

# Perichoresis

THE THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL OF  
EMANUEL UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA

VOLUME 9  
ISSUE 1  
2011



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THE PRICE OF AN ISSUE IS EUR 20, including postage and handling charges.

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# “Prepared to do, prepared to die.” Evangelicalism, Imperialism, and Late-Victorian Canadian Children’s Publications

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**Abstract.** Canadian churches took seriously their commitment to nation and empire-building in the welter of late-Victorian imperial commitments. This particular study explores one unique and little-known expression of Canadian Methodist and Presbyterian imperialism: the infusing of children with imperial virtues. What is striking for the purposes of this essay is the conflation of family values, evangelicalism and imperialism. The lived experience is decidedly imperial in these children’s publications. Evangelicalism’s emphasis on family was an important motivating factor in nurturing young imperialists, and the editors of these publications believed that imperial values were synonymous with Christian values, and that girls and boys who embodied the ideals of their papers would become good mothers, fathers, citizens, as well as defenders of empire. While it is difficult to determine how many children took the imperial message to heart, the fusion of family values and imperialism reveals just how enmeshed evangelicalism had become with late-Victorian imperialism.

**Key words:** imperialism, evangelicalism, children, newspapers, war

The Seventy-First Annual Meeting of the Methodist Sabbath Schools in Montreal on New Years Day, 1900, was a jingoistic affair:

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The most interesting thing in this New Year's gathering, and the thing which will render it memorable, was the enthusiastic spirit of patriotism that was displayed. The scholars came provided with small Union Jacks and made use of them heartily at different points in the service. It was truly a sight not soon to be forgotten to see five thousand children in the body and galleries of our noble Methodist Cathedral waving their small flags as they sang with joyous faces:

God bless our native land!  
 Firm may she ever stand,  
 Through storm and night,  
 When the wild tempests rage,  
 Ruler of wind and wave,  
 Do thou our country save,  
 By thy great might!"

to the tune of the National Anthem, or as they took up the chorus:

Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves,  
 Britons never, never, never shall be slaves.

Patriotism reached fever-heat, however, when Dr. Morton suggested the sending of messages to the Queen, and to the Canadian Contingent in South Africa. The suggestion was at once taken up with deafening applause and frantic waving of flags. The Empire is safe for the future as it is safe in the present when the children of the colonies display such loyalty and patriotism as were manifested in St. James last New Year's morning.<sup>1</sup>

This youthful imperial zeal in a province known more for its lukewarm support for British imperialism was neither an exception nor an accident, for Methodists in Canada were quite intentional in the way they went about nurturing ardent little

<sup>1</sup> "Great Sunday School Meeting in St. James' Church on New Year's Day," *Wesleyan*, 10 January 1900, 4.

imperialists in their ranks. Elsewhere in the Methodist press a line in one poem read: “The Empire’s children stand, prepared to do, prepared to die.” This poem is but one example of the imperial sentiment in its children’s literature, for this late-Victorian genre featured poems that extolled the empire and imperial virtues, maps that outlined the growing boundaries of the British Empire, pictures that portrayed the many subjects of empire, and stories of adventures, battles and “glorious deeds” done for the sake of the empire. John MacKenzie has noted how in Britain there was no pressing need for government agencies to be involved in imperial propaganda, for a number of non-governmental agencies were enthusiastically doing it for them.<sup>2</sup> In late-Victorian Canada it was much the same, and one example of such voluntary promotion of the empire was the extent to which Canadian Protestant churches sought to inculcate imperial virtues among the young readers of their children’s publications.

Canadian Protestant churches at this time were imbued with an ardent imperialism, and were firmly and enthusiastically committed to the imperial cause in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> In the dan-

<sup>2</sup> John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire. The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880-1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 2-3.

<sup>3</sup> The four largest Protestant denominations that represented over eighty-five percent of Protestants in Canada were (largest to smallest), Methodists, Presbyterians, Anglicans and Baptists. For analysis of imperialism in these churches, see Gordon L. Heath, *A War with a Silver Lining. Canadian Protestant Churches and the South African War, 1899-1902* (Montreal/Kingston/ London/Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009); Gordon L. Heath, “‘Were We in the Habit of Deifying Monarchs’: Canadian English Protestants and the Death of Queen Victoria, 1901,” *Canadian Evangelical Review* (Fall 2005-Spring 2006): 72-97; Gordon L. Heath, “‘Citizens of that Mighty Empire’: Imperial Sentiment among Students at Wesley College, 1897-1902,” *Manitoba History* (June 2005): 15-25; Gordon L. Heath, “Sin in the Camp: The Day of Humble Supplication in the Anglican Church in Canada in the Early

gerous social-Darwinian world of competing races and clashing empires, matters of nation and empire were considered to be life or death. Imperialism also was an ideology where a number of different movements and impulses such as the social gospel, missions, racism, constructions of gender and the “other” coalesced. In this welter of imperial passions, the churches took seriously their commitment to nation and empire-building. This particular study explores one unique and little-known expression of Methodist and Presbyterian imperialism: the infusing of their children with imperial virtues. What is striking for the purposes of this research is the conflation of family values, evangelicalism and imperialism. Marguerite Van Die’s research into religion, family and community in late-Victorian evangelical Protestant Canada draws attention to how religion shaped family identity, and the variety of ways in which religion adopted cultural forms; a process she refers to as lived experience.<sup>4</sup> The lived experience—to use Van Die’s expression—is decidedly imperial in these children’s publications. Evangelicalism’s emphasis on family was an important motivating factor in nurturing young imperialists. The editors of these publications believed that imperial values were synonymous with Christian values, and that girls and boys who embodied the ideals of their papers would become good mothers, fathers, citizens, as well as defenders of empire. Consequently, articles on faith, heroes, vocation, patriotism and entertainment were permeated with imperial sentiment. And while it is difficult to determine

Months of the South African War,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 44 (Fall 2002): 207-226; Gordon L. Heath, “Passion for Empire: War Poetry Published in the Canadian English Protestant Press during the South African War, 1899-1902,” *Literature and Theology* 16 (June 2002): 127-147.

<sup>4</sup> Marguerite Van Die, *Religion, Family, and Community in Victorian Canada: The Colbys of Carrollcroft* (Montreal/Kingston/London/Ithaca: McGill Queen’s University Press, 2005).



how many children took the imperial message to heart, the fusion of family values and imperialism reveals just how enmeshed evangelicalism had become with late-Victorian imperialism.

### Children's Literature

Out of all the literature that pervaded Victorian-Edwardian culture, "few were as prominent or as inspiring as popular literature."<sup>5</sup> Cheap papers and magazines flourished in late-Victorian Britain, and during those years children's books and periodicals constituted one of the largest genres in the industry.<sup>6</sup> There were two broad categories of children's literature, "wholesome" and "pernicious," and the latter included the "penny dreadfuls"<sup>7</sup> or the "shilling shockers."<sup>8</sup> Many churches were concerned that such papers challenged respectable morality, and the Religious Tract Society's attempt to counter the penny dreadfuls by publishing the *Boy's Own Paper* is the most well-known attempt to respond to the perceived danger. The *Boy's Own Paper* experienced remarkable growth, and eventually had a circulation in Britain of over one million.<sup>9</sup> The growth and impact of these children's publications in Britain has received

<sup>5</sup> Patrick A. Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," *Victorian Studies* 24 (Autumn, 1980), 105.

<sup>6</sup> Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," 106.

<sup>7</sup> Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," 106.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Bristow, *Empire Boys. Adventures in a Man's World* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), 11ff.

<sup>9</sup> There were numerous other children's papers; however, the *Boy's Own Paper* had the largest circulation of them all. See Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," 108. The *Boy's Own Paper* was circulated in Canada, often as a complete set (one year bound as a book). Circulation figures are unknown.

significant attention from a number of historians,<sup>10</sup> however, this has not been the case for this little known genre published in Canada.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> For instance, see Peter Hunt and Karen Sands, "The View from the Center: British Empire and Post-Empire Children's Literature," *Voices of the Other. Children's Literature and the Postcolonial Context*, edited by Roderick McGillis (New York/London: Garland Publishing, 2000), 39-53; Kristine Moruzi, "Feminine Bravery: *The Girl's Realm* (1898-1915) and the Second Boer War," *Children's Literature Association* 34 (Fall 2009): 241-254; Kathryn Castle, *Britannia's Children. Reading Colonialism through Children's Books and Magazine* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996); Kelly Boyd, *Manliness and the Boys' Story Paper in Britain. A Cultural History, 1855-1940* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003); Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," 105-121; Patrick A. Dunae, "Penny Dreadfuls. Late Nineteenth-Century Boy's Literature and Crime," *Victorian Studies* 22.2 (Winter 1979): 133-150; Bristow, *Empire Boys. Adventures in a Man's World*; John Springhall, "'Healthy Papers for Manly Boys': Imperialism and Race in the Harmsworth' Halfpenny Boy's Papers of the 1890s and 1900s," *Imperialism and Juvenile Literature*, edited by Jeffrey Richards (Manchester/New York: Manchester University Press, 1989), 107-125; Kelly Boyd, "Exemplars and Ingrates: Imperialism and the Boy's Story Paper, 1880-1930," *Historical Research* 67 (June 1994): 143-155; Patricia Mary Barnett, "English Boy's Weeklies, 1866-1899," PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1974; R. G. Moyles, "A 'Boy's Own' View of Canada," *Canadian Children's Literature* 34 (1984): 41-56; MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, ch. 8; Christopher Banham, "'England and America against the World.' Empire and the USA in Edwin J. Brett's *Boys of England*, 1866-99," *Victorian Periodicals Review* 40 (Summer 2007): 151-171; Robert H. MacDonald, "Signs from the Imperial Quarter. Illustrations in *Chums*, 1892-1914," *Children's Literature* 16 (1988): 31-55; Robert H. MacDonald, "Reproducing the Middle-Class Boy. From Purity to Patriotism in the Boys' Magazines, 1892-1914," *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (July 1989): 519-539; Sheila Bannerman, "Manliness and the English Soldier in the Anglo-Boer War 1899-1902. The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same," PhD dissertation, University of Lethbridge, 2005.

<sup>11</sup> R. G. Moyles examines *The Boy's Own* paper from the perspective of how the paper portrayed Canada to its readers in Britain. He does not look at distinctly Canadian publications. See Moyles, "A 'Boy's Own' View of Canada," 41-56. Janice Hill identifies the conflation of evangelicalism and impe-

Late-Victorian Canada also experienced rapid growth of the press,<sup>12</sup> and the religious press comprised a significant part of this increase. Merrill Distad claims that the “largest single genre [in late-Victorian Canada] was the religious press which accounted for at least one-fifth of all non-government imprints.”<sup>13</sup> The late-Victorian Canadian Protestant press had a significant number of publications, with some papers surpassing secular newspapers in circulation.<sup>14</sup> One significant genre among these numerous church publications was that of children’s literature, often distributed in Sunday Schools or by visiting clergymen in homes, but usually mailed directly to homes through subscriptions. Publications such as the Methodist *Pleasant Hours* or the Presbyterian *King’s Own* sought to provide material for the spiritual and character development of children, and other publi-

cialism within Canada, and looks at secular children’s groups and publications, but ignores the churches’ children’s publications. See Janice Hill, “Governing Children. The Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides, and Visions of Canadian Nationhood, 1880-1921,” *Symbolic Childhood*, edited by Daniel Thomas Cook (Peter Lang: New York/Berlin/ Brussels/Vienna/Oxford, 2002), 131-146.

<sup>12</sup> For a history of the development of the press in Canada, see Douglas Featherling, *The Rise of the Canadian Newspaper* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1990); W. H. Kesterton, *A History of Journalism in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Limited, 1967); and Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic. A History of Canadian Magazines* (Markham: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1989).

<sup>13</sup> Merrill Distad, “Newspapers and Magazines,” *History of the Book in Canada*, Vol. 2, edited by Patricia L. Fleming and Yvan Lamonde (Toronto/Buffalo/London: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 299-300.

<sup>14</sup> For an analysis and summary of the Late-Victorian Canadian Protestant Press, see Gordon L. Heath, “‘Forming Sound Public Opinion’: The Late Victorian Canadian Protestant Press and Nation-Building,” *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society* 48 (2006): 109-159. John Wolffe notes how, in general, evangelical children were intentionally shaped by a significant body of literature. See John Wolffe, *The Expansion of Evangelicalism. The Age of Wilberforce, More, Chalmers and Finney* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2007), 154ff.

cations provided similar material for teens.<sup>15</sup> The two main sources for this research are the Canadian-made<sup>16</sup> *Pleasant Hours* (1899-1902), a bi-weekly with a circulation of almost 52,000, and the *King's Own* (1899-1902), with a weekly circulation of over 20,000.<sup>17</sup> While these numbers may not seem impressive when compared with the circulation figures of the Boy's Own Paper, they are impressive numbers for a late-Victorian Canadian magazine (secular or religious).<sup>18</sup>

The caliber of these children's papers was far from Shakespearean, but, as Patricia Barnett asserts, this should not deter one from studying them.<sup>19</sup> Imperialism peaked in the decades after the 1870s, and these papers provide remarkable insights into the heightened sensitivity to all things empire.<sup>20</sup> It should be noted that the "popular literature for boys was, however,

<sup>15</sup> The most note-worthy other publication was the Methodist *Onward*. It had a circulation in 1902 around 39,000.

<sup>16</sup> The focus in this research is on magazines and papers published from within Canada by Canadian editors for Canadian denominations. These Canadian publications often re-printed material drawn from American, British, and other sources.

<sup>17</sup> With a circulation of over 50,000, the *Pleasant Hours* was one of Canada's largest publications. For a summary of these two publications, see Heath, "Forming Sound Public Opinion," 147, 151.

<sup>18</sup> The Baptists did not seem to have a children's publication, whereas the Anglicans had the *Canadian Church Juvenile*. The *Canadian Church Juvenile* was an inferior product compared with the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours*. By 1912 the publication had become something closer in quality—but even then it was still inferior.

<sup>19</sup> Barnett, "English Boy's Weeklies, 1866-1899," 1. For further discussion of the importance of newspapers as a source for historians, see Springhall, "Healthy Papers for Manly Boys," 109; Glenn R. Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 8-9.

<sup>20</sup> Christopher Banham argues that boy's literature was one of the cultural forms where imperialism was most evident. See Banham, "'England and America against the World,'" 151.

more than just a mirror of imperial thought. Throughout the period the literature also played an important role in promoting an interest in empire among a large and impressionable audience."<sup>21</sup> The Victorians were convinced that these publications played a significant role in the shaping of young lives,<sup>22</sup> and while just how much of an impact this literature had on its readers cannot be precisely determined, a number of contemporary historians are convinced that the press made a profound impact on its readers.<sup>23</sup>

### Imperialism in the Press

Like the genre best exemplified by the *Boy's Own Paper*, the *Pleasant Hours* and the *King's Own* are rich sources, for, along with the expected Bible stories and moral instruction, their contents included a potent mix of imperialism and nationalism. And while the *Pleasant Hours* and *King's Own* could not compete with the circulation of the *Boy's Own Paper*, the editors were convinced that their papers had no small part to play in the formation of the virtues that they wanted to inculcate in their young Canadian readers.<sup>24</sup>

In keeping with their evangelical roots, the two publications encouraged children to make sure that their faith was a genuine

<sup>21</sup> Dunae, "Boy's Literature and the Idea of Empire, 1870-1914," 120-121.

<sup>22</sup> Patricia Mary Barnett, "English Boy's Weeklies, 1866-1899," PhD dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1974, 261.

<sup>23</sup> Bristow, *Empire Boys: Adventures in a Man's World* 48; Barnett, "English Boy's Weeklies, 1866-1899," 183; Mark Moss, *Manliness and Militarism. Educating Young Boys in Ontario for War* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 61.

<sup>24</sup> To what degree the inclusion of imperial themes was driven by the need to sell papers is hard to discern. What is known is that imperialism sold papers. See MacDonald, "Reproducing the Middle-Class Boy," 520; MacDonald, "Signs from the Imperial Quarter," 34, 37.

faith and not an empty religion.<sup>25</sup> However, Christianity was considered to be more than right doctrine or pious prayers, for true religion was also supposed to be marked by Christian actions and Christian character. Consequently, the pages were filled with exhortations to avoid booze and the saloon,<sup>26</sup> to support overseas missions,<sup>27</sup> and, in the spirit of the social gospel, to transform society.<sup>28</sup> Doing was the key to a real Christian faith, and a great deal of the doing related to empire. In addition to doing, youthful readers were exhorted to develop and exhibit cardinal Christian virtues such as discipline, duty and responsibility; virtues that were, as the end of the nineteenth century drew nigh,<sup>29</sup> increasingly considered necessary for church work as well as for the momentous task of expanding, defending, and developing the empire.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see "Heartless Prayers," *Pleasant Hours*, 4 February 1899, 19; "Formal Prayer," *King's Own*, 27 July 1901, 119; "No Time to Pray," *King's Own*, 26 October 1901, 172; "Saying and Doing," *King's Own*, 19 April 1902, 64.

<sup>26</sup> There were myriad articles, poems and artwork related to temperance. For examples of some poems, see "We're Coming to the Rescue," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 January 1899, 12; "Wanted. A Million Boys," *Pleasant Hours*, 23 September 1899, 151; "Glass Number One," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 November 1899, 182; "When Daddy Comes Home," *King's Own*, 21 September 1901, 150.

<sup>27</sup> For example, see "China's Dying Millions," *Pleasant Hours*, 6 April 1901, 54; "What They Do in China," *Pleasant Hours*, 11 May 1901, 76; "South America's Need of Missions," *Pleasant Hours*, 7 June 1902, 89.

<sup>28</sup> The poem "Shine Where You Are" expresses the desire to make the world a better place. A part of it reads: "Would you have the world better and brighter?/ Then light up the way as you go;/ Make some little part of it lighter/ With beams from your life's steady glow." See "Shine Where You Are," *King's Own*, 19 April 1902, 64.

<sup>29</sup> Robert MacDonald identifies a noticeable shift at the turn of the century away from moral issues to imperial concerns. See MacDonald, "Reproducing the Middle-Class Boy."

The life portrayed for boys was a life of action, adventure, and heroic struggles against all sorts of evils, personal, national and imperial. This late-Victorian fusion of manliness with imperialism represents, according to Norman Vance, "an extension of the mid-Victorian combination of manliness and patriotism."<sup>30</sup> And the call was for heroes in a form of Victorian chivalric manliness. Poems such as "The Real Hero," "Our Heroes," "Onward, Youthful Heroes," and "Heroes," made it quite clear that Christian boyhood (and ultimately manhood) entailed standing up for justice and truth, regardless of the cost.<sup>31</sup> The *Pleasant Hours* reprinted the poem "The Boys We Need" three times in one year, and this poem provides a glimpse of ideal manliness, as well as the type of children needed to reverse the perceived decline of the Anglo-Saxon race:

Here's to the boy who's not afraid  
To do his share of work;  
Who never is by toil dismayed,  
And never tries to shirk.  
The boy whose heart is brave to meet  
All lions in the way;  
Who's not discouraged by defeat,  
But tries another day.

<sup>30</sup> Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit. The Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 195.

<sup>31</sup> Eben E. Rexford, "The Real Hero," *Pleasant Hours*, 6 April 1901, 53; Phoebe Cary, "Our Heroes," *Pleasant Hours*, 5 January 1901, 2; Phoebe Cary, "Our Heroes," *Pleasant Hours*, 24 August 1901, 136; E. A. Girvin, "Onward, Youthful Heroes," *Pleasant Hours*, 25 May 1901, 84; "Heroes," *King's Own*, 23 March 1901, 46; Longfellow, "Manliness," *King's Own*, 24 March 1900, 45; "Which Shall It Be?" *Pleasant Hours*, 2 February 1901, 18; H. L. Charles, "A Gentlemanly Boy," *Pleasant Hours*, 8 July 1899, 105; "A Battle for Young Soldiers," *King's Own*, 15 December 1900, 198; Ernest Neal Lyon, "To the Boys of the New Century," *Pleasant Hours*, 26 January 1901, 16.

The boy who always means to do  
 The very best he can;  
 Who always keeps the right in view,  
 And aims to be a man.  
 Such boys as these will grow to be  
 The men whose hands will guide  
 The future of our land; and we  
 Shall speak their names with pride.  
 All honour to the boy who is  
 A man at heart, I say;  
 Whose legend on his shield is this:  
 "Right always wins the day."<sup>32</sup>

The call was for boys to grow into men of character, and that character would ultimately shape the nation's destiny.<sup>33</sup> Within these poems, one gets glimpses of how the press sought to inculcate imperial values that would make Canada's children the saviors of the nation and empire. There was significant anxiety in Britain about the condition of the empire at the end of the nineteenth century, and much of the imperial zeal was reaction to feelings of insecurity about Britain's continued dominance. There was also a fear that Britain's decadence and sins threatened the empire, and that the superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race would be lost. A popular conviction was that war and soldierly qualities could reverse the corrosive influences of an increasingly materialistic society; in that sense imperialism was

<sup>32</sup> "The Boys We Need," *Pleasant Hours*, 28 January 1899, 15; "The Boys We Need," *Pleasant Hours*, 24 June 1899, 98; "The Boys We Need," *Pleasant Hours*, 8 July 1899, 106. For another example of the heroic ideal, see "For Battle," *King's Own*, 3 February 1900, 17.

<sup>33</sup> For instance, see "Wanted," *Pleasant Hours*, 2 September 1899, 139. Moss notes that the role of childhood shifted from the mid-nineteenth to the early-twentieth century. By the early-twentieth century, children were seen to be the "future" of the country. See Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 44ff.



perceived by many to be "an antidote to the evils of contemporary social life."<sup>34</sup> Consequently, as John Tosh notes, the overseas threats contributed to the convergence of the language of empire and the language of manliness.<sup>35</sup>

In late-Victorian Canada, the nation's destiny was intimately associated with that of the British Empire, and this was made clear in every issue. Images of, and reporting on, the monarchy abounded in the press, and what made for more than the normal fair was the death of Queen Victoria in 1901 and the coronation of Edward VII in 1902.<sup>36</sup> The Protestant press in general spared no efforts to report on the Queen's death,<sup>37</sup> and in this regard the *Pleasant Hours* and *King's Own* intensive coverage of events was in concert with other publications. Articles such as "An Incident in Victoria's Childhood," "The Queen's Early Years," "A Kind Little Princess," "The Queen's Dolls," "At Twelve Years Old," and "The Princess Who Became Queen,"

<sup>34</sup> Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power. Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism, 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 253. See also Anne Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," *History Workshop Journal* 2.1 (1976): 111.

<sup>35</sup> John Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2005), 193-194.

<sup>36</sup> For examples of articles on the Queen's death, see "The Death of the Queen," *Pleasant Hours*, 23 February 1901, 30; "The Queen's Funeral," *Pleasant Hours*, 23 March 1901, 46; "Tributes to the Queen," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 May 1901, 1; Rev. Dr. Carman on the Queen," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 May 1901, 1; "The Queen's Funeral," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 May 1901, 78. For examples of articles on the coronation of Edward VII, see "Edward VII," *Pleasant Hours*, 29 June 1901, 1; "The Coronation Procession," *Pleasant Hours*, 1 November 1902, 1; "The King's Coronation Robes," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 June 1902, 98; "England's King," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 June 1902, 1; "The Coronation of King Edward VII," *Pleasant Hours*, 25 October 1902, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Heath, "Were We in the Habit of Deifying Monarchs," 72-97.

reinforced traditional roles for girls.<sup>38</sup> Articles that focused on the Queen's adult life covered a wide range of topics, including how she traveled, her birthdays, her character, her concern for children as well as the elderly, and her home life in general.<sup>39</sup> What pleased the editors most of all was the religious life of Queen Victoria: in all cases, she was not found wanting. Queen Victoria's faith, discipline, sense of duty, and character were all worthy of emulation. She was a Christian Queen, and while young girls could not be a queen like her, they could be an ideal mother—or what one author coins "mothers of empire."<sup>40</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "An Incident in Victoria's Childhood," *Pleasant Hours*, 16 March 1901, 42; "The Queen's Early Years," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 May 1901, 78; "A Kind Little Princess," *Pleasant Hours*, 17 May 1902, 80; "The Queen's Dolls," *King's Own*, 2 March 1901, 34; "At Twelve Years Old," *King's Own*, 2 March 1901, 34; Elspeth Moray, "The Princess Who Became Queen," *King's Own*, 2 March 1901, 33-34. For other examples of the reinforcement of traditional gender roles, see "The Grown-Up Land," *King's Own*, 17 February 1900, 27. (The same poem was published in the *Pleasant Hours*. See "Growing-Up Land," *Pleasant Hours*, 1 July 1899, 101.) See also "Loveliness," *King's Own*, 5 October 1901, 160; "The Girl Who Smiles," *King's Own*, 1 September 1900, 140; "Grandma's Angel," *King's Own*, 29 September 1900, 154; Constance M. Lowe, "Isn't It Mother?" *Pleasant Hours*, 16; "Girls That Are Wanted," *Pleasant Hours*, 4 November 1899, 176.

<sup>39</sup> "The Queen and Her Children," *King's Own*, 2 March 1901, 34; "Stories of the World's Greatest Queen," *Pleasant Hours*, 16 March 1901, 43; "How Queen Victoria Traveled," *Pleasant Hours*, 6 July 1901, 104; "The Queen's Birthday," *King's Own*, 18 May 1901, 79; "What the Queen Read," *Pleasant Hours*, 2 March 1901, 34; "Anecdotes of Queen Victoria," *Pleasant Hours*, 25 May 1901, 82; "Incidents of the Late Queen's Life," *Pleasant Hours*, 29 June 1901, 106.

<sup>40</sup> This idea can best be seen in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide manuals. See Hill, "Governing Children," 140; Tim Jeal, *Baden-Powell* (London: Hutchinson, 1990). As authors such as Joanna Trollope have shown, numerous women had caught the imperial vision. See Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire* (London: Pimlico, 1983).

Despite the fusion of imperialism with manliness, both boys and girls were inculcated with a passion for empire. The link between Canada and the empire was made clear to the young readers, and the neo-British white identity identified elsewhere was often expressed through poetry.<sup>41</sup> While there were poems that waxed eloquently just about Canada, poems such as "I Love Thee England," "The U. E. Loyalists," "Victoria," "The Queen's Birthday," "God Save the King," "The Union Jack," and "England's Heroes Too" expressed and nurtured the imperial connection.<sup>42</sup> As Carl Berger, Robert Page and others have noted, imperialism was one form of Canadian nationalism, and to be loyal to Britain did not mean that you were a disloyal Canadian.<sup>43</sup> In promoting such connections to Britain, editors were shaping a particular type of national identity that

<sup>41</sup> See Banham, "England and America against the World," 162.

<sup>42</sup> M. Louis Swart, "I Love Thee England," *Pleasant Hours*, 18 May 1901, 79; Rev. Leroy Hooker, "The U. E. Loyalists," *Pleasant Hours*, 6 July 1901, 104; W. Wilfred Campbell, "Victoria," *King's Own*, 26 May 1900, 81; "The Queen's Birthday," *Pleasant Hours*, 20 May 1899, 78; "God Save the King," *King's Own*, 21 June 1902, 97; "The Union Jack," *Pleasant Hours*, 1 June 1901, 88; W. Wilfred Campbell, "England's Heroes Too," *King's Own*, 21 April 1900, 61. See also "Dominion Day," *King's Own*, 30 June 1900, 101; "Our Country," *King's Own*, 27 September 1902, 155; "Canada," *King's Own*, 28 September 1901, 156; R. S. G. A., "The Seven Sisters," *King's Own*, 29 June 1901, 101; Geo. W. Armstrong, "A Dominion Hymn," *Pleasant Hours*, 28 June 1902, 104; Rev. W. M. MacKeracher, "Dominion Day," *Pleasant Hours*, 13 July 1901, 110; Edward Hartley Dewart, "Ode to Canada," *Pleasant Hours*, 29 June 1901, 105; W. J. Topley, "Canada, Our Own Fair Land," *Pleasant Hours*, 8 July 1899, 107; M. Algon Bibby(?), "A Song of the Northland," *Pleasant Hours*, 6 July 1901, 102.

<sup>43</sup> Berger, *The Sense of Power*; Robert J. D. Page, "Canada and the Imperial Idea in the Boer War Years," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 5 (February 1970): 33-49; Phillip Buckner, "Whatever Happened to the British Empire?" *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 4 (1993): 3-32; Heath, *A War with a Silver Lining*.

placed Canadian identity in the familial bonds of a global empire. They also drew upon such shared history as a way to encourage and inspire good behavior in the children (an interesting example of finding a usable past in history): in order to stir boys out of their laziness one editor reprinted a poem from *Young Canada* (a boy's publication published in Toronto), a poem that recounted Nelson's watchword at Trafalgar "England expects every man to do his duty," and vividly painted a picture Britain's glorious past.<sup>44</sup> This hope was that such martial and imperial memories would be just what was needed to get the boys motivated.

The oft-criticized war in South Africa between Britain and its empire against the Boers (1899-1902) meant that the reputation of the empire needed defending. Britain's conduct in the war was presented as impeccable.<sup>45</sup> A utopian picture of Boer refugee camps was printed to counter any negative perceptions of the camps, and the humaneness of British rule was emphasized.<sup>46</sup> One article stated that "blessing was her mission" and everywhere Britain went it sought to "elevate people."<sup>47</sup> Poems reinforced this conviction, for a number spoke of the association of liberty with the Union Jack,<sup>48</sup> or of Britain's clemency towards its enemies.<sup>49</sup> The Boers were blamed for the war, and

<sup>44</sup> "To British Boys throughout the World," *Pleasant Hours*, 19 January 1901, 11.

<sup>45</sup> The children's press was reflecting wider support among Canadian Protestants for Britain's cause, for this defense of the empire was matched in all Canadian Anglican, Baptist, Methodist and Presbyterian publications. See Heath, *A War with a Silver Lining*.

<sup>46</sup> *Pleasant Hours*, 12 April 1902, 60.

<sup>47</sup> "Britain's Humaneness Emphasized," *Pleasant Hours*, 5 July 1902, 106.

<sup>48</sup> "Only a Small Bit of Bunting," *King's Own*, 26 May 1900, 84. A variation of the same poem is "The Union Jack," *Pleasant Hours*, 1 June 1901, 88.

<sup>49</sup> Henry Tisdale, "British Clemency," *Pleasant Hours*, 12 April 1902, 57.

the actions of Britain (and Canada) were entirely—and without question—just.<sup>50</sup>

Like in many Victorian and Edwardian papers, war and soldiering in the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours* was idealized.<sup>51</sup> Battles were described and the heroic nature of battle emphasized, but death, maiming and the horrific nature of war were glossed over. The modern-day heroes for the boys were the soldiers. Since the Crimean War and the suppression of the Indian Mutiny, soldiers in Britain had provided examples of Christian heroism, and "abundant hagiographical literature" had flooded the press.<sup>52</sup> They were the modern-day heroes, and in the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours* they were, in "iconography of power,"<sup>53</sup> the ones commonly portrayed in pictures and stories as people to emulate.<sup>54</sup> Lord Roberts, Lord Kitchener, General French, General White, Colonel Steele, Major-General Baden-Powell, and Admiral Nelson were the well-known heroes,<sup>55</sup> but

<sup>50</sup> "What England Asks of the Boers," *Pleasant Hours*, 10 March 1900, 38; "British Views of the Boer War," *Pleasant Hours*, 10 March 1900, 40; "Britain Vindicated," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 June 1902, 100.

<sup>51</sup> For instance, see Wilkinson, *Depictions and Images of War in Edwardian Newspapers, 1899-1914*; R. T. Stearn, "War and the Media in the 19th Century: Victorian Military Artists and the Image of War, 1870-1914," *RUSI: Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies, Journal* 131, 3 (September 1986): 55-62.

<sup>52</sup> Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," 117. See also Olive Anderson, "The Growth of Christian Militarism in Mid-Victorian Britain," *English Historical Review* 86, 338 (1971): 46-72.

<sup>53</sup> MacDonald, "Signs from the Imperial Quarter," 40.

<sup>54</sup> "With virtually every facet of society teaching boys that the warrior was the ultimate masculine ideal, there could be little mistake about the message." Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*, 20.

<sup>55</sup> "The First in Command," *King's Own*, 3 February 1900, 17; "Bobs," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 April 1900; "What 'Bobs' Never Does," 9 March 1901, 37; "Lord Roberts and the Children," *King's Own*, 5 May 1900, 72; "Lord Kitchener of Khartum," *King's Own*, 17 February 1900, 28; "General French," *King's Own*,

even the lowly private was worthy of imitation. Of course, what made their lives fun to read were the adventures and dangers that they experienced, and what made the soldiers heroes was their loyalty, bravery, fair play and sacrifice. But for the publishers of the papers, what made them ultimately worthy of imitation was their Christian character.<sup>56</sup> The press made it clear that soldiers fighting for a Christian empire needed to be Christian, and the British soldiers were deemed to have lived up to that expectation (especially unlike their counterparts the Boers). Hopefully, Canada's future soldiers—those children reading the magazines—would too.

J. R. Watson has noted how in Britain there was a "blurring between metaphor and literal truth in the matter of fighting."<sup>57</sup> There was also a striking fusion of the secular and the spiritual in the discourse of empire and conflict, for God's and Britain's kingdoms were often hard to tell apart. One of the most conspicuous examples of this union of Christian and imperial causes was the poem "A New Patriotic Anthem," recommended sung to the tune of the well-known jingoistic "Rule Britannia." A portion of the poem read:

4 August 1900; "The Hero of Ladysmith," *King's Own*, 31 March 1900, 52; "A Favorite Commander," *King's Own*, 28 April 1900, 68; "One of Britain's Idols," *King's Own*, 7 July 1900, 106; M. A. W., "Nelson as a Boy," *Pleasant Hours*, 25 May 1901, 81.

<sup>56</sup> For instance, the *Pleasant Hours* ran a four-month long serial entitled "A Methodist Soldier" which extolled these virtues. See January-April 1899. For other portrayals of ideal soldierly conduct, see "Dr. Bonar, "The Soldier's Prayer," *Pleasant Hours*, 27 July 1901, 118; "Only a Soldier True," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 April 1900, 64; "The Victoria Cross and the Heroes Who Wear It," *King's Own*, 13 October 1900, 162.

<sup>57</sup> J. R. Watson, "Soldiers and Saints: The Fighting Man and the Christian Life," *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, edited by Andrew Bradstock, Sean Gill, Anne Hogan and Sue Morgan (Houndsmill: Macmillan Press, 2000), 10-26.

The nations not so blest as thee  
 Prostrate to idol gods still fall;  
 While those more blessed bend the knee  
 To God, Creator of them all.  
 Rise, Britannia, and shine upon the waves;  
 Whom Christ makes free shall never more be slaves.  
 From north to south, from east to west;  
 Where'er thy banner is unfurl'd  
 Be this henceforth thy great behest,  
 To spread the Gospel through the world.  
 Rise, Britannia, and shine upon the waves;  
 Whom Christ makes free shall never more be slaves.<sup>58</sup>

With imagery and language that equated the bending of the knee to Christ with those within the growing boundaries of the British Empire (not to mention singing about the Gospel in a well-known jingoistic tune), it is no small wonder that in little more than a decade the churches would have a difficult time separating the waging of war against Germany from fighting a holy war in defense of that same empire. Referring to spiritual activities in the language of warfare only reinforced the association between the two kingdoms.<sup>59</sup>

Of course, it is a truism today that constructions of the other often reveal more about the constructor than the constructed, and that the colonizer's construction of the other justified empire. Regarding the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours*, both presented to their children readers an idealized view of the benefits of the empire, as well as the inferiority of its subjects or enemies. Not surprisingly, the expansion of the empire was depicted as a boon to those within its borders, and the artwork and commentary on cultures in Asia and Africa constructed

<sup>58</sup> “A New Patriotic Anthem,” *Pleasant Hours*, 28 June 1902, 102.

<sup>59</sup> For instance, using military terms to describe Christian activities (e.g., soldiers of Christ).

images of exotic and inferior peoples.<sup>60</sup> The superiority of British rule and religion was also touted when referring to the Boers, the white-Protestant settlers that Britain was at war against in South Africa. Boer culture and conduct was considered to be second-rate, especially when contrasted with heroic, noble, Christian, British soldiers and their civilization.<sup>61</sup> British rule was deemed to bring blessings to all, and the Union Jack was the emblem that reminded people of just that:

We hoist it to show our devotion,  
To our Queen, to our country and laws,  
It's the outward and visible emblem  
Of advancement and liberty's cause.<sup>62</sup>

This sense of superiority over all races and cultures was reinforced by the ultimate claim of divine endorsement: "God is with the Union Jack. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'"<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> For instance, see M. N. R. Stormont, "Boys and Girls in South Africa," *King's Own*, 24 March 1900, 46; "Women of Egypt," *Pleasant Hours*, 16 November 1901, 181; "Egyptian Donkey Boy," *Pleasant Hours*, 12 October 1901, 161; "Fiji Headgear," *Pleasant Hours*, 17 August 1901, 129; "Native Christian Prince, Fiji," *Pleasant Hours*, 17 August 1901, 129; "Wesleyan Chapel, Fiji Islands," "Native Christian Prince, Fiji," *Pleasant Hours*, 17 August 1901, 129 "Hindu Widows," *Pleasant Hours*, 29 February 1900, 29; "Natives of Tahiti," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 April 1900, 61; "A Village in South-East Manyema," *Pleasant Hours*, 26 April 1902, 65.

<sup>61</sup> For instance, see "Generosity of Our Soldiers," *King's Own*, 24 March 1900, 46; "Britain Vindicated," *Pleasant Hours*, 21 June 1902, 100; "What England Asks of the Boers," *Pleasant Hours*, 10 March 1900, 38; Henry Tisdale, "British Clemency," *Pleasant Hours*, 12 April 1902, 57; "The Closing Century," *Pleasant Hours*, 26 January 1901, 13; "Britain's Humaneness Emphasized," *Pleasant Hours*, 5 July 1902, 106.

<sup>62</sup> "Only a Small Bit of Bunting," *King's Own*, 26 May 1900, 84.

<sup>63</sup> The larger quote read: "The Union Jack is the emblem of a mighty nation, whose success is not in the size of its armies, but in the moral and spiritual



Desmond Morton provides a detailed and helpful survey and analysis of the growth of the cadet movement in public schools in the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, as well as identifies concern over the growth of militarism in Canada.<sup>64</sup> The Boy's Brigade in Britain had begun the practice of fusing military drill with Bible classes in the early 1880s.<sup>65</sup> The promotion of martial skills and love of empire manifested itself in the practice of military drill in church youth groups. One example from Rat Portage (now Kenora) Methodist Church in Ontario indicates that there was enthusiasm for such a practice in Canada. The following report from the editor of the Rat Portage Methodist provides a glimpse of this fusion of children's ministry with military training:

We had the pleasure of attending drill the other evening, and were greatly pleased to note the progress the boys were making under their patient and efficient instructor, Mr. S. D. Craig. We trust that the boys will never have occasion to use any rifles more death-dealing than the ones now in their possession. We certainly do not wish to foster any undue military or jingo spirit, but we do express our hearty approval of the Brigade as an excellent means of drill and discipline. We think the parents should encourage the boys to regularly attend drill as a valuable means of physical culture, and our suggestion is that the parents go themselves occasionally as an

strength of its individuals. It believes in the Bible and love[s] God. Its national anthem is a prayer... God is with the Union Jack. 'If God be for us, who can be against us?'" See Adele Stillwood, "The Union Jack," *Pleasant Hours*, 22 June 1901, 98.

<sup>64</sup> Desmond Morton, "The Cadet Movement in the Moment of Canadian Militarism, 1909-1914," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 13.2 (Summer 1978): 56-68. Tosh notes how the by the 1880s the public schools in Britain had laid claim to the role of education for empire. See Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities*, 197.

<sup>65</sup> Summers, "Militarism in Britain before the Great War," 119-120.

encouragement to the boys, and an evidence to the instructor that his work is appreciated.<sup>66</sup>

More research needs to be done to get a clearer sense of just how widespread the use was of military drill in Canadian churches. What is known is that the military drill practiced in church youth groups mirrored the emphasis on imperial virtues, martial skills and patriotism in the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours*. Mark Moss has identified how young boys in militarized late-Victorian and Edwardian Ontario were "educated for war."<sup>67</sup> And the examples from the *King's Own* and *Pleasant Hours*, as well as the military drill in churches, provides even further examples of just how that militarization was supported by the churches, especially since it was deemed to provide just the right values for their youth.

It should be noted that there was some alarm expressed in the adult religious press over rising militarism in society and in the church, for both the Methodist *Christian Guardian* and the Presbyterian *Westminster* lamented the growing jingoism in Canada.<sup>68</sup> Ironically, however, while the *Christian Guardian* was rejecting militarism with such statements as "muscular development is not a high ideal for a man, and still less is military development a high ideal for a nation,"<sup>69</sup> its children's counter-

<sup>66</sup> "Editorial," *Rat Portage Methodist*, 15 May 1900, 1.

<sup>67</sup> Moss, *Manliness and Militarism*.

<sup>68</sup> "Official Representative of Canadian Methodism to the British Methodist Churches," *Wesleyan*, 29 August 1900, 8; "Our Canadian Future," *Westminster*, 23 June 1900, 723-724; "Militarism, Force," *Christian Guardian*, 31 July 1901, 481; "Editorial," *Christian Guardian*, 21 March 1900, 177; "Canada's Day," *Christian Guardian*, 3 July 1900, 417.

<sup>69</sup> "Militarism, Force," *Christian Guardian*, 31 July 1901, 481.

part the *Pleasant Hours* presented the very opposite—a muscular and militaristic manhood.<sup>70</sup>

## Conclusion

There was a powerful current of imperialism in late-Victorian Canada which found ample expression in the Presbyterian and Methodist children’s publications. The Canadian churches were ardent nation-builders, and to build the nascent nation they believed that they must also support the empire to which the nation belonged. Through the empire, it was believed, the nation (as a distinctly Christian nation) could find its purpose, gain global influence, further the cause of justice, and spread the Christian faith. That being the case, instruction and inspiration for such an important (and providential) task needed to begin at an early age, and the *King’s Own* and *Pleasant Hours* did just that. What needs to be noted, however, is that evangelicalism’s concern for the family was a significant reason for looking upon imperialism as an ally, for imperial virtues were deemed to be family values. The editors believed that imperial values were synonymous with Christian values, and that girls and boys who embodied the ideals of their papers would become good mothers, fathers, citizens, as well as defenders of empire. Consequently, articles on faith, heroes, vocation, patriotism and enter-

<sup>70</sup> The dissonance can, in part, be understood by noting that imperialism and militarism were not considered to be synonymous. One could supposedly ardently endorse the empire, but at the same time be opposed to militarism. Ideally, imperialism was considered to be providentially established to bless nations, but militarism was deemed to be patriotism run amuck with destructive consequences. Militarism was considered to be a perversion of imperialism, and that is why the opposition to the growing jingoism did not translate into opposition to the war, or empire. Consequently, churches could encourage imperialism among its youth, but oppose militarism elsewhere. And that is why the children’s publications prepared their readers to be good soldiers of empire.

tainment were permeated with imperial sentiment. This conviction was so strong that the call was for children to become adults prepared to die for the empire:

With loyal hearts and ready hands,  
The Empire's children stand,  
Prepared to do, prepared to die,  
For Queen and native land.<sup>71</sup>

While it is difficult to determine how many children took this call to die for the empire to heart, this fusion of family values and imperialism reveals just how enmeshed evangelicalism had become with late-Victorian imperialism.

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<sup>71</sup> "The Queen's Birthday," *Pleasant Hours*, 20 May 1899, 78.

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# Four Patristic Models of Jesus Christ's Impeccability and Temptation

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**Abstract.** Early Christian theology focused on the identity of Jesus Christ according to the New Testament, and faced an apparent dilemma in Jesus' deity (which entails his impeccability) and Jesus' humanity (marked by his true temptations to sin). While no church council addressed the topic of Jesus' impeccability and temptation directly, patristic theologians did explain the relationship of Jesus' divine impeccability (considered as an *a priori*), his human temptation, and perfect sinlessness. The explanations vary in four types or models of dealing with the question. The description of each of the four models and a brief presentation of evidence from three patristic representatives for each model will provide the case that patristic theology shows developing sophistication in explaining the topic. In brief, these models are that Jesus was (1) sinless by his inherent impeccability, (2) sinless by deification, (3) sinless by divine hegemony, and (4) sinless by empowering grace. A brief evaluation of each of the models weighs their theological adequacy for contemporary Christological formulation.

**Key words:** impeccability, sinlessness, Christology, pneumatology, temptation

## Introduction

The task of Christological formulation required patristic theologians to reflect on the questions of Jesus Christ's impeccability and temptation. I will argue that these theologians formulated

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four discernible models to explain the apparent dilemma.<sup>1</sup> If right, the analysis shows progress of patristic model construction towards greater clarity and theological adequacy that should be considered in contemporary Christological formulations.<sup>2</sup>

For each model, I have offered brief descriptive labels as follows: (1) Sinless by Inherent Impeccability, (2) Sinless by Deification, (3) Sinless by the Divine Hegemony, and (4) Sinless by Empowering Grace. Both orthodox and unorthodox formulations are included so that we may learn from these varied attempts to explain the biblical data (despite their problems).<sup>3</sup> For

<sup>1</sup> Some theologians of dubious reputation such as Apollinaris, Origen, Nestorius, and others are included because of their attention to this specific issue of impeccability and temptation, but others such as Paul of Samosata, Arius, and Pelagius are so problematic that they are unhelpful and thus excluded (e.g., diminishing the deity of Christ and the force of sin).

<sup>2</sup> I am adopting a models approach to the theological evidence. The purpose is to discern the best explanation of the theological teaching of Scripture through sorting and evaluating the different ways that theologians have approached particular topics. After describing a distinct approach or set of explanations on a topic, we can evaluate strengths and weaknesses of the model, and test how well it fits the biblical revelation. A models approach aims to make explicit the distinct perspectives in the theological tradition and invites readers to get beyond their own perspective to see other approaches. Two examples are the books by Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church. A Critical Assessment of the Church in All Its Aspects* (New York: Doubleday, 1974), and *Models of Revelation* (New York: Doubleday, 1983).

<sup>3</sup> While not exhaustive of all the patristic writers and all their writings, this study is an attempt to cover thoroughly the breadth of theology for the period. Based on what I have examined, it does not seem that extending the study in depth and breadth further would yield more models than what I have reported here. As will show in the notes, I am indebted to Aloys Grillmeier (and his collaborators) for providing the leads to a great many of the relevant patristic sources in *Christ in Christian Tradition. Volume One, From the Apostolic age to Chalcedon*, trans. John Bowden, 2nd rev. ed. (Atlanta: John Knox, 1975).



each model, I will generalize a description and illustrate it with three representatives. Other representatives of the models will be indicated in the notes.

The four models are not mutually exclusive of each other. Some models have significant agreement because of the pre-suppositions common to all contributors, such as a common response to Christological formulas later deemed heretical (e.g., Arius, Apollinaris), the Nicene faith (Jesus Christ is *homoousios* with the Father), the common soteriological requirements that link Christ's identity with his work, and the assumptions of patristic philosophical theology that developed in its Hellenistic setting.<sup>4</sup>

One difficulty of research is that patristic thinkers often do not treat the topics of Christ's impeccability and temptation thoroughly or systematically. More often the case is that writers allude to a model as part of discussing a biblical text or a theological topic that is more pressing, such as the coherence of divine impassibility and Jesus' suffering. Nevertheless, these models were clear enough to provide starting points for theologians in later periods. On the one hand, the models are similar because all contributors accept the three key factors of Jesus Christ's actual sinlessness, his true temptations, and his divine impeccability. On the other hand, theologians disagree about how these factors should be related to one another, to other factors of soteriology, and to issues of Christology.

<sup>4</sup> E.g., divine impassibility, and the stock theories of physical union supplied by Stoic philosophers and Aristotle. These are analyzed by Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Faith, Trinity, Incarnation*, vol. 1 of *The Philosophy of the Church Fathers*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1970), 372-486. In his summary, the five theories of union are: composition, Aristotelian mixture, Stoic mixture, Stoic confusion, and Aristotelian predominance.

### **Sinless by Inherent Impeccability**

#### *Description*

The first model of Christ's impeccability and temptation in the patristic period is the general claim that his sinlessness was caused by his inherent impeccability as God. By his divine nature as the eternal Logos and Son, Jesus was immune to sin in his human experiences. This matches the Nicene affirmation that Jesus is homoousios with the Father. The distinctive of this model is the emphasis on Christ's preexistence to his incarnation, whether as a perfect soul (as in Origen) or as the Logos who becomes incarnate as a man. Because Christ is God before the incarnation, and God cannot sin, then Christ cannot sin when he is tempted as a man. This inherent impeccability model is the early answer to the problem posed by the Arians that since a man would have a mutable will with liability to sin, and God cannot be mutable or sin, then Christ the man could not also be God. The simple reply was that despite his incarnation in humanity and the experiences of temptation, Jesus Christ could not sin because he is divine as the preexistent Logos. His sinlessness is a necessity of his divinity. Proponents do not specify whether this is a necessity of his nature or his person. Theologians affirm simply that because Christ was the divine Lord, it was logically impossible for him to sin.<sup>5</sup> This first model is the starting point for subsequent formulations that explain further how it was that Jesus' being God guaranteed his sinlessness as a man.

<sup>5</sup> A summary statement of the patristic idea is given by Jacques Dupuis, *Who Do You Say I Am? An Introduction to Christology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994), 129: "If Jesus were to commit sin, God would be the author of sinful actions, which is a contradiction."

*Representatives*

Tertullian, Origen, and Augustine are examples of the first model. These three articulate the common explanation that the divine impeccability of the Logos is the efficient and material cause of Christ's human sinlessness.

Tertullian (ca. 155-220) insists that the normally sinful humanity was emptied of sin when assumed by Christ so that his was a sinless, transformed humanity.<sup>6</sup> That explains his initial state of sinlessness as a man. Tertullian elsewhere affirms the idea that Christ's sinlessness is based on his deity, explaining that just as God alone is without sin, so also Christ is the only man without sin.<sup>7</sup> For Tertullian, Christ's sinlessness is an entailment of his deity, and no other explanation than this is given for how Jesus remained sinless.

Origen (ca. 184-ca. 253) exemplifies principle of a preexistent cause of Christ's human sinlessness.<sup>8</sup> He also deviates from others by employing the Platonic doctrine of preexistent human souls in understanding the Incarnation (which is contrary to Scripture).<sup>9</sup> Origen writes that the preexistent human soul as-

<sup>6</sup> Tertullian, "De Carne Christi 16.780-81," in *PL* 2, ed. J.-P. Migne, (1866): 826.

<sup>7</sup> Tert., "De Anima 41.3," ed. J. H. Waszink, (Amsterdam: J. M. Meulenhoff, 1947), 57. "Solus enim deus sine peccato et solus homo sine peccato Christus, quia et deus Christus." My interpretation of Tertullian is different than Wolfhart Pannenberg's interpretation of the same passages in *Jesus. God and Man*, trans. Lewis L. Wilkins and Duane A. Priebe, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), 356. Pannenberg denies that Tertullian views Christ's sinlessness in terms of "a special disposition of his nature."

<sup>8</sup> Pannenberg, *Jesus*, 356, claims Origen was the first to argue for the impeccability of Christ when others had commonly affirmed his actual sinlessness. This may be the case, but Clement should also be counted as one of the earliest to affirm Christ's impeccability, if not the first (see below).

<sup>9</sup> Melvin E. Lawrenz, *The Christology of John Chrysostom* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen, 1996), 22. "Origen reflected the prevailing Platonism of his native Alexandria in the soteriological presuppositions that underlie his

sumed by the Logos became immune to the possibility of sin because this soul chose to cling to the Logos. The result was that “what formerly depended upon the will was by the influence of long custom changed into nature.”<sup>10</sup> Origen’s idea is that the human soul merited its assumption by the Logos, and the miraculous birth in a human body was the divine action to secure that impeccability which the human soul had merited, “so that the soul may be able to remain without having tasted evil.”<sup>11</sup> Few accepted Origen’s notion of a merited assumption by the Logos,<sup>12</sup> and others readily condemned it.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Origen affirmed the generally recognized idea of this first model that Jesus was “incapable of all evil because he was the divine Word.”<sup>14</sup>

Augustine (354-430) represents this model with a clear declaration in his sermon on the temptations that Jesus endured: “That Christ was the conqueror there, why should we be sur-

Christology. All souls have pre-existed, and God used the one soul that did not fall away—that of Jesus—to be united with his Logos or Wisdom which in turn became united with human flesh thus providing a way of redemption for the race.” Cf. or. “Canticum Canticorum 2.8” in *PG* 13, ed. C. and C. Vincentii Delarue, (1857): 126C.

<sup>10</sup> Or. “De Principiis 2.6.5,” *Origens Werke*, vol. 5, “De Principiis,” ed. P. Koetschau, *Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten drei Jahrhunderte* 22 (Berlin: Akademie, 1913), 145; trans. G. W. Butterworth (London: S.P.C.K., 1936), 112-13.

<sup>11</sup> Or., “Contra Celsum 1.33,” in *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* 54, ed. M. Marcovich, (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 35.

<sup>12</sup> An exception is Evagrius Ponticus, who developed Origen’s preexistent soul application in Christology by which the preexistent human soul in Christ is “the seat of moral decisions and of sinlessness” (Grillmeier, *Christ in Christian Tradition* 1: 379).

<sup>13</sup> E.g., Augustine denounces the idea of merit in the incarnational assumption repeatedly, as in “Enchiridion 36” and “Letter 187.”

<sup>14</sup> Or., “Celsum 4.15”: 229.

prised? He was almighty God."<sup>15</sup> Augustine also affirms that the sinlessness of Christ as a man was caused by his exceptional constitution, because Christ "is in His nature not man only, but also God, in whom we could prove such perfection of character to have existed."<sup>16</sup> Again, the plain logic of the model shows in the connection between the impeccability of God the Son and the sinless human action of Jesus Christ as a direct result.

### **Sinless by Deification**

#### *Description*

The question asked in the second model is this: How does the union of Jesus' divine nature with his human nature make him sinless as a man? The answer given is that Jesus' sinlessness is the result of the deification of his human nature by his divine nature. The divinity in Christ dominates his humanity, deifying and strengthening it against natural human weaknesses. As in the first model, the deification model affirms that the divine impeccability of the Logos is the main factor securing and transforming Christ's moral life as a man; thus, sin is impossible for Christ. Temptations never threaten him, just as a bar of heated iron cannot admit cold because of its union to the fire. Unlike the first model, this model counts the deifying union to specify the way that Jesus' divine nature affects his humanity for the result of a sinless life. The general principle of necessary sinlessness is defined as the deification of Jesus' humanity by transformation in union to his divinity, making a deiform humanity. Proponents of the model would deny any substantial

<sup>15</sup> Augustine "Sermon 284.5," *PL* 38 (1863): 1292, trans. Edmund Hill, *Sermons 273-305A: On the Saints*, vol. III/8, *The Works of Saint Augustine* (Hyde Park, NY: New City, 1994), 91.

<sup>16</sup> Aug., "On the Spirit and the Letter 1," *Saint Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Works*, trans. Peter Holmes and Robert Ernest Wallis, rev. Benjamin Warfield, *NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 5 (1956): 84.

change to his human nature (just as iron is unchanged when united to fire). Nonetheless, the effect of the union is that Jesus' humanity is made impeccable (just as hot iron receives the burning properties of fire) in a way that is not normal for human nature.

The theory of salvation by divinization deals especially in terms of transforming the human mutability and liability to sin. The Logos assumes and deifies universal human nature to heal and restore it for others as immutable and impeccable. The deification of Christ's humanity by his divinity is a type of all believers' deification and their future sinlessness through sharing in the divine nature of the Logos.

In the model's dependence on the divinization concept, Christ's divine nature is the efficient cause of the human impeccability, which is then the material cause of Christ's human sinlessness. Proponents assert the unity of the two natures so strongly that the incarnational union is often summarized with the monophysite maxim: "One incarnate nature of the Son."<sup>17</sup> Since the humanity in Christ has become divinized by union to the Logos, it is a humanity that is sinless by natural causation—between the natures—through union with the divine nature. However, this is not a change or absorption of the humanity in union to deity (as Eutyches was accused of saying). The moral immutability and impassibility of the Logos constitute

<sup>17</sup> Cyril, "Epistola 44 ad Eulogius," in PG 77, ed. J.-P. Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* (1859): 225B. Lionel R. Wickham, ed. and trans., *Cyril of Alexandria. Select Letters, Oxford Early Christian Texts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 62-63, notes that this phrase appears in a series of quotes from Athanasius, but that scholars have generally accepted it to be from Apollinaris. The reading given in Migne is "theou", with "hiou" as a variant; Wickham takes the variant as the best reading.

the moral immutability and impassibility of his human nature.<sup>18</sup> Accordingly, Christ's temptations are said to have occurred merely for the instruction of humanity—not that he really had to struggle to obey God when tempted to sin.

### *Representatives*

Clement of Alexandria (ca. 150-215) is one of the first to express the deification model.<sup>19</sup> Clement writes that Christ is "sinless" and "passionless in soul" because he is the Son of the Father and God the Logos who possesses "the nature of God."<sup>20</sup> At first glance, this seems like the first model. However, Clement also explains the divinizing elevation of Christ's humanity by communication of the divine impassibility to his humanity.<sup>21</sup> Thus, Clement explains that Christ's humanity is the "heavenly flesh sanctified."<sup>22</sup> For Clement, impassibility was the highest ethical ideal, the moral likeness of God.<sup>23</sup> Accordingly, he exhorts his readers to follow Christ's example of being free from human passions in their own striving against temptations.<sup>24</sup> For Jesus, however, the divine attribute of impassibility is determinative of his human action of sinlessness (or, positively, righteousness and faithfulness to God). Clement understands the divine

<sup>18</sup> Leontius of Jerusalem, "Adversus Nestorianos 1.6," in *PG* 86.1 (1860): 1425D. Cited in Patrick T. R. Gray, "Leontius of Jerusalem's Case for a 'Synthetic' Union in Christ," *Studia patristica* 18.1, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1985), 151.

<sup>19</sup> "Paedagogus" was written ca. 190, as noted in the introduction to *Clement of Alexandria. Christ the Educator*, trans. Simon P. Wood, *FOC* 23 (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954), xi.

<sup>20</sup> Clem., "Paed." 1.2.4.1-2: 3-4.

<sup>21</sup> Clem., "Paed." 1.2.4.1-2: 3-4.

<sup>22</sup> Clem., "Paed." 1.6.43.3: 28.

<sup>23</sup> Salvatore R. C. Lilla, *Clement of Alexandria. A Study in Christian Platonism and Gnosticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 277.

<sup>24</sup> Clem., "Paed." 1.2.4.1-2: 3-4.

attribute of impassibility to be the single answer to the question of why Jesus could not sin, and the question of why Jesus did not sin. Thus, Christ's sinlessness is explained by the deification of his assumed humanity.

Athanasius (328-373) is an example of the deification model by his emphasis on Jesus' divinized humanity for the divinization of all. This shows in his comment that the power of the Logos "destroys" the sinful corruptions of the flesh for Christ and others so that they may share in his eternal life to be "immortal and incorruptible" as he is.<sup>25</sup> Athanasius suggests that the transformation in Christ is a microcosm for the universal humanity because Jesus has broken the power of sin in human nature through union to the divine Word.<sup>26</sup> Athanasius connects the divine incorruption and purification with Christ's sinlessness. This association shows that even though Athanasius's main concern is death, the problem of sin is still important in his soteriology. In his view, God has solved both problems by means of a universal human nature that the Logos takes up and deifies in Christ. Therefore, Athanasius reasons that the Logos accomplished a sinless human life and the divinization of Christians by enhancing the human nature he assumed for redemption.

Basil of Caesarea (ca. 330-379) reflects the Cappadocians' concern with human passibility in its relation to sin. He distinguishes between the natural pathos that Christ assumed, and those pathos that arise "from wickedness."<sup>27</sup> Christ's humanity

<sup>25</sup> Athanasius, "Oratio III contra Arianos 33," in *PG* 26, ed. B. de Montfaucon, (1857): 393B.

<sup>26</sup> Ath., "De Incarnatione 17," *Contra Gentes* and *De Incarnatione*, ed. and trans. Robert W. Thomson, *Oxford Early Christian Texts* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 177, italics in trans.

<sup>27</sup> Basil, "Epistle 261," *The Letters*, *Loeb Classical Library* (LCL), trans. Roy J. Deferrari and Martin R. P. McGuire, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 4: 80.



must be transformed by eclipse of the evil path because these are unworthy of Christ's divine purity.<sup>28</sup> Basil explains that the divine nature in Christ absorbed his humanity, thus transforming his humanity.<sup>29</sup> By this transforming union, the divine nature destroys both death and sin in Jesus' humanity to make it immortal and impeccable—"not liable to sin."<sup>30</sup> Christ's divinization of his human nature by his divinity is a type of the divinization that Christians will share in through union with Christ (2 Peter 1:4).

Cyril of Alexandria (378-444) gives many examples of the deification model because of his soteriological concern for the divinization of a universal humanity in Christ, similar to the Cappadocians and Athanasius.<sup>31</sup> Cyril writes about the need for deification of Christ's humanity in relation to sin: "As God he wished to make that flesh which was held in the grip of sin and death evidently superior to sin and death."<sup>32</sup> This example fits the model closely by affirming that the divine nature of the Logos enhances his assumed humanity to make it impeccable by nature. Cyril insists on Jesus' impeccability as a man who is not subject to sin as others are,<sup>33</sup> and that his temptations were given by God's love for the sake of other humans who are tempted and need to know how to resist these dangers.<sup>34</sup> Cyril argues

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> John Anthony McGuckin, *Introduction to St. Cyril of Alexandria. On the Unity of Christ*, trans. John Anthony McGuckin (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 35.

<sup>32</sup> Cyr., "OTI EIS O KRISTOS" 718.28-32, *Cyrille D'Alexandrie, Deux Dialogues Christologiques*, ed. and trans. G. M. de Durand, *Sources chrétiennes* (SC) 97 (Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1964), 316. English trans. given in McGuckin, *St. Cyril*, 55.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 744.37-39: 402.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 754.22-26: 434.

that the union of the divine nature with the human nature in Christ was a transformation that he likens to dyeing cloth: the Logos effectively immersed his human soul in divine immutability as wool that is set in a bath of dye.<sup>35</sup> The purpose of this deification was to make the humanity of Christ more powerful than sin by means of the divine immutability.<sup>36</sup> In light of this view of Christ's humanity as enhanced by his deity to be impeccable, Cyril was shocked to hear that some people thought sin was a possibility for Jesus, since it was so obvious from his sinlessness that no danger existed for him in being tempted to sin.<sup>37</sup> Instead of peccability, Cyril's view was that salvation required that Christ be impeccable, and he explained it in terms of what we have summarized as the model, sinless by deification.<sup>38</sup>

### **Sinless by Divine Hegemony**

#### *Description*

The question asked in the divine hegemony model is this: How does Christ's operation in two natures result in his sinlessness as a man? The answer given is that the divine Logos directs his assumed humanity sinlessly in all the actions of his human experience. Like the deification model, the divine hegemony model explains Christ's impeccability and temptation as the predominance of his deity over his humanity. Different from

<sup>35</sup> Cyr., "De Incarnatione unigenitii" 691.27-30, in *Cyrille D'Alexandrie, Deux Dialogues Christologiques*, SC 97: 230.

<sup>36</sup> Cyr., "Oratio Ad Theodosium" 54.26-30, ed. Eduardus Schwartz, *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum* (ACO) (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1927), 1.1-4: 54.

<sup>37</sup> Cyr., "Adversus Anthropomorphitas," *Epistola ad Calosyrium* 18, in PG 76 ed. J. Auberti, (1859): 1120D.

<sup>38</sup> Other representatives of the deification model are Origen, Hilary of Poitiers, Didymus the Blind, Gregory of Nyssa, Leo the Great, and Leontius of Jerusalem. See McKinley, *Tempted for Us*, ch. 4.

second model is the way that this model explains this predominance as personal and volitional hegemony, not natural predominance. The hegemony is the Logos's personal leadership of his humanity to resist his temptations sinlessly. Christ's sinlessness is not a necessity of his human nature or the union to his divine nature; it is a necessity of his divine will. The Logos is personally the efficient cause of his human sinlessness, directing his assumed humanity in sinless action, not by natural necessity, but by his prevailing divine will. Jesus can be tempted as a man, but he cannot sin because he is the divine Son who will never choose to sin. His human will is subordinate and submitted to his divine will.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, Christ's attitudes and actions as a man are elevated and deified de facto, only functionally, because of the overriding will and choice of the divine agent-operator.

In contrast to deification, the divine hegemony model has no room for a transformation of Christ's humanity. Emphasis on the recapitulation of a human victory over Satan and temptation demonstrates the godly life of Jesus as a human example for Christians to follow. Emphasis on the integrity of the two natures and the Word's personal action prevents a change of the human nature to become divine. Instead, the hegemony of the Logos over his humanity leads to the communication of divine attributes without changing human nature. This model pictures an enabling communication instead of the transforming communication of the deification model. Important to advocates of the divine hegemony model are the likeness of Jesus' humanity to common humanity, the example Jesus demon-

<sup>39</sup> Cf. Gregory of Nazianzen's statement: "[Christ's] human will cannot be opposed to God, seeing it is altogether taken into God; but conceived of simply as in our nature." "Fourth Theological Oration," *Christology of the Later Fathers*, ed. Edward R. Hardy, vol. 3, *The Library of Christian Classics* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1954), 185.

strates for others, and his achievement of sinlessness as a human accomplishment in the face of temptations. Some representatives of this model suggest the idea that Christ's humanity is instrumental in the redemptive program, and he directs his manhood as a tool.

### *Representatives*

The earliest theologian to suggest this model is Irenaeus of Lyons (130-200). He insists on the divine use of the assumed humanity in an instrumental way, which fits his view of Jesus' whole life as a redemptive recapitulation as the second Adam.<sup>40</sup> Irenaeus opposes the Gnostics' docetic conceptions of Christ to argue instead for the likeness of "the Lord's flesh" with "our flesh."<sup>41</sup> This claim of the essential likeness suggests that Irenaeus also opposes the idea that Christ's humanity was dei-form. Irenaeus affirms Jesus' sinlessness without setting that moral achievement as a marker of his natural difference from the rest of sinful humanity.<sup>42</sup> In his view, the Logos aided Christ's assumed humanity to conquer his temptations to sin. Irenaeus writes, "The Logos remained quiescent during the process of temptation, crucifixion and death, but aided the human nature when it conquered, and endured, and performed deeds of kindness, and rose again from the dead, and was received up into heaven."<sup>43</sup> The model shows in Irenaeus's insistence on Christ's human victory that reverses the human defeat of Adam. Jesus obeys the law as a man, and answers Satan's temptations in the wilderness through nothing else but by quot-

<sup>40</sup> Irenaeus, "Adversus haereses" 5.24.4, in *PG* 7, ed. Migne, (1857): 1188C.

<sup>41</sup> Iren., "Haer." 5.14.3, in *PG* 7: 1162C.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Iren., "Haer" 3.19.3, in *PG* 7: 941; trans. Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 2, trans. Neil Buchanan (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1897), 284.

ing Scripture, thus demonstrating the example for others to follow.

Apollinaris of Laodicea (ca. 310-390, "the Younger") is overtly representative of divine hegemony and shows the danger of going too far with the model. In a stiff reaction to the Arians, Apollinaris forms his Christological model in response to the supposed problem of Christ's possible, temptable humanity.<sup>44</sup> Thus, Apollinaris explains that in Christ the unconquerable divine mind "directs the flesh" in a sinless human life.<sup>45</sup> When charged that he had diminished Christ's humanity and made it unlike normal humans, Apollinaris responded that Jesus was only "found as a man" (Philippians 2:8) and so was different from humans in part. But Apollinaris also saw this as necessary that Jesus have a divine rational soul because the theologian asserted that a free human will is necessarily subject to sin. Instead, the Christ of Apollinarianism had an immutable, divine will because the Logos operated in place of the human mind. This is an instrumental view of the humanity in Christ; the Logos is the "leading" and "guiding" principle of the assumed humanity.<sup>46</sup> Therefore, Apollinaris views the incarnational union as a displacement of the human mind and will by the divine mind and will, and the displacement guarantees Christ's human sinlessness.

The third representative of this model is John of Damascus (ca. 675-754). The Damascene argues that Christ's human will

<sup>44</sup> Anthony Meredith, *The Cappadocians* (Crestwood, NY: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995), 111-12.

<sup>45</sup> Apollinaris of Laodicea, "H KATA MEROS PISTIS" 30.13-16, in *Apollinaris von Laodicea und Seine Schule I, Texte und Untersuchungen*, ed. Hans Lietzmann, (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1904); reprint: Hildesheim, New York: Georg Olms, 1970), 178.

<sup>46</sup> Apollinar. L., "LOGOI" 152.16, ed. Lietzmann, 248. Lietzmann notes that this fragment is collected from a citation by Leontius Byz. Timotheus.

followed his divine will, so that his human will always worked in “subordination” to the divine will.<sup>47</sup> By this volitional divine hegemony, Christ could assume natural passibility for a full humanity without allowing his pathos to be “controlling influences” on his divine will. Were it not for this subordination of the human will to the divine will, Christ would have been liable to sin.<sup>48</sup> In his humanity, Christ could vicariously suffer and conquer all the pains of reported in the Gospels of hunger, thirst, grief, fear of death, agony, death, and the Devil’s temptations to sin.<sup>49</sup> Jesus could conquer in his weak, passible humanity because of an asymmetrical enrichment from his deity—deification without transformation, a communication for elevated, deiform, “divine operation” without mingling the natures—just as fire heats steel to burn without changing the nature of the steel.<sup>50</sup> The Damascene resists the idea of transformation to protect the integrity of the natures. Moreover, he emphasizes the value of Jesus as a model of obedience for believers since he became what they are to restore their obedience by his own exemplary life.<sup>51</sup> John of Damascus therefore suggests the divine hegemony model by relating the divine strength and human weakness through the dominance of divine will over his humanity to live sinlessly as a man.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>47</sup> John of Damascus, “De Fide Orthodoxa” 3.18, vol. 2, *Die Schriften des Johannes von Damaskos*, ed. P. B. Kotter, *Patristische Texte und Studien*, Band 12 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1973), 158. John of Damascus’s dyothelite position is clear in 3.13: 14.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.20: 163.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.20: 162.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.17: 156.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.1: 108.

<sup>52</sup> Other representatives of the third model are Tertullian, Gregory of Nazianzen, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, Leo the Great, Leontius of Byzantium, and Maximus the Confessor. See McKinley, *Tempted for Us*, ch. 5.

**Sinless by Empowering Grace***Description*

The question asked by the empowering grace model is this: How is Jesus sinless as a man in a way that he can be an example for others? The answer given is that divine grace empowers Jesus to live sinlessly in his humanity. Representatives of this model explain Christ's sinlessness as the result of cooperation between divine grace and the human will to choose right in the face of temptation. The divine nature of the Logos keeps Christ from sin (as in the first and second models), but Christ keeps himself from sin as a man who has learned to obey God. Impeccability is true of him as the Logos, but impeccability is not a factor in his actual sinlessness. The grace that empowers Christ's humanity by the Holy Spirit preserves the integrity of the natures, the example of Jesus' action in his humanity, and the moral reality of his actions as a human achievement. This follows from an emphasis on the moral growth in Christ (Luke 2:52; Hebrews 5:8) to be a true example for other humans in their sanctification by grace through faith (1 Peter 2:21-24). The moral reality of Christ's human life was proven by facing temptations and resisting them in a way that can be followed by others (Hebrews 4:15). Because of his experiences, Christ can sympathize with others in their temptations. Neither the divine Logos nor the divine nature directly causes Christ's sinlessness by communication of impeccability. Instead, divine grace works with Jesus' human will to enable him to obey God perfectly. This grace is the divine help given to Christ by the Holy Spirit. Other models picture a relation of divine transformation or domination of Christ's humanity, but here it is the divine grace which empowers Christ without altering his human nature or overriding his human will. Contrary to the view of salvation in the second and third models as an elevation or leading of humanity into a divinized mode of being (divinization), the em-

powering grace model emphasizes salvation as progress by grace toward perfect human life.<sup>53</sup>

The empowering grace model emphasizes Christ as an example and archetype of God's work in salvation according to the biblical evidence for his ignorance, weaknesses, struggles to obey, dependence on divine help, and the exhortations that Christians must imitate him. Central to this model is an emphasis on the integrity of the two natures. On the divine side, this means protecting the transcendence of the Logos in his immutability and impassibility, uncorrupted by the union with the mutable, passible humanity. On the human side, this means a temptable humanity in which Christ must struggle to resist sin. Because of the struggle, Christ's victory was a real moral achievement of merit in a way not possible if he had relied upon his impeccability as the Logos. Moreover, proponents draw a parallel between the empowering grace in Christ and the elect, though with due regard to the uniqueness of Christ's special identity as the Logos.

### *Representatives*

Theodore of Mopsuestia (ca. 352-428) is the earliest clear representative of this model; others preceding him in Antioch may have contributed to the formulation also. Theodore agrees with most others that Christ was impeccable and immutable as a man, but he uniquely holds that Christ did not become so until after the resurrection when the Logos predominated over his humanity.<sup>54</sup> Before the resurrection, Christ needed the empo-

<sup>53</sup> Donald Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology in the Early Church*, *Oxford Early Christian Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 28.

<sup>54</sup> Theodore mentions impassibility and immutability that are Christ's after the resurrection: "Post resurrectionem autem ex mortuis et in caelos ascensum impassibilis factus et inmutabilis omnino et ad dexteram sedens Dei," *Treatises Against Apollinarius*, 3, frag. 10 in vol. 2 of *Theodore of*



wering grace from the Holy Spirit to resist temptations and struggle for moral virtue;<sup>55</sup> as Theodore says, "Christ had need of the Spirit in order to defeat the devil, to perform miracles and to receive (divine) instruction as to the activities he should undertake."<sup>56</sup> Theodore continues to assert that if Christ did not need this help of divine grace (because he was all-sufficient in his humanity), then the indwelling of the Holy Spirit was superfluous for him. In keeping with Acts 2:22 and 10:38, Theodore sees a necessary role for the Holy Spirit in Christ; he explains that other theologians have overlooked this role because an acknowledgment seemed to imply that the Holy Spirit was

*Mopsuestia on the Minor Epistles of S. Paul*, ed. H. B. Swete (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1882); (reprint, Gregg: Westmead, U. K., 1969), 317-18. For patristic thinkers, impeccability is entailed by impassibility and immutability. It is likely that Theodore must have published the claim of Christ's post-resurrection changes because Theodore is specifically anathematized for it by the Fifth Council (Constantinople II, 553): Canon 12: "Theodorum Mopsuestenum qui dixit... post resurrectionem immutabilem cogitationibus et impeccabilem omnino factum fuisse," *Concilium universale Ephesenum*, ACO 4.1, ed. Eduardus Schwartz, (1971): 219. Joanne M. Dewart, *The Theology of Grace of Theodore of Mopsuestia*, *The Catholic University of America Studies in Christian Antiquity* 16 (Washington DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1971), 75-76, writes, "Yet Christ was not sinless without effort. Theodore was insistent on the reality of his temptations, and that it was possible for him to sin. A man with no chance of making a truly moral choice is less than a man in Theodore's eyes." Theodore seems to have been the exception in affirming Jesus' peccability.

<sup>55</sup> The Fifth Council (Constantinople II, 553) anathematized anyone who defends Theodore's doctrine that Christ progressed in good works by means of the grace of the Holy Spirit to become immutable and impeccable after the resurrection ("Capitula of the Council," 12, *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 14: 315).

<sup>56</sup> Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Fragmenta Dogmatica, ex libris contra Apollinarium," *PG* 66 (1859): 996B; trans. Boris Bobrinskoy, "The Indwelling of the Spirit in Christ: 'Pneumatic Christology' in the Cappadocian Fathers," *St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly* 28 (1984): 61.

greater than the Logos.<sup>57</sup> Theodore affirms that by grace the Logos always kept the assumed man from sin, but this enrichment of impeccability is in the background and not an active factor in Christ's achievement of sinlessness until the resurrection.<sup>58</sup> Accordingly, Theodore emphasizes that in the wilderness temptations Jesus had to struggle as a man, not as God, and is therefore an example for others:

If as God Jesus overcame the devil, it was no great accomplishment for him to defeat the apostate angel whom he himself had made. Nor is this victory to be ascribed to his humanity alone. But by long-suffering, he prevailed over him as man, teaching us that it is not through miracles but by long-suffering and patient endurance that we must prevail over the devil and that we should do nothing merely for show or for notoriety's sake.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Basil is an exception to the trend of neglecting the Holy Spirit because of his defense of the Spirit's role in the redemptive economy. Basil, "De Spiritu Sanctu" 16.39; trans. Bobrinskoy, "Indwelling of the Spirit," 61: "Every operation was accomplished (in Christ) with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit." G. J. Reinink, "Quotations from the Lost Works of Theodoret of Cyrus and Theodore of Mopsuestia in an Unpublished East Syrian Work on Christology," *Studia patristica* 33, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 565. The quotations noted here are from Theodore's *De Incarnatione* 5 and 12. Reinink does not give the text, reference, or translation.

<sup>58</sup> Thdr. Mops., "Catechetical Homilies" 7.13, *Les Homélie Catéchétiques de Théodore de Mopsueste*, trans. and intro. Raymond Tonneau in collaboration with Robert Devreesse, *Studi e Testi* 145 (Vatican City: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1949), 181; cited by Francis A. Sullivan, "The Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia," *Analecta Gregoriana* 82 (Rome: Apud Aedes Universitatis Gregorianae, 1956), 252.

<sup>59</sup> Thdr. Mops., "Fragment 20," *Mattäus-Kommentare aus der griechischen Kirche*, ed. Joseph Reuss (Berlin: Akademi-Verlag, 1957), 103; trans. in Manilo Simonetti, *Matthew 1-13, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. New Testament*, vol. 1a (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001), 60.

Theodore seems to say that the grace of God as given by the Logos is veiled to allow for the grace given by the Holy Spirit in cooperation with the grace-empowered human will. Having been made vulnerable to the contest, Christ's human will merited virtue.<sup>60</sup> The freedom of Christ's human will is important for Theodore because this gives moral reality to Jesus' choices for the good instead of evil.<sup>61</sup> Theodore develops his idea of grace as power or aid given to Christ that is analogous to the way God empowers other human beings.<sup>62</sup> Still, Theodore distinguishes Christ from other humans as uniquely gifted with grace in a degree of "operation more than" all others because of the incarnational union.<sup>63</sup> Jesus' exemplary life is the result of

<sup>60</sup> H. B. Swete, "Theodorus 26," *A Dictionary of Christian Biography and Literature. To the End of the Sixth Century AD, with an Account of the Principal Sects and Heresies*, ed. Henry Wace and William C. Piercy (London: John Murray, 1911), 970, summarizes Theodore's idea: "The perfect man, the man Christ surpassed all other men. He was absolutely free from sin, and His life was a continual progress from one stage of virtue to another, a meritorious course of which the end was victory over death and an entrance into the immortal and immutable state."

<sup>61</sup> Thdr. Mops., "De Incarnatione 14," in *PG* 66: 989D; cited by Dewart, *Theology of Grace*, 76. Dewart notes that for Theodore, a truly moral choice and the reality of Jesus' temptations entail the possibility of sinning.

<sup>62</sup> Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 52. Fairbairn notes that the usual patristic view of grace was God's giving of the divine life, or fellowship.

<sup>63</sup> Thdr. Mops., "De Incar. 7," ed. Swete, Theodore, 2: 298. A serious problem with Theodore's view is that he the man assumed for incarnation was foreknown by God to live virtuously, making God's grace contingent on human action, which resembles adoptionism in a superficial way. As partial explanation for this strange view, Greer argues that Theodore relied on a stock meaning of the relation between grace (providence) and freedom that appears commonly in patristic thought (e.g., Gregory of Nyssa and Origen) that God gives grace to those who seek to do good (Rowan A. Greer, "The Analogy of Grace in Theodore of Mopsuestia's Christology," *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s., 34 (1983): 92. Dewart defends Theodore against adoptionism by saying that "there is no hint in his teaching that the man,

grace in a way that has not transformed Christ to be superhuman,<sup>64</sup> but he is a perfect human and unique in virtue because of the special operation of grace in his life.<sup>65</sup>

This view of grace as divine assistance is the distinctive element of this model as the empowerment of Christ's human will to grow, progress, and obey in freedom to be a relevant example for others to follow. Theodore emphasizes Christ's human struggle in cooperation with divine grace as an achievement that is relevant for the rest of humanity.<sup>66</sup> Theodore also clarifies the concern of this model, how could Jesus be an example if he triumphed simply as God? Instead, the value of his life as an example is that Jesus struggled to obey as a man, according to the same scale of human life as believers have:

However, if he had not possessed a soul, but (rather) it is the Deity which was victorious—none of the things accomplished would have been to our profit. (For what likeness is there between Deity and the human soul with respect to perfection of activity?) And

Jesus, was adopted by the Word as a reward for merit at some point during the course of his lifetime (*Theology of Grace*, 79). The incarnation was a union with the assumed man from the beginning, in the womb, "De Incar. 7," in PG 66: 976D.

<sup>64</sup> "Moreover, the grace given the Man does not change his nature, however much it affects the capacities of his nature," Thdr. Mops., "De Incar. 2," ed. Swete, 291-92; trans. Greer, "The Analogy of Grace," 94.

<sup>65</sup> Greer, "The Analogy of Grace," 96, "The exceptional character of this grace explains the Man's constant choice of the good. And it accounts for peculiar gifts given the Man, gifts which render him different from all other human beings. His sinlessness, his virtual omniscience and omnipotence—these remain human, but they differ radically from moral and prophetic gifts bestowed upon others. The unique operation of God's grace explains the unique humanity of the Man."

<sup>66</sup> Thdr. Mops. "De Incar. 15.3," 2: 311; ed. Swete, trans. R. A. Norris, Jr., *Manhood and Christ. A Study in the Christology of Theodore of Mopsuestia* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 206.

the Lord's struggles would appear not to be of profit for us, but to have taken place for the sake of (empty) show. And if it is impossible to say this, it is certain that those things were done for our sakes, and (that) he instituted a greater battle against the passions of the soul, a lesser against those of the flesh.<sup>67</sup>

Therefore, Theodore of Mopsuestia represents the empowering grace model by his emphasis on the example, need for grace, and struggle of Christ in his humanity to resist sin and obey perfectly. Theodore sees a role for the Holy Spirit as mediator of divine help in a way that is analogous to the grace promised by Christ to others in the midst of their temptations (Hebrews 4:16).

Augustine also exemplifies this model. Augustine notes the differences and similarities of empowering grace in Christ and other human beings. Comparing Adam and Jesus, Augustine writes that Jesus was given greater grace that made him able to overcome the "will of the flesh" by the "will of the spirit."<sup>68</sup> But when comparing Christ to the elect, Augustine affirms that this empowering grace is "the same grace in the man Christ" as the grace that is in the elect. The difference is that in Christ the result was impeccability—"having no ability to sin."<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the empowering grace that enabled Jesus to continue sinlessly throughout his human life is the same grace that is available to others by the Holy Spirit for similar results.<sup>70</sup> Because of the similarity of empowering grace for Christ and the elect, Augustine can preserve Jesus' impeccability alongside affirming Jesus' value as an example for others. Because Jesus lived by empo-

<sup>67</sup> Thdr. Mops., "De Incar. 15.3" 2: 311; trans. Norris, *Manhood and Christ*, 206.

<sup>68</sup> Aug. "De Correptione et Gratia 31," *PL* 44: 935. He may mean the Holy Spirit.

<sup>69</sup> Aug. "Enchiridion 11.36," *CCSL* 46 (1969): 70.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.40, *CCSL* 46: 72. Grace is defined as the gift of the Holy Spirit that became natural to Christ in his humanity so that sin could not be admitted.

wering grace to achieve his sinlessness in the face of temptations, he can be an example and “through giving help” assist those who struggle with temptations to sin.<sup>71</sup> Augustine emphasizes that grace enhanced Christ’s freedom of will in his humanity by making him unable to serve sin.<sup>72</sup> A final representative of this model is Leontius of Jerusalem. Leontius explains that the impeccability of Christ is caused by the coordination of his human will and the Logos, described as “the divine nature being given through the Holy Spirit in Christ.”<sup>73</sup> In this way, Leontius preserves the human freedom of Christ that participates in the divine grace so that Christ can be a model for other humans. He understands divine grace not in terms of aid or power, but as “the leading principle” that gives freedom to Christ’s humanity.<sup>74</sup> Leontius’s formulation resembles the second and third models because of the way he sees a closeness of operation between the divine and human aspects in Christ. Leontius’s Nestorian opponents objected to this move as a denial of Christ’s human achievement of sinlessness because it was a victory of the divine nature.<sup>75</sup> Nonetheless, Leontius claims that grace protects Christ from Satan, sin, and death by hypostatic union of Christ’s humanity to the Logos.<sup>76</sup> The effect of the union is Christ’s human sinlessness, but this is a result coordinate with Christ’s human freedom as the necessity of empowering grace, not of the divine nature. Leontius is different from Theodore (and Nestorius) in that his meaning of grace is the operative presence of the divine nature, not simply the

<sup>71</sup> Aug., “De Trin. 4.13.17,” CCL 50: 183.

<sup>72</sup> Aug., “De Praedestinatione Sanctorum 15.30,” PL 44: 982.

<sup>73</sup> Leontius H., “Adversus Nestorianos 19,” PG 86.1: 1484D.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 1485A.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 1505AB.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1505CD.

power or aid given by God.<sup>77</sup> Despite this difference, Leontius suggests the empowering grace model by his emphasis on Christ's human need and the corresponding grace to choose obedience perfectly as he did, in full freedom.<sup>78</sup>

## Conclusion

If this analysis is right, I have reported a summary of research that supports my claim about four models of Christ's impeccability and temptation in the patristic period. The resources that patristic theologians passed on are rich in the different ways of explaining Christ's impeccability and temptation, as a subset of the interaction of divinity and humanity in the incarnational union. Few advances have been made beyond what the patristic thinkers developed in these four models, and much of what is later considered to be fresh formulation of models in modern theology has drawn significantly upon one or another of the patristic models, particularly the fourth model. I conclude by offering a brief evaluation of each model.

The first model, Sinless by Inherent Impeccability, is the baseline affirmation of Christ's human sinlessness as the result of his inherent divine impeccability. One part of the explanation is right: the ultimate outcome of Christ's temptation was never in doubt (he was unable to sin because of his deity). But this is distinct from the question about how Jesus got to that outcome (sinlessness as an achievement). On this second question the model seems to be theologically inadequate for the explanation of his sinlessness in terms of his impeccability. If this had been true, Jesus seems to have endured a vastly different experience

<sup>77</sup> Fairbairn, *Grace and Christology*, 166, sees the usual patristic view of grace as God's gift of himself, as here in Leontius, in contrast to Theodore of Mopsuestia's view of grace as divine aid or power given as something.

<sup>78</sup> Other representatives of this model are Nestorius and Theodoret of Cyrrhus. See McKinley, *Tempted for Us*, ch. 5.

of temptation than what other humans do, and this undermines his relevance. Consequently, the model fails to explain the significance of Christ's victory over temptation. The marvel of God's rout of the devil is that the incarnate Son regained lost ground on the same terms within the limitations of his frail humanity, just as the first Adam. The victory of the second Adam is empty if the inherent impeccability model is the fullest explanation we may give for Christ's triumph over Satan's temptation. Were this model true, then Christ's obedience would not be a human obedience learned through suffering (Hebrews 5:7-8) or a human faithfulness that God counts as a gift of righteousness to believers for justification (Romans 5:17-19). Finally, the first model does not explain how impeccability becomes a shareable property in Christ's human nature communicated from his deity. Is this deification, by which the human nature of Jesus is elevated to function in perfection because of union with the divine nature? That other models would be developed to explain these questions suggests that patristic theologians recognized the inadequacy of this first model, so they kept on formulating other proposals.

The second model, Sinless by Deification, explains the relation between Christ's divine impeccability and his human temptability as a natural predominance by which an elevated, divinized humanity results in his sinlessness. At this point it may be best to consider this model as giving part of the answer to the dilemma of impeccability and temptation, that is, explaining precisely why Jesus could not have sinned because of his immutable divine nature. Where the model seems to fall short as theologically inadequate is in the way the model explains how Jesus resisted sin. The model depicts Jesus as having cheated through using the internal effects of deification (analogous to using performance-enhancing drugs in sports), which I think is false. If Jesus possessed an unequal advantage of dei-



fication in temptation relative to the rest of us, then the praiseworthiness of his triumph (as the second Adam) and his example for others (as the pattern for faithfulness) may be called into question. It seems that if deification were the cause of his sinlessness, this would have also precluded the struggle necessary to Jesus learning empathy (Hebrews 4:15) and obedience through that suffering (Hebrews 5:7-8). Scripture does not specify anything like deification in the actual means Jesus employed in resisting temptation, or as the means that believers are exhorted to rely upon as assistance for meeting their temptations.<sup>79</sup> Instead, the only clear reference to deification that I am aware of (2 Peter 1:4) is the fulfillment and completion of salvation, synonymous with glorification, and is not specified as the generative means of progressing in salvation on this side of glory.<sup>80</sup> Proponents of this model could argue that deification for Christ occurs by the Holy Spirit, and a parallel sort of deification by grace is available to believers. This is not the way they have explained the deification of Christ's human nature. On the contrary, Cyril of Alexandria, for one, was extremely hostile to the suggestion that the Holy Spirit had this sort of role.<sup>81</sup> Thus, in the deification model, the role of the Holy Spirit for the Mes-

<sup>79</sup> The argument from silence is not best, but I think here it is at least good because specific things are mentioned in Scripture (e.g., prayer, community, the Holy Spirit, angels) as the support accompanying Jesus in his temptations, while the idea of deification is never indicated in this connection.

<sup>80</sup> I think the deification in view is relational engagement with God. Psalm 82:6 might be considered in regard to deification, but even here the concept is a status of those engaged by God relationally, not an ontological transformation of their nature.

<sup>81</sup> Cyril's ninth anathema against Nestorius, included in the declarations of the Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus, 431), was against all who counted a dynamic role of the Holy Spirit in Christ. I assume that this anathema is to guard against Adoptionism.

siah's spiritual life and ministry was counted as superfluous because the divine nature of the Logos deified his human nature.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, I find the deification model to be theologically inadequate to explain how Jesus did not sin. The causative force of deification in his human nature raises too much difference between Jesus and the rest of humanity (unnecessarily) and cannot be harmonized with the relevance of his temptation that Scripture highlights. Patristic contemporaries also seem to have found the model lacking because two other models were formulated during the period as alternate explanations.

The third model, Sinless by Divine Hegemony, explains Christ's human temptation and sinlessness as the relation of hypostatic predominance—the personal direction of the Logos over his human nature. I think the model is helpful to shift the focus away from properties or attributes of the divine and human natures to the person who is Jesus Christ and the Logos. This double-natured, double-willed person is the one who was tempted and then triumphed as a man. Christ's human will is truly human, and enjoys no special powers that are not also available to other humans. However, the model makes it difficult to see how a single person (the theanthropic Godman) can genuinely suffer temptation when his human will is perfectly anchored to, supervened by, and deified in concurrence with God's will. The problem of temptation seems to be much more

<sup>82</sup> This is the critique of a patristic contemporary, Theodore of Mopsuestia, "Fragmenta Dogmatica, ex libris contra Apollinarium," in *PG* 66 (1859): 996B. According to G. J. Reinink, "Quotations from the Lost Works of Theodoret of Cyrus and Theodore of Mopsuestia in an Unpublished East Syrian Work on Christology," *Studia patristica* 33, ed. Elizabeth A. Livingstone (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), 565, Theodore charged that many had obscured or ignored the Holy Spirit's involvement in the life of Jesus. The quotations noted by Reinink are from Theodore's "De Incarnatione" 5 and 12. Unfortunately, Reinink does not give the text, reference, or translation that is the basis of his claim that Theodore was critical in this way.

the existential struggle to enact that choice of conformity to God's will instead of disobedience. How can a human will that is antecedently conformed to the divine will be tempted in a way that constitutes some recognizable temptation experience and struggle that might be sufficient for Christ's empathy for others and his demonstration for them of a reasonable way out? The instrumental relation of his humanity to his personal choice and divine will is more like a theophany than an incarnation because the role of his human will is so greatly reduced to little more than an assent to divine volition. Such reduction counts against Christ's function as an example and an empathetic priest because he does not seem to be engaged with temptations, despite the way that the biblical accounts portray him. These inadequacies are perhaps the sorts of things perceived by others who formulated the fourth model, which brings Jesus much closer to us than the earlier three models dared.

The fourth model, Sinless by Empowering Grace, affirms that Jesus could be an example in his temptations and sinlessness as a man because he was helped in an external way by divine grace through the Holy Spirit. While it is unfortunate that one proponent of the model denied the impeccability of Jesus before the resurrection (Theodore of Mopsuestia), and three were judged as heretics for divisive Christology (see below), the model is not thereby tainted, since medieval and Reformation theologians have ably taken it up (listening to Augustine). At least two reasons for favoring this model should be mentioned. First, the empowering grace model follows the biblical evidence for Christ's temptations closely with a reasonable theological explanation for how Jesus could truly experience these trials—he suffered them in his humanity without the intrusion of his deity. This explanation alone (of the orthodox proposals thus far in the history) secures his true empathy with others who are not God incarnate as he is, and the reasonableness of

his pattern in sinless victory requires some sort of limitation to struggle within human means. Second, the model's account for Christ's success as based on the empowering grace of the Holy Spirit satisfies the difficult factor of Jesus' human freedom (despite the incarnational union with his divine nature) and builds the analogy to Christian experience receiving the same Holy Spirit from the risen Lord. Jesus has provided both the path and the means to walking through life as he did, and by employing that means instead of his inherent deity, Jesus became constituted through his experiences with empathy for others, fully qualified to be their priest to help them in the time of need when they are tempted (Hebrews 4:16).

Why was the empowering grace model not favored in its day? Church councils held at Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), and Constantinople (553) repeatedly condemned the eastern proponents of the fourth model. Theodore of Mopsuestia, Nestorius, and Theodoret of Cyrus were charged with emphasizing Christ's humanity and the action of divine grace so much that the divisive Christology obscured due regard for his deity. Antiochene proponents of divisive Christology were fond of referring to Christ's humanity as "the assumed man" (but this is not the case with Augustine). The specter of Adoptionism also seems to have haunted patristic thinking, which may have raised suspicions against a model that explains Christ's unique sinlessness in terms of grace that is similarly operative in other people. So, does the model reduce Jesus to a mere man who is specially empowered by divine grace to function as the adopted Son of God? I think the proponents are clear to exclude adoptionism (especially Augustine!). The model seems acceptable and orthodox if we maintain Christ's essential likeness to humanity (he is truly human, and thus can be a pattern of being empowered by the Holy Spirit) and his essential difference from humanity (he is truly God) as two of the orthodox mark-

ers of describing his identity properly. What remains to be done is to explain how such empowering grace works in Christ and others. Medieval and Reformed theologies have developed this further.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, the empowering grace model recognizes a significant, ongoing role for the Holy Spirit in the Incarnation. The model counts the Spirit as providing grace to Christ's humanity in a way that matches the biblical evidence the Messiah's earthly life and the analogous role of the Holy Spirit in the lives of Christians. To patristic theologians these were risky ideas, but a few theologians have favored a pneumatological aspect to the Incarnation since the Reformation (e.g., John Calvin and John Owen), and especially in recent decades (e.g., Gerald Hawthorne), and owe a debt to the patristic formulations that have paved the way to better understanding of this mysterious question.

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<sup>83</sup> See McKinley, *Tempted for Us*, chs. 6-7.

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This article is excerpted from John E. McKinley, *Tempted for Us. Theological Models and the Practical Relevance of Christ's Impeccability and Temptation* (Milton Keynes, U. K.: Paternoster, 2009), chs. 4-5.

# Calvino (ri)formatore di un ethos per la città

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**Astratto.** L'azione di Giovanni Calvino (1509-1564) ha contribuito fortemente al rinnovamento e alla trasformazione di Ginevra, con effetti straordinari per tutta la storia successiva della città e dell'Occidente. Annunciata dal pulpito giorno dopo giorno, la Parola si è incarnata nella vita e nei comportamenti delle persone, creando una comunità nuova e alternativa. Calvino interpreta una visione del mondo che abbraccia la totalità dell'esistenza, pur essendo radicata in un progetto di chiesa riformata dall'Evangelo, e rimane ancora oggi un riferimento imprescindibile per l'attuale dibattito sul ruolo della religione sulla scena pubblica in un quadro pluralista e secolarizzato, al di là di modelli clericali e pulsioni laiciste.

**Parole chiave:** Calvino, teologia della città, visione del mondo, calvinismo

Secondo M. Walzer, "Calvino può essere descritto nel modo più semplice come un intellettuale fattivo e concreto: un francese, uomo di cultura, profugo coinvolto nella politica ginevrina... Calvino [fu], in primo luogo, non un teologo, o un filosofo ma un ideologo. L'efficacia di una teologia sta nella sua capacità di offrire ai credenti una conoscenza di Dio... l'efficacia di una filosofia (almeno nel senso tradizionale del termine) sta nella sua

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capacità di spiegare a chi la fa sua il mondo e la società umana come sono e devono essere... L'efficacia di una ideologia, invece, sta nella sua capacità di mobilitare i suoi adepti per cambiare il mondo".<sup>1</sup> Il calvinismo stesso può essere descritto come "ideologia in transizione... funzionale al processo di modernizzazione."<sup>2</sup> In modo chiaro esso infatti non può essere considerato una "ideologia liberale, anche se la vita della comunità religiosa fu certamente un tirocinio di buon governo e di partecipazione democratica".<sup>3</sup>

### **Calvino e la trasformazione della città**

La realtà in cui Calvino si trova ad operare è di tipo urbano. Non a caso la riforma si presenta in molti contesti europei come fenomeno urbano. La proposta di Lutero fu accolta da 50 su 65 città libere in Germania. Simile è il caso della regione svizzero-renana con Zwingli. La dimensione sociale e culturale delle città agevola sensibilmente lo sviluppo della Riforma.

Ginevra, in particolare, rappresenta un caso particolare. Qui la riforma produce una fusione con il processo di autonomia, di sviluppo politico e di ricerca dell'indipendenza. E il genio di Calvino interagisce proficuamente con questo contesto. È un modello di posizionamento sociale della fede cristiana che esce dalla clandestinità, senza ricercare le comodità del palazzo. La specificità<sup>4</sup> della proposta di Calvino si colloca di fatti respon-

<sup>1</sup> M. Walzer, *La Rivoluzione dei Santi* (Torino: Claudiana, 1996), 64, (orig. 1965).

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 349.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

<sup>4</sup> Ovviamente, non tutti sono d'accordo. Si veda D. VonDrunen, "The Two Kingdom: A Reassessment of the Transformationist Calvin," *Calvin Theological Journal* 40 (2005): 248-266.

sabilmente tra la tentazione intimistica dell'ecclesiologia luterana e il comunitarismo politico di Zwingli.<sup>5</sup>

Non è eccessivo dire che la predicazione di Calvino ha contribuito fortemente al rinnovamento e alla trasformazione di Ginevra, con effetti straordinari per tutta la storia successiva dell'occidente. È una specie di paradigma, di laboratorio di trasformazione. Annunciata dal pulpito giorno dopo giorno, la parola si incarna nella vita e nei comportamenti delle persone, creando una comunità nuova e alternativa. Lo scopo della predicazione di Calvino, quindi, andava oltre alla preoccupazione per la salvezza delle anime. L'obiettivo reale è la trasformazione. Liberati dall'opera della croce, i cristiani adesso hanno nella predicazione una guida sicura per l'azione, per la vita, per l'impegno nella società. Tutta l'opera di Calvino sembra essere un accorato appello affinché la parola potesse circolare in massima libertà nelle città europee del XVI secolo.<sup>6</sup> Si tratta di una trasformazione non imposta, che non diventa sovrastruttura ideologica e che non richiede e non sopporta l'uso della violenza e della manipolazione, del privilegio e dell'abuso.

Alla fine dei suoi giorni, Calvino esplicita, però, una forte moderazione nei confronti della possibilità di un duraturo cambiamento politico. Il 31 luglio 1562, dice dal pulpito:

la giustizia e il giudizio sono principi universali che valgono per tutti. Significa amministrare se stesso in modo da rispettare gli al-

<sup>5</sup> "A Giovanni Calvino si deve riconoscere il genio dell'assimilazione critica, la capacità di cogliere nelle esperienze, nei lavori, nei progetti altrui gli elementi innovativi, il nucleo centrale e di ripensarlo nel quadro più ampio del progetto. Quando sarà da lui realizzato a Ginevra si trova già a Strasburgo... ma Ginevra non sarà solo la copia della chiesa madre, sarà altra cosa per una serie di circostanze e forse anche grazie al genio di Calvino" G. Tourn, *I protestanti—una rivoluzione* (Claudiana: Torino, 1993), 284.

<sup>6</sup> L. De Koster, *Light for the City. Calvin's Preaching: Source of Life and Liberty* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

tri, significa resistere e opporsi al male ogni qual volta è necessario aiutare i poveri o gli afflitti.<sup>7</sup>

La preoccupazione di Calvin per la giustizia sociale rimane sempre vivace. Qui sta una differenza con Lutero. La dottrina dei due regni porta Lutero<sup>8</sup> a coltivare un certo conservatorismo sociale. L'insegnamento di Calvin sulla sovranità di Dio e sulla signoria di Cristo, conducono il riformatore di Ginevra, invece, verso un impegno concreto per la trasformazione. Sicuramente, in Calvin rimangono—nel linguaggio e nella teologia—residui diffusi di un certo dualismo, ma l'estensione e l'articolazione della sua teologia e del suo pensiero non sono più di tipo ecclesiale o clericale. La centratura—come pare essere di fatto nelle Scritture—sul Regno di Dio rappresenta una delle eredità più importanti di Calvin.

Lo studioso americano David Hall ha sintetizzato i principali fuochi dell'eredità culturale di Calvin per la città.<sup>9</sup> Per Hall la cultura moderna è cambiata in dieci campi grazie al contributo decisivo, più o meno consapevole, di Calvin. Ecco in rapida sintesi l'elenco di Hall.

1. Educazione: rottura con la pedagogia medievale che limita l'educazione all'élite aristocratica e spinta verso l'educazione "pubblica," aperta a tutti.

<sup>7</sup> "Sermon on 2 Samuel 8:9-18," *Sermons on 2 Samuel*, D. Kelly (a cura) (Banner of Truth: Edinburgh, 1992), 418-419.

<sup>8</sup> "Even more than the later Luther, he converted the polarization of the two kingdoms model into parallelism, stressing harmonization of the spiritual and the temporal realms as of two communal realizations of God's will for fallen mankind, one direct and the other indirect." O. O'Donovan e J. L. O'Donovan, *From Irenaeus to Grotius* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 662.

<sup>9</sup> *The legacy of John Calvin* (Phillipsburg: P&R, 2008).



2. Sostegno ai poveri: non più la “carità” a pioggia, ma forme di responsabilizzazione dei poveri per uscire dalla spirale della povertà.
3. Il decalogo diventa un orientamento per la vita pubblica, non più solo la carta di riferimento della pietà personale.
4. Libertà della chiesa: distinzione rispetto alla magistratura civile e vigorosa salvaguardia della sua autonomia.
5. Spinta verso forme di governo collegiali. La monocrazia, sia in ambito civile che ecclesiastico, è di per sé portatrice di tentazioni autoritarie.
6. Politica decentralizzata: la repubblica come forma di stato che garantisce meglio l’equilibrio dei poteri.
7. Pari dignità tra le professioni: la vocazione ricevuta rende degno ogni lavoro.
8. La dignità del profitto equo: lo spirito d’intrapresa viene incoraggiato come forma di lavoro responsabile.
9. La musica nella lingua del popolo: il salterio cantato nella lingua vernacolare.
10. La spinta alla circolazione di libri: l’editoria a Ginevra diventa un’industria culturale di grande rilevanza.

### **La dinamica etica di Calvino**

Il profilo etico di Calvino viene in questo lavoro analizzato in una prospettiva diacronica e multi prospettiva. Dall’interazione di diversi elementi, infatti, è possibile cercare di comprendere la riflessione etica del Riformatore. I tre elementi presi in considerazione sono la metodologia del teologo Giovanni Calvino e i suoi effetti personali, la visione del mondo e della vita di cui Calvino si fa portatore e un’analisi del contesto storico-sociale. Per ognuno di questi elementi si esplicitano alcuni aspetti che potrebbero essere d’aiuto nel percorso.

### *La disciplina come rivoluzione*

Calvino crede che la crescita spirituale si manifesti in un accordo tra l'aspetto volontario e intimo dell'obbedienza. Una naturale armonia tra la moralità e i desideri. L'etica di Calvino è sostanzialmente un'etica per l'auto-disciplina. La disciplina non è solo uno dei tanti argomenti da affrontare teologicamente, è piuttosto un problema concreto, da affrontare e gestire con metodi e strategie opportune: lettura biblica, diario personale, impegni morali, gestione del tempo. La disciplina, in Calvino, non rappresento però solo uno degli elementi centrali della spiritualità personale, ma è anche e soprattutto un aspetto ineludibile di una sana ecclesiologia riformata. Una chiesa disciplinata (*église dressée*) è una comunità che onora i principi biblici nel suo mezzo. Nelle *Ordonnances ecclésiastique*<sup>10</sup>—che per molto tempo rappresentano la mappa di azione di molte chiese riformate in Europa—Calvino illustra diversi meccanismi istituzionali finalizzati al mantenimento della disciplina comunitaria. È l'esempio del “concistoro” che ha tra le sue attribuzioni quella di supervisionare la direzione morale della comunità e dei suoi membri.<sup>11</sup>

Si tratta di uno stile che internalizza finanche una nuova concezione del tempo.<sup>12</sup> L'applicazione di un codice morale e spirituale, costruisce una nuova relazione con il tempo, e facilita la relazione con Dio. Dio vede tutto e sempre, e nel giorno del

<sup>10</sup> *Ordonnances ecclésiastique. 1541*, J. F. Bergier (a cura), *Registres de la Compagnie des Pasteurs de Geneve au temps de Calvin*, vol. 1, 1546-1553 (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1964), 1-13. In italiano si veda E. Campi, *Protestantesimo nei secoli*, vol. I (Claudiana: Torino, 1991), 143-146.

<sup>11</sup> T. A. Lambert e I. M. Watt (a cura), *Registres du Concistorie de Geneva au temps de Calvin* (Geneva: Librairie Droz, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> Si veda l'eccellente studio di M. Engammare, *On Time, Punctuality and Discipline in Early Modern Calvinism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

giudizio, scrive Calvino, dovremmo rendere conto di ogni minuto della nostra vita. Ginevra diventa in pochi anni una città conosciuta per la sua puntualità, la precisione nel tempo. La Riforma sviluppa il suo approccio al tempo, molto diverso dalla concezione monastica e medievale. La puntualità non è tanto il frutto dell'innovazione tecnologica, è il frutto di una rivoluzione spirituale e sociale.

La disciplina, per Calvino, non è mai, però, semplice preferenza per l'ordine e la conversazione. Nel pensiero del Riformatore la disciplina è uno degli strumenti principali che Dio usa per manifestare la sua volontà e la sua gloria. La preoccupazione non è tanto per la moralità individuale (per altro importante e mai da trascurare)<sup>13</sup> quando per la testimonianza pubblica della comunità. Ogni cristiano, quindi, deve esercitare una forte responsabilità e sostenere la purezza della chiesa. L'accento all'integrità e la ricerca delle virtù morali non alimenta quindi una comprensione settaria della chiesa cristiana. Anzi, in Calvino, la chiesa è in qualche modo una realtà a volte ambigua, comunque parte di una realtà più grande, la *res publica christiana*. Il magistrato civile è l'autorità secolare e come tale ha il compito di proteggere la vera religione e applicare la disciplina cristiana nella società intera. Si aspira cioè ad una cristianizzazione della vita intera. Questo rimane uno degli aspetti più critici e discussi dell'intera architettura calviniana, anche se l'implementazione del modello generale ha prodotto risultati straordinari: dalle scuole che diventano finalmente popolari all'organizzazione dell'assistenza per i poveri e gli ultimi, Cal-

<sup>13</sup> Si veda il riferimento alla pietra: "definisco pietà un senso di venerazione e di amore per Dio congiunti insieme, a cui siamo condotti dalla conoscenza dei beni da lui largiti," IRC 1.2.1; "è giusto attribuirgli [a Dio] la superiorità che gli appartiene, onorandone la maestà, adoperandosi perché la sua gloria sia largamente conosciuta ed obbedendo ai suoi comandamenti... la vera religione [è]... venerazione volontaria e servizio degno" IRC 1.2.2.

vino e il calvinismo sono davvero dei testimoni di una singolare rivoluzione disciplinata.<sup>14</sup>

### **La visione del mondo di Calvino**

I riferimenti essenziali per avvicinarsi alla complessità, provando a scoprirne la rilevanza, del pensiero di Calvino sono da individuare nell'approccio epistemologico, nella relazione proposta tra teologia e antropologia e nel riposizionamento ecclesiologicalo nei confronti del società.

#### ***L'approccio epistemologico***

Fin dall'inizio delle Istituzioni, Calvino si interroga sulla natura della vera sapienza. Già nelle prime righe della sua opera, Calvino imposta il ritmo teocentrico che l'intero lavoro seguirà. La rivelazione di Dio è semplicemente centrale, necessaria, per una vera conoscenza di Dio. Calvino non si preoccupa di onorare Aristotele, di proteggere la ragione, di costruire prove per l'esistenza di Dio. Inizia dalla conoscenza di Dio, di noi stessi e, quindi, del mondo intero.<sup>15</sup> L'esistenza di Dio è presupposta, come accade nella rivelazione di Dio. Questo perché, la conoscenza di Dio è in un certo senso intuitiva: esiste un generale *sensus divinitatis*<sup>16</sup> e in ognuno di noi è innestato un *semen religionis*,<sup>17</sup> funzionale all'aspetto soggettivo della nostra conos-

<sup>14</sup> L'espressione è usata da P. S. Gorski, *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the rise of the State in Early modern Europe* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2003).

<sup>15</sup> IRC 1.1.1 e 1.1.2. Per una profonda discussione sull'epistemologia di Calvino, si veda E. A. Dowey, *The Knowledge of God in Calvin's Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994).

<sup>16</sup> IRC 1.3.1.

<sup>17</sup> IRC 1.4.1.

cenza. Inoltre, la creazione<sup>18</sup> intera proclama la conoscenza di Dio (l'opera di Dio rivela Dio): questo è l'aspetto oggettivo della conoscenza di Dio. Siamo cioè circondanti in ogni dove dalle testimonianze di Dio. Eppure, la verità di Dio è da noi continuamente distorta e rifiutata. Questa è la conseguenza della rottura originale: ancora oggi, a motivo del peccato, non possiamo conoscere Dio con la mente naturale.

E' solo attraverso le Sacre Scritture, guidati dallo Spirito Santo,<sup>19</sup> che riusciamo a conoscere Dio. Le Scritture, anzi, creano, correggono ed estendono la nostra percezione di Dio e del mondo.<sup>20</sup> Non è allora assolutamente possibile arrivare a conoscere Dio con la ragione o le proprie capacità,<sup>21</sup> perché il peccato ci rende totalmente inabili. La vera conoscenza di Dio, per il credente, è sempre una relazione dinamica tra l'aspetto oggettivo (le Scritture e la creazione) e quello soggettivo (la relazione con il Creatore, Signore e Salvatore). E l'unica risposta opportuna è quella dell'adorazione. Che si trasforma presto in servi-

<sup>18</sup> Esiste su questi temi un dibattito esagerato. Per una utile rassegna si vedano le opere di S. J. Grabill, *Rediscovering the Natural Law in Reformed Theological Ethics* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 2006) e G. Haas, "Calvin's Ethics," D. K. McKim (a cura), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93-105. E anche G. Haas, "Creational Ethics is Public Ethics: The Kuyperian Legacy," *Christian Theological Research Fellowship (Web) Journal* 10 (2005).

<sup>19</sup> Sul ruolo dello Spirito Santo nel pensiero di Calvino si veda il classico lavoro di B. B. Warfield, "Calvin the Theologian," *Calvin and Augustine*, nella raccolta di S. C. Craig (a cura) (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing, 1956).

<sup>20</sup> IRC 1.6.1 e 1.7.4.

<sup>21</sup> Per il dibattito sulle conseguenze noetiche del peccato si veda M. Westphal, "Taking St. Paul Seriously: Sin as an Epistemological Category," T. P. Flint (a cura), *Christian Philosophy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: Notre Dame University Press, 1990), 200-226; e E. T. Charry, *By Renewing of Your Mind, The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), cap. 9.

zio.<sup>22</sup> Anzi il credente diventa consapevole che nel suo cuore c'è una verità inattaccabile.<sup>23</sup> La parola penetra talmente la mente e lo spirito e le stesse giunture ossee, che per grazia divina, ci commuove così intensamente da trasformarci e renderci obbedienti. Ecco la vera fonte della prospettiva cristiana. Non è la natura, non è la cultura: elementi che di certo rimangono importanti nella formazione della personalità umana ma che non possono essere decisivi nella prospettiva cristiana. Alla fine, non importa chi sia la persona, come è stata la sua evoluzione, quanto il peccato abbia segnata la sua vita... Dio può arrivare nella vita di ognuno, stabilire una breccia nel cuore, ammorbidirlo alla verità della Parola, e salvarlo per la forza del vangelo di Gesù Cristo per mezzo della fede. Le prigioni dell'idolatria, della falsità e della menzogna sono distrutte dall'Iddio Uno-e-Trino e si viene liberati degli effetti deleteri e mortali del peccato. Il risultato è una trasformazione completa, un rinnovamento della mente e del cuore centrato sulla verità. La visione cristiana del mondo e della vita è sempre il risultato dell'intervento della grazia.<sup>24</sup>

### **Teologia e antropologia**

La direzione di fondo dell'intera opera di Calvinio è segnata dalla riscoperta della "sovranità di Dio." Interrogarsi su "cosa sia Dio" è una perdita di tempo, piuttosto vale la pena "sapere quali siano le sue caratteristiche e cosa si confaccia alla sua natura."<sup>25</sup> Dio è attivo nella creazione come Creatore e Sostenitore di ogni cosa. La dottrina della provvidenza di Calvinio ci aiuta così a capire come la sovranità di Dio si concretizzi nella realtà quotidiana. Non ha senso suddividere la creazione con le cate-

<sup>22</sup> IRC 1.2.1 e 2.

<sup>23</sup> IRC 1.7.4-1.8.1.

<sup>24</sup> Si veda D. K. Naugle, *Worldview* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> IRC 1.2.2.

gorie di materiale/spirituale, il regno di Dio e il regno di questo mondo. Dio è sovrano di tutto, la sua cura e la sua provvidenza interessano ogni cosa. Sicuri di queste verità, tutti i cristiani possono vivere fiduciosi nel mondo, impegnandosi con responsabilità nel lavoro quotidiano, alla gloria di Dio.<sup>26</sup> Ecco la rivoluzione biblica della teologia calviniana: Dio non è più un essere astratto, distante e remote, disinteressato o disattento nei confronti del suo mondo.

### *Chiesa e società*

Pur rimanendo completamente posizionato all'interno della cornice offerta dal Corpus Christianorum e delle diverse eredità medievali, Calvino è capace di profonde innovazioni culturali e sociali, anche nella riflessione specifica di tipo politico. Infatti, diversamente da Lutero e dagli anabattisti, Calvino rifiuta di pensare la chiesa e lo stato come due ambiti discontinui, e prova ad elaborare alcuni principi che favoriscono la congruenza tra le due istituzioni. Calvino scopre nella nozione di "patto" l'elemento chiave per spiegare la relazione tra Dio e l'uomo e la relazione tra gli uomini. L'ordine politico—come quello ecclesiastico—è fondamentale e necessario.<sup>27</sup>

Il contributo di Calvino alla costruzione di una visione del mondo e della vita cristiana è stato notevole. Si tratta di uno di uno sforzo esteso e sostanziale, senz'altro maggiore—in questo senso—di quello di qualunque altro riformatore. Una visione riformata della vita, solidamente fondata alle Sacre Scritture, alle quali Calvino ha dedicato la sua vita. Ed è proprio sulla base delle Scritture che Calvino ha sostenuto nel tempo lo standard della sovranità di Dio in tutte le aree della vita, non solo negli ambiti teologici ed ecclesiali, ma anche in quelli quotidiani

<sup>26</sup> IRC 1.17.6.

<sup>27</sup> IRC 2.2.13.

e politici. Questa attenzione nei confronti dell'autorità di Dio su tutte le aree dell'esistenza è forse una della eredità maggiori che dalla Riforma arriva fino ai giorni nostri.

### **La responsabilità del contesto**

Calvino è un profugo che, almeno all'inizio, è al servizio di altri profughi. La sua mobilità e la sua precarietà hanno influenzato fortemente il suo pensiero e la sua azione.

Da un lato ci sono molti dettagli nella biografia calviniana<sup>28</sup> che se presi in considerazione non possono che ampliare la centralità della condizione di vulnerabilità che ha caratterizzato il riformatore. I suoi spostamenti sono la cifra del rischio e delle vulnerabilità di Calvino: dal sud della Francia a Basilea, da Ferrara<sup>29</sup> a Strasburgo<sup>30</sup> e a Ginevra.<sup>31</sup> Luoghi dove le opposizioni e

<sup>28</sup> "... the pastor, an exile and resident alien, reached out to offer the strong hand of fellowship to a flock of refugees. This group spoke a language he know... all shared the condition of having been uprooted from home and everything familiar. The young man remembered that from his own experience. Thankful to have been received into this community, these new exiles asked for prayers for the friends they have left far away, and help for themselves, in the name of the one Lord Jesus Christ and His Gospel. Sometimes refugees might be able to bring with them the means to set up a new life, but not this group. Some of them were able and willing to work but needed jobs. Others brought little more than their faith and their shattered lives: a widow still stunned by the murder of her husband and anxious about providing for their three small children, a man who had been crippled by torture wondering if he could bear to be dependent even on these generous unknown neighbours," AA.VV., "The Economic and Social Witness of Calvin for Christian Life Today, Statement of an International Consultation," *Reformed World* 55.1 (2005): 3-7.

<sup>29</sup> Si veda L. De Chirico e A. Walker (a cura), *Lealtà in tensione. Giovanni Calvino e Renata di Francia* (Caltanissetta: Alfa & Omega, 2009).

<sup>30</sup> Ad esempio a Strasburgo Calvino scrive il suo commentario ai Romani, una nuova edizione delle Istituzioni, il piccolo trattato sulla santa cena, la risposta al cardinal Sadoletto. Ma a Strasburgo Calvino scopre la realtà della chiesa come diaspora. Un nuovo segno (nota ecclesiae): la vera chiesa di



le critiche e le più varie reazioni ostative si realizzano. Ginevra, in particolare, è una città che diventa punto di riferimento per i moltissimi profughi della fede. Uomini, donne, famiglie intere che dalla Francia, dall'Italia e dall'Inghilterra si spostavano per trovare serenità. Ginevra è quindi una città profondamente accogliente, generalmente attenta ai bisogni dei profughi.

Dall'altro la rilevanza del contesto è fondamentale ad una comprensione dell'approccio teologico di Calvino. Selderhuis,<sup>32</sup> nel suo libro sulla teologia dei salmi in Calvino, argomenta la forte autoconsapevolezza che Calvino manifesta nell'effettuare un parallelismo tra Davide e lui stesso, la comunità e Israele. L'esperienza di Davide è uno specchio della sua stessa esperienza, delle simili difficoltà.<sup>33</sup> Queste sono le radici del progetto

Cristo è perseguitata e dispersa; cfr H. A. Oberman, *The Two Reformations* (New Heaven: Yale University Press, 2003), 148-149.

<sup>31</sup> La relazione di Calvino con Ginevra è ambigua. Per molto tempo Calvino si considera un ospite (accetta la cittadinanza solo nel 1559). Anche l'influenza a la reputazione costruita nel tempo non sempre facilita. Rimane un pellegrino in terra straniera. Numero studi analizzano la relazione tra Calvino e Ginevra, ad esempio: E. W. Monster, *Calvin's Geneva* (New York: Wiley, 1967); W. C. Innes, *Social Concern in Calvin's Geneva* (Allison Park, Pickwick, 1983); W. G. Naphy, *Calvin and the consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994); W. G. Naphy, "Calvin's Genevam," D. K. McKim (a cura), *The Cambridge Companion to John Calvin*, 2004, 25-37.

<sup>32</sup> H. J. Selderhuis, *Calvin's Theology of the Psalms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007).

<sup>33</sup> Riporta H. J. Selderhuis, "we are ayllum seekers, that is to say, we are outside of our fatherland. We live and work here, but this is not our home: we live here temporarily in anticipation of our return home..." "we are not only physically but also spiritually dispersed and disturbed, through our sins we are outside of paradise in the desert and out of this situation we can seek asyllum from God, through God's grace," *op. cit.*, 28.

di Calvino: Dio è il primo rifugiato, Colui che vagabonda con il popolo di Israele per tutto il deserto.<sup>34</sup>

Con una cornice dei questo tipo, anche la dottrina dell'elezione e della predestinazione, frequentemente percepite come fredde e speculative, riescono anche ad esplicitare alcuni dei loro effetti per l'etica cristiana: si tratta di verità che incoraggiano tutti i veri cristiani. Perché loro sanno che, malgrado le innumerevoli difficoltà e opposizioni, riusciranno ad essere perseveranti fino alla fine, sicuri nella fede. Questo è la forza pastorale delle dottrine della grazia. Per coloro che non hanno una dimora stabile dove nascondere il capo, che non riescono ad ottenere un passaporto valido, o un permesso di soggiorno, l'elezione di Dio è davvero la loro unica carta di identità. Questa provvidentia specialissima deve essere sperimentata anche nella guida e nel conforto di Dio.<sup>35</sup> Per Calvino, cioè, i veri cristiani non hanno altro rifugio che la provvidenza di Dio. E questo si nota.

### **Il rilancio di Calvino**

Qui di seguito, ecco alcuni ambiti significativi dell'eredità<sup>36</sup> di Calvino che probabilmente sarebbe opportuno approfondire.

<sup>34</sup> H. Oberman, "Initia Calvini: The Matrix of Calvin's Reformation," W. H. Neuser (a cura), *Calvinus Sacrae Scripture Professor*, 1994, 151.

<sup>35</sup> H. Oberman, *The Two Reformations*, 149-168.

<sup>36</sup> Alcuni studiosi hanno individuate alcune aree come punti importanti dell'eredità di Calvino da rilanciare: (1) l'impegno di Calvino nella proclamazione della Gloria di Dio; (2) la determinazione di Calvino di porre Gesù Cristo al centro della vita e del pensiero; (3) l'enfasi di Calvino sullo Spirito Santo nella creazione e nella redenzione; (4) la sottomissione e l'impegno di Calvino alla Sacra Scrittura; (5) la determinazione di Calvino a esporre tutte le aree della vita alla volontà di Dio; (6) l'insistenza di Calvino sui doni della creazione; (7) il bisogno per la chiesa di comprendere e discernere la sua relazione ai principati e alle potenze di questo mondo; (8) l'impegno di Calvino per l'unità della chiesa; *Reformed World* 57.4 (2007): 231-236.

*Vocazione e teologia pubblica*

La visione riformata della sovranità di Dio e della signoria di Cristo amplia naturalmente l'impatto della vocazione cristiana su tutti gli aspetti della vita. Ai cristiani non è chiesto di estraniarsi dal mondo, di formare ghetti religiosi. A loro, piuttosto, è chiesta una partecipazione fedele, impegnata alla trasformazione della vita e del mondo. Loro sono agenti dell'amore di Dio per questo mondo e, in ogni ambito dell'esistenza umana lottano per la *shalom* di Dio.

Calvino (ma il discorso vale con qualche distinguo anche per gli altri riformatori) sviluppa una comprensione della vocazione cristiana che ha come cornice la cristianità. E, lo abbiamo già visto, è in questo *framework* è quasi automatico assumere che non solo le chiese, ma anche le istituzioni pubbliche hanno l'obbligo di rispettare gli obiettivi divini.

Ovviamente anche tutte le istituzioni, con l'intero ordine creazionale (chiesa inclusa) sono state infestate dal peccato; pur rimanendo ancora capaci di servizio e di produrre del bene.

La vocazione ha una dimensione privata oltre che pubblica. Infatti, guidati dalla luce della parola di Dio e del dono della ragione, Calvino incoraggia i cristiani a considerare la loro condizione, la loro posizione sociale, come luoghi dove l'obbedienza a Dio può diventare pubblica.<sup>37</sup> I cristiani sono al servizio di Dio, e devono esercitare i loro talenti, la loro influenza, le loro professioni nella prospettiva del regno di Dio. Il principio fondamentale è quello di usare i doni di Dio, in modo da onorare il fine per il quale Dio li ha creati. E poiché l'intera creazione non è soltanto necessaria per vivere, ma è anche bella,

<sup>37</sup> Per un'analisi si veda D. Fergusson, "Church, State and Civil Society in the Reformed Tradition," W. Alston e M. Welker (a cura), *Reformed Theology: Identity and Ecumenicity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 111-126.

nella nostra prospettiva dobbiamo considerare bellezza e necessità.

Dio... non ha soltanto voluto provvedere alle nostre necessità, ma anche al nostro piacere e diletto. E riguardo ai vestiti, oltre alla necessità ha considerato quel che è onesto e decente. Riguardo alle erbe, gli alberi, i frutti, oltre agli usi svariati che ne facciamo, ha voluto rallegrare la nostra vita con la loro bellezza...<sup>38</sup>

Questo non autorizza gli usi irresponsabili e comodi della creazione di Dio e dei suoi doni, ma onorando i principi della parola di Dio, è possibile godere pienamente delle molteplici benedizioni di Dio.<sup>39</sup>

Dalla prospettiva pubblica della vocazione, occorre iniziare a dire che se soggetti alle autorità, i cristiani sono sempre tenuti all'obbedienza e al rispetto. A meno che non si richieda di disobbedire ai comandamenti di Dio.

<sup>38</sup> IRC 3.10.2.

<sup>39</sup> Calvino individua alcuni principi riguardo il buon uso della creazione. Il primo è la profonda gratitudine verso Dio. I doni di Dio non sono funzionali alla nostra auto-ammirazione a scapito degli altri (IRC, 3.10.3) ma devono essere usati con lo stesso atteggiamento del pellegrino (1 Corinzi 7:29-31). Orgoglio, arroganza, auto indulgenza non hanno posto in questa visione. Il secondo principio è quello della pazienza e della moderazione. Dobbiamo sopportare le sofferenze con pazienza e vivere l'abbondanza e la pienezza con moderazione (IRC, 3.10.5). il terzo principio è quello dell'obbedienza alla chiamata di Dio, il rispetto della vocazione. "Dobbiamo anche prestare attenzione al fatto che Dio ordina ad ognuno di noi di tenere in mente la sua vocazione in ogni atto della vita... Ognuno per proprio conto deve considerare che il suo stato è per lui come un punto fermo assegnato da Dio perché non volteggi e svolazzi sconsideratamente per tutto il corso della sua vita... non ci sarà compito così disprezzato né così basso che non risplenda davanti a Dio e non sia estremamente prezioso, in esso adempiamo la nostra vocazione". IRC 3.10.6. Si veda anche il lavoro di R. C. Zachman, "Deny Yourself and Take up the Cross: John Calvin on the Christian Life," *International Journal of Systematic Theology* 11.4 (2009): 466-482.

Calvino definisce gli scopi divini del governo pubblico in questo modo:

Scopo di questo governo temporale è invece garantire e mantenere il servizio di Dio nella sua forma esteriore, la pura dottrina, la religione, custodire la Chiesa nella condizione della sua integrità, educare ad ogni sentimento di rettitudine, richiesta dalla convivenza umana, gli uomini per il tempo che abbiamo a vivere fra loro, adeguare i nostri costumi ad una giustizia civile, mantenere l'intesa gli uni con gli altri, stabilire e conservare una pace e una tranquillità comune.<sup>40</sup>

Calvino e i riformatori si muovono nel contesto del Corpus Christianorum, e devono essere chiari che il loro interesse declericalizzare non de-cristianizzare il potere politico e la società civile del tempo. Hanno bisogno del sostegno della nobiltà per opporsi al papato, l'obiettivo è comunque quello di riuscire a porre termine al cesaropapismo del tardo Medioevo, separare la Chiesa dallo Stato.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>40</sup> IRC 4.20.2.

<sup>41</sup> Dice Troeltsch: "il protestantesimo s'inserì nell'evoluzione dello Stato tendente alla sovranità e la favorì poderosamente, e particolarmente conferì al corpo dei funzionari statali, che andava formandosi, la veste di una mansione preordinata da Dio, che partecipa all'esercizio della volontà divina, e quindi comunica un valore etico alla nuova amministrazione accentrata. Inoltre il protestantesimo, addossando direttamente allo stato svariati compiti spirituali e culturali per il bene della comunità cristiana, lo rivolse a vastissimi scopi di civiltà... non è ancora il concetto moderno di Stato di cultura... ma da ciò, dato il distacco dalla cultura della Chiesa e la permanenza delle funzioni culturali nelle mani dello Stato nasce appunto il moderno Stato... Non appena lo Stato venne meno al senso spirituale di questi doveri, il calvinismo si ritirò alla Chiesa, lasciando allo Stato essenzialmente la sola funzione di tutelare la sicurezza e la disciplina, e preparando cos' il terreno all'idea statale del vecchio liberalism," E. Troeltsch, *Il protestantesimo nella formazione del mondo moderno* (Firenze: La Nuova Italia, 1998) (orig. 1912), 57-58.

Oggi però siamo in un periodo post-moderno e post-cristiano. Le vestigia cristiane non ci sono più ed è legittimo interrogarsi sul senso della vocazione cristiana, soprattutto nella sua dimensione pubblica. E si presenta quindi una specie di bivio che sembra condurre da un lato verso itinerari nostalgici che sperano di ricostruire le precedenti cornici religiose, dall'altro la via sembra condurre verso una rinuncia a tutto ciò che sembra cristiano.

Per muoversi nella direzione abbozzata da Calvino, rilanciandone la prospettiva, alcune tappe sono da segnalare. Occorrerebbe:

- riconoscere le criticità, i benefici e l'eredità dell'era cristiana. Apprezzarne le vittorie, oltre a confessarne i fallimenti. Costantino non fece tutto male. Ad esempio, ha permesso alle chiese di acquisire proprietà, ha reso illegale l'infanticidio, ha abolito la crocifissione quale pena capitale, la domenica è diventato un giorno di vacanza, ha rafforzato la politica familiare dell'impero... L'azione sociale dei cristiani ha portato indubbi benefici alla società intera e il vangelo stesso influenza l'intero universo culturale: dall'arte alla musica, dalla lingua alla storia, dall'economia alla forma di vita sociale. Si tratta di una fusione, spesso problematica, altre volte creativamente felice, tra il messaggio cristiano e alcuni elementi della civiltà contemporanea. È un miscuglio tra sintesi creative e edificanti da una parte, e configurazioni idolatriche dall'altra. Tra la vulnerabilità e l'autenticità del martirio e l'arroganza e la violenza delle crociate.
- recuperare le categorie della vocazione<sup>42</sup> nella vita cristiana. Calvino rifiuta la valorizzazione aristotelica della vita con-

<sup>42</sup> La letteratura sul tema è molto vasta oltre ad essere estesa nel tempo. Due recenti opere sono quelle di L. Hardy, *The Fabric of This World* (Grand Rap-

templativa, e propone la via biblica dell'impegno lavorativo molteplice, sempre al servizio di Dio e degli uomini.<sup>43</sup> La conoscenza non ha valore in sé, ma è sempre funzionale al come vivere. Il lavoro ha sempre una dignità religiosa, non importa quanto bassa sia la sua considerazione sociale. Per i cristiani, poi, la vocazione deve essere elaborata ed esercitata nella prospettiva della completa obbedienza ai principi e alla legge di Dio.<sup>44</sup>

—condannare tutte le forme di cristianità de facto “obbligatoria” (ufficiale). L'uso della forza, nelle sue molteplici forme, ha nei secoli caratterizzato la politica pro-cristianesimo. Inquisizione, violenza nei confronti degli eretici, censure, le più varie ingiustizie e le più dolorose manipolazioni... questi sono elementi che segnano ancora il supporto istituzionale nei confronti di alcune confessioni cristiane. Si tratta di una metanoia capovolta, perché invece che servire il bene comune e promuovere la giustizia, l'ufficializzazione del potere prova sempre a conservare il privilegio e a proteggersi da ogni cambiamento. Ovviamente non la exit strategy non sarebbe quella di neutralizzare la propria fede nel dibattito pubblico (à la Rawls), ma esserci con discrezione e fermezza, in uno spazio pubblico aperto e senza corsie protette o privilegiate. E, consapevoli delle proprie

ids: Eerdmans, 1990); D. Schuurman, *Vocation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2004).

<sup>43</sup> IRC 3.10.6. U. Zwingli, sulla stessa traiettoria di Calvino, scrive di coloro che servono il bene comune, la comunità cristiana, lo stato e gli individui come persone tra “le più simili a Dio,” nella sua azione come Creatore, Sostenitore e Redentore; cfr. U. Zwingli, “On the Education of the Youth,” G. Bromiley (a cura), *Zwingli e Bullinger, Selected Translation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1953), 113.

<sup>44</sup> IRC 2.8.57 e 4.13.12-13.

idiosincrasie, ricercare percorsi che onorino le pluralità<sup>45</sup> in un sistema sociale non-preferenziale.

—combattere i monopoli religiosi e ideologici, anche se sostenuti dalle maggioranze.<sup>46</sup> Ad esempio, in molti Paesi, il cristianesimo non è religione di Stato, ma è culturalmente sostenuto e rafforzato da una paniera di fattori che lo rendono dominante. Formalmente si decantano i principi della laicità, neutralità e tolleranza. Un certo nominalismo e forme pro-attive di clericalismo rendono poi questi contesti sociali particolarmente regressivi su alcuni ambiti.

### *Calvino e le libertà*

Calvino, assieme ad altri dopo di lui, ha sviluppato una teologia dei diritti umani e delle libertà che ha svelato, nel tempo, delle potenzialità uniche. Ad iniziare dal primo diritto, forse il prin-

<sup>45</sup> Contra Calvino, nel suo commento a 1 Timoteo 2:2 dice infatti che “lo scopo principale dei magistrati non è tanto quello di mantenere la pace... è piuttosto quello di garantire che Dio sia servito ed onorato ...” Qui Calvino va oltre il testo biblico (che è una semplice esortazione ai cristiani a pregare per le autorità, affinché attraverso la pace e le buone condizioni sociali la chiesa trovi lo spazio adatto per vivere la sua missione); G. Calvino, *Contro nicodemiti, anabattisti e libertini*, L. Ronchi De Michelis (a cura) (Torino: Claudiana, 2008).

<sup>46</sup> Scrive con lungimiranza J. S. Mill: “la società nel suo complesso... esercita una tirannide sociale più potente di molti tipi di oppressione politica, poiché, anche se generalmente non viene fatta rispettare con pene altrettanto severe, lascia meno vie di scampo, penetrando più profondamente nella vita quotidiana e rendendo schiava l'anima stessa. Quindi la protezione dalla tirannide del magistrato non è sufficiente: è necessario anche proteggersi dalla tirannia dell'opinione e del sentimento predominanti, dalla tendenza della società a imporre come norme di condotta e con mezzi diversi dalle pene legali, le proprie idee e usanze a chi dissente, a ostacolare lo sviluppo—e a prevenire, se possibile, la formazione—di qualsiasi individualità discordante, e a costringere tutti i caratteri a conformarsi al suo modello.” J. S. Mill, *Sulla Libertà* (Milano: Bompiani, 2000).



cipale per i Calvino e i suoi seguaci, la libertà di religione e di coscienza, e i suoi corollari di esercitare la propria religione, di vivere una comunità di fede in modo autonomo. La protezione della libertà religiosa, infatti, richiedeva già allora una particolare attenzione<sup>47</sup> e ad alcuni ambiti ad essa prossimi: diritto a riunirsi, parlare, adorare, evangelizzare, educare, viaggiare, scrivere e studiare... ma anche a livello organizzativo e istituzionale occorre esercitare una certa vigilanza (ad esempio per l'acquisizione dei diritti di proprietà, o per le forme di personalità giuridica, ecc.). Secondo R. Witte, in un'analisi che si può facilmente condividere, la libertà religiosa, nella complessa storia del calvinismo, è diventata realmente la madre di tutte le libertà.

Una tappa importante nella vita di Calvino è il 1536, l'anno della prima edizione delle Istituzioni. Qui Calvino raccoglie la prospettiva di Lutero riguardo la libertà di coscienza dai controlli ecclesiali e dalle leggi canoniche, libertà dai privilegi e dell'autorità statale, libertà dall'oppressione dei governi. Il giovane Calvino opera ancora all'intero di una struttura molto simile a quella luterana dei due regni. Negli scritti della maturità, Calvino elabora una teoria più articolata della legge e dei diritti. Preoccupato delle ricadute concrete del suo pensiero, alcuni studiosi hanno visto in questa fase della biografia di Calvino un certo irrigidimento e una certa ostilità nei confronti dell'immoralità e del dissenso religioso.

Diverse e molteplici, sono però le basi che Calvino costruisce e che risulteranno fondamentale per gli sviluppi futuri: l'attenzione alla coscienza cristiana (che diventerà la pietra angolare della libertà religiosa, l'approccio nei confronti delle leg-

<sup>47</sup> Si veda il lavoro di D. R. Walhof, "The Accusations of Conscience and the Christian Polity in John Calvin's Political Thought," *History of Political Thought* 24.3 (2003): 397-414.

gi morali e dei diritti naturali (“diritti comuni dell’umanità”); l’enfasi (anche se ancora imperfetta) sui distinti ruoli tra comunità cristiana e stato,<sup>48</sup> la distinzione tra due ambiti morali, quello delle “leggi civili” che interessa tutti, e quello delle “leggi spirituali” rilevante per i cristiani, differenziazione questa che implica una separazione tra i ruoli politici e quelli ecclesiali (visibile, ad esempio nella distinzione tra il concistoro e il consiglio della città di Ginevra).<sup>49</sup> Ovviamente, e questo lo sapeva anche Calvino, i diritti umani, però, hanno un valore nullo in contesti dove sono mancanti i diritti umani basilari alla sopravvivenza, in situazioni dove le vittime non sono legittimate a stare in tribunale o dove le procedure annullano ogni pretesa.

*Verso una conclusione: cosa dobbiamo a Calvino?*

Il 500° della nascita di Calvino non è una ricorrenza facile perché, ad essere sinceri, c’è qualche imbarazzo nel mondo contemporaneo a ricordare la sua figura. Calvino, detto in altre parole, non gode di una buona reputazione. Di lui è nota l’inflessibilità nei principi e nel carattere, la strenua determinazione nel sostenere le sue posizioni di intellettuale e uomo religioso, la serietà—a volte eccessiva—che ha imposto sui costumi dell’epoca. Anche il suo tentativo di fare di Ginevra un’autentica città cristiana presenta qualche criticità, senza nulla togliere all’originalità della visione di questo grande personaggio e del suo pensiero.

Eppure a Giovanni Calvino dobbiamo molto più di quanto immaginiamo.

<sup>48</sup> IRC 3.19.15.

<sup>49</sup> Il processo continua, dopo Calvino, passando dall’opera di Beza, Althusius, il calvinismo inglese fino ad arrivare ad A. Kuyper. Per una lettura stimolante si vede R. Witte, *The Reformations of Rights* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

In primo luogo Calvino ha contribuito in modo straordinario a ridare dignità alla vita quotidiana e al lavoro secolare. Prima della riforma, i cristiani che volevano fare sul serio diventavano monaci, suore o sacerdoti. Calvino invece ha dimostrato come la manifestazione primaria dell'amore di Dio e del prossimo sta nel lavorare per il bene altrui, della società tutta, attraverso un lavoro che contribuisca responsabilmente alla vita comunitaria. Il lavoro, anche nella sua semplicità e quotidianità, è sempre un dono di Dio. La vita secolare non è quindi una sfortuna da evitare se possibile, ma è l'itinerario maestro per manifestare la dignità della persona e per concretizzare l'amore per gli altri. Qualunque cosa facciamo, ogni tipo di professione e di impegno dovrebbe essere letto in questa prospettiva. Come dice McGrath "il vero calvinista è incoraggiato a impegnarsi nel mondo, piuttosto che a ritirarsi". A volte aspri e rigidi, i cristiani calvinisti sono stati senza dubbio lavoratori onesti e responsabili, dedicati non solo al proprio interesse personale e mai interessati alla mera ricerca di una salvezza eterea o al disimpegno morale.

L'impegno nei confronti della scienza e della cultura a 360°, almeno nel mondo protestante, è un altro aspetto dell'eredità di Giovanni Calvino. La sua idea di ricercare attentamente la natura e la causa dei fenomeni naturali e del mondo perché anche questo è un modo di onorare il Dio biblico, ha rappresentato una validazione teologica nei confronti della ricerca. Tant'è che per molti cristiani riformati l'impegno scientifico e culturale rappresenta ancora oggi una via importante e responsabile da non manipolare con censure o veti ecclesiastici.

Pur se esiste una letteratura leggendaria che narra un Calvino dittatore, nella migliore storiografia risulta chiaro come la sua filosofia politica, la sua insistenza nel tenere distinti i ruoli tra chiesa e governo sia stata senza dubbio profetica. La confusione tra chiesa e stato, che ancora oggi opprime molte demo-

crazie è infatti nelle prospettiva calvinista un abuso insostenibile. Impossibile non citare la ricchezza e la fecondità del nuovo calvinismo che da Calvino, passando per Kuyper e Dooyeweerd, arriva ai giorni nostri.

E se Calvino non è molto amato nel mondo, in Italia è pressoché sconosciuto. Le ragioni sono diverse prima tra tutte la pensante censura culturale nei confronti del pensiero cristiano riformato. In ogni caso è difficile ignorarne la portata.

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# A Brief History of the Phenomenon of the “Reinterpretation” or “Spiritualization” of the Physical Cult

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**Abstract.** This study makes the assertion that the tendency of New Testament authors to “spiritualize” or “reinterpret” certain Old Testament cultic categories was not necessarily an innovation. Rather, one will observe that a number of Old Testament authors already looked beyond the “physical” requirements of the cult, into the “spiritual” and “moral” condition of the worshippers. Driven by this tendency, some authors appear to have reinterpreted the physical dimension of the Temple and the offerings, looking for alternative way to fulfill the requirements that God expected from the worshipper. This study briefly summarizes the developments of this phenomenon in the Greek and Hellenistic world, including Philo of Alexandria, lists the key passages of the New Testament, and analyzes several of the key passages from the Old Testament that reflect the tendency toward spiritualization and the reinterpretation of the cult.

**Key words:** Philo, New Testament, Old Testament, Spiritualization, Spiritual Sacrifices, Temple

## Introduction

It is well known and universally agreed that the authors of the New Testament often times quoted directly, paraphrased, alluded to, and allegorically reinterpreted, passages from the

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Old Testament.<sup>1</sup> There exist, however, several New Testament passages appear to use Old Testament concepts in a new, spiritualized fashion. For example, the apostle Peter reminded his audience that:

“You yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” (1 Peter 2:5)

The two key terms that Peter uses here, *οἶκος πνευματικὸς* (“spiritual house”) and *πνευματικὰς θυσίας* (“spiritual sacrifices”) reflect the tendency of Hellenistic Judaism and Christianity to reinterpret Old Testament cultic terminology in a new, spiritualized manner.<sup>2</sup> In the following study, we would like to examine the literary and religious backgrounds of the tendency of New Testament authors to spiritualize the Old Testament cultic entities. Our study will focus on some key passages from the Old Testament that reflect this tendency. We will also review some of the ways in which Greek and Hellenistic authors (including Philo of Alexandria) understood and practiced the concept of the spiritualization of the cult. Finally, we will list some of the key passages in the New Testament, together with the Greek terminology. The purpose of the paper is to understand some of the very general tenets of the method of reinterpretation and to ask what led the biblical authors to resort to this approach.

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Archer and Chirichigno, *Old Testament Quotations in the New Testament* (Chicago, IL: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1983).

<sup>2</sup> I already analyzed this theme in my forthcoming book *The Concept of Intention in the Bible, Philo of Alexandria and the Early Rabbinic Judaism* (New York: Gorgias Press, 2011). Some of the passages and the authors that I will refer to here were analyzed more thoroughly in this book.

# Brief Survey of the Critique and Reinterpretation of the Cultic Regulations in the Old Testament

By “reinterpretation” of cultic entities we refer to the process by which biblical authors have sought spiritual meanings from the physical entities of the Israelite cult, or have emphasized the spiritual aspect of what otherwise would have been a physical act or entity of the cultus.<sup>3</sup> Before we discuss this aspect, it is important to show that some biblical authors approached cultic activities with a sincere concern for the *intention* of the worshipper who engaged in those activities. In others, for some authors the *condition of the heart* meant as much as fulfilling the physical requirements of the cult. In yet other passages, the biblical authors appear to condemn the sacrifices that were brought with disregard for other matters of Law. We will begin with these, and list the following examples:

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל הַחֶפֶץ לַיהוָה בְּעֹלֹת וּזְבָחִים  
כְּשֶׁמֶעַ בְּקוֹל יְהוָה הִנֵּה שְׁמֹעַ מִזִּבְחַ שֹׁב לְהִקְשִׁיב מִחֶלֶב אֵילִים:

“And Samuel said, “Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.” (1 Samuel 15:22)

לְמַה־לִּי רַב־זִבְחֵיכֶם יֹאמַר יְהוָה שְׁבַעֲתִי עֹלֹת אֵילִים  
וְחֶלֶב מְרִיאִים וְדָם פְּרִים וְכִבְשִׁים וְעִתּוּדִים לֹא חָפְצָתִי:

“What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the LORD; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats.” (Isaiah 1:11)

<sup>3</sup> For a more thorough analysis of this phenomenon see Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 99, 101ff.

WTT Jeremiah 6:20  
 לְמַה־זֶּה לִי לְבוֹ נָה מִשְׁבָּא תְבוּא וְקִנְיָה הַטּוֹב  
 מֵאַרְצֵי מִרְחָק עֲלוֹתֵיכֶם לֹא לְ"רִצּוֹן וְזִבְחֵיכֶם לֹא־" עֲרְבוּ לִי:

"What use to me is frankincense that comes from Sheba, or sweet cane from a distant land? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices pleasing to me." (Jeremiah 6:20)

WTT  
 אִם־תַּעֲלוּ־לִי עֲלוֹת וּמִנְחֹתֵיכֶם לֹא אֶרְצֶה וּשְׁלָם מִרִּיאֵיכֶם לֹא אֲבִישׁ:  
 Amos 5:22

"Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings, I will not accept them; and the peace offerings of your fattened animals, I will not look upon them." (Amos 5:22)

Micah 6:7  
 הֲיִרְצֶה יְהוָה בְּאַלְפֵי אֵילִים בְּרִבְבוֹת  
 נַחֲלֵי־שָׁמֶן הָאֵתָן בְּכוֹרֵי פִשְׁעֵי פִרְי בִטְנִי חֲטָאת נַפְשִׁי:

"Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7)

Psalm 40:6  
 זָבַח וּמִנְחָה לֹא־חִפְצָתָ אֲזַנְנִים כִּרְיֹת לִי עוֹלָה וְחֲטָאָה לֹא שְׂאֵלָתָ:

"In sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required." (Psalm 40:6)

WTT  
 כִּי לֹא־תִחַפֵּץ זָבַח וְאֵתָ" נָה עוֹלָה לֹא תִרְצֶה: זָבַחִי אֱלֹהִים רוּחַ נִשְׁבָּ"רָה  
 Psalm 51:18-19  
 לִב־נִשְׁבֵּר וְנִדְבָה אֱלֹהִים לֹא תִבְזֶה

"For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it; you will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a



broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalms 51:16-17)

שֵׁם־אֱלֹהִים בְּשִׁיר וְאֶנְדֵּלְנוּ בְּתוֹ”דֶה: וְתִשָּׁב לִי”ה זֶה מְשׁוֹר פֶּר מִקְרָן מִפְּרִים  
אֶהְלֵלָה Psalm 69:31-32

“I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving. This will please the LORD more than an ox or a bull with horns and hoofs.” (Psalm 69:30)

זָבַח רָשָׁעִים תּוֹעֵבָה יְהוָה וְתִפְלֵת יִשְׂרָאֵל רְצוֹנוֹ: <sup>WTT</sup> Proverbs 15:8

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him.” (Proverbs 15:8)

זָבַח רָשָׁעִים תּוֹעֵבָה אֵף כִּי־בִזְמָה יִבְיָאוּ: <sup>WTT</sup> Proverbs 21:27

“The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination; how much more when he brings it with evil intent.” (Proverbs 21:27)

מִסִּיר אָזְנוֹ מִשְׁמֹעַ תוֹ”רָה גַם־תִּפְלֵתוֹ תּוֹעֵבָה: <sup>WTT</sup> Proverbs 28:9

“If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Proverbs 28:9)

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יְיָ כִּי נִגַּשׁ הָעָם הַזֶּה בִּפְּיוֹ וּבִשְׂפָתָיו כְּבָדוּנִי  
וְלִבּוֹ רַחֵק מִמֶּנִּי וְתַהֲי יִרְאָתָם אֵתִי מִצִּוַּת אֱ”נָשִׁים מְלֻמָּדָה:

“... because this nation has honored me with their mouth and their lips, while their hearts are far from Me, and their fear of Me is a commandment taught by men.” (Isaiah 29:13)

מִי־יִנּוֹר בְּאֵהֶלֶךְ מִי־יִשְׁכֵּן בְּהֵר קִרְשֶׁךְ  
הוֹלֵךְ תָּמִיד וּפֹעֵל צֶדֶק וְדֹבֵר אֱמֶת בְּלִבּוֹ Psalm 15:1-2

“Who shall sojourn in Your tent? Who shall dwell on Your holy mountain? The one who walks blamelessly, and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart” (Psalm 15:1-2)

Psalm 24:3-4 מִי־יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר־יְהוָה וְיָמִי־יָקִים בְּמָקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ  
נָקִי כַפַּיִם וְיִבְרֶלֶבֶב אֱשֶׁר לֹא־נִשְׂא לִנְשָׂא נִפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה

“Who will ascend to the mountain of God, and who will stand in His holy place? The one with clean hands and a pure heart, who did not lift up his soul to what is false, and who did not swear deceitfully.” (Psalm 24:3-4)

Psalm 66:18 אֲנִי אִם־רָאִיתִי בְּלִבִּי לֹא יִשְׁמַע אֱלֹהִים

“If I regarded wickedness in my heart, the Lord would not have listened—to my prayer.” (cf. verse 19; Psalm 66:18)

The reason these passages are even marginally important to our subject matter is the fact that they show a consistent tendency, on the part of many Old Testament authors, to emphasize first the *inward attitude* and *morality* of the worshipper, and only second the efficacy and usefulness of the cult. Second, they also reflect a concern with other matters of law, than just the requirement to bring offerings. If the worshipper commits injustice or iniquities, his sacrifices may not effect forgiveness. As such, we can argue that the tendency to distinguish between the *outward* and the *inward*, between the *spiritual* and the *physical*, or between *principle* and *practice*, begun much earlier than the Hellenistic “innovations” of Philo of Alexandria, or the New Testament critique of the Temple (see the Epistle to the Hebrews).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> In fact this was the argument that I developed in my work, *The Concept of Intention*, namely, that the inward motivation of a person was deemed absolutely important by the earliest authors of the Old Testament. In fact,

Furthermore, one may note that in most of these passage, the critique is not directed against the cult per se, but against the inward and the outward impurity of those who claimed they worshipped the God of Israel.<sup>5</sup> Evidently, people became guilty of hypocrisy, as they used the cult to approach a holy God, with stained hearts and hands.

If one analyzed attentively the terminology used in these passages, it will become evident that the Old Testament paid close attention to the role that human intent played in cultic activities. Psalm 66:18 uses the phrase *אֵין אִם-רָאִיתִי בְלִבִּי* (“If I contemplated abomination in my heart”) to emphasize the relationship between the *human heart* and God accepting the formal prayer of the worshipper. Proverbs 21:27 states *אֵף כִּי-בִזְוָה יִבְרָאנוּ זֶבַח רָשָׁעִים תוֹעֵבָה* (“the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination, especially if he brings it with evil intent”). It appears, then, that the prophetic, poetic and wisdom literature have raised our awareness that God—and often times the human community—would judge the *evil motivations* of the worshipper.<sup>6</sup>

the data of the Old Testament shows a consistent argumentation in favor of this view throughout all genre of biblical literature: legal, historical, wisdom, poetic and prophetic texts!

<sup>5</sup> In this sense see Nikiprowetsky, “La spiritualization des sacrifices et le culte sacrificiel au temple de Jerusalem chez Philon d’Alexandrie,” *Etudes philoniennes* (Paris: Le Editions du Cerf, 1996), 199-216. For the discussion of the invidual psalms, and especially Psalm 51, see Briggs, *Psalms II* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1909), 10ff.; Schmidt, *Die Psalmen* (Tubingen: Handbuch zum AT, 1934), 102; Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel’s Worship* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), 2: 21f.; Krauss, *Psalms 1-59*, translated by G. Buswell (Richmond, VA: J. Knox, 1965), 498-506; Tate, *Psalms 51-100* (Dallas, TX: Word Books, 1990), 27-28; Jacquet, *Psaumes 2. Les Psaumes et le Coeur de l’homme* (Paris: Gemblaux, 1975), 181; Weiser, *Psalms* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1962), 409; Mays, *Psalms* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1944), 203.

<sup>6</sup> See Clements, R. E. “The Concept of Abomination in the Book of Proverbs,” *Texts, Temples, and Traditions*, ed. M. V. Fox. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbraus,

In the case of Isaiah 29:13, the author uses the verb *vng* to describe the approach of the people on their way to fulfill the cultic requirements of the Temple worship.<sup>7</sup> Yet, they fail according to the criterion of *inward purification*, for God regards the condition of their heart just as important as the manner and quality of the cultic performance.<sup>8</sup> In the case of Psalm 15 and 24, the author describes the journey that worshippers undertook to the Temple in Jerusalem. The Psalm focuses on the final moments of entering, and dwelling in, the Temple. Naturally, the question arises as to who may or may not enter the holy presence of God and perform the cultic activities expected of them? And, as part of the answer, the psalmist mentions the condition of the heart, that is, to speak the truth “in his heart.”<sup>9</sup>

1996), 211-226; Fox, *Proverbs 1-9* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 154-55, 167; Perdue, *Wisdom and Cult* (Missoula, MO: Scholars Press, 1977), 155ff; Kovaks, “Is There a Class Ethic in Proverbs?” *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, ed. Crenshaw (New York: Ktav, 1974), 173-179, 189ff.; Farmer, *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991), 75, and von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1972), 124-29.

<sup>7</sup> Thus נָגַח, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, R. L. Harris et al eds. (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1980). The verb occurs in other religious contexts as well, but in several key texts it describes the act of drawing near to the Temple or the presence of God, to bring sacrifices or perform other cultic acts (see Exodus 19:22; Exodus 20:21; Exodus 28:43; Exodus 30:20; Leviticus 21:21; Leviticus 8:14; Malachi 1:7-8).

<sup>8</sup> Thus Childs, *Isaiah* (Louisville, KY: Westminster, 2001), 218-19; Watts, *Isaiah 1-33* (Waco, TX: Word, 1985), 386; Beuken, *Isaiah II* (Leuven: Peeters, 2000), 97. One may note a similar case in Isaiah 48:1, even though the emphasis does not fall on the inward aspect of worship to the same extent that it happens in 29:13. In this sense, see Westermann, *Isaiah 40-66* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), 196-97, and Oswalt, *Isaiah 40-66* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1998), 256ff. For a fuller analysis of these passages I have also analyzed some of these passages.

<sup>9</sup> See my *The Concept of Intention*, 101ff., for the notion of the “Entrance Liturgy,” and the discussion of Clements, “Worship and Ethics,” *Worship and the Hebrew Bible*, M. P. Graham ed. (Sheffield: JSOT, 1999), 81ff., Mowinckel,

Furthermore, Psalm 66:18 refers to another cultic act, namely, *prayer*. The context of the Psalm is less clear as to where exactly the action place; that is, whether in the Temple proper, or in another place where the psalmist was praying. The principle, however, remains the same. Outward prayer—as a *physical* act of devotion (whether in the cultic or the private context)—may not be effective until it meets the *internal criteria* of heart purity.<sup>10</sup> According to Greenberg, in the Old Testament “the idea that the essence of prayer is the conformity of speech with thought surely reflects a refined spirituality.”<sup>11</sup> Finally, as part of this larger argument, one ought to take into consideration another dimension of the attitude towards the sacrifices, namely, the substitution of the *heart* for the *animals*. The classic example that scholars have cited is Psalm 51:18-19. Just as in the examples cited above, here to the concern of the author falls on the inward condition of the worshipper: (וְנִדְבָהּ) (רֵיחַ נִשְׁבֵּ"ר) (לֵב-נִשְׁבֵּר). In the Old Testament, both לֵב and רֵיחַ are organs that also describe *psychological* and *emotional* functions.<sup>12</sup> They are

*The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1962), I:178-79, Willis, “Ethics in a Cultic Setting,” *Essays in Old Testament Ethics*, Crenshaw/Willis ed., (New York: Ktav, 1974), 157.

<sup>10</sup> See Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1967), 134-35, and Ze'ev Falk, *Biblical Law in Biblical Times*, 2nd ed. (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2001), 54, for the notion that the moral criteria had to be met before the cultic acts happened.

<sup>11</sup> *Biblical Prose Prayer* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983), 49-51.

<sup>12</sup> See our analysis in *The Concept of Intention*, 125ff. Note also Fabry, bl, TDOT 7: 399-438; לֵב, TLOT 639-40; Lucas, לֵב, NIDOTTE; Baumgartel, καρδία, TDNT 3: 607; Thus Hogg, “‘Heart and Reins’ in the Ancient Literatures of the Near East,” *JMOS* 1 (1911): 49-91; North, “Did Ancient Israelites Have a Heart?” *BibRev* 11 (1995): 33; Glasson, “‘Visions of Thy Head’—the Heart and the Head in Bible Psychology,” the *Expository Times* 81.8 (1970): 247-48. For the meanings of רֵיחַ see: רֵיחַ, TWOT and Kaiser/Block, רֵיחַ, NIDOTTE; Albertz, רֵיחַ, TLOT 1210.

carries of *intentions, thoughts, plans* and *deliberations*. Likewise, they often become the object of divine examination and judgment.<sup>13</sup>

With these preliminary conclusions, we may turn our attention to the Greek, Hellenistic and New Testamental periods and the manner in which different authors understood the relation between the physical cult and the inward and moral condition of the worshipper.

### **Brief Overview of the Greek and Hellenistic Attempts to “Reinterpret” or “Spiritualize” Cultic Entities**

In the early stages of Greek thought, the religious worldview of Homer came under attack from certain philosophers who thought the behaviour of the Homeric gods was unworthy of their stature.<sup>14</sup> For example, although Zeus—the king of the gods—was married to Hera, had over 40 extramarital affairs out of which came tens of sons, daughters, muses, nymphs and other creatures. Often times Zeus would change his identity in order to seduce beautiful virgins. This led several Greek poets to speak of Hera’s jealousy as the cause for many calamities in the world.<sup>15</sup> The erratic behavior of the gods, with their mood swings, jealousy, violent character, and lying brought the

<sup>13</sup> For verbs of “divine examination” see Fuller, “תכן,” *NIDOTTE*; Seesemann, *πείρα/πειράζω*, *TDNT* 6: 23-36; Brensinger, נסה, *NIDOTTE*; *TWOT*, נסה. Helfmeyer, נסה, *TDOT* 9: 453; Andre, פקד, *TWAT* 6: 707-723; Schottroff, פקד, *TLOT* 1018-31; Wakely, צרף, *NIDOTTE*; חאשטת, בחרן, *TDOT* 2: 69-72; Jenni, בחרן, *TLOT* 207-09; Brensinger, בחרן, *NIDOTTE*; Grundmann, “δοκιμάζω,” *TDNT* 2: 255-60; Seesemann, *πειράζω* *TDNT* 6: 23-36.

<sup>14</sup> See Pulleyn, *Prayer in Greek Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 196ff.

<sup>15</sup> Ferrari, “Zeus,” *Dicționar de Mitologie Greacă și Romană* (București: Polirom, 2003), 895-899.

charge from early philosophers that Homer's worldview was too anthropomorphic.<sup>16</sup>

Criticism of traditional religion appears to have intensified with the rise of "naturalistic philosophy" and the emphasis on prose, as a new literary genre for expressing philosophical ideas.<sup>17</sup> However, in spite of this criticism, throughout the classical age most thinkers kept a balanced view of the importance of traditional religion for Greek society. The crisis of Greek religion seems to have intensified more with the advent of Alexander's conquest of Athens and thus with the rise of Hellenistic thought.<sup>18</sup> It is interesting to note, though, that Stoic and Epicurean philosophers upheld the importance of religious institutions such as temples, public worship and offerings, while subtly reinterpreting the Homeric formulations of the divine world.<sup>19</sup> For example, Fergusson described the later view of Epictetus as "intellectualist," even though he agreed that "it is

<sup>16</sup> See Reale, *From the Origins to Socrates. A History of Ancient Philosophy*, trans. by J. Catan (New York: State University of NY Press, 1987), esp. 78-81.

<sup>17</sup> As several scholars have shown, in the early stages of Greek thought, speaking about gods was seen as the prerogative of the poets, who afforded to use anthropomorphism and allowed themselves to be more libertine and creative. See Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 252ff., Burkert, *Greek Religion*, trans. by J. Raffan (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 305-06, 311ff. Yet see Tate, "On the History of Allegorism," *Classical Quarterly* 28 (1934): 105-06, who argued that even some of the earlier poets criticized traditional Greek thought using poetic devices.

<sup>18</sup> See Reale, *Systems*, 155-56, and *Schools of the Imperial Age* (*Ibid.*, 1990).

<sup>19</sup> Thus Nikiprowetzky, "La spiritualisation des sacrifices et le culte sacrificiel au temple de Jerusalem chez Philon d'Alexandrie," *Etudes Philoniennes* (Paris: Cerf, 1967, 1996), 79-96; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 333ff., and also Hecht, "Patterns of Exegesis in Philo's Interpretation of Leviticus," *Studia Philonica* 6 (1979-80): 140, and Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 149-50.

proper to pour libations and offer sacrifice according to the customs of our fathers."<sup>20</sup>

One element of traditional religion that suffered the process of transformation was the *Temple*. Wenschkewitz showed that, even though certain philosophers maintained a proper attitude toward Greek religion, their emphasis on the inner life of the worshipper represented a subtle criticism of the traditional tenets of religion.<sup>21</sup> Other philosophical schools, like the Neopythagoreans and Apollonius of Tyana, rejected altogether the animal offerings and upheld the importance of wordless prayer and the mind. Perhaps the tendency toward spiritualization was best seen in the philosophy of Stoicism, that contended that the true seat of divinity is not the physical structure of the Temple, but man himself and his soul. Although a later writer, Seneca embodied the Stoic consensus when he affirmed that the human body and soul is "the Temple of god" (*Ep.* 31.11).<sup>22</sup> Since the world and humanity are all permeated by the Logos, then the entire cosmos is the Temple of the divinity.<sup>23</sup> Haussleiter showed that the notion of the "divine indwelling" in the human soul was closely linked with the concept of "inward receptacles."<sup>24</sup> Another corollary of this tendency was to reinterpret the acts of the Temple cultus in a

<sup>20</sup> *The Religions of the Roman Empire* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970), 196.

<sup>21</sup> *Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe* (Leipzig: Eduard Pfeiffer, 1932), 51ff, and Burkert, *Greek Religion* 334, for the fact that in the thought of Plato, Greek traditional religion maintained its proper place.

<sup>22</sup> Along with Wenschkewitz see Pohlenz, *Die Stoa I-II* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1959, 1992), 1: 233, and Winston, *The Wisdom of Solomon* (New York: Doubleday, 1979), 102, for the notion of "theou oikos."

<sup>23</sup> Thompson, "Hebrews 9 and Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice," *JBL* 98 (1979): 567-575, pointed to Zeno and the tenets of Stoicism for this view.

<sup>24</sup> Haussleiter, "*Deus Internus*," *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum III* (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1957), 794-96, 799-811.



philosophical manner.<sup>25</sup> It is important to note that, with some exceptions, most philosophers did not call for the abrogation of *sacrifices*.<sup>26</sup> As a matter of fact, pagan sacrifices came to an end only during the time of Constantine, when he officially prohibited the practice. But during Classical and Hellenistic times, the criticism against expensive sacrifices did exist, alongside with the emphasis on inward religiosity and the belief that the gods did not really need animal offerings.<sup>27</sup> For example, Apollonius of Tyana criticized the Athenian priests for their claim that the gods depended on the sacrifices brought by humans.<sup>28</sup> In particular, Young traced two general directions of criticism: the “theological” aspect—that gods do not need sacrifices for their sustenance—and the “philosophical” one: that the gods cannot be bribed by sacrifices.<sup>29</sup>

It appears that the approach that some took to integrate the traditional religion into their larger philosophical worldview touched on the aspect of *worship* as well. The emphasis on the human soul had started very early in Greek thought, with the

<sup>25</sup> See Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 259, and the reference to Behm’s division of the types of criticisms of sacrifices: *religious* and *literary* texts (Aeschilus, *Ag.* 1296ff.; Theophr. according to Porphyri, *Abst.* II 32; Xenophon, *Mem.* I, 3, 3; *An.* V, 7, 32; *Eur. Fr.* 329; *Corp. Herm.* I, 31; XIII, 18; XIII, 21), and *philosophical* texts (Plato, *Leg.* IV, 716d; *Ps. Plat., Alc.* II, 149e; Anaximander, *Ars Rhetorica* 2; and Stoicism: Seneca, *Fr.* 123 (Lact., *Inst.* VI, 25, 3); Epict., *Diss.* I, 19, 25; in *Θύω*, *TDNT* 3: 180-90.

<sup>26</sup> Note Burkert, *Greek Religion* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), 309, for Heraklitus’ attacks against the practice of prayer before the statues of the gods and purificatory rituals.

<sup>27</sup> See Nikiprowetzky, “Spiritualisation des sacrifices,” 80-81, and Thompson, “Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice,” 574.

<sup>28</sup> Thus Nordern, *Agnostos Theos* (Berlin: B. G. Teubner, 1913), 38ff.

<sup>29</sup> See mainly Young, “The Idea of Sacrifice in Neoplatonic and Patristic Texts,” *Studia Patristica* XI (1972): 279ff., but also Fergusson, “Spiritual Sacrifices,” 1151-89, and Thompson, “Hellenistic Concepts of Sacrifice,” 575ff.

current of Orphism and later on, in the writings of Plato. Reale has shown that Orphism was among the first currents of Greek thought that argued for the presence, within the body of man, of "something divine."<sup>30</sup> Pythagorean philosophers incorporated this view into their system and gave it a more rationalistic form. It was Plato, however, who brought the teaching of the body and soul dualism to its most profound exposition. Furthermore, after the Hellenistic schools marginalized the dualism of Plato, the Orphic notion of a divine presence in the soul of man resurfaced in the first century BC in the mysticism of the Alexandrian philosophy of Middle Platonism.<sup>31</sup>

Stoicism too had a vital impact upon the notion of inward worship, with their notion of "rational worship." As Wensckewitz and Heinemann argued, Stoic physics, with its emphasis on the role of the Logos, insisted that the human being is a rational being.<sup>32</sup> Consequently, even the tendency to *worship* will in the end take a rational manifestation.<sup>33</sup> As we have shown already, other authors posited a different source of influence, namely, the mystic, Hermetic current of Mystery Religions.<sup>34</sup> This argument, even though it was criticized by a number of

<sup>30</sup> *From the Origins to Socrates* (New York: State University of New York, 1985), 15, 68, 295-304.

<sup>31</sup> See Reale, *Schools of the Imperial Age* (New York: State University of New York, 1990), 211ff.

<sup>32</sup> Wensckewitz, "Spiritualisierung," 58; Heinemann, *Bildung*, 54ff.

<sup>33</sup> See Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980), 326ff., for the relation between the concept of *λογικὴ λατρεία* in Stoicism and its formulation in Romans 12:1. On the philosophical background to the Christian concept of "spiritual worship" see also Fergusson, "Spiritual Sacrifice," 1154; Cranfield, *Romans* (Edinburg: T&T Clark, 1979), 602; Schmithals, *Romerbrief* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlaghaus, 1988), 429; Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 711; Fitzmeyer, *Romans* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 640-44.

<sup>34</sup> See Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 264.

authors, was introduced by Reitzenstein, who asserted that the Oriental mystical cults of the Mediterranean world had a heavier influence than otherwise thought. Reitzenstein allowed for a possible influence via the philosophical schools of Middle Platonism, but considered it minimal.<sup>35</sup> Most other scholars believe that the notion of "rational" or "inward" worship came as a syncretism between the influence of the philosophical schools and Hellenistic mysticism.<sup>36</sup>

In conclusion, we must add the fact the concepts of the Temple, offerings and worship received a usually philosophical dimension in the writings of Philo of Alexandria. This came as the result of the influence of the *allegorical method*. The majority of scholars have argued that Philo was influenced in this method by the early Greek allegorists, as well as by the Stoic and other Hellenistic schools of thought. As Blonigen asserted, the allegorical method may have come as the "need to respond against the charges of the 'anthropological character of the myths' brought by philosophers."<sup>37</sup> In other words, most philosophers were unwilling to reject the Homeric mythical accounts of the gods, and so reached a compromise by explaining them allegorically. As we have shown, this account makes sense, but it must be weighed against the fact that the origins and application of the allegorical method were far more complex.<sup>38</sup> In the last part

<sup>35</sup> *Hellenistic Mystery Religions* (Pittsburgh, PA: The Pickwick Press, 1978), 416ff.

<sup>36</sup> Kasemann, *Romans*, 328; Wenschkewitz, *Spiritualisierung*, 49-62; Schmitthals, *Romerbrief*, 429 and Cranfield, *Romans IX-XVI*, 602; Dunn, *Romans 9-16* (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 711.

<sup>37</sup> Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 259-60, and Blonigen, *Der griechische Ursprung*, 20.

<sup>38</sup> See *The Concept of Intention*, 258ff., and the references to and discussions of Rollinson, *Classical Theories of Allegory* (Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1981), 3-28; Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grecque* (Paris: Societe d'Edition "Les Belles Lettres," 1956); Pepin, *Mythe et Allegorie* (Paris:

this chapter, we will offer a brief sample of examples on how Philo applied the allegorical method in his reinterpretation of the physical cult.<sup>39</sup>

### **The reinterpretation/spiritualization of the physical cult**

Tabernacle and altar	ideas (ἰδέας) and rational spirit (πνεῦμα λογικόν)	<i>Ebr</i> 134 <i>Spec</i> 1.273-7
The sanctuary	mental (νοητός), invisible order	<i>Rer</i> 75; <i>QE</i> 2.51, 83
Holy of holies in Temple	realm of the mind (νοητός)	<i>Mos</i> 2.81
Temple	the human soul (ψυχή)	<i>Spec</i> 1.12, 66ff.; <i>Cher</i> 29, 99-100;
Offering incense	offering the whole mind (ὅλον τὸν νοῦν)	<i>Leg</i> 2.56; <i>QE</i> 2.71
Whole burnt offering	the perfect disposition (διάθεσιν) a man seeks to attain	<i>Spec</i> 1.253
Body parts of priestly offerings	inward virtues, reason, etc.	<i>Spec</i> 1.145-50; 1.206-08, 216
High priest as me-	the λόγος	<i>Mig</i> 102;

Editions Montaigne, 1958), 33-92, esp. 88-89; Whitman, *Allegory. The Dynamics of an Ancient and Medieval Technique* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), 263-68; Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 3ff.; Blonnigen, *Der griechische Ursprung der jüdisch-hellenistischen Allegorese und ihre Rezeption in der alexandrinischen Patristik*, KSL XV (Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992), 11-19; Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 20ff.; Tate, "The Beginning of Greek Allegory," *CR* 41 (1927): 214-15; Kamesar, "Philo, the Presence of 'Paideutic Myth' in the Pentateuch, and the 'Principles' or *Kephalia* of Mosaic Discourse," *StPh Annual* 10 (1998): 34-65.

<sup>39</sup> For a complete list of the articles of reinterpretation, see Botica, *The Concept of Intention*, 290ff.

diator		<i>Som</i> 1.215;
Sacrificing perfect victim	purification of the soul ( <i>ψυχή</i> ) from passion	<i>Spec</i> 1.259-60
Worship through sacrifice	a soul ( <i>ψυχή</i> ) bringing simple reality as its only sacrifice	<i>Det</i> 21
Passover	purification of soul ( <i>ψυχῆς κάθαρσιν</i> )	<i>Spec</i> 2.147
Special festivals	life of the soul ( <i>ψυχή</i> ), thoughts ( <i>λογίσμοι</i> ), and virtues	<i>Spec</i> 2.42
Circumcision	excision of pleasures which bewitch the mind ( <i>διάνοια</i> ), the lady of conceit	<i>Spec.</i> 1.6, 8ff., 305; 3.46ff.; <i>QG</i> 3.46; <i>QE</i> 2.2
Sacrificing the sheep	purging the mind ( <i>διανοίας</i> )	<i>Mut.</i> 245-57
Clean beasts and birds	the senses and the mind ( <i>νοῦς... λογισμοί</i> )	<i>QG</i> 2.52
Pouring libation of blood	the blood of the soul ( <i>τὸ ψυχικόν αἷμα</i> )	<i>Leg.</i> 2.56; <i>QE</i> 2.14

Now, one must understand that Philo never applied the method of allegory to the Old Testament in order to “save” the integrity of the biblical revelation from the criticism of Greek philosophers. In other words, Philo did not think that the accounts of the Pentateuch fell within the same category of myth with the Homeric accounts of the gods.<sup>40</sup> Rather, Philo applied the method of allegory for two reasons. The first was his formation

<sup>40</sup> For a wider argument on this aspect see Kamesar, “‘Paideutic’ Myth,” esp. 56-65, and “The Literary Genres of the Pentateuch as Seen from the Greek Perspective: The Testimony of Philo of Alexandria,” *StPhAn* 9 (1997): 143-89.

as a Greek philosopher, and this tendency is evident from the philosophical concepts, the logic and the breadth of knowledge that he exhibits in his writings.<sup>41</sup> The second reason was, indeed, an apologetical one. But Philo never started with the premise that the account of the life of Moses was mythical. Rather, he employed this method in order to speak the language of the philosophers and thus to convince his Greek audience of the superiority of the biblical account.<sup>42</sup> In fact, as Heinemann argued, Philo “criticized certain Greek philosophical and religious tendencies from the perspective of a biblical thinker.”<sup>43</sup>

### **Brief Overview of the Key Passages of the New Testament Describing the Phenomenon of the “Reinterpretation” or “Spiritualization” of Cultic Entities**

As we will argue, the image and the function of the Temple and the offerings were used by New Testament authors at two levels: the *physical* and the *metaphorical*. In the physical sense, the authors referred to the Old Testament Temple and to the Temple of Herod. Unlike other categories, however, most often the physical image of the Temple was not transformed into a spiri-

<sup>41</sup> See Sowers, *Hermeneutics* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1975), 11-27, 49-63; Nikiprowetzky, “Spiritualisation,” 92-94; Hecht, “Exegetical Contexts,” *Nourished With Peace* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), 51-80, esp. 68-75, and “Patterns of Exegesis,” *StPh* 6 (79-80): 82; Dreyer, *Begriff des Gottgeziemenden SPUDASMATA XXIV* (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1970), 135-40; similarly Mendelson, *Philo’s Jewish Identity* (Atlanta, GA: 1988), 54ff.; Amir, *Hellenistische Gestalt* (Dusseldorf: Neukirchener Verlag, 1983), 124-27; Brehier, *Idées philosophiques* (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard & Fils, 1908), 37ff.; Pépin, *Mythe*, 231-42, and “La théorie de l’exégèse allégorique chez Philon,” *Philon d’Alexandrie*, esp. 150ff.; Mack, “Philo and Exegetical Traditions in Alexandria,” *ANRW* II.21.1 (1984): 227-271 (esp. 250ff.); Menard, *La gnose de Philon d’Alexandrie* (Paris: Cariscript, 1987), 119-21.

<sup>42</sup> See Wenschkewitz, *Spiritualisierung*, 83-86.

<sup>43</sup> *Bildung*, 54-57, 66ff., 74ff., 463ff.

tual entity, as was the case with the notion of sacrifices and offerings (1 Peter 2:5). As we will show, the tendency to operate with this transference was there.<sup>44</sup>

Second, the New Testament authors seem to have operated with the same logic whenever they discussed the issue of *offerings* and *sacrifices*.<sup>45</sup> For them, the advent of the coming, the work and the resurrection of Christ made a profound difference. It was the death of Christ—the supreme sacrifice—that washed the iniquities and sins of those who believed in him. Just as the blood of animals effected atonement for the sins of the worshippers in the Old Testament, so the blood of Christ washed away not only the visible sins, but also the stains of the conscience and of the heart. This indeed is a *transformation* of the Old Testament concept of sacrifice. The question remains to what extent were the New Testament authors influenced by the Old Testament versus the Hellenistic tendency to spiritualize cultic entities? In the following table we will list several of the key expressions that fall within the wider concept of “reinterpretation” or “spiritualization” of cultic entities.

<sup>44</sup> Young, “Temple Cult and Law in Early Christianity,” *NTS* 19 (1973): 325-28; Fiorenza, “Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament,” *CBQ* 38 (1976): 159-77; Daly, *Christian Sacrifice* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America, 1978), 160ff.

<sup>45</sup> Cranfield, *Romans*, 602-03; Schmithals, *Römerbrief*, 429; Dunn, *Romans*, 711; Schreiner, *Romans*, 645.

### Table with the Reinterpretation of Cultic Entities in the New Testament<sup>46</sup>

Physical Category	Spiritual/Symbolical Interpretation	Greek Terminology	Reference
	your body is a <i>temple</i> of the Holy Spirit within you	τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν <b>ναὸς</b> τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν	1 Corin- thians 6:19 (3:16)
	<i>holy temple</i> in the Lord	<b>ναὸν ἁγίου</b> ἐν κυρίῳ	Ephesians 2:21
	In him you also are being built together <i>into a dwelling place</i> for God by the Spirit	ἐν ᾧ καὶ ὑμεῖς συνοικοδομεῖσθε εἰς <b>κατοικητήριον</b> τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πνεύματι	Ephesians 2:22
<b>Temple</b>	for we are the <i>temple of the living God</i> , as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them"	ἡμεῖς γὰρ <b>ναὸς</b> <b>θεοῦ</b> ἐσμεν ζῶντος καθὼς εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς ὅτι ἐνοικήσω ἐν αὐτοῖς καὶ ἐμπεριπατήσω	2 Corin- thians 6:16
	you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a <i>spiritual house</i>	καὶ αὐτοὶ ὡς λίθοι ζῶντες οἰκοδομεῖσθε <b>οἶκος</b> <b>πνευματικὸς</b>	1 Peter 2:5a
	but Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And	Χριστὸς δὲ ὡς υἱὸς ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ οὗ <b>οἰκός</b> ἐσμεν	Hebrews 3:6

<sup>46</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the translation of biblical passages that I have used in this article is that of the English Standard Version, as found in *BibleWorks* 8 (Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 2010).



	<i>we are his house</i>	ἡμεῖς	
	to offer <i>spiritual sacrifices</i> acceptable to God through Jesus Christ	ἀνενέγκαι πνευματικὰς θυσίας εὐπροσδέκτους [τῷ] θεῷ διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.	1 Peter 2:5b
	Let us therefore celebrate the festival, not with the old leaven, the leaven of malice and evil, but with the <i>unleavened bread of sincerity and truth</i>	ὥστε ἐορτάζωμεν μὴ ἐν ζύμῃ παλαιᾷ μηδὲ ἐν ζύμῃ κακίας καὶ πονηρίας ἀλλ’ ἐν ἄζύμοις εἰλικρινείας καὶ ἀληθείας.	1 Corin- thians 5:8
<b>Food, Offerings and Sacrifices</b>	Even if <i>I am</i> to be poured out as a drink offering upon the <i>sacrificial offering</i> of your faith	Ἀλλὰ εἰ καὶ σπένδομαι ἐπὶ τῇ <b>θυσίᾳ</b> καὶ <b>λειτουργίᾳ</b> τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν	Philippians 2:17
	offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, <i>the fruit of lips</i> that acknowl- edge his name.	ἀναφέρωμεν θυσίαν αἰνέσεως διὰ παντὸς τῷ θεῷ, τοῦτ’ ἔστιν <b>καρπὸν χειλέων</b> ὁμολογούντων τῷ ὀνόματι αὐτοῦ.	Hebrews 13:15
	Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God	τῆς δὲ <b>εὐποιίας</b> <b>καὶ κοινωνίας</b> μὴ ἐπιλανθάνεσθε· τοιαύταις γὰρ <b>θυσίαις</b> εὐαρεστεῖται ὁ θεός.	Hebrews 13:16

so that the <i>offering of the Gentiles</i> may be acceptable	ἵνα γένηται ἡ <b>προσφορά τῶν</b> <b>ἐθνῶν</b> εὖ πρόσδεκτος	Romans 15:16
to present <i>your bodies as a living sacrifice</i> , holy and acceptable to God, which is your <i>spiritual worship</i> .	παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν <b>θυσίαν ζῶσαν</b> ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, <b>τὴν</b> <b>λογικὴν</b> <b>λατρείαν</b> ὑμῶν	Romans 12:1
with <i>our hearts</i> sprinkled clean	ῥεραντισμένοι <b>τὰς καρδίας</b> ἀπὸ συνειδήσεως πονηρᾶς	Hebrews 10:22
<i>our bodies</i> washed with pure water	λελουσμένοι <b>τὸ</b> <b>σῶμα</b> ὕδατι καθαρῶ·	Hebrews 10:22
how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, <i>purify our conscience</i> from dead works to serve the living God.	πόσῳ μᾶλλον τὸ αἷμα τοῦ Χριστοῦ, ὃς διὰ πνεύματος αἰωνίου ἑαυτὸν προσήμεκεν ἁμῶν τῷ θεῷ, καθαριεῖ <b>τὴν</b> <b>συνείδησιν</b> ἡμῶν ἀπὸ νεκρῶν ἔργων	Hebrews 9:14

We have shown that ancient Greek authors (especially the Stoics) believed that the body of man was permeated by λόγος. This “divine residence” made him or her a “rational being,” and implicitly his or her worship rational or spiritual (λογικὴν

λατρείαν).<sup>47</sup> The apostle Paul makes a similar argument, namely, that the body of the believer is the Temple of the Holy Spirit (τὸ σῶμα ὑμῶν **ναὸς** τοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἁγίου πνεύματος ἐστίν, 1 Corinthians 6:19). It must be said, however, that according to Paul the indwelling of the Spirit of God in the human body is not a consequence of being human, as Stoic philosophers would argue. In fact, for many Stoics the entire cosmos was permeated by the *λογος*, not only the human being.<sup>48</sup> Rather—and here the association between Paul and the Stoics breaks down—the Holy Spirit indwells the body only on the condition of belief in Jesus Christ. For Paul, one could not make the claim that his body was indwelt by the Holy Spirit if he or she were not a believer. Paul extends the metaphor of the believer as part of the building of (spiritual) Temple in Ephesians 2:21/2 Corinthians 6:16 (**ναὸν ἁγίου**) and 2:22 (**κατοικητήριον**, a dwelling place). The apostle Peter makes the same assertion in 1 Peter 2:5, where he uses the expression **οἶκος πνευματικὸς** (spiritual house).

As we noted in the table above, both the apostle Paul and Peter make references to *sacrifices*. We will only focus here on two of the more important verses. For the beginning, one may suggest a close association between the Hellenistic and Christian concept of “spiritual sacrifices.” In Romans 12:1, the apostle Paul refers to the human body as a living sacrifice (**θυσίαν ζῶσαν**).<sup>49</sup> However, even though making the connection be-

<sup>47</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans*, 602, for the Stoic conception of man as a *ζῶον λόγικον* (Arrian, *Epict* 2.9.2; Marcus Aurelius 2.16). Also, see Strathmann, *λατρεύω/λατρεία*, TDNT 4: 58ff., and Kittel, *λογικός*, TDNT 4: 142-43.

<sup>48</sup> In this sense see LSJ, *λογος*; Debrunner, *λόγος*, TDNT 4: 73-4; BDAG, *λόγος*, esp. 3; Kleinknecht, *λόγος*, 4: 77-91; Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, 1: 32-36; 2: 19-20; Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy*, 147ff.; Burkert, *Greek Religion*, 309; Reale, *Systems*, 217; Pohlenz, *Die Stoa*, 2: 160.

<sup>49</sup> See Cranfield, *Romans*, 602; Dunn, *Romans* 9-16 (Waco, TX: Word, 1988), 711; Fitzmeyer, *Romans* (New York: Doubleday, 1993), 640-44; and Schreiner, *Romans*, 646-47, Schmithals, *Der Romerbrief*, 429ff.; Fergusson, “Spiritual Sa-

tween the Hellenistic and Pauline usage of this term is somehow warranted, one ought to remember that the apostle was deeply influenced by the worldview of the Old Testament.<sup>50</sup> In fact the term is evidently a Septuagint translation from the Hebrew  $\text{זָבַח}$ . The early Christians used the Septuagint form  $\thetaυσία$ , which was a translation of the Hebrew word  $\text{זָבַח}$  (animal sacrifice, Leviticus 22:29, Deuteronomy 18:3).<sup>51</sup> By connecting  $\thetaυσίαν$   $\zeta\omegaσαν$  with the expression  $\tauὰ σ\acute{o}\mu\alpha\tau\alpha \acute{\iota}\mu\omega\nu$  (your bodies) Paul had in mind the daily (i.e., “living”) offering of one’s body to the service of God. One clearly notices here a limit in the analogy between the Old Testament concept of “sacrifice” and Paul’s reference to “body”. That is, the bodies of the believers serve as sacrifices not by being “slaughtered” (as were the animals during the first and second Temples). Rather, instead of dying, they ought to be living daily as an offering to Christ.<sup>52</sup>

Concerning the usage of the same concept in the apostle Peter’s case, we may say that, along with a possible influence via Hellenistic thought, he uses Hebrew terminology to give the expression  $\piνευματικὰς \thetaυσίας$  (spiritual sacrifices, 1 Peter 2:5) a

crifice,” 1154. See also Kasemann, *Commentary on Romans*, for the origins of the concept of  $\text{λογικὴ λατρεία}$  in Stoicism, and Dodds, *The Bible and the Greeks* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954), 196, for sacrifices “on the rational plane, offered by the  $\text{λογικὸν μέρος τῆς ψυχῆς}$ , where  $\text{λογικαὶ θυσίαι}$  might otherwise be described as  $\text{νοητὰ θυσίαι}$ .”

<sup>50</sup> Thus Morris, “Sacrifice,” *The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1993, the electronic version). See also Behm,  $\thetaύω$ , TDNT 3: 180-90; Brown,  $\thetaύω$ , *New International Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978), 3: 417-38.

<sup>51</sup> See Behm,  $\thetaύω$ , TDNT 3: 180-90; Fiorenza, “Cultic Language in Qumran and in the New Testament,” 159-77; Brown,  $\thetaύω$ , NIDNT 3: 417-38; Daly, *Christian Sacrifice*, 160ff., and  $\text{זָבַח}$ , Koehler/Baumgartner, *Hebrew and English Lexicon*;  $\text{זָבַח}$ , Harris, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*.

<sup>52</sup> As Morris argued, Paul “spiritualizes the sacrificial idioms of the OT cultus, just as could other sectors of Second Temple Judaism (e.g., 1QS 9: 3-5; 4QFlor 1: 6-7).”

unique sense.<sup>53</sup> In essence, what Peter meant by *πνευματικὰς θυσίας* was the offering of the inward person (with all that thoughts, intentions, motivations and emotions entail) before God. That Peter was keenly aware of the importance of the reason and the heart in Christian worship is evident from the way he spiritualizes physical cultic and other actions and objects:

*τὰς ὀσφύας τῆς διανοίας* (the loins of your minds, 1 Peter 1:13)  
*τὰς ψυχὰς ὑμῶν ἡγνικότες* (purifying your souls, 1 Peter 1:22)<sup>54</sup>  
*τὸ λογικὸν ἄδολον γάλα* (the pure spiritual milk, 1 Peter 2:2)  
*οἶκος πνευματικὸς* (spiritual house, 1 Peter 2:5)  
*πνευματικὰς θυσίας* (spiritual offerings, 1 Peter 2:5)  
*ὁ κρυπτὸς τῆς καρδίας ἄνθρωπος* (the hidden person of the heart, 1 Peter 3:4)  
*τὸν Χριστὸν ἀγιάσατε ἐν ταῖς καρδίαις ὑμῶν* (sanctify Christ in your hearts, 1 Peter 3:15)<sup>55</sup>

In conclusion, we may state the following observations. First, it is evident that the degree of the effort toward spiritualization on the part of the Old Testament and the New Testament au-

<sup>53</sup>Achtemeier, *1 Peter* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Fortress, 1996), 154-59; Elliot, *1 Peter* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 414ff.

<sup>54</sup> For the usage of *ἀγνίζω* in classical Greek, with the sense of “purification” or “lustration,” see F. W. Danker *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 2000) and Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon (LSJ)*, 9th ed. with new supplement (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996). In the LXX the verb *ἀγνίζω* means to purify, to cleanse. It is another cultic verb translated by the LXX from two Hebrew cultic verbs: *קָדַשׁ* (to sanctify, set apart as holy, Exodus 19:10; 1 Chronicles 15:14; Isaiah 66:17) and *טָהַר* (to purify from uncleanness, Numbers 8:21; 19:12; 31:19).

<sup>55</sup> The word *ἀγιάζω* (to make holy, to set apart) is the LXX translation of the Hebrew *קָדַשׁ*, which clearly is a cultic term, with the sense to *sanctify/set apart as holy* a cultic entity (Sabbath day, priestly clothes, the altar, the tent, the priest/levite), see Exodus 19:23, 20:11, 29:27.

thors was far more modest than the freedom that Philo afforded himself when he interpreted the cultic texts of the Pentateuch. In fact, the same conclusion should be derived if one compared the early and classical Greek and Hellenistic passages on this theme. First, it appears that the Biblical authors did not seek to make an apology for the physical cult, by reinterpreting or allegorizing its function and elements. Second, it is also evident that in the Bible the portrayal of cultic activities is grounded in a historical reality that is unapologetically accepted by the authors of both the Old and the New Testament. Even when the cult is substituted with a new spiritual reality (New Testament), its place in the history of redemption is never derided. Third, when the authors of the Old Testament sought to emphasize the spiritual condition of the worshipper, as opposed to the outward fulfillment of cultic activities, they did not cast a shadow of doubt upon the validity of the Temple and its activities. In fact, the Old Testament viewed the cult as necessary, but sought to elevate the principle above the practice.

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Str. Nufărului Nr. 87, 410597 Oradea, Bihor, România/Romania

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is PUBLISHED BY

Editura Universității Emanuel/Emanuel University Press and  
Centrul de Cercetare «Religie și Știință»/The «Religion and Science»  
Research Centre  
Str. Nufărului Nr. 87, 410597 Oradea, Bihor  
România/Romania

and PRINTED FOR EMANUEL UNIVERSITY PRESS BY

S.C. ROPRINT® S.R.L.  
Str. Cernavodă Nr. 5-9, 400188 Cluj-Napoca, Cluj  
Tel/Fax: +40-264-432384, Email: [roprint@roprint.ro](mailto:roprint@roprint.ro)  
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THE THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL OF EMANUEL UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA

Editura Universității Emanuel/Emanuel University Press  
Centrul de Cercetare «Religie și Știință»/The «Religion and Science» Research Centre  
Str. Nufărului Nr. 87, 410597 Oradea, Bihor, România/Romania  
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ISSN 1224-984X