followed, presbyterians turn out to be in the same league with the hated anabaptists.[34] There is a false "subjective principle" behind the Puritan position, whether on assurance or on church discipline,

[30] *Lawes* II.7.5 FLE 1:180.11-16); see also II.8.6 (FLE 1:190.9-19).
[31] *Lawes* II.4.2 (FLE 1:152.15-153.25).
[32] *Lawes* II.7.3 (FLE 1:177.25-34). On the proportion of the degree of subjective credence to the degree of objective credibility, see W. David Neelands, "Hooker on Scripture, Reason, and 'Tradition'," in *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe, 1997), 79.
[33] *Lawes* II.7.9 (FLE 1:184.24-185.20).
[34] *Lawes* V.10.1 (FLE 2:46.7-47.9).

so that a subjective state is elevated to objective authority.[35] To assert assurance on the public side is as dangerous as to seek it on the spiritual side. Subjective "security" is always dangerous and leads to neglect and a lack of watchfulness: in Christian history, according to Hooker, this is what happened to the orthodox Trinitarians after the Council of Nicaea; they became "secure," and allowed the Arians to gain ground. "It plainely appeareth that the first thinge which weakened them was theire securitie."[36]

The Puritans, not recognizing the natural limitations and weaknesses of the means of grace in the process of natural human history, adopt wrong positions on the "perfection" of the ministers of Christian sacraments. Thomas Cartwright, in objecting to the "usurped jurisdiction" of baptism by a layman, argued that someone so baptized would "lack assurance"; such an administration of the sacrament would be like a stolen seal on a forged document. Hooker rejected the argument. Administering baptism was not like a seal in this respect: "the grace of Baptisme cometh by Donation from God alone."[37] In fact, the very weakness of the human agents of the sacraments is the warrant for "assurance" that they are more than human acts: "regarde the weaknes which is in us, and they are warrantes for the more securitie of our beliefe."[38]

In the *Lawes*, the direct discussion of the "comfortable doctrine of blessed assurance" does not hold the centre of the stage, but the general view is the same as in *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*. We are to make a charitable assumption that we and all others who care about it, are among the elect, and therefore will persevere, but we are not to search for a particular conviction in ourselves:

[35] Egil Grislis, "The Hermeneutical Problem in Richard Hooker," in W. Speed Hill (ed.), *Studies in Richard Hooker* (Cleveland, 1972), 167ff.
[36] *Lawes* V.42.4 (FLE 2:169.6-7).
[37] *Lawes* V.62.19 (FLE 2:286.2). Cartwright is quoted in 2.285.*f*.
[38] *Lawes* V.57.2 (FLE 2:245.26-27).

> There is in the knowledg both of God and man this certaintie that life and death have dievided betwene them the whole bodie of man kinde. What portion either of the two hath, God him selfe knoweth; for us he hath left no sufficient meanes to comprehend and for that cause neither given any leave to search in particular who are infalliblie the heires of the kingdom of God, who castawaies. Howbeit concerninge the state of all men with whome we live… wee may till the worldes ende, *for the present,* alwaies presume, that *as farre as in us there is power to discerne* what others are, and as farre as any dutie of oures dependeth upon the notize of their condition in respect of God, the safest axiomes for charitie to rest it selfe upon are these, *He which believeth already is;* and *Hee which believeth not as yeat may be the child of God.* It becometh not us *duringe life altogether to condemne any man seinge that* (for any thinge wee knowe) *there is hope of everie mans forgivenes the possibilitie of whose repentance is not yeat cutt of by death.*"[39]

This same view, repeated consistently by Hooker, apparently from before his public quarrel with Travers in 1585, reappears again in his latest composition. At the very end of the *Dublin Fragments*, Hooker re-wrote the Lambeth Articles. His version of them shows how close he was to the advisers of Whitgift at Lambeth. But there is a startling omission. The sixth Lambeth Article had slightly amended Whitaker's draft, by substituting the Pauline phrase "full assurance of faith" for Whitaker's "certainty of faith," but had otherwise repeated the principle of Christian assurance:

> The truly faithful man—that is one endowed with justifying faith—is sure by full assurance of faith of the remission of sins and his eternal salvation through Christ.

Hooker could, presumably, have agreed with that. In fact, he had said something apparently stronger in the *Sermons Upon S. Judes Epistle*. Just how he could accommodate this view with his

[39] *Lawes* V.49.2 (FLE 2:203.9-25).

conviction about *uncertainty*, we have seen in examining *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*: in view of the identity of the *giver* of faith, faith is certain; in view of the natural desire for the good, hope once given will not be lost. But to say that everyone to whom *any sort of faith* had been given would persevere, obviously went beyond what Hooker could assert, for "grace sufficient" was clearly offered to all, though "saving grace" was not. There was thus a tension, if not an inconsistency, in the understanding of the articles by Whitgift's advisers, who on the one hand, when interpreting the seventh Lambeth Article, admitted the possibility that a sufficient grace, and therefore some sort of faith, was offered to all, yet held that only those with effectual grace were elect and would persevere. On the other hand, in accepting the sixth Lambeth Article they appeared to hold that *all* who enjoyed "justifying faith" had assurance of their salvation. Could it be possible to discern one group of the faithful from another? Was "true faith" detectable from the faith of those who had "sufficient" but not "efficacious" grace?[40] The problem led many to deny that there was such a thing as sufficient grace that was not therefore efficacious. But *Hooker boldly answered in the negative*; there is no way of discriminating between faith that will endure and that which will not, and there are both kinds of faith given. He thus qualified the conviction about assurance held by both Whitaker and his supporters and Whitgift and his advisers. And Hooker, in consistency, omitted the sixth Lambeth Article altogether. The theme of *Certaintie and Perpetuitie*, which he clearly held to be important, he boldly attached to the final article. Unchanged from Whitaker's draft, the ninth Lambeth Article read:

> It is not in the will or the power of each and every man to be saved.

[40] As noted earlier, a parallel problem had emerged for Perkins. Kendall, 22, 36, 67-76, cited above.

Hooker apparently interpreted this article as, in effect, rejecting Pelagianism by asserting the absolute need for grace. In some sense, however, it had to be within the natural *will* of the elect (elevated of course by grace) to be saved. This was not the case for "each and every man." But the important thing, for Hooker, was watchfulness: effort without grace was useless, but grace without effort would be fruitless. His version of the final article involves a significant expansion, for explanation and for balance:

> 8. And that it is not in everie, noe not in any mans owne meere abilitie, freedome, and power, to be saved, noe mans salvation being possible without grace. VII. Of the necessitie of labor to concurre on our part with the will of God in justifying and sanctifying his elect, that in the end they may be glorified. Howbeit, God is noe favourer of sloath and therefore there can be noe such absolute decree touching mans salvation as on our part includeth noe necessitie of care and travaile, butt shall certainly take effect, whether wee ourselves doe wake or sleepe.[41]

Thus Hooker undercut both Calvin's account of assurance through faith, and the Beza-Perkins account of the reflexive act that brings assurance. The search for assurance is simply misdirected for Hooker, but God is dependable, and hope in the here and now is all.

Thus even before 1595 and the controversy leading to the Lambeth Articles, Hooker had already parted company with Whitaker, and with Whitgift, and for that matter, with Perkins and the "experimental predestinarians" on the question of "assurance." For Hooker, there was a paradox on assurance: the best assurance one could have was derived from a recognition of the weakness of one's faith;[42] perfect assurance was a gift of

[41] *Dublin* 46 (FLE 4:167.10-19).

[42] And perhaps the evidence of our love of our brethren, as in *First Sermon Upon S. Judes Epistle*. See above.

glory; to presume it here in this world turned one into a presumptuous Pharisee.

Paul Ricoeur's Concept of Fallibility as Fault, Myth and Symbol

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ABSTRACT. This article presents and analyses Ricoeur's notion of fallibility from the idea of myth to that of symbol in the context of the dialectics between finitude and infinitude. In Ricoeur, myth is used to present natural reality in a symbolic way which, it is argued, contradicts the traditional Christian perspective on reality which includes the ontology of metaphysics. Ricoeur is concerned to find a way to decipher religious mythological imagery by means of symbolism, so he also talks about the transition from direct meaning to indirect significance. Concepts like bad will and evil are discussed within Ricoeur's symbolics of evil which intends to find the locus of evil within human reality. This is why he concludes that the symbolism of evil is not only theoretical but also historical, in the sense that man's reality as imbued with evil is not only a philosophical issue but also a pressing practical matter.

KEY WORDS: fallibility, fault, myth, symbol, in/finitude

Introduction

The notion of fallibility in Ricoeur is presented by means of the idea of fault.[1] In describing fault, Ricoeur resorts to the introduction of two fundamental aspects which depict the nature of fault, namely opaqueness and absurdity. Therefore, the very nature of fault is opaque and absurd, so it escapes pure description. In other words, there is no possibility of having a pure imagery of fault which can be presented in unmediated terms.

[1] See also Steven H. Clark, *Paul Ricoeur*, 32.

Fault cannot be presented in a purely theoretical manner because it goes beyond the reasonableness of pure rationality.[2] In order for one to understand the nature of fault, one has to break the barriers of fundamental ontology[3] and pure description[4]. Thus, for Ricoeur, fault is somehow external to man's ontological constitution.[5]

In speaking about fault—and it is evident that fault has to do with the human being itself—Ricoeur places its philosophy over against Christian theology, understood in traditional terms. It is quite clear that he does not want to enter any dispute with Christian theology but the mere presentation of fault as part of the human being's constitution—regardless whether fault is external or internal to man—begs for a comparison. One can speak of both similarities and dissimilarities between Ricoeur and Christian theology. The similarity resides in the fact that both Ricoeur and Christian theology see the nature of fault as opaque and absurd. Christian theology presents human fault in terms which leave no doubt that fault is a human reality that pushes human beings to act in unreasonable ways. The dissimilarity has to do with the possibility of describing fault. If for Ricoeur fault escapes pure description, Christian theology has no problem in identifying fault as a reality which is closely connected to what the human being actually is in the world or how it can be presented in a purely theological way.

Fault and Myth

Why cannot Ricoeur present fault in a direct way? Because his conviction that fault is external to man's ontological constitution requires a certain mediation in presenting the idea of

[2] David F. Klemm, "Philosophy and Kerygma: Ricoeur as Reader of the Bible", in David M. Kaplan, *Reading Ricoeur*, 65.
[3] See Olav Bryant Smith, *Myths of the Self*, 138.
[4] Theodoor Marius van Leeuwen, *The Surplus of Meaning*, 22.
[5] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xli.

fault.[6] For Ricoeur, fault can only be properly described if we make use of mediating concepts. This is because while the inner constitution of man, which does not contain the reality of fault, can be presented by pure description, the idea of fault, which is external to the inner constitution of man, needs a more practical or empirical presentation and this cannot be done unless we use concepts which mediate the state of man as inner constitution and the state of man as external reality. It is clear that Ricoeur's anthropology is dualistic when it comes to the representation of the human being: there is first the reality of man's inner constitution which can be thought of in terms of pure description and then there is the reality of man's external manifestation which is triggered by action of passions over the will.[7] This is important because the concept of will seems to be the actual connection between what can be called the theoretical image of man, which has nothing to do with fault, and the practical/empirical image of man, which is characterized by fault. This connection introduces the mediating concepts which put Ricoeur's theoretical and empirical man together, and these concepts are myths[8] or what Ricoeur calls "concrete mythics".[9] Here is what Ricoeur has to say about the idea of fault in connection to mythology:

> […] Fault […] is not a feature of fundamental ontology similar to other factors discovered by pure description […] motives, powers, conditions and limits. Fault remains a foreign body in the eidetics [imagery, n.a.] of man. […] The passage from innocence to fault is not accessible to any description, even an empirical one, but needs to pass through a *concrete mythics*. Thus the idea of approaching the empirics of the will by means of a concrete mythics was already formed, but we did not then realize the reasons for this de-

[6] For details about the relationship between fallibility and man's ontological structure, see John B. Thompson, "A Response to Paul Ricoeur", in John B. Thompson (ed.), *Paul Ricoeur. Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, 39.
[7] Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 10.
[8] Phillip Stambovsky, *Myth and the Limits of Reason*, 60ff.
[9] See Charles E. Reagan, *Paul Ricoeur*, 23.

> tour. Indeed, why can the "passions", which affect the will, be spoken of only in the coded language of a mythics? How are we to introduce this mythics into philosophic reflection? How can philosophic discourse be resumed after having been interrupted by myth?[10]

It is crucial once again to underline Ricoeur's standing as compared to traditional Christian theology and in this respect one can only identify a thorough dissimilarity between Ricoeur's thought and Christian anthropology. Human fault is seen in Ricoeur as being properly mediated as well as described by means of the idea of myth, which calls for a symbolic, even supernatural, presentation of a natural reality. In Christian theology, however, there is no such thing as myth in presenting human fault. Christian theology has a very concrete image of fault as ontological reality because it is fault which breaks the connection between God and man. In Ricoeur, the idea of myth automatically disannuls what traditional Christian theology sees as ontologically real. In other words, the notion of myth makes reference to supernatural realities which must be understood in terms of natural realities while in Christian theology supernatural realities are understood as having ontological existence. But why is myth so important for Ricoeur? Because it presents the practical reality of the human being as affected by passions which result in the empirical reality of fault and fault cannot be adequately presented unless introduced into philosophical reflection. In other words, if one really needs to know how the reality of human fault should be understood, then he or she must resort to philosophical discourse which is capable of presenting the issue of fault provided fault is understood in mythological terms.

Myths belong to religion but as far as Ricoeur is concerned religion cannot help philosophy because religious myths exist

[10] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xli-xlii.

in an "unrefined state".[11] This can mean that religion in itself is unable to offer a relevant as well as meaningful explanation[12] of what the human being is in its fundamental ontology unless accompanied by the philosophical discourse which informs both the theoretical and the practical existence of man. Ricoeur's plan is to refine the myths of religion—and theology—in order to provide a relevant account of man's existence in the world. Therefore, he perceives myth as the shell of language. Myth is the image of language or, as Ricoeur puts it, a secondary development of a primary language.[13] This particular sort of language is the "language of avowal"[14] which, in Ricoeur, presents the idea of fault. It is crucial to notice here that for Ricoeur it is this primary language which presents fundamental importance as compared to the myth. This is because the fundamental language behind the myth addresses philosophy while the myth itself can only speak to religion and theology. The language behind myth is to be approached by the philosopher and it is the philosopher who can eventually decipher as well as refine the idea behind the religious and theological myths. In Ricoeur's words:

> […] the *myths* of fall, chaos, exile, and divine blinding, all of which are directly accessible to a comparative history of religions, could not be inserted in their unrefined state into philosophic discourse. First they had to be put back into their own universe of discourse; for this reason I devoted several preparatory studies to its reconstruction. It then appeared that myths could be understood only as secondary elaborations of a more fundamental language that I call the language of avowal; this language speaks of fault and evil to the philosopher, and what is noteworthy in it is that it is *symbolic* through and through. It does not speak of stain, sin, or guilt in direct and proper terms, but in indirect and figurative terms. To un-

[11] Patrick L. Bourgeois, *Extension of Ricoeur's Hermeneutic*, 63.
[12] See John Wall, *Moral Creativity*, 29.
[13] Dan A. Stiver, *Theology after Ricoeur*, 54.
[14] John B. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 44.

> derstand this language is to bring into play an exegesis of the symbol, which calls for rules of deciphering: a hermeneutics. In this way the initial idea of a *mythics* of bad will has been expanded to the dimensions of a *symbolics of evil*. Now, in the center of this symbolics, the most speculative symbols, such as matter, body, and original sin, refer to mythical symbols such as the battle between the forces of order and the forces of chaos, the exile of the soul in a foreign body, the blinding of man by a hostile divinity, Adam's fall, and these refer to the primary symbols of stain, sin, and guilt.[15]

In other words, any direct reference to myth will lead to discussions about sin and guilt which are both irrelevant for today's people and philosophically crude in the sense that philosophy just cannot accept them unless refined by means of philosophical discourse. If Ricoeur's ideas are applied to Christian theology, it means that traditional Christianity is religiously irrelevant for the men and women of today's world as well as philosophically inadequate for those involved in the quest for truth. To give just one example, the traditional idea of sin as presenting traditional Christianity is totally irrelevant without being refined through the idea of fault as extracted from the mythological image of religious sin.

From Myth to Symbol

What Ricoeur proposes is to advance a philosophical discourse which reinterprets the direct language of religious myths in order to present them as indirect and metaphorical concepts that inform our image of humanity. Thus, the idea of sin as direct and proper term must be turned into an indirect and figurative term if we want it to be philosophically relevant. In Ricoeur, this transition from direct meaning to indirect significance and from mythology to symbolism is called the "exegesis of the

[15] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xlii.

symbol".[16] To put it in simple terms, the exegesis of the symbol is actually hermeneutics, so in order to refine mythology Ricoeur resorts to hermeneutics. The application of hermeneutics to religious mythology results in philosophical symbolism. With direct reference to the idea of fault, the application of hermeneutics to the traditional religious and theological mythology of sin leads to the symbolism of evil.[17] It should be stressed here that Ricoeur's symbolism of evil is the philosophical translation of what he calls the mythics or the mythology of "bad will".[18] This seems to be the practical application of his understanding of man as external reality because it can be investigated by means of the concept of fault. Thus, fault must be understood symbolically by deciphering and refining fundamental myths—such as original sin—as symbols of the conflict between order and chaos. To take the practical example of traditional Christian theology, the myth of Adam's fall, for instance, should be understood as the symbol of sin. It is clear therefore that, in Ricoeur, hermeneutics starts from myth to symbol and then from knowledge to philosophy.[19]

It is not enough for Ricoeur to understand and apply the dynamics of hermeneutics from mythology to symbolism; this would be to go only half way through. After the refinement of myths and their subsequent understanding as symbols, it is absolutely necessary that symbols should be drawn closer to man's knowledge of himself. Actually, following the transformation of myths into symbols, one must perform the insertion of symbols into man's knowledge of himself.[20] With reference

[16] Patrick L. Bourgeois, *Extension of Ricoeur's Hermeneutic*, 64.

[17] See also Andrew Tallon, *Head and Heart*, 89-90.

[18] For details about the concept of "bad will", also in connection to Ricoeur, see Frank K. Flinn, "The Phenomenology of Symbol: Genesis I and II", in William S. Hamrick (eds), *Phenomenology in Practice and Theory*, 227.

[19] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xlii.

[20] For the connection between fallibility and knowledge in Ricoeur, see Thomas W. Ogletree, "Christian Social Ethics as a Theological Discipline", in Barbara G. Wheeler, Edward Farley (eds), *Shifting Boundaries*, 234.

to the concept of fault, Ricoeur leads us to believe that the myth of Adam's fall cannot be properly understood if taken on its own or in its original religious and theological setting. In order for the myth of Adam's fall to be accurately presented today, we must apply the hermeneutics of the symbolism of evil to this myth and this is how we shall expose it as the symbol of sin (or of original sin). Once here, we have to understand that symbolism must also be deciphered by means of language—in Ricoeur's case, the language of avowal which expresses the ideas of fault and evil in philosophical terms. This particular language, however, is a matter of self-consciousness and self-consciousness is a matter of one's will since the symbolism of evil is based on deciphering the mythology of bad will.

So fault and evil have to do with bad will and we know this because we translated the myth of Adam's fall into the symbol of original sin and we reached the conclusion that the idea of fault or evil is an issue which has a direct connection to the individual will. This does not mean that we have automatically discovered the locus of evil in human will;[21] this would be all too simple. Having established the way hermeneutics functions from mythology to symbolism or from the mythology of bad will to the symbolism of evil with reference to the idea of fault, Ricoeur still asks himself which is the locus of evil.[22] If human reality is affected by evil, how and where did evil manage to get within it? What actually makes evil possible in human reality?[23] Finding an answer to this question is unveiling the essence of fallibility:

> The exegesis of these symbols prepares the myths for *insertion* into man's knowledge of himself. In this way a symbolics of evil is an initial step toward bringing myths nearer to philosophic discourse. In the present work this symbolics of evil occupies the second of three projected books. Now, in this second part, linguistic prob-

[21] Patrick L. Bourgeois, *Extension of Ricoeur's Hermeneutic*, 28.
[22] Patrick L. Bourgeois, Frank Schalow, *Traces of Understanding*, 19.
[23] Henry Isaac Venema, *Identifying Selfhood*, 54-55.

> lems hold an important place. Indeed, the specific feature of the language of avowal has appeared more and more as one of the most astonishing enigmas of self-consciousness--making it seem as though man reached his own depth only by way of the royal road of analogy, as though self-consciousness could be expressed only in riddles and would necessarily require a hermeneutics. While the meditation on the mythics of bad will was unfolding into a *symbolics of evil*, reflection was pushing on in another direction: what is the human "locus" of evil, what is its point of insertion in human reality? In order to reply to that question I wrote the outline of philosophical anthropology placed at the beginning of this work. This study is centered on the theme of fallibility: the constitutional weakness that makes evil possible. By means of the concept of fallibility, philosophical anthropology comes, as it were, to the encounter of the symbolics of evil, just as the symbolics of evil brings myths closer to philosophic discourse. With the concept of fallibility, the doctrine of man approaches a threshold of intelligibility wherein it is understandable that evil could "come into the world" through man. Beyond this threshold begins the enigma of an upheaval in which discourse is only indirect and ciphered.[24]

It is clear that man is fallible and evil is part of his existence but the actual way evil grew to affect human existence is what concerns Ricoeur.[25] It is absolutely essential to stress here that Ricoeur notices a crucial fact, namely that it is possible to admit that evil came into the world through man. At this point—at least at the level of basic linguistics—Ricoeur concurs with traditional Christian theology because both admit that evil came into the world through man. The problem begins, however, when we attempt to see what the coming of evil into the world through man means for Ricoeur and what it means for traditional Christianity.

[24] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xliii.

[25] David E. Klemm, "Searching for a Heart of Gold", in John Wall, William Schweiker, W. David Hall (eds), *Paul Ricoeur and Contemporary Moral Thought*, 102-103.

The explanation is pretty straightforward with traditional Christianity. Sin is not understood as a symbol because Adam's fall is not considered a myth. Adam's fall is a historical fact, therefore original sin and sin in general is an ontological reality which places the human being in sheer opposition to God—and God is neither myth nor symbol but a person who has an ontological status. In other words, traditional Christianity promotes a dual ontological reality: the metaphysical reality of God and the physical reality of man. Sin is performed by man and caused by man, so the locus of sin is the human being. Traditional Christianity also allows for the difference between sin and evil, as the sin of man is the manifestation of an evil which exists beyond man.

For Ricoeur though, things are a bit more complicated. Sin is a symbol because Adam's fall is a myth, so Adam's fall is not a historical fact; therefore, original sin and sin in general are mere symbols of human's reality as characterized by evil. Ricoeur's presentation of Adam's fall as a myth leads not only to the explicit transformation of sin into a symbol but also to the implicit disannulment of traditional Christianity's dual ontological reality. Thus, in Ricoeur, God can be either a myth or a symbol because sin itself is a symbol. There is no ontological status attached to sin in Ricoeur, so if sin does not exist as ontological reality, why should God? There can be a metaphysical reality of God in Ricoeur but this does not necessarily have to be ontological; it can be mythical or symbolic, or even conceptual but it does not seem to be ontological. Therefore, in Ricoeur, God seems to be present only as a concept which symbolically explains the fundamental nature of religious and theological mythology.

Between Finitude and Infinitude

Ricoeur's philosophy of fallibility cannot be understood unless the fundamentals of his understanding of man are unveiled. For him, man is a dual being in the sense that it is ontologically confronted with the disproportion between the polarity of finitude

and the polarity of infinitude.[26] Man must be understood in terms of the mediation between human finitude and infinitude because it is this mediation that explains man's fallibility.[27] Thus, the translation of myths into symbols and their subsequent insertion in man's knowledge of himself lay the basis of a philosophical discourse which paves the way to the idea of the possibility of evil[28] and this is fallibility.[29] In other words, fallibility is the possibility of evil because fault and evil realities which resulted from the translation of myths, such as Adam's fall, into symbols, such as original sin. Nevertheless, both myths and symbols must be inserted in man's knowledge of himself, so sin—understood as symbol—teaches man about himself, not about something beyond him. But this is not enough for Ricoeur. Translating myths into symbols and then inserting symbols into man's knowledge of himself is not sufficient. What we have to do from now on is apply a certain type of hermeneutics to symbols. Thus, symbols must be understood over against the text but Ricoeur's hermeneutics does not only read the text by working behind the symbol but from the symbol.[30] This means that the symbols we find in the text can lead to new meanings that inform man's knowledge of himself.

> The elaboration of the concept of fallibility has provided an opportunity for a much more extensive study of the structures of human reality. The duality of the voluntary and the involuntary is brought back into a much vaster dialectic dominated by the ideas of man's disproportion, the polarity within him of the finite and the infinite, and his activity of intermediation or mediation. Man's specific weakness and his essential fallibility are ultimately sought

[26] For details, see Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Paul Ricoeur. The Promise and Risk of Politics*, 61.
[27] Details about Ricoeur's view of finitude can be found in Walter Lowe, *Theology and Difference. The Wound of Reason*, 156.
[28] Eugene T. Long, *Twentieth Century Western Philosophy of Religion, 1900-2000*, 431.
[29] Karl Simms, *Paul Ricoeur*, 15-16.
[30] Don Ihde, *Hermeneutic Phenomenology*, 161.

> within this structure of mediation between the pole of his finitude and the pole of his infinitude. […] by preceding the symbolics of evil with an elucidation of the concept of fallibility, I was confronted with the difficulty of incorporating the symbolics of evil into philosophic discourse. […] this philosophic discourse leads to the idea of the possibility of evil or fallibility, and it receives new life and considerable enrichment from the symbolics of evil. But this is achieved only at the price of a revolution in method, represented by the recourse to a hermeneutics, that is, to rules of deciphering applied to a world of symbols. Now, this hermeneutics is not of the same nature as the reflective thought that led to the concept of fallibility. The rules for transposing the symbolics of evil into a new type of philosophic discourse are outlined in the last chapter of the second part under the title "The symbol gives thought." The text is the pivotal point of the whole work. It shows how we can both respect the specific nature of the symbolic world of expressions and think, not at all "behind" the symbol but "starting from" the symbol.[31]

It seems that Ricoeur's theory of fallibility based on his hermeneutics which works from the symbol makes sure that his anthropology benefits from some sort of an ongoing relevance.[32] If the symbol is the starting point of hermeneutics, then it means that the meaning of the symbol undergoes a constant process of change which is aimed at offering an understanding of humanity which presents constant relevance throughout history. Thus, Ricoeur's philosophy is historically conditioned to such a high extent that it can offer a relevant image of humanity at any given historical stage. The symbols of religious and theological texts can therefore be permanently translated from myths into new images of humanity that explain why the possibility of evil is present within man's existence. It is interesting that Ricoeur prefers to talk about fallibility in terms of the possibility of evil, not in terms of the actuality of evil. This does not of course cancel his recognition of the actuality of evil; on the

[31] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xliii-xliv.
[32] Steven H. Clark, *Paul Ricoeur*, 32.

contrary, he seems to attempt to provide an explanation of why evil is constantly present in human life and fallibility described as possibility makes evil an immanent reality of man's existence. In fact, it is the possibility of evil that explains the actuality of evil as manifestation of human fallibility, and in this respect Ricoeur resorts to psychoanalysis[33] and political philosophy.[34]

So, he is convinced that in order for us to understand fallibility in a proper way, we have to go beyond religion and theology in the realm of psychoanalysis and political philosophy. Human fallibility is so vividly confirmed by the historical reality of evil that Ricoeur cannot conceive human fallibility without the problem of power. Resorting to psychoanalysis and political philosophy does not mean breaking up with religion and theology—it is actually the other way around: psychoanalysis and political philosophy continue what religion and theology initiated by symbolically presenting the reality of human alienation.[35] In other words, Ricoeur acknowledges that the human being has a fundamental problem which can be described in terms of the possibility of evil or fallibility. This is because fallibility is present in everyday reality to such an extent that from mythological religion and theology to scientific psychoanalysis and political philosophy man has plentifully proved his utter inability to know himself. Ricoeur is convinced that the symbolism of evil is always followed or accompanied by the empiricism of the will; fallibility is not only a philosophical-theoretical issue but also a historical-practical problem. Man has a serious problem which can be understood only if he accepts the reality of his will as being a slave-will,[36] namely a "free will that is bound and always finds itself already bound."[37] To conclude,

[33] John B. Thompson, *Critical Hermeneutics*, 46.
[34] Bernard P. Dauenhauer, *Paul Ricoeur*, 74.
[35] For an analysis of alienation in Ricoeur, see Jacques Ellul, *The Ethics of Freedom*, 28.
[36] See also William David Hall, *Paul Ricoeur and the Poetic Imperative*, 66.
[37] Ricoeur, *Fallible Man*, xlv.

man's fallibility must be perceived by means of the tension between his free will and the realities which constantly bind his will.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

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