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CONTRIBUTIONS & CORRESPONDENCE

Contributions to the CTR are welcomed in areas relating to the broader disciplines of Theology, Biblical Studies, and Missiology. To further guide potential contributors, a more detailed description of the scope of the CTR has been outlined at the end of this journal. All submissions will be evaluated and edited for suitability for CTR publication. Article submissions and related correspondence should be directed to the CTR Editor-in-Chief at: czoccali@gmail.com. Book review contributions and related correspondence should be directed to the CTR Book Review Editor at: lowe.matthew.forrest@gmail.com.

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Foreword

The first five articles in this issue of *CTR* are revisions of papers given at the annual Fall interdisciplinary theology conference of the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association (CETA) held at Northeastern Seminary in Rochester, NY on October 19, 2013. The theme of the conference was "New Creation: Scripture, Theology, and Praxis." The fifth article, by Andrew Van't Land, won CETA's Jack and Phyllis Middleton Memorial Award, an annual competition that awards graduate students for a paper demonstrating excellence in the field of Theology. In addition to these articles sharing the theme of New Creation, this issue includes a sixth article on moral formation and Christian doctrine by Anthony Siegrist.

Christopher Zoccali,
editor-in-chief.

Ecce Homo: The Servant of Yhwh as *Imago Dei* in Second Isaiah[1]

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Abstract

Attention to the use of key words and their resonances in a variety of texts in Second Isaiah (Isa 40-55) results in a remarkably coherent understanding of the servant figure in Second Isaiah. This understanding includes Second Isaiah's theology of the servant of Yhwh as *imago Dei* (the paradigm human being), whose identity and character are revealed especially in contrast with Babylonian idols. Ultimately, this exploration of an intertextual reading of Second Isaiah leads to a portrayal of the servant's utilization of power in an alternative mode to that of the Babylonian empire. Specifically, the servant suffers, intercedes for, and even bears the sins of others, and in doing so manifests or images Yhwh, who is revealed as *Deus patiens* (the suffering God).

Few things a man needs
to look like God at the hour
of creation:
white garments, sombrero,
serape, machete,
and a back that does not break
and a heart that does not break.

— Dilys Laing[2]

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1   A shorter version of this paper was presented at the "New Creation" interdisciplinary theology conference, sponsored by CETA and held at Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY, on October 19, 2013. I am indebted and grateful to Richard Middleton for his many suggestions for improving and clarifying my argument and making it more user-friendly for the general reader. He, of course, is not responsible for any of the paper's remaining deficiencies in style or substance.

2   "Worker," *The Collected Poems of Dilys Laing* (Cleveland, OH: The Press of Case Western University, 1967), 351.

As far back as 1961 biblical scholar James Barr famously warned against the exegetical crime of "illegitimate totality transfer."[3] By this warning he meant to critique a tradition of doing word studies in Scripture that crammed willy-nilly all possible meanings of a particular Hebrew or Greek word (everything in its semantic range) into each particular usage of the word, without attending to how the word was actually used in each particular context. While Barr's warning is generally helpful in preventing superficial misreadings of the Bible, it can lead biblical interpreters to ignore significant resonances between different texts that use the same word (or words derived from the same Hebrew root). The result can be a splintered, atomistic interpretation of Scripture.

In this paper I shall push back (respectfully) against Barr's exegetical strictures, paying attention to the use of key words and their resonances in a variety of texts in Second Isaiah (Isa 40-55). Mining the connotations of these words (while attending appropriately to their contextual use) will serve to illustrate a remarkably coherent understanding of the servant figure in Second Isaiah. This understanding includes Second Isaiah's theology of the servant of YHWH as *imago Dei* (the paradigm human being), whose identity and character are revealed especially in contrast with Babylonian idols. Ultimately, this exploration of an intertextual reading of Second Isaiah leads to a portrayal of the servant's utilization of power in an alternative mode to that of the Babylonian empire. Specifically, the servant suffers, intercedes for, and even bears the sins of others, and in doing so manifests or images YHWH, who is revealed as *Deus patiens* (the suffering God).

Second Isaiah's Creation Theology and Ideology Critique

I begin by setting the interpretive context of Isaiah 40-55. I read Second Isaiah as addressing Israel's deportees subjected to Babylonian state power and the theological justification of this power in Babylon's creation myth, *Enuma Elish*. This myth centers in divine Marduk's slaying of divine *ur*-mother Tiamat and using her body as a protective barrier within which to create a cosmos over which Marduk rules as divine king. Analogously, the human king, understood as Marduk's *ṣalmu* or "image," rules his earthly empire from within fortress Babylon, through the might of armies that, for example, have destroyed Jerusalem and deported its leading figures to Babylon.

J. Richard Middleton has shown how Israel's Primeval History (Gen 1–11) can be read as "ideology critique" *over against* this very Babylonian theology of statecraft.[4] This critique centers in two textual foci: The Babel story in Gen 11:1-9

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3   James Barr, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 218.

4   J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005). Middleton's discussion of Mesopotamian kings, especially in the seventh century BCE, as *ṣalmu* of the divine king, comes on 111-17. As he writes, "the image of god . . . functions . . . as a behavioral norm," such that the king's behavior should conform to that of his gods (115).

subverts the account of the founding of Babylon in *Enuma Elish* by telling an alternative tale of the origin (and demise) of this great civilization; and Genesis 1 presents God's creative activity, not as that of a violent warrior, but as what Middleton calls an *artisan*. And the cosmic rule of a God who works six days and rests on a seventh finds its image (*ṣelem*) not just in kings, but in every ordinary human who works for six days and rests on the seventh. As Genesis 2:15 implies, God is imaged by earthlings set on the earth as in a garden to work/serve it (*'ābad*) and preserve/guard it (*šāmar*).

Middleton's reading of the Primeval History as ideology critique of Babylon is persuasive; and I take Second Isaiah as another such critique, aimed at forestalling any temptation on the part of weary and disheartened exiles to abandon YHWH for Marduk. At the heart of this critique is the servant of YHWH who subverts the wisdom of kings, who "shall shut their mouths because of him; / for that which has not been told them they shall see, / and that which they have not heard they shall understand" (Isa 52:15).[5]

As I offer my reading of the servant of YHWH in Second Isaiah, I do not claim that Second Isaiah explicitly designates the servant as *imago Dei*, though I do assume that Second Isaiah is working in full view of the creation account in Genesis 1. I further assume, contrary to Gerhard von Rad's well-known identification of Second Isaiah's creation themes as ancillary to the theme of redemption, that the text takes Israel's creation traditions as foundational. Finally, I assume that those creation traditions, as expressed in Genesis 1 (including the *imago Dei* theme), have shaped Second Isaiah's worldview deeply enough that they are formative of his anthropology and his eschatology.

My purpose in what follows is to show the *congruence* and *resonance* of Second Isaiah's portrayal of the servant, as developed in the context of this exilic prophet's ideology critique, with the portrayal of humankind in Genesis 1.[6] This presentation in modes of indirection and implication is typical of poetic discourse. In the following analysis I shall draw attention, in particular, to the way in which certain words and images are applied both to the idols of the nations and to Israel and/as the servant, in such a way as to imply a comparison and set off the contrast between them.

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5   Translations of the Bible in this paper will generally be based on the RSV, with the author's modifications.

6   Perhaps I will be accused, not of Barr's "illegitimate totality transfer," but "illegitimate connotation transfer," a distant cousin to the exegetical crime Barr names. In response, I suggest that the proof is in the pudding; let us see what attention to the congruence and resonance of texts and words produces. For those who wish a hermeneutical account of my approach, see J. Gerald Janzen, *When Prayer Takes Place: Forays into a Biblical World* (ed. Brent A. Strawn and Patrick D. Miller; Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), ch. 14: "Toward a Hermeneutics of Resonance" (241-300).

Yhwh's Likeness in Isaiah 40:12-31

In Isa 40:12-31, the divine address comes in response to Israel's cry: "My way is hid from Yhwh, / my right [*mišpāt*] is disregarded by my God" (Isa 40:27). This introduces one of Second Isaiah's key words, *mišpāt*,[7] which I take to mean, at heart, "the right way to do things" including "the way to set things to rights."

But what is that right way? Is it the way of Marduk's cosmic statecraft founded in creation through violence? In Isaiah 40 (and elsewhere) Second Isaiah presents Yhwh's creative action not as violent combat, but as founding a building or pitching a tent for creaturely habitation (40:22).[8] It is precisely in Yhwh's cosmic creativity that Israel is to understand the character of the divine *mishpat* (40:12-14).

Yhwh's query, "to whom will you *liken* [*tădamměyûn*] God, / or what *likeness* [*děmût*] compare with him?" (40:18) implies a two-fold contrast. First, Yhwh's creative activity is not like that of gods such as Marduk; second, that creative activity does not find its likeness (*děmût*) in Marduk's human king (the Babylonian monarch, who subdued Israel), but in humankind imaging Israel's God.[9]

For note: the nations and their kings rise and fall through their failure to understand and embody true *mišpāt*; even their youths "faint and are weary" and their "young men shall fall and be exhausted." (40:30) Whereas Yhwh, "the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth," who "does not faint or grow weary" is imaged in "those who wait for Yhwh," who thereby "renew their strength: / they shall mount up with wings like eagles, / they shall run and [like their God] not be weary, / they shall walk and [like their God] not faint."(40:28-29, 31) This "likeness," between unwearying Yhwh and unwearied followers, may seem incidental; but its significance will emerge later in Second Isaiah, where the motif of weariness undergoes an intriguing twist.[10]

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7   Occurring eleven times in Second Isaiah, this term is central to the four so-called Servant Songs (see 42:1, 3, 4; 49:4; 50:8; 53:8).

8   In Isaiah 51:9-11 the "arm of the LORD" is invoked in imagery suggestive of the creation-myth of cosmic battle. However, this passage articulates Israel's plea for Yhwh to intervene in such a fashion. (See J. Gerald Janzen, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power: Yahweh and the Sea in Job and Deutero-Isaiah," *CBQ* 56 [1994]: 458-78, esp. 471-78; and Jeremy M. Hutton, "Isaiah 51:9-11 and the Rhetorical Appropriation and Subversion of Hostile Theologies, *JBL* 126 [2007]: 271-303.) Significantly, the divine response to such a plea for violent action is to recall plaintive Israel to its own non-violent creation-tradition (51:12-16).

9   Second Isaiah does not employ the term "image" (*ṣelem*), but does use its pair-word in Genesis 1:26, *děmût*. This tangential allusion to Genesis 1 is similar to Second Isaiah's frequent use of *bārā'* (sixteen times) vis-à-vis its occurrence seven times in Gen 1:1-2:4a, but with an additional connotation of redemption or new creation. In another way it is similar to Second Isaiah's tangential use of the verb *rāqaʿ* (cognate with the *rāqiaʿ* or "firmament" of Gen 1:6-8) in Yhwh's structuring of the cosmos, but now in reference to the earth as a sort of "ground-sheet" or carpeting under and the heavens as a pitched tent (Isa 42:5; 44:24). For Middleton's discussion of a Mesopotamian text that uses *mushshulu* (semantically similar to Hebrew *děmût*) to speak of "the king's likeness . . . to a god," see *The Liberating Image,* 115, and reference there to the work of Jeffrey Tigay.

10   For this twist, see the discussion of Isaiah 49 later in this essay.

The Critique of Idolatry in the Trial Scene of Isaiah 41

Following the majestic opening chapter of Second Isaiah, chapter 41 presents a cosmic trial scene convened by the summons, "let the peoples renew their strength / . . . let us draw near together for *mišpāt*." The peoples, for their part, renew *their* strength by fearfully fashioning new idols, fixing them with nails so that they cannot be moved (41:5-7). In contrast, Yʜwʜ calls upon Israel as his servant to "fear not, … I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."(41:8-10) The text thus draws a vivid contrast between the nations steadying the images of their gods and Yʜwʜ upholding and steadying Israel.

Yʜwʜ then interrogates the nations and their gods as to the meaning of history, past and future (Isa 41:21-26), and concludes: "When I look, there is no one; . . . / who, when I ask, gives an answer" (41:28). The verdict of the cosmic trial? "Behold, they are all a delusion; / their works are nothing; / their molten images are empty wind [*rûaḥ vatohû*]."(41:29; with a similar statement in. v. 24)

The Portrayal of Yʜwʜ's Servant in Isaiah 42:1-4

This characterization of the idolatrous images as *rûaḥ vatohû* segues immediately into a contrasting portrayal of Yʜwʜ's servant. According to Yʜwʜ in Isa 42:1, the servant is one upon whom "I have put my spirit [*rûaḥ*]." The use of *rûaḥ vatohû* for the molten images should not be taken simply as two nouns side-by-side but as a hendiadys, where emptiness (*tohû*) qualifies the sort of *rûaḥ* they have—thus "empty wind." By contrast, the servant is filled with Yʜwʜ's powerful *rûaḥ*.

In place of the nations' gods, whose so-called *mišpāt* results in the *tohû* that Israel's exiles (and others like them) are suffering under, this servant "will bring forth *mišpāt* to the nations" (42:1). The sort of justice the servant will engender does not separate end-result from mode of delivery: "A bruised reed he will not break, / and a dimly burning wick he will not quench; / he will faithfully bring forth *mišpāt*. / He will not burn dimly or be bruised / till he has established *mišpāt* in the earth; / and the coastlands wait for his *tôrâ*" (42:3-4).

How does this servant "set things to rights"? He does this by embodying a *mišpāt* that will not break those bruised by life's vicissitudes, nor quench their flickering hopes. And the *rûaḥ* that energizes this servant will enable him also not to be bruised or lose hope in the execution of his mission.

The Servant and the Nations in Isaiah 42:5-8

The next verses of Isaiah 42 then place this servant within the context of cosmic creation, which climaxes in humankind.

"⁵ Thus says God, Yʜwʜ,

who created the heavens and stretched them out,

who gives breath to the people [*'am*] upon it
and spirit [*rûaḥ*] to those who walk in it.
⁶ 'I am Y*HWH*, I have called you in righteousness,
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;
I have given you as a covenant to the people [*'am*],
a light to the nations [*gôyim*].'" (Isa 42:5-6)

The first use of the word *'am*, in 42:5, is atypical and strikingly suggestive. Generally, it refers in the singular to *a* people among the *many* peoples (*'ammîm*) or nations (*gôyim*) of the earth. In the eighty verses scattered throughout the Bible containing a form of *'am* together with a form of *gôy,* one finds numerous instances of singular *'am* in parallel with singular *gôy*, plural *'ammîn* in parallel with plural *gôyim*, and of a specific *'am* in the midst of the many *gôyim*. But Isa 42:6 is distinctive. There *'am* is "singularly" (in both senses of that word) applied to humankind as a whole; it is parallel to *gôyim*.

Although the context in Isa 42:5 is protological, the only clear analogy I can find for this singular use of *'am* comes in the eschatological text in Zech 2:11 (15 MT) where God says: "many nations [*gôyim rabbîm*] shall join themselves to Y*HWH* in that day, / and shall become my people [*vĕhāyû lî lĕʿām*]." To this text we might add Ps 100:3, if, following Norbert Lohfink and others,[11] we take the confession by "all the earth" (100:1) that "we are his people [*'ammô*], and the sheep of his pasture" (100:3) to be an eschatological extension to the nations of an originally Israelite confession of its covenant relation to Y*HWH*.

The evidence of these two eschatological texts (Zech 2:11 and possibly Ps 100:3), together with the protological usage in Isa 42:5, bears on the interpretation of Isa 42:6, where the term *'am* is to be taken as synonymous with the following *gôyim*. But whereas Isa 42:5 is protological, verse 5 is eschatological, implying the redemption of the nations (as one *'am*) through the instrumentality of the servant. The details of that redemption are then elaborated as the opening of eyes and freeing of prisoners (42:7).

When the passage ends in 42:8 with, "I am Y*HWH*, that is my name; / My glory [*kabôd*] I give to no other, / nor my praise to graven images," other biblical mentions of God's name and glory are evoked.

Consider this background: At the burning bush God gives the divine name to Moses; and in Deuteronomic theology God causes the divine name to dwell in

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11 See Erich Zenger's comments, in Erich Zenger and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld, *Psalms 2: A Commentary on Psalms 51–100* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2005), 492-98, and reference there to Lohfink. Particularly relevant to my analysis of the Servant's covenanting mission vis-à-vis humankind as one *'am*, is this comment: "In Ps 100:3… the [covenant] formula is given a creation-theological basis, and is thus released from its salvation-historical anchors in order to be expanded to include the nations" (Zenger, 496).

Israel's midst. Similarly, God's glory dwells above the ark and between the cherubim, so that, when the Philistines capture the ark, it is said, "the glory [*kābôd*] has departed"; or, as Psalm 78:61 has it, "Yʜᴡʜ delivered his power to captivity, / his glory [*tip'eret*] to the hand of the foe."

In the present context, then, I take it that Yʜᴡʜ's name, glory, and praise are bestowed, not on graven images, but on this servant figure. Filled with God's *rûaḥ* to embody God's *mišpāt* as a light to the nations, the servant is the ideal representative of humankind, and as such, the ideal embodiment of the divine *imago*.

This motif of the servant as *imago Dei* is borne out by a series of thematically related passages in Second Isaiah. In Isa 49:3 the servant affirms: Yʜᴡʜ "said to me, 'You are my servant, Israel, / in whom I will be glorified [*'etpā'ār*].'" In Isa 46:13 Yʜᴡʜ says, "I bring near my deliverance, it is not far off, / and my salvation will not tarry; / I will put salvation in Zion, for Israel my glory [*tip'eret*]." And in Isa 43:7 Yʜᴡʜ refers to Israel as "everyone who is called by my name, / whom I created for my glory [*kābôd*], / whom I formed and made." So then, the "glory" associated here with God's servant (people), whether *kābôd* or *tip'eret*, contrasts with the verdict on the idols at the end of the trial scene as "empty wind" (*rûaḥ vatohû*).

Israel as God's Chosen Image in Contrast to Idols in Isaiah 48:9-11

I move now to Isa 48:9-11, where God's dealing with Israel, as contrasted with the activity of idolaters in fashioning their idols, comes to a climax.[12]

Following on a description of Israel's own idol-making propensities from the beginning described in 48:1-8, we find this statement of Yʜᴡʜ's forgiving grace in verses 9-11, where a number of key terms impart a telling rhetorical power.

> [9] For my name's sake I defer my anger,
>> For the sake of my praise I restrain it for you,
>> that I may not cut you off.
> [10] Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver,
>> I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction.
> [11] For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it,
>> for how should my name[13] be profaned?
>> My glory I will not give to another.

The first thing to notice is that the opening and closing lines of this unit (verses 9 and 11) contain three words from 42:8 associated with the servant: *name*, *praise*,

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12 Several structural and thematic features of Second Isaiah suggest a two-part movement (with two climaxes), from 40:1 to 49:13, and from 49:14 to 55:13.

13 The RSV translation here is based on the LXX; the MT has *it*.

and *glory*.[14] Beyond that, the statement "I will not give [my glory] to another" [*lĕ'aḥer lo'-'ettēn*] occurs in Second Isaiah only here (48:11) and in 42:8. By this rhetorical means 48:9-11, which concludes the description of Jacob / Israel's past idolatrous behavior in 48:1-8, is set in contrast to the statement that concludes the description of the servant in 42:1-8.

But it is not just that the servant is contrasted with idolatrous Israel. Rather, a renewed vocation for Israel is implied through Yᴴᴡʜ's forgiveness of this very idolatry. This can be seen by examining the expression "I defer my anger" (48:9), coming as it does after the triple reference to Israel's idolatry (placed on the people's own lips in 48:5).

"I defer my anger" [*'a'ărîk 'appî*] echoes "slow to anger" [*'erek 'appayim*] from Exod 34:6.[15] Just as the forgiveness articulated in Exod 34:6-7, after the idolatry of the Golden Calf (Exod 32), allows Israel to begin again with God, instead of being cast off, so the re-use of this terminology in Isa 48:9 suggests a repristinating of Israel in its vocation.

That vocation is here presented implicitly as being Yᴴᴡʜ's own called, created, and now renewed, *imago*—in pointed contrast to the material counterfeits (idols) that people (both within Israel and among the nations) have devised for themselves. In this presentation, the very terms that depict idolatry are used for Yᴴᴡʜ's dealings with Israel. This can be illustrated by attention to the verbs *refined* and *chosen*, which are used in 48:10.

In Second Isaiah the verb *refine* [*ṣārap*] occurs only four other times, and then as a participle with the substantive meaning "refiner" or "goldsmith."[16] As a substantive in the Hebrew Bible, the *ṣôrēp/ṣorēp* is never described as refining or purifying ore, but always as working the already refined metal into some material shape.[17] So in Isa 46:6, "they lavish gold from the purse, / and weigh out silver in the scales, / hire a *ṣôrēp*, and he makes it [the already refined metal] into a god." This suggests that in 48:10-11 Yᴴᴡʜ is not technically *refining* the exiles; rather, in contrast to the idol-making *ṣôrĕpîm*, Yᴴᴡʜ is *fashioning* the already-refined exiles into his own *imago* or cult statue.

Just as the verb *choose* [*bāḥar*] follows the use of *refine/fashion* [*ṣārap*] in 48:10, we find that the nations' idol-making scene in 40:19 which twice mentioned a *refiner* or goldsmith [*ṣôrēp/ṣorēp*] is followed in verse 20 by the remark, "he who is impoverished *chooses* [*bāḥar*] for an offering wood that will not rot."[18]

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14 Note how Yᴴᴡʜ's *name*, which is the focus of 48:1-2 is resumed in 48:9.
15 This phrase is repeatedly echoed throughout the Old Testament. See Num 14:18; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nah 1:3; Ps 86:15; 103:8; 145:8; Neh 9:17.
16 Isa 40:19 (twice); 41:7; 46:6.
17 The texts (apart from Isaiah) are Judg 17:4; Jer 10:9, 14; 51:17; Prov 25:4; Neh 3:8, 32.
18 This translation of 40:20 is disputed; thus the NRSV has "As a gift one chooses mulberry wood—wood that will not rot."

The implication is that, for those who are wealthy, the *ṣôrēp/ṣorēp* is able to choose gold and silver as materials. This verb *choose* [*bāḥar*] occurs nine times in Second Isaiah, seven times of Yʜᴡʜ choosing Israel, and twice of idolaters choosing an idol or choosing wood as material for an idol.[19] In 48:10-11, then, Yʜᴡʜ's "choosing" Israel stands in contrast to the nations "choosing" wood, or gold and silver for their idols.[20]

The rhetorical point of "I have chosen you in the furnace of affliction" (48:10) is to reassure the exiles that the very place of their affliction (exile) does not signify their abandonment; rather, in that very place, and under those very conditions, they are chosen to bear the divine name and glory as God's own image. "For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, / for how should my name be profaned? / My glory I will not give to another" (48:11). God's people, and not idols, are the legitimate *imago Dei* in the world.

In similar vein, although not specifically in the passage at hand (48:9-11), consider Second Isaiah's use of the verb *yāṣar* ("form"). Among other applications, *yāṣar* appears three times in the final idol passage in chapter 44, to describe the "forming" of an idol (44:9, 10, 12) so as to "make it into the figure of an *'îš* with the glory [*tip'eret*] of an *'ādām*" (44:13). This reference to the nations "forming" idols bearing the glory [*tip'eret*] of a human being contrasts with Yʜᴡʜ's activity of "forming" Israel (43:1, 7, 21; 44:2, 24; 45:11), especially as servant, as ideal humankind (44:21; 49:5), so that Yʜᴡʜ may be glorified (49:3, *'etp ā'ār*) in this servant.

The implied contrast between idols and Israel as Yʜᴡʜ's servant is brought into sharper focus in that the terms *'îš* and *'ādām*, applied in 44:13 to the idols of the nations, are paired only one more time in Second Isaiah, and that is in 52:14, where God's servant is revealed to the nations and their kings. I shall pick up this contrast below.

The Servant Images Yʜᴡʜ—with an Ironic Twist—in Isaiah 49:1-6

Now we come to the twist, earlier adumbrated, in the motif of unwearied Yʜᴡʜ and unwearied servant people (see the discussion at 40:28-31). The twist begins with the servant's response to Yʜᴡʜ's declaration of the servant's vocation: "You

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19 For Yʜᴡʜ choosing Israel, see 41:8, 9; 43:10; 44:1, 2; 48:10; 49:7. For choosing an idol, see 40:20; 41:24.

20 The NRSV renders *bāḥar* in 48:10 as *tried* instead of *chosen*. This accords with the current practice of translators following 1QIsaᵃ, which contains the verb *bāḥan*, "test," where the MT reads *bāḥar*. It is true that in five other passages the verbs *ṣārap* and *bāḥan* occur together to express Yʜᴡʜ's refining /testing Israel or the psalmist (Jer 9:7[MT6]; Zech 13:9; Ps 17:3; 26:2; 66:10). However, I take 1QIsaᵃ to be a secondary reading, conforming MT to the more common idiom, but in the process flattening the tensiveness of Second Isaiah's poetry by detaching 48:9-11 from Second Isaiah's running theme of servant Israel's chosenness.

are my servant, / Israel, in whom I will be glorified [*'etpā'ār*]" (49:3). Then the servant replies: "But I said, 'I have wearied myself [*yāga'*] in vain, / I have spent my strength for nothing [*tohû*] and futility [*hevel*]" (49:4a).

Earlier, the *rûaḥ*-endowed servant was implicitly contrasted with idolatrous images that are *rûaḥ vatohû*, whose devotees faint and become weary [*yāga'*] and fall exhausted; so we might have expected Yhwh's servant, in contrast, to run and not be weary [*yāga'*]. But here, in the second Servant Song (49:1-6), the servant says he has wearied himself [*yāga'*], feels he has wasted his time on *tohû* and *hevel*. Given that *hevel* is frequently used to characterize other gods and especially their idols, it is as though the servant here verges on the suspicion that the service of Yhwh is just as futile as the service of other gods.

But then he catches himself and says, "Yet surely my *mišpāt* is with Yhwh / and my recompense with my God." In saying all this—in both affirming that his *mišpāt* is with Yhwh and confessing, nevertheless, his feeling of weary futility—precisely in saying both, I take the servant to be imaging Yhwh.

Earlier, in 43:22-24, where Yhwh charges Israel with having robbed him of the worship due him by offering it to other gods, Yhwh says, "You have burdened me [*he'ĕbadtanî*] with your sins, / you have wearied me [*hôga'tanî*] with your iniquities" (43:24). Note that *he'ĕbadtanî*, is the Hiphil of the verb *'ābad*, thus "you made me into an *'ebed*, a servant." So Yhwh is becoming like his servant. But conversely, just as Yhwh has been wearied [*hôga'tanî*, the Hiphil of *yāga'*] by Israel's sins (43:24), so Israel has become weary [*yāga'*] in Yhwh's service (49:4). Here we find the *imago Dei* motif, with an ironic twist.

The Servant as *Imago Dei* in Isaiah 52:13–53:12

I turn now to the fourth Servant Song (52:13–53:12) a passage that cries out to be mined for its nuanced depiction of God's servant, even in suffering and death.

The passage opens (52:13) with the servant "high and lifted up" [*yārûm wĕniśśā'*]. The only parallels to this hendiadys (the verbs *rām* and *nāśā'*) come in Isa 6:1 and 57:15. In the former, the prophet says, "I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up [*rām wĕniśśā'*]," while in the latter, Yhwh declares, "Thus says the high and lofty One [*rām wĕniśśā'*] / who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: / 'I dwell in the high and holy place.'"

In Babylon, the sanctuary would contain a material image of Marduk, whereas in Israel's sanctuary Yhwh dwells invisibly between the cherubim. Yet Isaiah "sees" Yhwh in the temple, *rām wĕniśśā'*—indeed, lifted up so high that only his train (or the hem of his robe; NRSV), fills the temple. If, then, the servant is presented as *yārûm wĕniśśā'*, this implicitly identifies the servant as Yhwh's *imago*.

As the earthly representative of the Holy One who inhabits eternity, this figure

dumfounds the nations and their kings, "for that which has not been told them they shall see, / and that which they have not heard they shall understand." There are two aspects to the nations' dumbfoundedness.

First, in his origins and growth (like a young plant out of dry ground), this figure displays none of the "form" [*to'ar*] or "splendor" [*hādār*] typical of royalty (53:2).[21] But, beyond that, at the hands of his oppressors and their violation of his *mišpāt* (53:8), the servant's "appearance was marred, beyond human semblance [*mē'îš*], / and his form [*to'ar*] beyond that of humankind [*mibnê 'ādām*]" (52:14). When the nations fashion their idols on the model of an *'îš* or a *ben 'ādām* (44:13), one may assume that those idols would resemble human royalty in its most august and majestic aspect. But Yʜwʜ's servant is presented in an aspect so marred as virtually to erase all trace of humanity. Yet *such* a figure is "high and lifted up" [*yārûm wĕniśśā'*]? *This* is the authorized divine image? No wonder kings and nations are astonished!

Moreover, in his extreme vicissitude, this figure, in bearing [*sābal*] the pains/ sorrows (53:4) and iniquities (53:11) of others, intercedes for them (53:12). In this passional action[22] the servant again images Yʜwʜ. For consider the imagery of "bearing" in Isaiah 46.

In Isaiah 46, the idols of Bel and Nebo (i.e., Marduk and Nabu, Marduk's son) are loaded [*'ămûsôt*] and carried [*nĕśu'ôt*] on weary beasts (46:1); and when the tottering procession arrives at the sanctuary, the worshipers lift [*nāśā'*] this "burden" [*maśśā'*; 46:1], bear it [*sābal*] and set it in its place, where it stands, immovable and incapable of responding to human intercession (46:7). Over against this, Yʜwʜ says:

> [3] Hearken to me, O house of Jacob,
>> all the remnant of the house of Israel,
> who have been loaded [*'ămûsîm*] onto me from your birth,
>> carried [*nĕśu'îm*] from the womb;
> [4] even to your old age I am He,
>> and to gray hairs I will bear you [*'esbol*].
>> I will bear [*'esbol*] and will save. (46:3-4)

The contrast here is between the Babylonians who must "carry" or "bear" [*sābal*] their idols, and Yʜwʜ who "carries" and "bears" [*sābal*] Israel. This verb,

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21 The term *hādār* is frequently associated with Yʜwʜ's majesty; and in Ps 8:5 (MT6) it is one of the attributes of humankind as God's viceroy on earth. The term *to'ar* is of more general application, but it is associated with royalty in Judg 8:18; 1 Sam 16:18; 1 Kings 1:6.

22 In using the expression "passional action," I mean to draw attention to the fact that voluntary passion in the biblical sense is not "passive" as "inert" or "apathetic," but is a form of action. It is an acceptance of the task of bearing what is placed upon one, of undergoing what one suffers in such a way as not to be destroyed by it nor simply to act out that burden in retaliation.

sābal, typically connotes forced labor or state slavery; so that we may hear, in Yʜᴡʜ's "bearing" of Israel, echoes from 43:24, of Yʜᴡʜ's weariness as of a servant in bearing with Israel's sin. It is such a God that the servant images when he bears [*sābal*] the iniquities of those who transgress against him.

The Servant's Knowledge and Yʜᴡʜ's Wisdom
in Isaiah 40:13-14 and Beyond

But what is it that enables the servant to respond to his oppressors in such a fashion? According to 53:11 it is by his *da'at*: "By his knowledge [*da'at*] shall the righteous one, my servant, / make many to be accounted righteous; / and he shall bear [*sābal*] their iniquities."[23]

Earlier (in my analysis of 40:12-31), I proposed that the servant's *mišpāt* is grounded in, and even incarnates, the divine *mišpāt* that informs cosmic creation (40:13-14). Whereas Yʜᴡʜ's *mišpāt* mentioned in 40:14 ("who taught him the path of *mišpāt*?") contextualizes Jacob/Israel's complaint in 40:27 ("My way is hid from Yʜᴡʜ, / my right [*mišpāt*] is disregarded by my God"), the servant's mission embodies precisely this *mišpāt* (42:1-4). Likewise, the servant's knowledge [*da'at*], which enables him to accomplish his mission, is both grounded in and reflects the very creative wisdom of Yʜᴡʜ—an *imago Dei* motif.

It is now time to look more fully at 40:13-14, which joins *mišpāt* with *da'at* (along with other wisdom terms) in its depiction of Yʜᴡʜ as creator.

> [13] Who has directed the Spirit [*rûaḥ*] of Yʜᴡʜ,
>   or as his counselor [*'îš 'ăṣātô*] has instructed him [*yôdî'ennû*]?
> [14] Whom did he consult [*nô'āṣ*] for his enlightenment [*vaybînēhû*],
>   and who taught him the path of justice [*mišpāt*],
>   and taught him knowledge [*da'at*],
>   and showed him [*yôdî'ennû*] the way of understanding [*tĕbûnôt*]?
>   (40:13-14)

The passage is rife with words at home in Israel's wisdom tradition. First, the rhetorical point of the noun *da'at* is reinforced by the double occurrence of the cognate verb *yôdî'ennû* (vv. 13, 14), the Hiphil of *yāda'* (thus, "to cause to know"). Second, this verb's force is further intensified by the verb *nô'āṣ* ("consult"; v. 14) and its associated noun *'ēṣâ* "counsel" (as in "counselor," lit. "man of his counsel"

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23 L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, and J. J. Stamm, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (trans. and ed. M. E. J. Richardson; 4 vols. Leiden, 1994–1999) lists the occurrence of the noun *da'at* in 53:11 as *da'at* III, "sweat," and (user take note) the *Accordance* Bible research concordance likewise lists it separately, not including it under the search term *da'at,* "knowledge." But there is no reason to adopt such a singular construal of *da'at* here when the meaning "knowledge" makes elegant sense.

[*'îš 'ăṣātô*]; v. 13). Third, still further reinforcement comes in the verb *vaybînēhû* (the Hiphil of *bîn* , thus "cause to understand"; v. 14) and its cognate noun, *tĕbûnôt* ("understanding"; v. 14).

There is no room here to trace in detail the rhetorical changes rung on each of these wisdom terms throughout Second Isaiah; suffice it to note the following:

First, between the occurrences of *da'at* ("knowledge") in 40:14 and 53:11, this term is found in three crucial places. Along with the related noun *tĕbûnâ* ("understanding, discernment"), it appears in 44:19 in reference to the making of idols (idolaters have *no* knowledge or discernment); *da'at* occurs again in 44:25, where God makes foolish the *da'at* of idolatrous diviners; and in 47:10 Babylon's self-idolatrous *da'at* leads it astray.

Second, it is in virtue of Yʜwʜ's unsearchable (or inexhaustible) understanding [*tĕbûnâ*] that Yʜwʜ does not faint or grow weary (40:28), and likewise, implicitly, those who wait on Yʜwʜ; while, as noted, the idol-makers of 44:19 are devoid of *tĕbûnâ*.

Third, the verb *bîn* ("discern, consider, understand") also occurs also in a number of significant places. It is found in 40:21, where Israel is challenged to "understand" the nature of God's creative power on the basis of its traditions concerning "the foundations of the earth"; in 43:10 it is used of Israel as God's witnesses, who should understand who Yʜwʜ is; and then in 44:18 it is used of the idolaters who know not [*yāda'*], nor discern [*bîn*], because God has shut their eyes so that they cannot understand [*haśkîl*; the Hiphil of *śākal*].

The rhetorical force of this last verb *haśkîl* must not be overlooked. It occurs already in 41:20 where it is paired with *yāda'* to describe the revelatory purpose of God's eschatological action (that all may "know" and "understand" who it is that has accomplished salvation). And it occurs finally in 52:13 in the climactic presentation of the servant.

The final Servant Song begins with: "Behold, my servant shall *yāśkîl* [the Hiphil of *śākal*], he shall be exalted and lifted up, and shall be very high" (52:13). While *yāśkîl* is often translated "prosper" (RSV; NRSV), the NIV is surely correct in rendering the verb "act wisely."[24] In that connotation, it forms a wisdom *inclusio* with the Hitpolel of the verb *bîn* at the end of the Song's first stanza, where the servant dumbfounds the nations and their kings: "for that which has not been told them they shall see, / and that which they have not heard they shall understand [*hitbônāhû*]" (52:15). And all this, finally, provides the rhetorical context for the *da'at* that informs the servant's counter-intuitive, redemptive—and therein revel-

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24   While the NLT, NAS, NASB also have "prosper" and NET, CEV, CEB have "succeed," the wisdom meaning of the verb is preserved in the ESV and CSB ("act wisely"), LXX ("understand"), KJV ("deal prudently"), and ASV ("deal wisely").

atory—response to his oppressors. The knowledge/wisdom by which the servant acts is nothing less than a disclosure of the character of YHWH.

The Servant's Suffering as Revelation of YHWH's Power in Isaiah 53:1 and Beyond

What, then, is the relation between YHWH's and the servant's passional bearing and intercession, on the one hand, and the "arm [*zĕrôaʿ*] of YHWH" that is "revealed" in 53:1, on the other?

The term *zĕrôaʿ* is conventionally an image for conquering military might. And so it figures in 51:9-11, which I take to be Israel's plaintive cry for YHWH to intervene in the typical, violent mode of divine action ("Awake, awake, put on strength, / O arm of YHWH; / awake, as in days of old, / the generations of long ago"). But Isa 40:10 had already revealed the *zĕrôaʿ* of YHWH as that of a shepherd bearing his lambs. And in the wilderness, when Israel once again had sinned, Moses interceded, "Let the power [*koaḥ*] of YHWH be great as you have promised, saying, 'YHWH is slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression" (Num 14:17-18). This is the "power" of God's forgiving mercy.[25] So it is that when the "arm of the YHWH" is "laid bare" (52:10), it is "revealed" (53:1) in its true character in the figure of the servant, who bears the sins of the transgressors and intercedes for them.

Here we come to the heart of Second Isaiah's "ideology critique" of Babylon's Marduk, a god who creates and sustains cosmic and social order through the violence of military might, and who is imaged in a human king exercising and expanding his rule through his armies. This false god is critiqued in the figure of the servant as *imago* of a long-suffering God, a *Deus patiens*, who bears the world, including its sins, toward its ultimate redemption.

I conclude on this methodological note. I certainly want to affirm the validity of James Barr's warning against "illegitimate connotation transfer." But to go no further than Barr would be to misunderstand how poetry works (including the poetry of Second Isaiah). I suggest that poetry works, in part, by rubbing its words up against each other so that their connotations spark off each other. This generates what Owen Barfield calls "speaker's meanings" that go beyond the words' standard "lexical meanings."[26] The result is that we can be surprised, by means of words whose meanings we thought we knew, into meanings we had not known—so that that which had not been told us we may see, and that of which we had not heard we may understand.

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25 An Anglican collect, echoing this passage, opens with the words, "O God, who declarest thy almighty power chiefly in showing mercy and pity" (Collect for the eleventh Sunday after Trinity).

26 See Owen Barfield, *Speaker's Meaning* (Letchford, Hertfordshire: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967).

Eschatology Shapes Ethics:
New Creation and Christian Ecological Virtue Ethics[1]

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Abstract

In the middle of the nineteenth century the (in)famous German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach declared: "Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself and the salvation of his soul." Twenty-five years ago award-winning environmental historian Roderick Nash claimed that "Christian eschatology was a poor basis from which to argue for environmental ethics in any guise" since a Christian view of the future leads Christians to ask "Why take care of what you expected to be obliterated?" Would a properly biblical view of God's good future reshape our actions in the present? Would an earth-affirming eschatology change our ethic? If so, what kind of ethic? What virtues might a theology of (re)new(ed) creation require? I attempt to show in this paper how a Christian virtue ethics rooted in a biblical eschatology of new creation can help us do the difficult things that are and will be necessary to live within the boundaries of the earth.

"*Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself and the salvation of his soul.*"

— Ludwig Feuerbach [2]

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1 A shorter version of this paper was presented at the "New Creation" interdisciplinary theology conference, sponsored by CETA, held at Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY, on October 19, 2013.

2 Ludwig Feuerbach, *The Essence of Christianity* (New York: Harper and Row, 1957), 287.

"But lacking the qualities of virtue, can we do the difficult things that will be necessary to live within the boundaries of the earth?

— David Orr [3]

"I believe the kind of stuff I'm writing about [i.e., all saved Christians, dead and alive, get snatched into heaven; those with weak faith get left behind to fight the antichrist; a seven-year tribulation of plagues ravages the earth] is going to happen some day."[4] So spoke Jerry Jenkins, co-author of the wildly popular *Left Behind* series of books, in an interview published some years ago in the *Chicago Tribune*. In other words, while the books may be fiction, the basic plot is not fiction but fact, based on the authors' interpretation of the Bible. Given this future, Jenkins implied with his message, Christians should do and not do certain things. For example, Christians need not worry about the earth or its plethora of creatures. These non-human creatures will, after all, be incinerated in the (soon) coming apocalypse. Christians need not worry about porcupines or pine trees or tall grass prairies. All of that is of little or no value to a god who cares only for humans and their souls, and therefore it should be of little or no value to those who follow and worship this god.

This view of the future is powerfully captured by noted environmental historian Roderick Nash in his book *The Rights of Nature: A History of Environmental Ethics*. In a chapter on "the greening of religion," Nash comments on "the pervasive otherworldliness of Christianity." He writes: "Christian' aspirations were fixed on heaven, the supposed place of their origins and, they hoped, their final resting. The earth was no mother but a kind of half-way house of trial and testing from which one was released at death . . . . Indeed Christians expected that the earth would not be around for long. A vengeful God would destroy it and all unredeemed nature, with floods or drought or fire." Nash's concluding comments are telling: "Obviously this eschatology was a poor basis from which to argue for environmental ethics in any guise. Why take care of what you expected to be obliterated?"[5]

Nash's view of Christianity fits well with that of mid-nineteenth century German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, whose summary judgment is found in the first epigraph above: "Nature, the world, has no value, no interest for Christians. The Christian thinks only of himself and the salvation of his soul." This claim by Feuerbach summarizes the logical deduction to be drawn from a world-negating view of the future and of reality more generally. A metaphysic and corresponding

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3 David Orr, *Earth in Mind* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1994), 62.
4 Jerry Jenkins, *Chicago Tribune* (March 13, 2002), section 5, p. 3.
5 Roderick Nash, *The Rights of Nature* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), 91-92.

anthropology in which spirit is separate from matter and soul is separate from body, with the former in each case more valuable than the latter, easily leads to an eschatology in which there is no reason to care for the earth.

Unfortunately, social scientific data reveal that many Christians today hold this view of the future and exhibit the behavior one would expect from such views. For example, a recent study by two political scientists concludes that beliefs of American Christians about the future are a major reason why climate change legislation has not made more headway. In a study entitled "End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change," authors David Barker and David Bearce conclude that beliefs among evangelical Christians about the second coming of Jesus are a major factor underlying the resistance to addressing global climate change in the US. In the words of one blogger, quoted in the essay reporting this new study:

> Likely the closest biblical examples of what could be considered climate change would be the end times disasters prophesied in Revelation 6–18. Yet these prophecies have nothing to do with greenhouse gas emissions; rather, they are the result of the wrath of God, pouring out justice on an increasingly wicked world. Also, a Christian must remember that God is in control and that this world is not our home. God will one day erase this current universe (2 Peter 3:7-12) and replace it with the New Heavens and New Earth (Revelation 21–22). How much effort should be made "saving" a planet that God is eventually going to obliterate and replace with a planet so amazing and wonderful that the current earth pales in comparison?[6]

Eschatology Shapes Ethics

These introductory remarks illustrate my central thesis: eschatology shapes ethics. How we view the future affects what we do (or don't do) in the present. And for critics of Christianity (and Nash is only one of many) this means that an escapist eschatology implies an ethic of neglect and exploitation. In other words, in seeking the cause of contemporary ecological degradation, one need look no farther than religion, and Christianity in particular. We are in the ecological mess we are

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6 For the blog, see http://www.gotquestions.org/climate-change.html. Quoted in http://digitaljournal.com/article/349388. For the original study, see David C. Barker and David H. Bearce, "End-Times Theology, the Shadow of the Future, and Public Resistance to Addressing Global Climate Change," *Political Research Quarterly* 66 (2013): 267-79. As indicated in the text, end-times theology is one major factor. There are other reasons in addition to beliefs about the second coming of Jesus that have led some Christians to oppose climate change legislation.

in, it is argued, largely because the vast majority of Christians do not care about creation. And they don't care about creation because they believe God doesn't care about creation. Indeed the created world, they believe, will be destroyed. So why care for something that (soon) will be obliterated? Ethicist James Nash identifies escapist eschatology as one of the four main planks in what he calls the "ecological complaint against Christianity."[7] While each of these four arguments is deeply problematic, there is plenty of anecdotal evidence to confirm the statistical data showing that many Christians, especially American evangelical Christians, believe that creation care is not important, in large part, because they believe that Jesus is coming soon, and assume that when Jesus comes again the earth will be destroyed. Eschatology shapes ethics.

All of the above prompts the question of this essay: Would an earth-affirming eschatology change our ethic? Would a properly biblical Christian view of God's good future—of heaven and earth renewed, as vividly described, for example, in Revelation 21-22—reshape our actions in the present? I think the answer is yes: a truly biblical view of God's good future would change our ethic and consequent behavior. More of us would become earthkeepers.

An important related question has to do with what kind of ethic. More exactly, how would a truly biblical eschatology inform a virtue ethic? What virtues might a theology of new (or renewed) creation require? In the remainder of this paper I explore these two questions.

One final preliminary word. This is part of a book project entitled *What Kind of Person Would Do Something Like That?: A Christian Ecological Virtue Ethic*. In other words, this essay is a modest attempt to take seriously David Orr's question, in the second epigraph, by showing how a Christian virtue ethic rooted in a biblical eschatology of new creation can help us do the difficult things that are and will be necessary to live within the boundaries of the earth.

(Re)New(ed) Creation Eschatology

There are many possible biblical texts to examine, but I would like to focus in this essay on Revelation 21-22. What can we learn about God's good future from this mind-boggling text? There are five main points.[8]

1. **God's good future is earthy and earthly.** It includes a renewed heaven and earth. Having brought this world of wonders into existence, covenanted with it, and persistently worked to redeem it, God does not give up on it. This vision is of a new heaven and a new earth (*ouranon kainon kai gēn kainēn*), but the new here connotes new in quality, in contrast to what is old. New means

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7   James Nash, *Loving Nature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1991), ch. 3.
8   These five points are from my book *For the Beauty of the Earth*, revised 2ⁿᵈ edition (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 107-109.

renewed, renovated, reclaimed. In keeping with the great vision of Isaiah 65 and Ezekiel 40-48, God's good future is a renewed heaven and earth. Eugene Boring captures this well:

> Even though the first earth and the first heaven have passed away, the scene continues very much as a this-worldly scene . . . . [This] is an affirmation of the significance of this world and history, even after the new heaven and new earth arrive . . . . [God] does not junk the cosmos and start anew—he renews the old and brings it to fulfillment . . . . God does not make 'all new things,' but 'all things new.'[9]

2. **In God's good future God himself will dwell with us and all of our crea-turely kin.** In language reminiscent of John 1:14 and Ezek 37:27, Rev 21:3 declares that the home of God (*skēnē tou theou*) is among humans (*anthrōpōn*), that God will tent among us (*skēnōsei met autōn*). Indeed, the text emphasizes that God himself (*autos ho theos*) will be with us, and we will be his peoples. In language rooted deeply in the Old Testament (Exod 6:7; Lev 26:12; Jer 7:23; Ezek 37:27; Hos 1:23), Rev 22:4 makes clear that in the holy city God will be known face to face, and we will belong to God, his name emblazoned on our foreheads.

3. **In God's good future the separation between heaven and earth is over-come.** The now distinct realms of heaven and earth are in the future braided together—cojoined because of God's initiative. The holy city comes down (*katabainousan*) from heaven (21:2 and 21:10). Its arrival is no human achievement, its reality no product of human ingenuity. In keeping with God's character, God comes to us. Heaven is on earth. As in the parable of the gracious father (Luke 15:11-32), God initiates redemption. In the words of Justo and Catherine Gonzales:

> No longer will there be a great separation between heaven and earth. It is not so much that the redeemed shall be taken to heaven but rather that God will come among us and be part of the new Jerusalem. In the incarnation of Christ, God came among human beings as one of them, but still in a hidden fashion. Now, in this new creation, God will not be hidden, but will come among redeemed humanity in a direct, unmediated way.[10]

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9   M. Eugene Boring, *Revelation* (Louisville: John Knox, 1989), 220.
10   Justo and Catherine Gonzales, *Revelation* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 1997), 138.

4. **In God's good future evil and its consequences are no more.** Seven (the perfect number) elements of the old order are no more. The sea, symbolic of primeval chaos and the abode of the beast, is no more. Death itself is no more. Mourning and crying and pain are no more. No more parents mourning their kids killed in battle. No more cancer stealing life much too young. No more stillbirths. And all that is under God's curse is no more. The curse of Genesis 3 is repealed, lifted, abrogated. In the words of the old Christmas hymn, redemption extends "far as the curse is found." And, last, the night is no more. The realm of deception is banished. In sum, this apocalyptic vision vividly portrays a world of shalom.

5. **In God's good future we inhabit a most unusual city.** There is no temple, no set apart place, for God himself is the temple. A Person has replaced a building. Thus nothing in this city is profane; nothing is not sacred. All is for the service of God. And this city is a gardened city. In this city flows the crystaline river of life, watering trees that line its banks. These trees provide fruit year-round, sustenance in every season, and their leaves are a healing balm for the nations. People of all kinds stream into this city, whose gates never close. Kings and paupers, friends and enemies—they all bring their glory and honor to the city. George Caird captures this important feature of the John's vision:

> Nothing from the old order which has value in the sight of God is debarred from entry into the new. John's heaven is no world-denying Nirvana, into which man may escape from the incurable ills of sublunary existence, but the seal of affirmation on the goodness of God's creation. The treasure that men find laid up in heaven turns out to be the treasures and wealth of the nations, the best they have known and loved on earth redeemed of all imperfections and transfigured by the radiance of God. Nowhere in the New Testament do we find a more eloquent statement than this of the all-embracing scope of God's redemptive work.[11]

What, then, does God's good future look like? These last chapters of Revelation beckon us with an earthly vision of life made good and whole and right. Heaven and earth are renewed and are one. God dwells with us, at home in creation. Evil and its minions are no more. All is sacred, fit to serve God. All is made new. In short, a world of shalom. George Caird provides a fitting conclusion:

> John is told to write this, because this voice from the ultimate future has something urgent to say to the critical present: 'I am

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11   G. B. Caird, *The Revelation of St. John the Divine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1966), 279-80.

making all things new.' This is not an activity of God within the new creation, after the old has been cast as rubbish to the void; it is the process of re-creation by which the old is transformed into the new. In Smyrna and Thyatira, in Sardis and Laodicea, in all places of his dominion, God is forever making all things new, and on this depends the hope of the world.[12]

This conclusion has been more recently echoed by N. T. Wright. In his book *Surprised by Hope* Wright summarizes well the biblical eschatology of new creation in Revelation 21-22:

> We thus arrive at the last and perhaps the greatest image of new creation, of cosmic renewal, in the whole Bible. This scene, set out in Revelation 21-22, is not well enough known or pondered. This time the image is that of marriage. The New Jerusalem comes down out of heaven like a bride adorned for her husband.
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> We notice right away how drastically different this is for all those would-be Christian scenarios in which the end of the story is the Christian going off to heaven as a soul, naked and unadorned, to meet its maker in fear and trembling. As in Philippians 3, it is not we who go to heaven, it is heaven that comes to earth; indeed, it is the church itself, the heavenly Jerusalem, that comes down to earth. This is the ultimate rejection of all types of Gnosticism, of every worldview that sees the final goal as the separation of the world from God, of the physical from the spiritual, of earth from heaven. It is the final answer to the Lord's Prayer, that God's kingdom will come and will be done on earth as it is in heaven.[13]

In short, the Bible teaches not an escapist but an earth-affirming eschatology.

Virtue and the Virtues: An Overview

What has all this reflection on eschatology to do with ethics? And what is the

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12 Ibid., 265-66.

13 N. T. Wright, *Surprised By Hope* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), 104. In an illuminating essay Richard Middleton puts forward "the exegetical case for a consistent understanding of redemption as the restoration of God's creational intent." His main claim is that "the logic of biblical redemption, when combined with a biblical understanding of creation, requires the restoration and renewal of the full complexity of human life in our earthly environment, yet without sin." See J. Richard Middleton, "A New Heaven and a New Earth: A Case for a Holistic Reading of the Biblical Story of Redemption," *Journal for Christian Theological Research* 11 (2006): 73-74, 77. See the expansion of Middleton's argument in *A New Heaven and a New Earth: Reclaiming Biblical Eschatology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014), esp. chs. 2 and 8.

connection with virtue ethics? First, some background on virtue ethics, and then a brief foray into ecological virtue ethics in particular.

In my view, the most pressing ethical question is not "What are my duties?" (deontology) or "What are the consequences?" (teleology) but "What kind of person should I be?" (areteology). While obligations and consequences are important in ethics, concern for the virtues is even more important.[14] In short, I wish to emphasize character rather than conduct, though I full well realize that each shapes the other. I also realize that this emphasis on virtue goes against the grain of much ethical theory, which typically focuses on duties or consequences.[15] Nevertheless, my claim is that areteology is more basic than deontology or teleology.

My reason, in brief, for adopting a virtue-based approach to ethics is quite simple: what we do depends on who we are. Doing is contingent on being. To a large extent our actions arise from our desires and affections, our dispositions and inclinations—in short, our character. Jamie Smith captures this point well:

> Much of our action is not the fruit of conscious deliberation; instead, much of what we do grows out of our passional orientation to the world—affected by all the ways we've been primed to perceive the world. In short, our action emerges from how we *imagine* the world. What we do is driven by who we are, by the kind of person we have become.[16]

What we do is driven by who we are. And who we are—the kind of person we have become—is best described by traits of character such as virtues and vices. This approach implies a critique of much contemporary ethics as too intellectualistic, too focused on rational principles and conscious deliberation. Such ethical theory has failed to notice or understand the pre-reflective and pre-conscious basis of (moral) action.[17] While rational reflection is important, the simple fact is that most of our actions are pre-reflective and pre-conscious, a result of having an intuitive and embodied feel for the world—a kinaesthetic way of being in the world shaped over time by habits, rituals, and routines.[18]

Furthermore, the kind of person we have become depends on the stories we

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14 For a masterful combination of all three, see Lewis Smedes, *Choices: Making Right Decisions in a Complex World* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1986).

15 As Charles Taylor, among others, notes: "The dominant philosophical ethics today, divided into the two major branches of Utilitarianism and post-Kantianism, both conceive of morality as determining through some criterion what an agent ought to do. They are rather hostile to an ethics of virtue or the good, such as that of Aristotle." Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 282.

16 James K. A. Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 31-32.

17 Like Smith, I am "pushing back against an 'intellectualist' account of action that assumes that what I *do* is the outcome of what I *think*." Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 33.

18 For more on this, see James K. A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), part 1, and Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, part 1.

identify with. Stories shape our character, and thus all human action is shaped in terms of narratively formed character. Smith, again, articulates well the central insight:

> And that shaping of our character is, to a great extent, the effect of stories that have captivated us, that have sunk into our bones— stories that 'picture' what we think life is about, what constitutes 'the good life.' We live *into* the stories we've absorbed; we become characters in the drama that has captivated us.[19]

In the succinct words of Alasdair MacIntyre: "I can only answer the question 'What am I to do?' if I can answer the prior question 'Of what story or stories do I find myself a part?'"[20] Or as Smith puts it: "We need stories like we need food and water: we're *built* for narrative."[21] And these stories are not husks that can be shucked to get to the kernels inside, but are indispensible to knowing who we are. As Stanley Hauerwas reminds us "We do not tell stories simply because they provide us a more colorful way to say what can be said in a different way, but because there is no other way we can articulate the richness of intentional activity—that is, behavior that is purposeful but not necessary."[22] There is, in short, a "narrative quality" to human action.[23]

So a virtue is a narratively formed praiseworthy character trait. And because we are shaped by competing narratives, we find ourselves living in a world of competing understandings of what virtuous living looks like. For example, one strand of folk wisdom states that "Cleanliness is next to godliness." But what is cleanliness? What is a clean home? That depends on what narrative most profoundly shapes that home. An American family shaped by 1950s' medically inspired preoccupation with germs and sanitation will have a different idea of cleanliness than a family that comes from Belize or New Zealand in the 2010s. Indeed, Jesus found himself in a lot of trouble over the matter of cleanliness because he understood the story of the Jewish covenant differently than the Pharisees. We may all agree that it is good to be clean, but the story we indwell will give us different understandings of what that actually means.

In addition, virtues are shaped by practices. As Hauerwas and Burrell put it, "in

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19 Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom,* 32.
20 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theology* (2nd ed.; Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 216.
21 Smith, *Imagining the Kingdom*, 129. His italics.
22 Stanley Hauerwas, *Truthfulness and Tragedy* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 76.
23 See Stephen Crites, "The Narrative Quality of Experience," in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology* ed. Stanley Hauerwas and L. Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 65-88. See also the seminal work of Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vols. 1-3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

allowing ourselves to adopt and be adopted by a particular story, we are in fact assuming a set of practices that will shape the ways we relate to our world and destiny."[24] With the indwelling of a particular story comes a particular set of practices—of communal, embodied rhythms and routines—that shape and mold our dispositions. In other words, the meta-narratives or big stories we hear and with which we identify—of manifest destiny, of material prosperity, of a crazy carpenter from Nazareth—shape our character by enlisting us to engage in certain practices—reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, shopping at the mall, saying the Lord's Prayer. These practices shape the kind of person we become—our virtues and vices—and hence the actions we engage in. And sometimes we see practices embodied in a person who displays for us what a life of virtue concretely looks like, e.g., a well-known saint such as Mother Teresa or a well-loved if unknown relative such as Uncle John. I suspect we all can name people we personally know, or know about, whose lives serve as examples of virtue to us. Such people are ethical exemplars or models of virtue who inspire us to live such a life ourselves.

So stories and practices shape character. But, furthermore, our practices over time color the way we see ourselves and the world. There is a connection between virtue and vision. As Gilbert Meilander states, "What duties we perceive—and even what dilemmas—may depend upon what virtues shape our vision of the world."[25] We see the world differently, depending on how we have been formed by the virtues that constitute our character. C.S. Lewis captures this point well in *The Magician's Nephew*, book 6 of *The Chronicles of Narnia*. The creation of Narnia by Aslan looks and feels very different for wicked Uncle Andrew than it does for the children. While the children find Narnia alluring and understand the words spoken by the animals, Uncle Andrew shrinks back in fear and hears only barking and howling. Indeed, because of his evil character he is blind to what the children see and misconstrues both Aslan the creator and what is created. As the narrator comments: "For what you see and hear depends a good deal on where you are standing; it also depends on what sort of person you are."[26] What you see and hear depends on your character.

In summary, a virtue is a story-shaped, praiseworthy character trait formed by practices over time that disposes us to act in certain ways. It is a habitual disposition to act with excellence, molded by the narrative(s) we identify with and in which we dwell. We know what is truly good and how to live well by soaking in certain narratives of particular communities, with their corresponding practices, and by looking to people of virtue as role models.

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24 Stanley Hauerwas and David Burrell, "From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics," in Hauerwas and Jones, 186.

25 Gilbert Meilander, "Virtue in Contemporary Religious Thought," in *Virtue—Public and Private*, ed. Richard John Neuhaus (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1986), 9.

26 C. S. Lewis, *The Magician's Nephew* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), 125.

Ecological Virtue Ethics

In the last three decades serious work has been done on ecological virtue ethics. Beginning with Thomas Hill's pivotal 1983 essay "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments"[27] and with subsequent work by Bill Shaw, Geoffrey Frasz, Ronald Sandler, and Philip Cafaro, to name only a few of the principal contributors, the field is now well established. Evidence for this includes the publication of anthologies such as *Environmental Virtue Ethics*,[28] by Sandler and Cafaro in 2005, and monographs such as *Character and Environment: A Virtue-Oriented Approach to Environmental Ethics*,[29] by Sandler in 2007. One sign that the field has developed its own identity is that it now has its own acronym: EVE.

The contributors to the new field of EVE develop and explicate various virtues. For example, Geoffrey Frasz speaks of benevolence as an environmental virtue.[30] This virtue is the active and consistent concern for the flourishing of both humans and non-humans. The expansion of the sphere of concern to include all living creatures—indeed, concern for whole species and particular places, large ecosystems and local watersheds—is what distinguishes benevolence as an environmental virtue from benevolence as such. Following Aldo Leopold, Frasz expands the concept of community to include nonhuman entities, both living and non-living. He also argues that the environmental virtue of benevolence implies the related virtues of proper humility, patience, and perseverance, as well as the character traits of imagination and attentiveness.

On his list of moral virtues Philip Cafaro lists care, patience, persistence, self-control, humility, respect, and self-restraint.[31] Along with these moral virtues Cafaro also lists intellectual virtues such as attentiveness and wonder, aesthetic virtues such as appreciation and creativity, physical virtues such as stamina and hardiness, and what he calls "overarching virtues" such as wisdom and humility. In another essay Cafaro comes at this issue by exploring the environmental vices of gluttony, arrogance, greed, and apathy.[32]

In one of the few explicitly Christian forays into EVE, Louke van Wensveen mentions care and compassion as ecological virtues, though she does not develop

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27 Thomas Hill, Jr, "Ideals of Human Excellence and Preserving Natural Environments," *Environmental Ethics* 5 (1983): 211-24.

28 Ronald Sandler and Philip Cafaro, eds., *Environmental Virtue Ethics* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005).

29 Ronald Sandler, *Character and Environment: A Virtue-Oriented Approach to Environmental Ethics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

30 Geoffery Frasz, "Benevolence as an Environmental Virtue," in Sandler and Cafaro, ch. 8.

31 Philip Cafaro, "The Naturalist's Virtues," *Philosophy in the Contemporary World* 8/2 (Fall-Winter 2001): 85-99.

32 Philip Cafaro, "Gluttony, Arrogance, Greed, and Apathy: An Exploration of Environmental Vice," in Sandler and Cafaro, ch. 9.

her ideas in any detail.[33] In a more recent essay she develops a set of ecological virtues she calls "virtues of care," which include humility, friendship, attentiveness, benevolence, and love.[34] These "cardinal environmental virtues" sensitize us to the needs of all creatures—human and non-human—and thus widen the scope of what counts morally. They are, therefore, crucial dispositions if we are to properly care for the world in which we live.

This is not the place to extensively review these various proposals. I merely wish to make two observations. First, much solid work has been done to establish the importance of ecological virtue ethics. Most of this work has involved a retrieval and appropriation of the Greco-Roman tradition(s) of virtue ethics. Second, while much work has been done in recent years on EVE, there has been precious little attention given to it by Christians; and yet we Christians have a rich tradition of virtue ethics from which to draw.[35]

In chapter 6 of my book *For the Beauty of the Earth* I develop a set of fourteen ecological virtues.[36] For example, the virtue of courage is moral strength in the face of danger. One of the four cardinal virtues for the Greeks, courage implies firmness of mind and resoluteness of spirit despite the fearful awareness of risk. In the Christian tradition courage was transmuted into fortitude.[37] Fortitude is tenacity in the face of opposition or stubborn persistence in the face of adversity. Ecological courage is a kind of fortitude or perseverance. In the face of apathy or ignorance or fear, ecological courage is the dogged determination to persevere in caring for the earth.

The vice of deficiency is cowardice, or the inability to overcome fear without being reckless. Paralyzed by fear, the coward lacks the ability to act when the situation calls for decisive or swift action. The ecological coward fails to properly care for pine tree, mountain meadow, or planet earth because of some overwhelming fear. The vice of excess is rashness. While courageous people honestly face

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33 Louke van Wensveen, "The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Langauge," in Sandler and Cafaro, ch. 1. This is adapted from ch. 1 of her book *Dirty Virtues: The Emergence of Ecological Virtue Ethics* (Amhurst, NY: Humanity Books, 2000).

34 Louke van Wensveen, "Cardinal Environmental Virtues: A Neurobiological Perspective," in Sandler and Cafaro, ch. 11.

35 In addition to van Wensveen, see also Celia Deane-Drummond, "Environmental Justice and the Economy: A Christian Theologian's View." *Ecotheology* 11/3 (2006): 294-310; James Nash, *Loving Nature* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 63-67; Michael Northcott, *The Environment and Christian Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 314-16; and Seth Bible, "Pursuing Ecological Virtue: A Critical Analysis of the Environmental Virtue Ethics Models of Ronald Sandler, Louke Van Wenveen, and Philip Cafaro." Ph.D. dissertation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2011.

36 My argument, in brief, for referring to these virtues as *ecological* virtues is quite simple. While similar in many ways to the virtues as usually conceived, e.g., as naming a particular disposition, these virtues are sufficiently different to warrant the term "ecological virtues" because they have either an expanded scope (e.g., a focus on non-human creatures or a particular place) or a distinct meaning (e.g., courage as ecological courageous endurance) or both.

37 See, e.g., Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae, I-II*, question 61.

their fear and persevere in spite of its sometimes paralyzing effects, rash people refuse to acknowledge their fear and thus act hastily or without proper caution. The ecologically rash stuff their fear and rush off to "save the earth," but in so doing they often do more damage than good.

My undergraduate research student, Lauren Madison, has written insightfully on courage as an ecological virtue and its inextricable relationship to hope.[38] Lauren traces the lives of Kentucky residents who exhibit what she calls "ecological courageous endurance." Despite great risk and fear, some people stubbornly resist the encroachment of "King Coal" on their land or into their way of life. As Lauren describes one woman, her "decision to hold her ground was not an easy one, but it was one of courage, born of a love that proved greater than fear or want of money."[39]

A Virtue Ethic for (Re)New(ed) Creation

With respect to eschatology, three virtues are especially germane: justice, love, and hope. Why these three? In brief, they name central features of a properly biblical eschatology. It is difficult to envision God's good future of shalom without speaking of justice, love, and hope. As Martin Luther King, Jr. famously put it, "There is something in the universe that unfolds for justice."[40] That is its trajectory. The ultimate *telos* of creation is that state in which wrongs are put to right and equity reigns supreme. So also with love. The biblical vision of the future cannot be described except by reference to love—the kind of love manifest in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Love is, as Jesus teaches, the summary of the law and the prophets. And hope is a main ingredient in biblical eschatology. Indeed, hope is the life-blood of that yearning for shalom that marks those who follow Jesus. In sum, justice, love, and hope are central to the biblical vision of the future. But what exactly are these three virtues?

First, justice. For the Greeks, justice is rendering to each his or her due—rendering to each that to which they have a right. More exactly, as Nicholas Wolterstorff cogently argues, justice is what due respect for the worth of someone requires.[41] It is treating someone as befits her or his worth, and as such involves respecting the rights of that person.[42] So justice, at its core, is about respect—re-

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38 Lauren Madison, "Courage and Hope as Imperative Ecological Virtues in Appalachia: A Case Study Approach." (unpublished research paper).
39 Ibid., 15.
40 Martin Luther King, Jr., in *A Testament of Hope,* ed. James Washington (New York: Harper One, 2003), 14; see also 20, 257.
41 Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice In Love* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2011), ch. 7.
42 Ibid., 85-87. For a brief mention of the rights of nonhumans, see 138, 146. For a more in-depth discussion of justice, see Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Justice: Rights and Wrongs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010). In emphasizing justice as respect for rights, Wolterstorff is echoing the insights of fellow Calvinist Lewis Smedes; see, Smedes, *Mere Morality* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1983), ch. 2.

spect for rights. Justice is also about fairness. In whatever form—commutative, distributive, or retributive—justice concerns equity. For example, distributive justice has to do not only with the determination and rendering of goods based on legitimate claims to those goods, but also with the equitable allocation of goods. Justice means not playing favorites; it means being impartial and unbiased. Justice is the equitable respect for rights.

Thus the virtue of justice is the habitual disposition to act fairly. It is the ability to make decisions with equity, which is not to be confused with equality. The virtue of justice involves the ability to discern when to treat equals equally and unequals differentially; thus it implies the virtue of practical wisdom. So the virtue of justice implies respect—respect for the rights of others—and the just person knows how to respect the rights of others even when faced with competing rights. The virtue of ecological justice names the settled disposition to act fairly when faced with the competing rights or legitimate claims of creatures both human and nonhuman. It is a cultivated and practiced fairness with respect not only to oppressed women and racial/ethnic groups, but also to domestic animals and wild plants, endangered species and damaged ecosystems. Ecological justice is the steady disposition to render with equity to human and non-human alike that which their worth requires.

In my view, the virtue of justice is not a mean, and thus has only one vice, namely, injustice. Injustice is the propensity to be partial—to play favorites for no good reason or, more perversely, for personal gain. The vice of injustice names a disinclination to be evenhanded, impartial, or fair-minded. As such it fails to give others their due; it fails to respect their rights. Ecological injustice names the willingness to violate the rights of others, including the rights of non-human creatures.[43] Or if you think that non-human creatures have no rights, ecological injustice is the failure of human moral agents to properly exercise their duties to those creatures whose intrinsic value makes them objects of concern.[44] Ecological injustice is the habitual disposition to wrong creatures—human and non-human—whose worth calls for our respect.

Second, love. There are a number of helpful typologies of love,[45] and while this is not the time or place to delve into an in-depth discussion of the various types, we do need to make some distinctions. Benevolence is the promotion of the good of someone as an end in itself, without necessarily feeling moved to and without justice requiring it. In other words, benevolence is the willingness to promote the

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43 Paul Haught, "Environmental Virtues and Environmental Justice," *Environmental Ethics* 33/4 (2011): 357-75.
44 Holmes Rolston, *Environmental Ethics* (Temple University Press, 1988), chs. 1 and 6.
45 For example, C.S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960); Caroline Simon, *The Disciplined Heart* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997); and Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 37-39.

well-being of another, as an end in itself, even if the bonds of affection are absent and even if no one's rights demand it. It is willing the good regardless of affection. Agapic love (from the Greek *agapē*) is promoting the good of someone as an end in itself simply because that someone is your neighbor. As Wolterstorff puts it: "agapic love is that form of benevolent love which is bestowed on someone just because she is a neighbor."[46] This kind of love can co-exist with other forms of love, e.g., attraction-love, attachment-love. Indeed, most of the time agapic love is accompanied by these other kinds of love. Bonds of affection and attachment usually arise out of personal relationships, such as kinship or friendship, and produce a love that promotes the well-being of the beloved for its own sake. But agapic love may also exist by itself. It may, for example, "seek to promote as an end in itself the flourishing of someone to whom I am neither attached nor attracted, someone whose company I don't like."[47] Finally, again borrowing terminology from Wolterstorff, love as care is that form of agapic love that seeks to promote what one believes to be another person's good. But unlike benevolence, which promotes someone else's good as an end in itself provided justice does not require it, love as care seeks to promote someone's good while also insuring that the person is treated justly. Love as care "combines seeking to enhance someone's flourishing with seeking to secure their just treatment."[48] In this way doing justice is an example of love; justice and love are not contraries, as often thought, but there is justice in love.[49] So love as care names a kind of agapic love that includes justice.

Hence the virtue of love is the habitual disposition, often but not always rooted in affection or compassion, to care about another person.[50] It is the steady inclination to promote someone's good and secure their rights as ends in themselves and not as a means to some other end. The virtue of ecological love, as its etymology suggests, names the settled disposition to care about the house (*oikos*) and its inhabitants—to promote the flourishing of all creatures. It is the care we have not only concerning people but also animals and plants—family pet and backyard

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46 Wolterstorff, *Justice in Love*, 33.
47 Ibid., 38.
48 Ibid., 101.
49 Ibid., 84.
50 In reflecting on Jesus's silence about the motives for love, Wolterstorff comments: "Jesus says nothing at all about reasons or motives for loving the neighbor: all he says is that one should love one's neighbor as oneself. He nowhere rejects caring about some people because one is attached to them, caring about others because one feels compassion for them, caring about yet others because one finds oneself attracted to them, and so forth. In all such cases one is doing what Jesus commanded, caring about the other, seeking to promote her good and to secure her rights as ends in themselves. All of us find that there are 'neighbors' who fall outside the orbit of the care evoked by our natural dynamics of attachment, attraction, compassion, identification, and the like. Our natural dynamics leave us indifferent to their good. In such cases, our care about them will have to be out of duty. Duty is the fall-back position. . . . If no natural dynamics motivate you to care about your neighbor, then care about him out of duty." In *Justice in Love*, 116-17.

tree—and special places—local river and favorite park. When these creatures and places are well-known and thus evoke loyalty and affection, care often comes easily. But people who embody this virtue promote the flourishing of nonhuman creatures and places even when affection is absent. So the virtue of ecological love is the habitual disposition to care about the earth and its many inhabitants.

Since the virtue of love is not a mean between extremes, there is no excess but only deficiency; hence there is only one vice. The vice contrary to love is care-lessness. This is the habitual inclination not to promote someone's good and se-cure their rights as ends in themselves. It is the failure to seek as an end in itself the flourishing of someone else. There are at least two forms: malevolence and apathy. Motivated by ill-will, the malevolent actively seek to harm others. Filled with indifference, the apathetic by neglect allow harm to come to others. In either case, the goods of others go unrealized and their rights are flouted. Ecologically understood, malevolence is the habitual disposition to destroy other creatures and places. The ecologically malevolent intentionally wreak havoc upon the earth. Ecological apathy is the absence of any affection for human or nonhuman crea-tures. The ecologically apathetic are oblivious to and unconcerned about the havoc wreaked upon the earth. In either form the ecologically care-less do not mourn the loss of anything natural. They are puzzled when Aldo Leopold laments, "One of the penalties of an ecological education is that one lives alone in a world of wounds."[51]

Finally, hope. Hope is, to quote Emily Dickinson's famous poem, "the thing with feathers, that perches in my soul, and sings the tune without the words, and never stops at all." Hope is confident expectation of future good. It involves im-agining some good future, believing that such a future is possible, and acting in such a way as to bring this good future to fruition.[52] So the act of hoping involves three things—imagining, believing, and willing. For example, I imagine my local lake purged of all invasive species and free of water contaminated by harmful bacteria. I believe such a future is actually obtainable, especially given the recent unveiling of a watershed-wide cleanup effort named "Project Clarity." And I will to act in such a way that this vision of the local watershed becomes a reality. For Christians the expectation of a good future is based on God's promises and God's character as a keeper of promises.[53] First and foremost, Christians hope because they worship a God who raised Jesus from the dead as a sign of the future restor-ation of all things.

Thus the virtue of hope is the settled disposition to act with confidence to bring

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51   Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac* (New York: Ballantine, 1966), 197.

52   Lewis Smedes, *Standing on the Promises* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998), chs. 2-4.

53   Hope is different from optimism, since optimism is an inclination to put the most favorable face on actions or events, without adequate warrant or reason. See N. T. Wright, *Surprised by Hope* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008), ch. 5.

about some imagined good future. It is an inclination to live into an imagined world that is really possible, no matter how improbable. Ecologically speaking, hope names the settled disposition to yearn for God's good future of shalom, rooted in confidence that such a future lies in God's good hands. Ecological hope remembers the rainbow promise made to Noah, celebrates the Resurrection, anticipates the New Jerusalem.

There are two vices that correspond to the virtue of hope. The vice of deficiency is despair. Despair is the absence of any expectation of a good future. As its etymology suggests, it is the loss of all hope (*de-sperare*). Despair is cynicism of a profound kind, for it signals a failure or inability to trust. Despair is the hopelessness that leads, as Soren Kierkegaard powerfully describes it, to the sickness unto death.[54] Ecologically speaking, despair is hopelessness in the face of our aching earth. It is the inability to imagine or believe, in the face of pervasive ecological degradation and intractable ecological problems, that any liveable future on earth is possible. Despair is an abandonment of belief in the ultimate redemption of all things.

The vice of excess is presumptuousness. This can take two forms. Sometimes it has to do with what is called a presumptuous attitude. In contrast to the confident expectation of genuine hope, this kind of false hope exudes an over-confidence that takes the good future for granted. It is an unwarranted audacity of belief. Another kind of presumptuousness concerns the grounds for belief rather than the level of confidence. Not all objects of hope are worthy of trust. There are pretenders to hope in our anxious world. Prophets of easy credulity are lurking virtually everywhere. This species of false hope presumes that ecological healing will be pain free and/or won't demand much from us.

Conclusion

Eschatology shapes ethics. And a truly biblical eschatology of (re)new(ed) creation should inspire us to become earthkeepers. More exactly, such a view of the future should motivate us to become people who embody ecological virtues such as justice, love, and hope. While many people of late have spoken of earthkeeping, few have done so as eloquently or insightfully as Wendell Berry. I conclude with some words of his.

> The ecological teaching of the Bible is simply inescapable: God made the world because He wanted it made. He thinks the world is good, and He loves it. It is His world; He has never relinquished title to it. And He has never revoked the conditions,

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54   Soren Kierkegaard, *Sickness Unto Death* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1941).

bearing on His gift to us of the use of it, that oblige us to take excellent care if it. If God loves the world, then how might any person of faith be excused for not loving it or justified in destroying it?[55]

May we be empowered by the Holy Spirit to embody the virtues necessary to bear faithful witness to God's great good future of shalom.

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55   Wendell Berry, *What Are People For?* (New York: Northpoint, 1990), 98.

Introducing the Incarnate Christ:
How John's Logos Theology Sets the Stage for the Narrative Development of Jesus's Identity[1]

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Abstract

Many who have undertaken a critical reading of the Gospel of John have found it difficult to see the connection between the Prologue (1:1-18) and the Gospel narrative. While some of the language in the Prologue surfaces throughout the rest of the Gospel, its central term, "Word" (*logos*) does not show up as a title for Christ within the Gospel narrative. This paper will attempt to explore the integral connection between John's Logos theology and Jesus's I AM statements in the rest of the Gospel by examining the use of the term *memra* in Jewish Targums, especially its connection to creation by fiat ("let there be"), and how Memra theology can be understood as a theological thread weaving the Prologue and the Gospel narrative together.

With beautifully poetic prose, the Fourth Gospel opens with what has been appropriately called the Prologue (1:1-18). Not only is this Prologue unique in the biblical canon, it is distinctive even in the context of the book it introduces. Indeed, many who have undertaken a critical reading of John's Gospel have found it difficult to see how certain central themes within the Prologue are present throughout the Gospel narrative.[2] Although some language in the Prologue, such as "light"

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1 An earlier version of this paper was presented at the interdisciplinary theology conference on New Creation co-sponsored by Northeastern Seminary at Roberts Wesleyan College and the Canadian Evangelical Theological Association (CETA), October 2013, in Rochester, NY. I am grateful for the feedback I received from the attendees at this meeting. The expanded written paper was the winner of the Roberts Wesleyan College/Association of Christian Librarians Research Award for 2014.

2 For a thorough discussion on the discontinuity between the Prologue and the Gospel narrative, see Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John (i-xii): Introduction, Translation, and Notes* (Anchor Bible 29; Garden City, NY: Doubleday), 18-21.

(*phōs*), "darkness" (*skotia*), "glory" (*doxa*), and "truth" (*alethēia*), show up later in the Fourth Gospel, its central term, "Word" (*logos*), is never used as a title for Jesus outside of the Prologue.[3] Some scholars, such as John Ronning and Martin McNammara, have made significant strides in easing the tension between the Prologue and the narrative by examining Jewish Targums as a possible background to John's Logos theology.[4] Nevertheless, little attention has been given to the way in which Memra theology from the Targums shows up not only in the Prologue, but also in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel.[5]

This paper will attempt to explore the integral connection between John's Logos theology (in the Prologue) and Jesus's I AM statements (in the rest of the Gospel) by examining the use of *memra* (Aramaic for "word") in Jewish Targums, especially the connection of Memra theology to creation by fiat ("let there be") and how this theology can be understood as a theological thread weaving the Prologue and the Gospel narrative together.

A Word on Memra, Targums, and Methodology

Before mining the Targums for the ways in which *memra* is used, it will be helpful to give some orientation to the term itself, as well as to the nature of the Targums, and which Targumic texts will be important for this study.

I am using the term *memra* and the phrase "Memra theology" to represent the Aramaic word *mēmrā'* (which sometimes occurs as *mêmrā'*, *mîmrā'*, or *mē'mār*). This noun, derived from the verb *'āmar* (to say or speak), seems to be the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew *dābār* and Greek *logos*.

The term "Targum" is an English transliteration of Hebrew *tārgûm*, meaning "translation." It typically refers to the Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible.[6] As the LXX is a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek for a Hellenized Jewish community, the Targums are translations of the Hebrew Bible into Aramaic for an Aramaic-speaking Jewish audience.

However, the Targumists did not simply translate the Hebrew text into Ara-

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3   Additionally, "fullness" (*plēroma*) and "grace" (*charis*) appear only in John's Prologue and nowhere else in the Gospel narrative. For a helpful discussion on the vocabulary differences between the Prologue and the narrative, see Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 67-69.

4   John Ronning, *The Jewish Targums and John's Logos Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010); and Martin McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited: Aramaic Paraphrases of the Hebrew Bible* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010).

5   Many scholars resonate with C. K. Barrett's statement that the Targumic Memra is "a blind alley in the study of the biblical background of John's Logos doctrine;" in C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel of According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (2nd ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978), 153.

6   For an excellent resource on Targums, the Aramaic Bible series offers an English translation and introduction to each Targumic book. For reading the Targums in Aramaic online, visit http://cal1.cn.huc.edu/ (the *Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon Project*).

maic; they frequently took interpretive liberties by expanding upon the original text.[7] In this way, the Aramaic Targums resemble something like an informal commentary on the Hebrew Bible, through which contemporary readers can discern the theological motifs and expressions of the time period within which they originated.

Although the theology of Memra occurs in a number of Jewish Targums, my interest will be primarily in Targum Neofiti 1 (Tg. Neof.). This particular Targum is the most substantial of the western or Palestinian Targums, and covers all five books of the Pentateuch.

The question then arises concerning the dating of Tg. Neof. What time period is it from? This is an important consideration, since arguing for the dependence of the Gospel of John on Tg. Neof. would be erroneous if the Targum originated after the New Testament was written. This is precisely Joseph A. Fitzmyer's argument. He notes (correctly) that Tg. Neof. was written during the Late Aramaic period (A.D. 200-700), and concludes that this dating puts Tg. Neof. "well beyond the period of the composition of biblical books, even those of the NT."[8]

This does not, however, mean that Tg. Neof. is irrelevant for the study of John's Gospel. Géza Vermès suggests four possibilities for understanding the relationship between the NT and the Targums: It could be that (1) the similarities are a matter of coincidence, or (2) the Targumists borrowed from the NT, or (3) the NT writers depended on the Targums, or (4) both the NT and the Targumic texts have their origin in "Jewish traditional teachings."[9] Vermès argues for the fourth option, suggesting that while there is no dependence between the Targums themselves and the NT writings, it is most likely that, in a common culture, there were common terms and expressions that were used in order to effectively communicate to a people who shared a common worldview.

A contemporary analogy might be the way contemporary Christians use the term "Trinity" to express the Godhead. If a congregation uses the term "Trinity" in their belief statement, it would not be assumed that they borrowed the term from another congregation's belief statement. Instead, the term is so embedded in the worldview of the church that anyone using it can assume that their audience will understand the theological weight—at least, in part—of what they are trying

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7   For a helpful and thorough discussion on the characteristics of Targum translations, see Josep Ribera, "The Targum: From Translation to Interpretation," in *The Aramaic Bible: Targums in their Historical Context*, ed. Derek R. G. Beattie and Martin J. McNamara (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 218-25; and McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 101-19.

8   Joseph A. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980): 18.

9   Géza Vermès, "Jewish Literature and New Testament Exegesis: Reflections on Methodology," *Journal of Jewish Studies* 33 (1982): 361-72.

to convey. Such is the case for the distinctive use of the "word" of God in the NT (*logos*) and the Jewish Targums (*memra*).

In what follows, I will first examine the use of *memra* in Tg. Neof. on creation texts, then I will shift to the use of *memra* in a variety of Targums on Exodus 3:14 (the revelation of the divine name). This will clarify how Memra theology expresses Yʜwʜ's identity as creator and redeemer.

Memra and the Tetragrammaton: Agent of Creation and Redemption

In both the MT and the Targums, Yʜwʜ is the divine creator who brings everything into existence by his word. However, the way Yʜwʜ's agency in the creation event is expressed differs between the MT and the Targums. Although there are multiple places in the Targums to which we could turn for examining the theology of the creation event, I will focus on two creation texts from Tg. Neof. that illustrate well how *memra* is used. The first text is Genesis 1 and the second, somewhat surprisingly, is Exodus 12 (which describes the Passover in the MT, but which is expanded in the Targum with a reference to creation). In both of these texts the name "Yʜwʜ/ the Lord" and the phrase "the *memra* of the Lord" are used as interchangeable equivalents to express both God's speech and God's act of creation.[10]

Genesis 1

In Tg. Neof. the term *memra* occurs twenty-four times throughout the creation narrative of Genesis 1 (technically 1:1-2:3). After the creation event is completed, *memra* does not come on the scene again until Gen 3:8 and appears infrequently afterwards.[11] This suggests that, for the Targumist, *memra* was a central motif in the creation event.

Throughout the MT of Genesis 1, there is a consistent pattern to the way God's agency is expressed in creation, commonly known as the fiat pattern: God speaks and there is. In Hebrew this pattern is expressed by the twofold occurrence of the word, *yĕhî* (יְהִי), which means both "let there be" and "it was so." In Tg. Neof. this pattern has been modified. In fact, there are two different modifications, evident in a comparison between Gen 1:20-21 and 1:26-27.

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10   In the Targums the Tetragrammaton (the four consonants of the divine name) is replaced with three yodhs (ʼ̈ʼ). Similar to the Massoretic insertion of the vowels for *adonai* into the tetragrammation, this is meant to help prevent the reader from accidentally speaking the unutterable divine name. From here on, all references to "the Lord" in translations of the Targums should be understood to represent the three yodhs.

11   This does not include the marginal glosses of Tg. Neof., where *memra* occurs quite frequently; although, this usage is still less frequent than in Genesis 1 of the Neofiti text.

Genesis 1:20-21

> "And *the Memra of the Lord* said: 'Let the waters swarm forth a swarm of living creatures" . . . . And the Lord created . . . every living creature which the waters swarmed forth."[12]

Genesis 1:26-27

> "And the Lord said: 'Let us create man' . . . . And *the Memra of the Lord* created the man . . . and the Glory of the Lord blessed them."[13]

In Gen 1:20-21 of Tg. Neof., the "Memra of the Lord" is the agent of creation by speech; it is the *memra* who says, "let the waters swarm," while the subject of the verb "created" is "the Lord." This "*memra* speaking/the Lord doing" pattern is reversed in Gen 1:26-27. In this text the Lord says, "let us create man" and it is "the Memra of the Lord" that does the actual creating. So we have the situation where both the agent of the act of creating and the agent of creation by fiat can be expressed by either "the Lord" or "the Memra of the Lord."

Yet, the role of Memra in creation does not end here. After the Lord speaks creation into existence by fiat, "let there be," the Targums change the reading of the MT, "and it was so," to say that "it was so according to his Memra."[14] Again, Memra is an agent of creation alongside the Lord.

It is worth noting a final example from Tg. Neof. of Genesis 1: "And the Memra of the Lord said: 'Let there be light'; and there was light according to the decree of his Memra . . . and the Memra of the Lord separated the light from the darkness" (1:3).[15] In this text the Memra of the Lord shatters the primordial darkness and brings light to creation.

Exodus 12

The second text that stands out as paramount when looking at Memra in creation is a midrashic poem on Exodus 12:42 where, in the MT, the writer states that the Passover night was a vigil of the Lord to be kept by all the Israelites for subsequent generations. Tg. Neof. states that this night was "set aside for redemption to the name of the Lord at the time the children of Israel were brought out redeemed from the land of Egypt."[16] The Targumist goes on to describe this one night as

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12 Martin McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis* (Aramaic Bible 1A; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 54 (emphasis added).
13 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis,* 55 (emphasis added).
14 Tg. Neof. Gen 1:7, 9, 11, 15, 24, 30.
15 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Genesis*, 52-53.
16 Martin McNamara trans. in Martin McNamara, Robert Hayward, and Michael Maher, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus* (Aramaic Bible 2; Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1994), 51.

four nights in which the sacred events of history are summed up, from creation on the first night to the promise of a future King Messiah on the fourth. As Tg. Neof. has it,

> The first night: when the Lord was revealed over the world to create it. The world was without form and void, and darkness was spread over the face of the abyss, and *the Memra of the Lord was the light, and it shone*, and he called it the First Night.[17]

It is striking that the Targumist begins the scope of redemption history with a survey of the creation event. Not only that, but this survey includes the function of *memra* not as the creator of light, but as the actual light that brings an end to the primordial darkness. This is similar to John's Prologue, where God's *logos* is identified with the light shining in the darkness (John 1:5-9), a light that the rest of the Fourth Gospel consistently identifies with the redemptive presence and agency of Jesus (John 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9-10; 12:35-36, 46).

On the fourth night of the Passover vigil, the Targumist describes a future time when the entire world will be redeemed. Included in this cosmic redemption is the removal of bondage and wickedness, headed by what at first appears to be two great redemptive figures: Moses and the King Messiah. Yet, the Targumist affirms the presence of a third figure: "One will lead at the head of the flock, and the other will lead at the head of the flock, *and his Memra will lead between the two of them*."[18] In articulating this future redemption, the Targumist employs language reminiscent of a shepherd leading the flock (an image used of Jesus in John 10). Just as Memra was involved in creation as the cosmic luminary, it is also involved in the cosmic redemption of the world by shepherding the flock between Moses and the King Messiah. Thus, in the Passover vigil the Targumist connects the role of Memra in creation with the redemptive work of Yhwh contextualized in the Exodus event and the future cosmic redemption, in which Memra takes center stage. Memra is an agent of both creation and redemption. This motif is further unpacked in Exodus 3, a text of paramount importance for understanding Yhwh's identity.

Memra and I AM: The Divine Name and the Creative Word

The story of Moses' conversation with Yhwh at the burning bush in Exodus 3 is as popular as it is cryptic. Of interest to this study is the way in which Tg. Neof. interprets God's self-disclosed name. In this text, Moses is summoned to lead the Israelites out of the bondage of slavery from the Egyptians. Struck with fear

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17 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Psuedo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 52 (emphasis added).
18 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus*, 52 (emphasis added).

and self-doubt, Moses asks God what name he should tell the Israelites when they ask who sent him. God responds with words that have echoed throughout history: ʾehyeh ʾašer ʾehyeh (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה), popularly translated as "I am who I am"; and God follows this up by telling Moses to let the Israelites know that ʾehyeh ("I am") has sent him (Exod 3:14). Thus the abbreviated ʾehyeh, along with the longer version, ʾehyeh ʾašer ʾehyeh, seems to function as God's name; and this is confirmed in 3:15 where God's name is specified as Yʜwʜ, which most biblical scholars think represents the third person singular of hyh, the verbal root of ʾehyeh.[19]

Before Yʜwʜ's disclosure, there is a slight hint of this name in 3:12 when God first responds to Moses' self-doubt. He says, "I will be [ʾehyeh] with you." Neofiti changes the MT here from "I will be with you" to "I, namely my Memra, will be with you."[20] In this instance, Memra has become an exegetical stand-in for the divine name ʾehyeh. Yet, what might be the link between these two terms? What prompted the Targumist to bring together the Aramaic word memra and the Hebrew title ʾehyeh and to use these terms interchangeably, to express God's identity? What is the basis of this usage?

As we saw earlier, the actual word God speaks to create in Genesis 1 is yĕhî ("let there be"). This word has a philological connection with ʾehyeh ("I am" or "I will be"), in that both verbs share the same root, hyh (the Hebrew verb "to be"). Put differently, the word Yʜwʜ uses to call creation into existence is a version of his own name. This has led J. Gerald Janzen to conclude that "clearly the Targumists at this point associated ʾehyeh in Exod 3:12-15 with yehi in Gen 1:3, not only philologically but theologically."[21] Thus the term ʾehyeh is taken to designate God essentially as creator, the one who calls the world into being, and moreover who does this by his word. This complex of ideas finds expression in the Targums by the use of the term memra.

There is a further connection between the divine name and creation. In three different Targums (Targum Pseudo-Jonathan [Tg. Ps.-J.], Targum Neofiti 1 [Tg. Neof.] and the Fragmentary Targum on the Pentateuch [Frg. Tg.]), the Targumists interpret ʾehyeh ʾašer ʾehyeh in Exod 3:14 as linking the past creative act of Yʜwʜ with the present redemption through Moses, and in two cases (Tg. Neof. and Frg. Tg.) also with the future redemption of the world.

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19 Thus Yʜwʜ probably means "he is" or "he will be," or (according to a tradition in Old Testament scholarship, going back to Frank Moore Cross) Yʜwʜ is to be understood as the Hiphil of hyh, thus designating God as creator ("he causes to be").

20 Robert Hayward, *The Divine Name and Presence: The Memra* (Totowa, NJ: Allanheld, Osmun, 1981), Preface.

21 J. Gerald Janzen, "What Does the Priestly Blessing *Do*?" pp. 38-49 in Janzen, *When Prayer Takes Place: Forays into a Biblical World*, ed. Brent A. Strawn and Patrick D. Miller (Eugene, OR: Cascade, 2012), 47.

Tg. Ps.-J.	Tg. Neof.	Frg. Tg.
"He who said and the world was, who said and every-thing was." Then he said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I-am who-I-am-and-who-will-be has sent me to you.'"[22]	"The one who said and the world was from the beginning; and is to say to it again, 'Be,' and it will be has sent me to you."[23]	"And the Memra of the Lord said to Moses: The one who said to the world from the beginning: "Be" and it was … will say in the future, 'Be.' And he said: Thus should you say to the children: I AM … sent me to you.'"[24]

This threefold temporal reference is grounded by the Targums in the threefold use of ʾehyeh in 3:14 ("*I am* who *I am*" and "*I am* has sent you"). These Targums seem to play on the fact that ʾehyeh is in the Hebrew *yiqtol* conjugation (also called the imperfect), which lacks temporal specificity. The result is that Yʜᴡʜ's identity as creator (in the past; and ʾehyeh in Exodus 3 was already associated with *yĕhî* in Genesis 1) is here integrally linked with his identity as redeemer (in the present and the future); all of this is expressed by the term *memra*. Thus Robert Hayward concludes that for the Targumists *memra* is "God's Name ʾHYH, which by midrashic exposition refers to His presence in past and future creation, history, and redemption."[25]

Targumic Resonances in the Johannine Prologue

The relationship of *memra* to creation and redemption is so intertwined in the Targums that it is almost impossible to mention the function of the *memra* in one without reference to the other. Yet this connection between creation, redemption, and God's *Word* is not unique to the Targums. The prologue of John resonates with the Targum's creative-redemptive function of the divine Word in three ways.

The Unity Between the Logos and God
First, just as *memra* functions as an interchangeable equivalent with Yʜᴡʜ, John opens his Gospel with a statement of unity between God and the *logos*: "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Echoing Gen 1:1, both John's Gospel and Tg. Neof. affirm the same point: to refer to the Word is to refer to God.

Logos: The Agent of Creation
The second Targumic resonance we see in the Prologue is the creative function

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22 Michael Maher trans. in McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus,* 168-9.
23 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus,* 19.
24 Marginal note in McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1 and Pseudo-Jonathan: Exodus,* 19.
25 Robert Hayward, "The Holy Name of the God of Moses and the Prologue of St. John's Gospel," *New Testament Studies* 25/1 (1978): 24.

of the Word. The Gospel writer emphasizes that everything (*panta*/ πάντα) came into being through the Word (John 1:3, 10). This creative agency vis-à-vis the Word is even more explicit in the Greek text. Of the eighteen verses making up the Prologue, the Greek verb, *ginomai* (γίνομαι; meaning "to be/ become/ come into being") occurs in seven of the verses, a total of nine times (John 1:3 [3x], 6, 9, 12, 14, 15, 17).[26] The prevalence of this verb in association with the *logos* parallels the prevalence of *memra* in Genesis 1 of Tg. Neof. Just as *memra* was a central motif in the Genesis 1 creation narrative of Tg. Neof., *ginomai* is a central motif in John's Prologue for describing the creative work of the *logos*.[27]

Having first attributed all creaturely existence to the agency of the *logos* (1:3), the Gospel writer goes on to describe this *logos* as the giver of life, and this life is said to be the light of humanity (John 1:3b-4). With language similar to the first night of creation in Exodus 12 of Tg. Neof., the Gospel writer states that "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overtaken it" (John 1:5). As the Prologue progresses, there is a gradual dawning of this life-giving *logos* in and among human beings. The light of the *logos* not only enlightens (*phōtizei*/ φωτίζει) all people, in the sense that through the *logos* humanity receives biological life (John 1:9), but the *logos* brings new (renewed) life to those who receive it (John 1:12a). Here the *logos* is the source of new creation.

Logos: The Agent of Redemption
But this means that the *logos* is the source of redemption. This new life the *logos* brings is described with language suggesting a rebirth experience in John 1:12, where those who receive the life-giving *logos* are granted "authority to become [γίνομαι] children of God" (see also John 3:5-8). This makes explicit the Prologue's third resonance with the Targumic *memra*: the *logos* is the agent of both creation *and redemption*, bringing all things into being, and renewing life. The activity of this divine, creative-redemptive agent reaches its climax in John 1:14 when "the Word became [γίνομαι] flesh" in the person of Jesus Christ (though this name is not used until 1:17). Later on, Jesus's own word (*logos*) brings eternal life (John 5:24). It is this creative-redemptive motif, built up so prominently in the Prologue, that the Gospel writer unpacks in the narrative of Jesus's life, mission, and self-identification with the Father.

I AM: The Incarnate Word in the Gospel Narrative
The position argued in this paper, that the appropriate backdrop to the Prologue is

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26 This verb can also be translated "be born."

27 In fact, referring to God as the creator is not too different from the referring to God as the *Word*. Both are titles that give theological meaning to the divine identity: the former identifies God as the maker of all things and the latter identifies him by the way he made all things (i.e., by speaking a Word).

the creative-redemptive theology of the divine *memra* in the Targums, has been proposed by a number of scholars.[28] However, John Ronning may be unique in claiming that the Targums also provide background for Jesus's I AM statements. According to Ronning, "both expressions [Word and I AM] identify Jesus as the God of Israel, the one true God, so that the divine I AM sayings in the body of the Gospel complement the *logos* title in the Prologue."[29] Although Ronning insightfully grounds John's *logos* title in Targumic *memra*, he does not consistently show that Jesus's I AM statements are *also* grounded in the Memra theology of the Jewish Targums.[30] While all of Jesus's I AM statements are worthy of study, I will focus on two crucial statements (in John 6 and 8), both of which have explicit parallels to the Prologue's *logos* and the Targumic *memra*.[31]

I AM the Light of the World

One obvious parallel between Jesus's I AM statements and the Targumic *memra* can be found in John 8. Immediately after sending the Pharisees away and forgiving the woman caught in the act of adultery, Jesus tells her, "I AM the light of the world; the one who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (8:12). John here connects Jesus's identity as the *'ehyeh* of Exodus 3 with the light that shines in the darkness, a connection reminiscent of *memra* in Tg. Neof., where *memra* was identified with the primordial light of Gen 1:3. We have already seen that the Prologue associates the *logos* with light; thus, the identity of Jesus in John 8 may be understood as his embodiment of this light—he is the light incarnate. This suggests that in John 8 Jesus's I AM statement flows out of the same Targumic vein as the *logos* in the Prologue.

I AM the Bread of Life

Another I AM statement with significant Targumic parallels is found in John 6. After the familiar story of the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:1-15) and Jesus's appearance to the twelve disciples while walking on water (John 6:16-21), we find the story of the crowd following Jesus to the other side of the Sea of Tiberias, where they press him for a miracle: "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you?" (John 6:30) To bolster their petition, they cite Scripture, highlighting that their "ancestors ate manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (John 6:31). This becomes

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28 See the account in McNamara, *Targum and Testament Revisited*, 146-66; and Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, esp. 1-68.

29 Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 194.

30 Ronning grounds Jesus's I AM statements primarily in the OT affirmations that Yhwh is the only God (esp. in Deut 32:39 and Deutero-Isaiah, esp. Isa 43:10) and so renders ἐγώ εἰμι as "I am he." Although he does make mention of the use of *memra* in Tg. Neof. and Frg. Tg. on Deut 32:39, this is not the core of his argument in his chapter on the I AM statements of the Johannine Jesus.

31 For a thorough examination of all twenty-two of Jesus's I AM statements in John's Gospel, see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 194-223.

the focal point for the rest of the dialogue. Jesus responds by saying that the true bread from his father "comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33b). The crowd then asks, "Give us this bread always" (John 6:34) and Jesus responds by saying, "I AM the bread of life" (John 6:35), a statement that unites the redemptive provision of God in the exodus event with the life-giving function of Jesus's incarnate mission.

The obvious OT parallel with John 6 is the story of God's provision of manna to the Israelites in Exodus16. However, there are closer literary parallels with Tg. Neof. than there are with the MT of Exodus 16.[32] The MT of Exod. 16:4 states that YHWH "will *rain down* bread from heaven." Tg. Neof., on the other hand, makes a slight modification by saying that YHWH "will make bread *come down* from heaven," which parallels John 6:35, 38, 41, 50, and 58.

Furthermore, in some marginal glosses on Exod. 16:15 of Tg. Neof., the writer states that the manna was given "by the Memra of the Lord for you as food."[33] Whereas the Targumic "word" gave the manna to the Israelites in Tg. Neof., it is the Word made flesh, the divine I AM, that has become the manna which gives redemptive life to those who receive its eternal nourishment (John 6:35b).

Given that the Prologue of John associates the *logos* with both life and light (John 1:4), what we have in John 6 and 8 are narrative affirmations that the incarnate *logos*, Jesus of Nazareth, is the embodiment of this very life and light.[34] Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus's I AM statements reach back not just to the Prologue, but beyond the Prologue to the Targums of Exodus 3, where *memra* is associated with the creative-redemptive activity of the divine name, and even back to the Targumic interpretation of Genesis 1, where *memra* works alongside YHWH to bring life and light into being.[35]

The Unity of the Fourth Gospel Grounded in Memra Theology

This reaching back to creation is precisely what John intends by his use of *logos* in the Prologue. John is reaching back in order to look ahead, to make the claim that Jesus is the embodied Word (the *memra* of God in the flesh). This Word was the creative power behind the first acts of creation and has now entered history as an agent of redemption for a new creation. Just as YHWH / ʾehyeh created by speaking a word, *yĕhî* ("let there be") in the MT, and the *memra* of the Lord could be said to be the agent of creation in the Targums, so Jesus is the incarnate agent

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32 For a thorough comparison of John 6 and Exodus 16 in Tg. Neof., see Ronning, *The Jewish Targums*, 203-205.
33 McNamara, *Targum Neofiti 1: Exodus*, 71.
34 At other places throughout the Gospel, Jesus's own word (*logos*) is intimately connected with life and light (John 3:34-36; 5:24; 12:46-50).
35 Not to mention the identification of *memra* with the light in the expansion of Exod 12:42 in Tg. Neof.

of new creation who, by his words and deeds gives people "the authority to be-come the children of God" (John 1:12), that they might be "born again" / "born from above" (John 3:3). With the theological thrust of the Targumic *memra*, Jesus continues Yʜᴡʜ's redemptive work by creating a new people of God, a theme that links John's reference to the *logos* in the Prologue with Jesus's later I AM statements in the Gospel.

By this use of *logos*, John's Prologue introduces Jesus as one whose mission is in continuity with God's past works of creation and redemption; we might even say that John's Prologue gives the reader the "backstory" of Jesus, all the way back to "the beginning" (John 1:1). And Jesus's I AM statements throughout John's narrative pick up on this very thread. In this way, the narrative develop-ment of Jesus's identity begins with the Prologue and is unpacked in Jesus's self-disclosure throughout the Gospel.

In his prayer to the Father in John 17, Jesus states that his mission is to make known the Father's name, which he says is also his very own name (John 17:11-12). The unity of the name of Jesus and the name of the Father gains greater depth by considering the grounding of this notion in John's understanding of the *logos* in the Prologue and Jesus's later I AM statements, and the grounding of both of these in the creative-redemptive *memra* of the ancient Targums. Jesus is the unique one who has, indeed, explained or exegeted (ἐξηγήσατο) the Father (John 1:18).[36]

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36 I am thankful to J. Gerald Janzen for an insightful e-mail correspondence in which he pointed out a possible correspondence between Yʜᴡʜ's I AM statement in Exodus 3:14 and the wording of John 1:18. In the LXX of Exod 3:14, Yʜᴡʜ's affirmation "I am who I am" is rendered as ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν (*ego eimi ha ōn*). Interestingly, the phrase ὁ ὤν also occurs in the Prologue's closing words: "the only begotten God, *who is* [ὁ ὤν] in the bosom of the Father, he has explained him" (John 1:18). Thus both ὁ ὤν in the Prologue and Jesus's later use of ἐγώ εἰμι in the Gospel narrative allude to the revelation of the divine name in Exod 3:14. In this way, Jesus's I AM declarations are possibly anticipated in the Prologue not only by the presence of the *logos* lexeme as it resonates with the Targumic *memra*, but also by both the use of ὁ ὤν in describing the only begotten/unique one.

"His Mercy is Over All His Works":
John Wesley's Mature Vision of New Creation[1]

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Abstract

For much of his life, John Wesley accepted common Christian assumptions regarding final salvation as a state of spiritual rest in paradise. Late in life, however, he rejected these assumptions, as "the new creation" became a dominant theme in his theology. Wesley's mature eschatological vision thus shifted from a hope for spiritual rest to a dynamic vision of redeemed humanity living in a transformed, but still-physical new earth, complete with animal life. This paper explores "the new creation" as a theme in Wesley's mature thought, through a close reading of sermons published in the last decade of his life. The topic is addressed under four headings: 1) Wesley's speculations about the place of animals in redemption; 2) his understanding of the "image of God" and humanity's relationship to the rest of creation; 3) the connection between Wesley's vision of the new creation and the question of creation stewardship in the present life; 4) the way that the new creation functioned as an aspect of Wesley's theodicy. While some of Wesley's specific speculations concerning the new creation might not be of enduring value, this paper will argue that the overall shape and direction of his mature eschatology remains a compelling model for contemporary evangelicalism.

For much of his life and ministry, John Wesley accepted the inherited assumptions of the mainstream Christian tradition regarding the final state of the redeemed as being one of spiritual rest in paradise. In fact, his first sermon, written shortly

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1   This paper was presented at the "New Creation" interdisciplinary theology conference, sponsored by CETA and held at Northeastern Seminary, Rochester, NY, on October 19, 2013.

after his ordination to the diaconate in 1725, took as its text Job 3:17, "There the wicked cease from troubling / there the weary are at rest." In that sermon he speaks of death as "not only a haven, but an entrance into a far more desirable country—a land not flowing with milk and honey like the earthly Canaan, but with joys knowing neither cessation nor end."[2] Late in life, however, he rejected these assumptions, as "the new creation" became a dominant theme in his soteriology. This shift can be seen, as Randy Maddox has argued, as part of a larger arc of development in Wesley's theology, which begins with his radical shift to an evangelical understanding of *personal* salvation after his heart-warming Aldersgate experience, continues with his growing recognition of the *socioeconomic* dimensions of Christian life in the 1770s, and culminates in his growing sense of redemption's *cosmic* scope in the 1880s.[3] Thus, in the last decade of his life, we find Wesley speculating in surprisingly concrete terms about the nature of the new heavens and the new earth, and musing about the possible ways in which both inanimate and animate creation will be transformed. Wesley's mature eschatological vision thus shifted from a hope for a static spiritual rest to a dynamic vision of redeemed humanity living in a transformed, but still-physical new earth, complete with animal life. "The new creation," however, was not a category which Wesley used *only* in reference to the eschaton; it was a central strand his mature theology, which brought together the personal, socioeconomic, and cosmic dimensions of salvation. As was the case with Wesley's theology of salvation in general, he understood the new creation as having both *future* and *present* dimensions, and he believed God had graciously invited humanity to play a role in the ongoing realization of the new creation in human history.[4]

This paper will explore "the new creation" as a theme in Wesley's mature thought through a close reading of sermons published in the last decade of his life. The topic will be addressed under four headings: 1) Wesley's speculations about the place of animal creation in redemption; 2) his understanding of the "image of God" and humanity's relationship to the rest of creation; 3) the connection between Wesley's vision of the new creation and his theology creation stewardship

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2   Sermon 133, "Death and Deliverance," §4, in Albert C. Outler, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984), 4: 208 (hereafter *Works*). It should be noted that Wesley retained a belief in the resurrection of the body after a period of intermediate rest in paradise, but assumed (again, following the predominant trends of his day) that at the general resurrection our earthly bodies would be transformed into ethereal bodies. Randy L. Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory," in *Wesleyan Perspectives on the New Creation*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Kingswood Books, 2004), 44.
3   Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory," 32.
4   Maddox helpfully articulates these characteristics of Wesley's teaching on new creation as its "present availability," its "processive character," and its "cooperant dynamic." Ibid., 26–31. It is presently available in that the new creation is breaking into the world today, it has a processive character in that the new creation is realized by degrees, and it has a cooperant dynamic, in that God's grace invites a response from humanity and brings with it responsibilities.

in the present life; 4) the way the new creation functioned as an aspect of Wesley's theodicy. While some of Wesley's specific speculations concerning the new creation might not be of enduring value, the overall shape and direction of his mature eschatology remains a compelling model for contemporary evangelicalism.

The Place of Animal Creation in Redemption

John Wesley had a lifelong interest in the natural world, and was particularly interested in animal life.[5] Building on the traditional English Protestant affirmation of creation as "the book of nature," revealing God in its own way alongside the Bible, Wesley published three editions of a four-volume work on creation, entitled *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*.[6] This was a compendium of what was then called "natural philosophy," which, for Wesley, served the distinct theological purpose of leading the believer to a greater knowledge of God.[7] The Christian, he believed, was called to "see the Creator in the glass of every creature," and to "use and look upon nothing as separate from God."[8]

Thus the idea of creation as a source for theological reflection already had a long lineage in Wesley's thought by the time he reached the final decade of his life. It was at this time, however, that the issue of animal suffering came increasingly into his view as a theological problem. Thus he begins his remarkable sermon "The General Deliverance," written in 1782, with a quotation from Psalm 145:9 in the *Book of Common Prayer*, from which I have taken the title of this paper: "his mercy is over all his works." Yet, Wesley asks, "If the Creator and Father of every living thing is rich in mercy towards all; if he does not overlook or despise any of the works of his own hands, if he desires even the meanest of them to be happy according to their degree – how comes it to pass that such a complication of evils

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5   Wesley's well-known advice to his preachers was, "Be merciful to your beast. Not only ride moderately, but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed, fed, and bedded." See the "Large" Minutes of the Methodist Conference, 1789, in *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 10, ed. Henry Rack (Nashville: Abingdon, 2011), 919.

6   Published in three editions, dated 1763, 1770, and 1777, respectively.

7   For background on "natural philosophy" as a pre-cursor to what we now know as "science," and Wesley's place in eighteenth century debates concerning this field, see Randy L. Maddox, "Wesley's Engagement with the Natural Sciences," in *The Cambridge Companion to John Wesley*, ed. Randy L. Maddox and Jason E. Vickers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 160–75.

8   Sermon 23, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount III," §I.11, Works, I: 516–17. This aspect of Wesley's theology has led Howard Snyder to suggest the so-called "Wesleyan Quadrilateral" should be modified into a "Pentalateral," including creation as a source alongside scripture, tradition, reason, and experience. Howard A. Snyder, *Yes in Christ: Wesleyan Reflections on Gospel, Mission, and Culture*, Tyndale Studies in Wesleyan History and Theology 2 (Toronto: Clements Academic, 2011), 51–58. See also Wesley's comments on Christ as the life of all creatures, in Sermon 77, "Spiritual Worship," (1780) § II.3, Works, 3: 95, and his early affirmation (1733) of the "pleasure" that God has "inseparably annexed" to the "use of those creatures which are necessary to sustain the life he has given us," in Sermon 17, "The Circumcision of the Heart," §I.12, Works, 1: 408.

oppresses, yea, overwhelms them?"[9] He answers the question by arguing that all animal suffering, including that which various species currently inflict upon one another to ensure their own survival, is the result of the fall. Thus, before the fall, animal creation was "happy" and enjoyed a kind of "perfection" according to their kind, which was seen in their loving obedience to humanity, who as God's vice-regents, were God's appointed conveyors of blessings to all other creatures. The obedience of animals to humanity, therefore, could be seen as bearing "some shadowy resemblance of even moral goodness."[10] In short, animals in the original creation were, Wesley suggests, at peace with humanity and with one another.[11] Yet, as a result of the fall, humanity's relationship to God was disrupted, and therefore the blessings of God no longer flow through human stewardship to God's creatures.[12] After the fall, then, animals came to be at war with one another. It is because of sin that "an immense majority of creatures, perhaps a million to one, can no otherwise preserve their own lives, than by destroying their fellow-creatures!"[13] Moreover, humanity's loving and kind stewardship of animal creation has been turned into an exploitative domination, such that humanity's cruel treatment of animals surpasses the cruelty of a shark hunting its prey.[14] Wesley is unwilling to grant that such animosity and brutality is part of God's original design for his creatures.

Why would God allow animals to be subject to such vanities? Surely, he reasons, God will one day restore animal creation to a state that is superior to that of the original creation. As they have been subjected to a degree of the corruption brought on by the fall, so also will they be liberated to experience "a measure of 'the glorious liberty of the children of God'" in the new creation.[15] This will entail a greater strength, swiftness, and understanding than each creature in its kind has possessed in the original creation, and, like human creatures, they "will be delivered from all irregular appetites, from all unruly passions, from every disposition that is either evil in itself, or has any tendency to evil."[16] Therefore, as they had originally been able to evidence "a shadowy resemblance of even moral goodness,"[17] so in the new creation, "No rage will be found in any creature, no fierce-

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9   Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §1-2, *Works*, 2: 437-38.

10 Ibid., *§*I.5, *Works*, 2: 441. Wesley would also publish, in the following year, an extract of John Hildrop's *Free Thoughts Upon the Brute Creation*, which argued in favor of the idea that animals have souls. See Randy L. Maddox, "Anticipating the New Creation: Wesleyan Foundations for Holistic Mission," *Asbury Journal* 62/1 (2007): 59.

11 See also Sermon 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," §I.11-13, *Works*, 2: 394-96.

12 Ibid., §II.1, *Works*, 2: 442.

13 Ibid., §II.3, *Works*, 2: 444.

14 Ibid., §II.6, *Works*, 2: 445.

15 Ibid., §III.1, *Works*, 2: 445.

16 Ibid., §III.3, *Works*, 2: 446.

17 Ibid., §I.5, *Works*, 2: 441.

ness, no cruelty, or thirst for blood."[18] Working on the assumption of creation as a "great chain of being," with humanity occupying a higher place in the chain, and creatures proceeding downwards in accordance with their likeness to the creator,[19] Wesley speculates that all creatures might "move up" one level in the chain, and that some animals might therefore even join humanity in becoming "capable of God."[20] Lest we think this was a one-time indulgence on Wesley's part, he ventures the same speculation in his 1785 sermon "The New Creation."[21] These reflections on the place of non-human creatures in God's plan of redemption are thus one aspect of Wesley's late thinking about "new creation."

The Image of God and Humanity's Relationship to Other Creatures

The image of God is another concept that has a long lineage in Wesley's thought, reaching back into his pre-Aldersgate days.[22] It remained a centerpiece of his writing in the twilight of his life. Wesley had a three-fold understanding of the image of God: the *natural image*, which denotes those capacities which make humanity "capable of God," including understanding, will, and liberty; the *political image*, which denotes humanity's role as God's vice-regents on earth, exercising leadership and management of creation as stewards; and the *moral image*, which is humanity's vocation to imitate God in true righteousness and holiness.[23] While Wesley clearly distinguishes humanity from the rest of creation as the only earthly creature "capable of God," it should be noted that he does not make this distinction absolute, but rather argues that some animals share in a degree of the natural

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18 Ibid., §III.3, *Works*, 2: 446.

19 See, for example, Sermon 56 "God's Approbation of His Works," §I.14, *Works*, 2: 396-397: "There was 'a golden chain' (to use the expression of Plato) 'let down from the throne of God;' an exactly connected series of beings, from the highest to the lowest; from dead earth, through fossils, vegetables, animals, to man, created in the image of God, and designed to know, to love, and enjoy his Creator to all eternity."

20 "May I be permitted to mention here a conjecture concerning the brute creation What, if it should then please the all-wise, the all-gracious Creator to raise them higher in the scale of beings What, if it should please him, when he makes us 'equal to angels,' to make them what we are now, — creatures capable of God; capable of knowing and loving and enjoying the Author of their being If it should be so, ought our eye to be evil because he is good However this be, he will certainly do what will be most for his own glory." Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §III.6, *Works*, 2: 448. Wesley's (uncited) source for this idea is identified by Maddox as Charles Bonnet's *La Palingénésie philosophique; or Idées sur l'état passé et sur l'état futur des etres vivans* (2nd edition. Munster: Philip Henry Perrenon, 1770). Maddox, "Anticipating the New Creation: Wesleyan Foundations for Holistic Mission," 61.

21 Sermon 64, "The New Creation," §17, *Works*, 2: 508-509.

22 See Sermon 141, "The Image of God," Wesley's first "University Sermon" at Oxford, 1730; *Works* 4: 290-303.

23 Wesley does not always speak of all three aspects of the image at once, but for an example of a passage where he does do so, see Sermon 45, "The New Birth," §I.1 *Works*, 2: 188-89. His views on this subject are ably summarized in Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*, 13–19.

image.[24] But it is Wesley's view of the political image of God that is of particular interest in relation to his mature thinking about "new creation." As already noted above, Wesley conceived of Adam's divine vocation to vice-regency as a means by which "all the blessings of God flowed through him to the inferior creatures." So, he states, "Man was the channel of conveyance between his Creator and the whole brute creation."[25] But the effects of the fall were such that the moral image of God was lost, and the capabilities of the natural image and political image remained but were twisted and perverted to false ends.[26] Here Wesley speaks of humanity being "incapable of transmitting those blessings" which God desires to bestow upon all creatures through his vice-regents, and therefore of all creatures being "cut off" from that communication with God which is proper to each.[27] Not only this, but as noted above, fallen humanity abuses its position of vice-regency and inflicts abuse and exploitation upon the rest of creation.[28]

Again, the new creation answers the disease of fallen creation with a cure that brings a restoration which is greater than the original creation. Wesley insists that on a personal level, salvation as "new creation" means not only forgiveness of sins and restoration of God's favour, but the restoration of the image of God in all its fullness. Thus in his 1781 Sermon "The End of Christ's Coming," Wesley writes that "real religion" is "a restoration of man, by him that bruises the serpent's head, to all that the old serpent deprived him of; a restoration not only to the favour, but likewise to the image of God, implying not barely deliverance from sin but the being filled with the fullness of God."[29] Wesley explicitly states that such a restoration involves not only the restoration of the moral, but also the natural, image of God,[30] and his statements about Christian stewardship, to which I will turn next, clearly indicate that he included the political image within this grand restoration.[31]

New Creation and Creation Stewardship
The idea of creation stewardship follows from Wesley's assertion of the restor-

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24 Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §I.4, *Works*, 2: 440-41.
25 Ibid., §I.3, *Works*, 2: 440. See also his earlier comment in the same paragraph, about how Adam in his original state experienced an increased happiness "by the all the things that were round about him," meaning by his enjoyment of "the order, the beauty, the harmony of all the creatures: of all animated, all inanimate nature."
26 Sermon 57, "On the Fall of Man," §II.6, *Works*, 2: 410.
27 Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §II.1, *Works*, 2: 442.
28 Ibid., §II.6, *Works*, 2: 445.
29 Sermon 62, "The End of Christ's Coming," §III.5, *Works* 2: 482.
30 Sermon 57, "On the Fall of Man," §II.8, *Works* 2: 410.
31 The basic structure of Wesley's thought concerning creation, fall, and redemption confirms this claim concerning the political image. Wesley is always concerned to demonstrate that: a) creation as originally designed was good; b) salvation overcomes the corruption of the fall at every point. Thus God has provided "an universal remedy for an universal evil!" Ibid., §II.9, *Works*, 2: 411.

ation of the image of God. Remembering that Wesley sees this restoration as a dynamic reality, which is present *now* by *degrees* and will be fully restored in the eschaton, we can see how Wesley makes the concept of "stewardship" a central one in his teaching on Christian life. Humanity may have been given "dominion" over creation, but, he writes, "We are not at liberty to use what he has lodged in our hands as we please, but as he pleases, who alone is the Possessor of heaven and earth, and the Lord of every creature."[32] Thus, as part of their ongoing reflection of the restored *moral image,* human creatures are called to "imitate him whose mercy is over all his works,"[33] which gives shape to the proper exercise of the political image of God.

It would be inaccurate to suggest, however, that Wesley explicitly wrote about "creation stewardship." Certainly, as I have already indicated, he believed that Christians were called to treat animal creation with justice and mercy, but the issues of environmental concern that are so prevalent in today's context were simply not matters of concern in the 18th century. Nevertheless, as scholars such as Howard Snyder, Randy Maddox, and Theodore Runyon have suggested, there is a definite "trajectory" in Wesley's thought that points toward an ethic of creation stewardship.[34]This case can be made, not only on the basis of Wesley's strong appreciation for creation, but also on his understanding of the profound *interconnectedness* of creation, as underscored by his understanding of creation existing in a great interconnected "chain of being." It was important for Wesley that Christians understood their connection to the rest of creation, as can be seen in his remarks in the preface to his *Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*, "By acquainting ourselves with subjects in natural philosophy, we enter into a kind of association with nature's works, and unite in the general concert of her extensive choir. By thus acquainting ourselves with the works of nature, we become as it were a member of her family, a participant in her felicities."[35] While the early Wesley adopted an ascetical ideal of holiness that involved flight from supposedly "transitory" creation, the mature Wesley increasingly envisioned holiness as a life in which human beings would *enjoy* creation all the more.[36] But such "enjoyment" can never be individualistic; it is always to be understood within a set of relationships between human persons and the rest of creation. Therefore our conduct and *use* of creation in its totality should be done in a way that reflects God's propri-

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32 Sermon 51, "The Good Steward," §I.1 (1768), *Works*, 2: 283.
33 Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §III.10, Works, 2: 449.
34 See Snyder, *Yes in Christ*, 51–58, 94–97; Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*, 200–207; Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory," 49–52.
35 *A Survey of the Wisdom of God in the Creation*, I:viii, cited in *Runyon, The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*, 202.
36 On this point, see Snyder, *Yes in Christ*, 95.

etorship and a consciousness of how our use will affect the happiness of others. Along these lines, Wesley comments in his sermon "The Mystery of Iniquity" that Christian violence in India has affected not only its supposedly "heathen" inhabitants, but also the very earth itself:

> See with your own eyes! Look into that large country, Indostan. There are Christians and Heathens too. Which have more justice, mercy, and truth the Christians or the Heathens Which are most corrupt, infernal, devilish, in their tempers and practice the English or the Indians Which have desolated whole countries, and clogged the rivers with dead bodies
>
> O sacred name of Christian! how profaned!
>
> O earth, earth, earth! how dost thou groan under the villainies of thy Christian inhabitants![37]

In other words, because Wesley believed we should "use and look upon nothing as separate from God,"[38] we can say, as Runyon does, "When we deal with the earth and its resources, and when we deal with our fellow creatures, we are dealing with God."[39]

This role of the steward, though modest in respect to the views of some of his contemporaries concerning the superiority of humans over other creatures, nevertheless highlights the way in which he believed God was *involving humanity* in the present and ongoing realization of the new creation in history. This aspect of Wesley's thinking is best illustrated by his understanding of Methodism's role in what he called "The General Spread of the Gospel." Taking Isaiah 11:9 as his text, Wesley's sermon on this topic interprets the promise of God that "The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea," as meaning that "The loving kindness of God, producing, uniform, uninterrupted holiness and happiness, shall cover the earth, shall fill every soul of man."[40] He then goes on to assert that such uniform holiness and happiness will be brought about, not by God acting irresistibly, but by working in the same way that he works *now*, that is, by grace assisting and empowering human creatures to respond to the grace of the Gospel and live lives of holiness.[41] The Methodist revival is then offered as an illustration of the way in which God works to spread holiness over the face of the earth, and a hopeful sign that the world is entering "the dawn of 'the latter day

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37 Sermon 61, "The Mystery of Iniquity," §33, *Works*, 2: 467-468. The line of poetry is an allusion to Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iv. 951.

38 Sermon 23, "Upon Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount III," §I.11, *Works*, 1: 516-17.

39 Runyon, *The New Creation: John Wesley's Theology Today*, 207.

40 Sermon 63, "The General Spread of the Gospel," §8 (1783), *Works*, 2: 488.

41 Ibid., §§9-11, *Works*, 2: 488-89.

glory.'"[42] Thus, universal holiness, which, again, it should be remembered, *includes* the restoration of the "political" image of God and a right relation between humanity and the rest of creation, is *already beginning to spread now*, and will continue to spread in the same way in which is spreads now. In language that seems to reflect a tendency towards postmillennial eschatology, Wesley writes, "in general it seems that the kingdom of God will not 'come with observation,' but will silently increase wherever it is set up, and spread from heart to heart, from house to house, from town to town, form one kingdom to another."[43] Thus, as those *now* participating in the new creation, in an as-yet-partially realized manner, Christian believers are called to *presently* imitate their Lord whose mercy is over all his works. Again, although Wesley does not explicitly lay out an ethic of creation care, the overall trajectory of his thinking on new creation clearly points in that direction.

New Creation as an Aspect of Wesley's Theodicy

Finally, because of his strong emphasis on the love of God, it was important for Wesley to affirm, first of all, that all pain and suffering are the result of the fall, and not a part of God's original design for creation, and that secondly, the remedy of salvation is sufficient to not only cure all these evils but to restore creation to a *greater* state than originally intended. Thus, taking into account the immeasurable suffering that has been inflicted on humanity and the rest of creation because of the fall, and believing that God's sovereignty implies that he at the very least *permitted* the fall to take place, Wesley argues that the fall must have been permitted in order to allow for a greater blessing to occur in the fullness of time. Thus, not only is God free from blame for the suffering inflicted by moral and natural evil, but his goodness will also be vindicated by a promised new creation in which *all things* will be transformed into a superior state than that which they enjoyed in the original creation. Furthermore, stressing the *present* aspect of new creation, in his 1782 sermon "God's Love to Fallen Man," Wesley argues that humanity has a promise of greater happiness and holiness both *here on earth* and in the coming new creation.[44]

The greater blessedness of non-human creation, however, will have to wait for

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42 Ibid., §16, *Works*, 2: 493, citing Job 19:25.

43 Ibid., §17, *Works*, 2: 493. Wesley's shift towards postmillennial eschatology (following an earlier shift towards premillennial eschatology from his original amillennialism) is summarized in Maddox, "Nurturing the New Creation: Reflections on a Wesleyan Trajectory," 34–38.

44 Thus Wesley joins his voice to the *O felix culpa*! tradition of thinking about the fall. See Sermon 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," esp. §I.1 and n. 9 by Outler, in *Works*, 2: 425: "mankind in general have gained by the fall of Adam a capacity of attaining more holiness and happiness on earth than it would have been possible for them to attain if Adam had not fallen. For if Adam had not fallen Christ had not died." See also Sermon 57, "On the Fall of Man," §II.10, *Works*, 2: 411-412.

the consummation of the new creation. As I have already noted, Wesley was quite attuned to the issue of animal suffering as a theological problem, and saw the resolution of this challenge in a transformed animal creation as an aspect of theodicy. He spells this out at the end of his sermon, "The General Deliverance," where he argues that the idea of animal salvation can

> furnish us with a full answer to a plausible objection against the justice of God, in suffering numberless creatures that never had sinned to be so severely punished They could not sin, for they were not moral agents. Yet how severely do they suffer! – yea, many of them, beasts of burden in particular, almost the whole time of their abode on earth; So that they can have no retribution here below. But the objection vanishes away, if we consider that something better remains after death for these poor creatures also; that these, likewise, shall one day be delivered from this bondage of corruption, and shall then receive an ample amends for all their present sufferings.[45]

So also, in his sermon "The New Creation," Wesley speaks of animal salvation as "a demonstrative proof to all his creatures that 'his mercy is over all his works.'"[46]

But Wesley also believed that the new creation would see a transformation of "inanimate" creation, such that many natural evils would be removed. This, again, is built upon the presupposition that whatever "natural evil" is found the present creation was not present in the original creation. So in his 1782 sermon "God's Approbation of His Works," Wesley postulates that, with respect to the earth, "there were no agitations within the bowels of the globe, no violent convulsions, no concussions of the earth, no earthquakes…there were no volcanoes, or burning mountains."[47] With respect to water, he suggests that "there were no putrid lakes, no turbid or stagnating waters,"[48] and further that "the element of *air* was then always serene . . . it contained no frightful meteor, no unwholesome vapours, no poisonous exhalations."[49] And although all these forms of natural evil do persist in the present, fallen creation, Wesley insists that the new creation will see a new heavens and a new earth in which inanimate creation will surpass its original beauty and harmony. In his sermon "The New Creation" Wesley indulges in some uncharacteristic speculation about the state of the new earth, and in his speculations he is careful to note, again, a lack of such phenomena as comets, hurricanes,

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45   Sermon 60, "The General Deliverance," §III.9, *Works*, 2: 449.
46   Sermon 64, "The New Creation," §17, *Works*, 2: 509.
47   Sermon 56, "God's Approbation of His Works," §I.3, *Works*, 2: 389.
48   Ibid., §I.4, *Works*, 2: 391.
49   Ibid., §I.5, *Works*, 2: 391.

storms, meteors, earthquakes and volcanoes.[50] He also foresees changes in the elements, with fire, for example, retaining "its vivifying power, though divested of its power to destroy."[51] The earth will no longer be subject to extreme variations in temperature, but "will have such a temperature as will be most conducive to its fruitfulness."[52] In these and many similar speculations, it becomes clear that Wesley sees the new creation as a way for God to set all things right, and to restore and improve upon the proper ordering of the original creation, including animal life and non-animal creation. Thus, all the forms of natural evil that are present in the fallen world are credited as resulting from the fall. The evil that we see in the world is not an inevitable consequence of the present world's materiality, and hence the new creation need not entail an escape from materiality, but rather a new creation that includes a transformed and redeemed materiality.[53] Thus the problem of evil is addressed by clearly crediting humankind's abuse of their God-given liberty as being the source of evil, and then emphasizing the way in which God's plan of redemption will provide a salvation which, in its personal, social, and cosmic scope, will address the profound corruption of sin and its effects in their entirety.[54]

Conclusion

At first reading, some of Wesley's ideas about the future state of animals and other aspects of creation may seem fanciful and idiosyncratic. However, they should not be dismissed too lightly, for three reasons. First, these specific speculations should be set within the broader context of his theological system, in which concern for God's love, justice, mercy and truth feature prominently. Viewed in this light, Wesley's proposals concerning the new creation have integrity and weight as part of his larger theological project. Secondly, his strong affirmation of the goodness of creation and God's plan to restore all things in the new creation has solid warrant in the overarching shape of the scriptural narrative, even if some of the specific aspects of his arguments are tied to particular understandings of the natural world which have passed out of favor. Thus, if we were to attempt to translate Wesley's views to a contemporary context, we would have to replace his thinking about the "chain of being" with a contemporary understanding of the interrelatedness of all creation. Third, the way that the concept of new creation was able to unite the personal and cosmic aspects of salvation in Wesley's

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50 Sermon 64, "The New Creation," §§8, 9, 15, *Works*, 2: 503-504, 507-508.
51 Ibid., §10, *Works*, 2: 504.
52 Ibid., §14, *Works*, 2: 507.
53 Wesley explicitly rejects the idea that matter is inherently evil in Sermon 59, "God's Love to Fallen Man," §15, *Works*, 2: 434.
54 The same motivation is seen in his rejection of predestination. See Sermon 58, "On Predestination," §14, *Works*, 2: 420.

theology holds compelling promise for contemporary evangelical theology. Although Wesley was not overtly concerned about creation stewardship, his vision of "new creation" could nevertheless provide a fruitful framework for integrating the stewardship of creation into a cohesive understanding of salvation and Christian mission.

(Im)Peccability amid the Powers: Christological Sinlessness and Systemic Evil[1]

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Abstract

This article raises the question of how Christian theology might reconcile the orthodox commitment to Christ's sinless human nature with the more recent understanding of sin and evil as collective systemic forces instead of merely individualistic moral dynamics. Toward this end, three theological currents are navigated: the Reformed tradition's rendering of Jesus Christ's impeccability (inability to sin), Eastern Orthodoxy's theological anthropology (including Christological recapitulation and virtue ethics), and liberation theology's analysis of the spiritual dimension of social-systemic "Powers." This eclectic and ecumenical intersection situates an exegesis of two key Gospel accounts—Christ's visits to the Temple as a boy and as an adult—that tracks Christ's personal development into the fullness of his nature as the God-man. This interpretation draws the provisional conclusion that Christ cultivated a new way of being within the Powers, inaugurating a hope that social forces and institutions might enable human flourishing rather than oppression.

The last century has broadened significantly our human understanding of the range, forms, and impacts of sin on creation. We have come to realize that the type of evil that is the most difficult to recognize and to combat is not

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individual moral sin, nor (so-called) natural evil, but rather systemic or "societal evil."[2] Sensitive to ecological awareness, we have realized that human communities have a far greater impact—often negative—upon their environments than could have been previously imagined. The blossoming of the social sciences have shown myriad ways in which human group behavior (and the attendant social evils of racism, sexism, ableism, classism, and the like) is conditioned and normalized. Psychology has demonstrated that the mind—once thought to be the very seat of the human self and the absolute locus of moral choice and action—is contingent upon social factors ranging from domestic conditions to one's genetic background. All of these systemic complexities offer a far wider arena for evil, sin, and death to go to work on God's creation than had been previously thought. This should make us simultaneously tremble at how much more power we have than we had imagined, and also marvel at how powerless we truly are beneath the forces of these structures.[3]

This new definition of sin as systemic as well as individual threatens to unravel the neatly-theorized Christology that many major branches of the faith have long taken for granted. Christian theologians have often exceeded the contention that Christ was absolutely sinless (an important orthodox litmus test) with the even stronger claim that Christ was by nature unable to sin.[4] William G. T. Shedd claims that the first Adam was able to avoid sinning (*posse non peccare*), but sinned and thereby became unable to avoid sinning (*non posse non peccare*). However, Christ (as the "second Adam") was *impeccable*, unable to sin (*non posse peccare*).[5] Whereas it was possible but logically unnecessary and uncertain that Adam would resist the temptation to commit evil, it is logically necessary and certain that Christ's will would obediently defy the temptation to sin.[6] However, this is problematic, because it digs a broad, ugly ditch between Adam's *peccability* and Christ's *impeccability,* suggesting that Christ was not fully human in the same sense as was the archetypal Adam (who represents our own humanity). The aforementioned systemic hamartiology adds another layer

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2   Lambert Zuidervaart, "Earth's Lament: Suffering, Hope, and Wisdom," *The Other Journal* (January 27, 2009); http://theotherjournal.com/2009/01/27/earths-lament-suffering-hope-and-wisdom/ (Institute for Christian Studies Inaugural Address, 2003).

3   I am grateful to Nicholas Ansell, J. Richard Middleton, and Christopher Zoccali for their assistance with this article.

4   "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Heb 4:15 ESV); William G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology: Volume II* (New York: C. Scribner's, 1888), 396.

5   Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 330.

6   Following James 1:13, Shedd claims that temptation never issues from God but only from within creation itself (Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 331). According to Shedd, Christ's wills (finite and infinite, human and divine) could never conflict; Christ remained impeccable because his *will* actively resisted the temptations of his *susceptibility* (Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 335-36). I will show how all human wills and identities—including that of Christ the God-man—are always-already influenced by the life-patterning systems of the Powers, for good or for evil.

of complexity to this conundrum: if Christ was fully human, then he participated in all the structures that humans are naturally involved in: economics, politics, religion, family, psychology, the environment, etc. But all of these Powers—these systemic dimensions of creation—are (in this postlapsarian epoch) corrupt and fallen. How then are we to maintain simultaneously the seemingly opposed facts of *both* Christ's impeccable divinity *and* his full humanity (which is peccable insofar as any individual is immersed in social systems complicit in evil)? How can we understand the "temptation to sin" in a systemic sense? How did Christ avoid and even resist systemic sin while living amidst and within it?

Systems and Powers

This notion of a systemic *Power* (especially as thematized by Walter Wink and John Howard Yoder) can be applied to economies, political structures, ecosystems, gender roles and their relations, race/ethnic relations, public health, and other dimensions of shared human existence. What each realm has in common is an inability to be reduced to an aggregate of individual agents; instead, each of these systems is driven by *synergic patternedness*.[7] Human life would be impossible without the mediating force of institutions and systems (psychological, ecological, aesthetic, ethical, economic, etc.) that cannot be reduced to the "mere sum total of the individuals composing them."[8] Walter Wink similarly emphasizes that the spiritual Powers are "the inner aspect of material or tangible manifestations of power" that manifest in the immanent creation in either good or sinful ways.[9] This spiritual nature of systemic power, morally charged in a positive or negative direction, is only ever cultivated through concrete social structures.[10] There are numerous Powers, institutions, or systems that have emerged from patterns of human behavior, ossified, and subsequently guide and regulate that behavior for good or for evil.[11] The parasitic, privative force of such social evil

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7   John Howard Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus: Vicit Agnus Noster*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans and Paternoster, 1972), 138. I realize that this position contradicts my use of Irenaeus elsewhere throughout this paper. Whereas Irenaeus highlights human individual free will (e.g., Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, ed. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, trans. A. Cleveland Coxe [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001], V.xxix), my exploration of systemic sin delimits the scope of human free agency. Similarly, my use of Walter Wink and John Howard Yoder (who stress the interdependence of humanity and creational systems) resists Irenaeus's notion that creation was meant to serve humanity and not vice versa (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, V.xxix).

8   Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus,* 143.

9   Walter Wink, *Naming the Powers: The Language of Power in the New Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), 103-5.

10   Ibid.*,* 109.

11   Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus*, 137. Acknowledging that "power" and "structure" are modern notions that might not be easily mapped onto first century Jewish understandings, Yoder nonetheless claims that the scriptural language of *powers, principalities, law, throne* and *dominions* all convey similar meanings to our contemporary sense of "power structures."

is *systemic* precisely because its host, creational goodness, is also synergic and systemic.[12]

Fallenness

Systemic sin is the negative direction that such structures can display: sin cannot merely be reduced to any given immoral action, but instead sin is complex and developmental in nature. Gustavo Gutierrez portrays sin as *both* a "personal and social intrahistorical reality" whose function is to pose "an obstacle to life's reaching the fullness we call salvation."[13] Walter Wink emphasizes that the language of "power" in the New Testament never refers to evil *per se*, but only to those Powers that serve evil ends.[14] The Powers were created *good*, as the vehicles for regularizing and rightly ordering all of creation, but as part of creation they are no less subject to the consequences of the fall. John Howard Yoder likewise notes that the majority of New Testament allusions to structures or systems (Powers, dominions, etc.) assume the fallenness of these synergic complexes.[15] Yoder claims that sin has led to the absolutization of these systems: under conditions of death and sin, the very structures and systems meant to facilitate human thriving instead broker misery and enslavement.[16]

Because of the interconnectivity and integration of all facets of an originally good creation, sin in any creational sector ripples out to upset the order of the rest of creation. In Daniel Boscaljon's words, sin is "*dis-integration* . . . a dissembling whose rupture denies wholeness." As dis-integration, evil alienates individuals from their home institutions and socially-conditioned ecosystems (family, government, friendships, environment, etc.). Insofar as an individual's identity is

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12 This is not to suggest that goodness and evil are located primarily in the social as opposed to the individual realm of human life; instead, both sites are morally significant. I highlight the social-systemic mode only because Christian morality, theological anthropology, and atonementology have often erroneously privileged the individual mode.

13 Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics, and Salvation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1973), 152.

14 Wink, *Naming the Powers,* 12.

15 Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus,* 141.

16 Ibid*.,* 143. Zuidervaart suggests that insufficient theological attention is paid to the way in which the fall has affected both the structure and direction of contemporary institutions such as businesses, schools, and churches (Lambert Zuidervaart, "Earth's Lament: Suffering, Hope, and Wisdom"). One possible problem with a systemic rendering of sin is that it overemphasizes the social construction of evil to the point where it is assumed that because sin is (in McDougall's words) "a cultural production; it is a man-made reality that can be overturned" (Joy Ann McDougall, "Feminist Theology," 670-87 in *The Oxford Handbook of Systematic Theology,* ed. John Webster, Kathryn Tanner, and Iain Torrance [New York: Oxford University Press, 2007], 674). While any theology of redemption surely needs to theorize how humanity can participate in redemptive restoration, it seems spiritually irresponsible to utterly immanentize both the problem and the solution—God needs to enter the picture in a substantial way. I suggest that traditional Christological doctrines (concerning Jesus's life, death, resurrection, etc.) already offer us the resources with which to flesh out this systemic conception of sin.

interconnected with and defined in relation to these complexes, one is alienated by this dis-integration from one's self, from others, from creation, and from God.[17]

While such a *privatio boni* interpretation of sin (as a dis-integration of already-existing creational goodness) provides the notion of evil with "no metaphysical standing", Darby Ray suggests that evil nevertheless takes on "a life of its own" in opposing God-given goodness.[18] Thus, social evil can have exponential repercussions, often culminating (in Wendell Berry's words) in a "hellish symbiosis."[19] When social systems fall (dis-integrate), they do not merely break down: they often re-calibrate and re-order into a false equilibrium. Humans often develop ideological excuses for this malfunctioning re-order, thereby legitimating these domination systems as morally neutral or even good.[20] Systemic evil (the fallen condition of dis-integrated subservience to malfunctioning social structures) often appears to be natural, when in fact it is tragically *unnatural*—it impedes human development into our teleological nature.

Irenaeus proposed that fallenness is the short-circuiting of humanity's processual training in righteousness. As a "good-but-not-perfect" creation,[21] humankind was originally meant to develop fully into the likeness of God (*similitudo Dei*). Conversely, the *imago Dei* is the ineffaceable potential for humankind to fully reflect God's creative glory to and within creation. From a historical-critical standpoint, there is no exegetical basis for drawing any such distinction between the *imago Dei* and the *similitudo Dei:* the biblical text refers synonymously to the divine image and the divine likeness. Nevertheless, I employ this patristic dyad heuristically: by aligning with (though not deriving from) the larger biblical narrative, these theological categories can helpfully explicate its anthropological and soteriological implications.

As the archetype of humanity, Adam was meant to achieve this flourishing

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17 Daniel Boscaljon, "Dis-Integration as a Model for Identifying Systemic Evil" in *The Other Journal* (April 10, 2012); http://theotherjournal.com/2012/04/10/dis-integration-as-a-model-for-identifying-systemic-evil/.

18 Darby Ray, "Tracking the Tragic: Augustine, Global Capitalism, and a Theology of Struggle," pages 135-43 in *Constructive Theology,* ed. Serene Jones and Paul Lakeland (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2005), 137.

19 Wendell Berry, "Solving for Pattern," pages 134-48 in *The Gift of Good Land: Further Essays Cultural and Agricultural* (New York: North Point Press: 1981), 136.

20 David Bentley Hart, *The Doors of the Sea: Where was God in the Tsunami?* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 144. Hart militates against the impulse toward theodicy that attempts to rationalize the existence of evil (thereby granting sin and suffering the status of ontological necessity). As horrifying as it is to recognize no greater spiritual purpose for creation's tragic misery, Hart claims, it would be even more horrendous if such suffering were naturalized as necessary into the order of the cosmos.

21 Terence E. Fretheim, *God and the World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005).

telos, the *similatudo Dei,* through a gradual process of character growth.[22] However, an "infantile" humankind tried greedily to grasp this flourishing telos too soon, before it was mature enough for such fullness of life.[23] The fall was a tragic spiritual shortcut, which cut short humanity's sanctification—the gradual perfection of human character into the likeness of God.[24] The Edenic fruit which would have nourished human appetites poisoned them instead. In this vein, the Eastern Orthodox Church understands sin less as *crime* against law that stands in need of retributive punishment, but rather as more of a *sickness* needing to be healed to permit one's flourishing.[25]

The individualistic portrait of sin might find attractive Christ's call to gouge out or chop off a misbehaving body part, because it assumes that sin is reducible to an individual's desires and choices—simply remove the malfunctioning element, and goodness will ensue. But if our Orthodox brothers and sisters are correct in their view that sin works more like a disease, then sin's affect on an "organism" will be *systemic,* permeating the whole in a way that cannot be treated by amputating a single infected limb or organ. As a healing process, sanctification is not merely the restoration of a prior perfect state, but is instead the restoration of the conditions of growth. Sanctification can be described as the gradual and habitual attainment of a new *habitus,* or condition of human life.

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22 Irenaeus equates sanctification with human deification (*theosis*). He remarks, "How, then, shall he be a God, who has not as yet been made a man? Or how can he be perfect who was but lately created? How, again, can he be immortal, who in his mortal nature did not obey his Maker?" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, IV.xxxix.2). I suggest that one need not be committed to the Eastern Orthodox doctrine of *theosis* to find wisdom in an Irenaean anthropology, whereby humanity participates in the process of sanctification, slowly regaining the *similitudo Dei* in the wake of Christ's recapitulative earthwork.

23 Ibid., V.xxxviii.1, 3. Irenaeus writes that "created things must be inferior to Him who created them, from the very fact of their later origin; for it was not possible for things recently created to have been uncreated. But inasmuch as they are not uncreated, for this very reason do they come short of the perfect. Because, as these things are of later date, so are they infantile; so are they unaccustomed to, and unexercised in, perfect discipline. . . . man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant. . . . Now it was necessary that man should in the first instance be created; and having been created, should receive growth; and having received growth, should be strengthened; and having been strengthened, should abound; and having abounded, should recover [from fallenness]; and having recovered, should be glorified; and being glorified, should see his Lord."

24 Irenaeus writes that humanity was created to be "ripening for immortality" (Ibid., V.xxix.1). Therefore, he views Adam's original sin not merely as the transgression of absolute divine command, but rather as "impatience with the timing of the divine economy" (Denis Minns, *Irenaeus* [London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1994], 98).

25 V. Palachovsky, *Sin in the Orthodox Church,* trans. Charles Schaldrenbrand (New York: Desclee & Cie, 1960), 20. The end purpose of the sacraments is therefore *healing*, referred to by the Orthodox Church by the ancient Greek term *iasis*. The sacraments (including confession, absolution, and Eucharist) are understood to be medicinal, in a sense, cleansing sinners of their disease (Palachovsky, 23).

Habitus: Virtue Ethics and Systemic Soul-Crafting

Habitus is the Latin term employed by Aristotle's Scholastic successors to refer to a person's psychological "ecosystem" within which humans both pattern their lives and have their lives patterned for them. Etymologically, *habitus* is closer to *condition* or *state* than to *habit*.[26] Yet this dual connotation—*habit* and *habitat*—is helpful in connecting the systemic conditions of social reality to the habituating development of personal virtue.[27] The life-habits marking the soul's *habitus* can slowly be changed (for better or worse) by willing against and acting against one's present nature.[28] As N. T. Wright recounts, ancient philosophy and theology understood virtue as a potential or capacity, a possible state of being that must be actualized by persistent moral practice. This training or exercising of the virtues (that are as yet accidental to one's present state of being) helps one slowly attain essential aspects to one's teleological—or "second"—nature. This *telos* must be developed, but once obtained it becomes an unalterable condition of one's soul, by which a person consistently desires, thinks, and acts rightly.[29]

Human growth is necessarily systemic: it proceeds through both individual habituation and social patterns.[30] As Alistair MacIntyre notes, the exercise of a certain group of virtues (habits conducive to a certain *telos*) helps to reinforce the systemic patterns of behavior that one shares with others.[31] But of course, vices (either the non-exercise of virtues, or the exercise of counter-"virtues") can like-wise reinforce the *habitus* of a broken system. In order to further develop a Christology which takes account of such systemic evil, I will now turn to Irenaeus's theory of recapitulation.

Recapitulation

According to Irenaeus, Christ's life, death and resurrection were a performative, redemptive retelling of the Adamic tale of creation and fall.[32] Where Adam had

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26 Cary J. Nederman, "Nature, Ethics, and the Doctrine of 'Habitus': Aristotelian Moral Psychology in the Twelfth Century," *Traditio* 45 (1989-1990), 87 (full article 87-110).

27 Hannah Arendt observes a similar dynamic in the causal loop intertwining human nature with human culture: "The human condition comprehends more than the condition under which life has been given to man. . . . the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers" (Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998], 9).

28 Nederman, "Nature, Ethics, and the Doctrine of Habitus," 90-92.

29 N. T. Wright, *After You Believe: Why Christian Character Matters* (New York: HarperOne, 2010), 31-36.

30 Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 158.

31 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (London: Duckworth, 1985), 223.

32 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.xviii.7. Narrating Christ's life, death and resurrection, Irenaeus writes that "God *recapitulated* in Himself the ancient formation of man, that He might kill sin, deprive death of its power, and vivify man."

skipped over his training in righteousness to grasp at unripened telic fruit, Christ qua human patiently bore his earthly suffering and tempting as he grew into the sanctified shape of his full nature.[33] Irenaeus typologically parallels Adam the fallen with Christ the redeemer by using the trope of *recapitulation*: Christ successfully "sums up" in his own personal development the spiritual history of humanity's encounters with temptation.[34]

For Irenaeus, Christ (as fully and enfleshedly human) underwent the length and breadth of the creaturely condition, including temptation and suffering. However, it was through embracing and embodying this suffering, temptable flesh that Christ conquered Satan, sin, and death, and thereby regained for human nature the possibility of sinlessness, immortality, and perfection.[35] Christ, in his obedience to the father, "cast sin and death out of the flesh he shared with Adam" thereby rightly embodying (qua whole human) both the *imago* and *similitudo* of God.[36] Irenaeus saw therefore Christ's obedient withstanding of the devil's temptations in the desert as a remix of the Adamic mistake:[37] Christ patiently bore the developmental process as he—fully human—grew even more deeply into the likeness of God. In Irenaeus's account, Jesus (as the "second Adam") undergoes the same fleshly trials and tribulations yet emerges victorious, thereby winning back for humanity health, wholeness and immortality. These conditions allow the unfolding of sanctification, the process of becoming fully human and therefore fully embodying God's likeness.[38] Irenaeus saw Christ's human growth—from newborn to adult—as the site of sanctification of the developmentality of human nature.[39] People are meant to grow, and to grow older. They are not, however, meant to experience death. By living through life's stages yet arising from death, Christ (as a fulfilled person) gave back to humanity the inherent goodness of the process of human growth.

This Irenaean view deconstructs Shedd's thesis that Christ's human nature did not partake in original sin but was *already* perfected as the sinless and righteous, yet impeccably temptable, Second Adam.[40] For Christ to be fully human, he must

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33 Ibid., III.xxxviii.1-2; Minns, *Irenaeus*, 98.

34 Ibid., V.xxxviii.1. He writes that "man could not receive this [perfection], being as yet an infant. And for this cause our Lord in these last days . . . . summed up all things into Himself."

35 Minns, *Irenaeus*, 91. As Irenaeus writes, "For it behoved Him who was to destroy sin, and redeem man under the power of death, that He should Himself be made that very same thing which he was, that is, man; who had been drawn by sin into bondage, but was held by death, so that sin should be destroyed by man, and man should go forth from death" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* V.xvii.7). Irenaeus proposes that the righteous will persist through and overcome tribulations in order to be "crowned with incorruption" (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* V.xxix.1).

36 Ibid.*,* 99; Irenaeus*, Against Heresies,*V.xxxviii.4.

37 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* III.xviii.7; Minns, *Irenaeus*, 99.

38 Minns, *Irenaeus*, 92-3.

39 Irenaeus, *Against Heresies,* V.xxxviii.1; Minns, *Irenaeus*, 91.

40 Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology,* 443.

have undergone the full depths of character development—that is, identity development. According to Irenaeus's Adamic typology, Christ was not already perfected qua human, but instead his humanity grew into his divine likeness (*similitudo Dei*).

Because Wink sees the self as extending into the identity-forming matrices of the Powers, he interprets Christ's exhortation to relinquish life in order to gain it as the refusal to cling to one's (perceived) autonomous selfhood: the ego must be replaced by God as the axis of one's identity, or character.[41] According to Wink, Christ focused on precisely this "process of *dying to* the Powers as the central paradox of his ministry." [42] Similarly, instead of portraying Christ (who willingly permits his own death at the hands of the Powers) as a slave of power, Yoder describes Christ as the first person in history "who is not the slave of any power."[43] It is precisely Jesus's antithetical posture toward (contingently malfunctioning) evil structures that leads to his being crushed beneath these Powers. This act performatively strips the Powers of their primary engine: the *illusion* that humans are the masters of their own fate.[44] It seems that for Wink and Yoder, dying to one's self is equivalent to dying to the Powers, and vice versa—and both attitudes clear the space for the Spirit to move both through the self and through the complex Powers.

I suggest that Irenaeus's Christological notion of recapitulation can benefit from Yoder's understanding of everything's coherence in Christ. Yoder remarks that the passage "all things subsist in [Christ]" (Colossians 1:16-17) is etymologically tantamount to claiming that Christ (re-)*systematizes* the Powers of the world.[45] By recapitulating within his own being the human drama of evil's systematization, Christ (working through his peccable-though-sinless *accidental* condition to gain the impeccable *essential* condition of the likeness of God) gathers up unto himself all systems, orders and Powers, healing their diseased privations so that they themselves might healthily enable an abundance of life. Christ's life, death, and resurrection enacted the paradigm shift *par excellence*, developing new virtue patterns that inculcated a new way of human flourishing in the midst of fallen systemic patterns of existence. This form of human flourishing is found in bearing on earth the likeness of the divine. Of course, this newness of life is not a supersessionist break with God's past vision for humankind; it is instead the expansive fulfillment of God's ancient covenantal call to human responsibility, both individual and social.

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41   Wink, *Engaging the Powers*, 159.
42   Ibid., 159 (my emphasis).
43   Yoder, *The Politics of Jesus,* 145.
44   Ibid*.,* 147.
45   Ibid., 141.

Exegetical Example: Christ's Two Temple Visits

The theologies (Christological, anthropological, hamartiological) which I have relied on thus far are certainly rooted in Scripture, yet my argument has been primarily philosophical and not scriptural. To demonstrate a biblical precedent for understanding Christ's earthwork as both a developmental participation in existing social Powers and a recapitulative reformation of them, I will exegete two Gospel passages narrating Christ's different experiences in the Temple: first as a child, then again as an adult.

The Lukan account of the boy Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:41-44 ESV) emphasizes the ritual nature of Christ's first pilgrimage to Jerusalem, ground zero of Jewish worship. He, his family, and their friends "went up according to custom" for the Passover Feast, implying that the Jewish religious calendar exerted bio-power over the travel plans and bodily diets of Yahweh's worshippers. If the adults in the group were susceptible to such social forces as these religious customs, then how much more so were children (such as Jesus) who carried the additional obligation to obey their parents. However, like other young individuals susceptible to larger social Powers, Jesus seems to get swept up by other social patterns and power structures: he remains in the Temple conversing with the teachers and priests instead of following his family as they leave town (Luke 2:44). The young Jesus's "understanding" and "answers" astonish his teachers and fellow students alike; however, these precocious qualities are mentioned only after Jesus is described as diligently "sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions" (Luke 2:46). According to John Wesley, "Not one word is said of his disputing with them, but only of his asking and answering questions, which was a very usual thing in these assemblies."[46] The Christ-child's obedient attention has shifted from the power field generated by his mother and father to the one generated by the Temple's priests and rabbis. His question to his parents, "Why were you looking for me?" is not a condescending divine rebuke, but rather genuine human incredulity at how to navigate these conflicting matrices of social expectations: "Did you not know that I *must* be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2:49, emphasis added).

One reading of this passage could interpret the Christ-child as ironically condescending to human power structures, only outwardly pretending to be constrained by finitude's limitations (upon experiential knowledge and conflicting social obligations) while inwardly knowing his absolute authority over these finite realms of nature and culture. However, a more radically *kenotic* interpretation would take seriously the temporal and material conditions of young Jesus's humanity: the God-child was once immature in his humanity. From the standpoint

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46   John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1754), 147.

of individual choice, either Jesus has carelessly forgotten the time or he has delib-erately disobeyed his parents' earlier call to leave. But neither of these options address the external necessity, the institutional obligation, alluded to in young Jesus's confused response. Jesus does not argue that it would be morally or spirit-ually better for him to remain in the Temple, but rather that he simply *must* be there. This sense of institutional necessity can, of course, cultivate beneficial by-products (in this case, a spirited and spiritual conversation among teachers and priests); however, it can just as easily herd its members fatalistically toward more malignant ends (for instance, the 'banal evil' exhibited by overly obedient Phari-sees unduly attending to the letter of the law while ignoring the good of the very people whom the law is meant to benefit).[47] The subtext of "What else could I do?" in Jesus's young voice reveals a resignation to systemic necessity, implicating the God-child in the social evil (though not, of course, individual sin) permeating the Temple as an institution. His immature attitude of resignation is repeated toward the end of the episode with a return to the familial *status quo*: "And he went down with [his parents] . . . and was submissive to them" (Luke 2:51). Of course, the problem is not his obedience to his parents or his religious authorities *per se.* Rather, the rapid oscillation of his institutional allegiance between the family sys-tem and the Temple system suggests that Christ the child (though fully divine) remains immature in his human nature, following the institutional path(s) of least resistance—now mercifully benign, but perhaps malignant down the road. So long as he participates passively in the Powers, Jesus cannot grow into the full-ness of his humanity: the likeness of God.

Yet is such complicity in systemic evil an essential feature of Jesus's nature? Or is it rather only an accidental feature which might be eventually shed? Can his human and spiritual development (for they are one and the same) not only extri-cate him from social sin, but actively enable him to reconfigure such sinful sys-tems? Luke's tale concludes by mentioning that "Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2:54). The next time that Jesus visits the Temple, he is a fully grown man with a clearer sense of how to re-struc-ture the complex and corrupt Powers.

Mark 11 portrays the adult Jesus visiting the Temple. In versus 7-11, Jesus "triumphantly" enters Jerusalem with his disciples, and then enters the Temple precincts. Verse 11 explains that Jesus "looked around at everything, but since it was already late, he went out to Bethany with the twelve." The meaning of this is unclear until several verses later, when the Temple goings-on are portrayed as

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47 This is most clear in the Pharisees' responses to Christ's controversial Sabbath miracles (Mark 3:1-6, John 9:1-16, Luke 14:1-6). The phrase "the banality of evil" was coined by Hannah Arendt to describe the mundane, bureaucratic nature of Nazi war crimes (Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* [New York: Viking Press, 1963]).

business as usual (as it were). The spiritual aura of the Temple (as a social Power embodied in a particular institution) has greatly changed since its last appearance in the Christological narrative: far from the rabbis' academic marketplace of ideas depicted in Luke 2, the Temple now appears as an economic underworld, a black market exploitation of religious rituals (Mark 11:15-17). In response, Jesus once again astonishes those Temple-goers who hear him teaching (Mark 11:18). However, this time it is because his message is magnified by his body language: he physically impedes trades and exchanges in the Temple halls (Mark 11:16).[48] He drives out *both* sellers and buyers, implying a ubiquity of guilt (Mark 11:15).[49] However, while his diagnosis is not dualistic, neither is it merely a blanket condemnation of all those present. Instead, Christ decries the *process* by which all the denizens of the Temple have become re-identified as thieves: "You have made it a den of robbers" (Mark 11:17). The *habitus* of the Temple is named and condemned as both a bad habit ("you have made it") and a bad habitat ("a den of robbers"). The Temple as a systemic Power has been constructed from the intersecting life-patterns of its members, yet it in turn has reconstructed those individuals in a deforming fashion. Christ is not merely concerned with the *actions* of the Temple inhabitants, but also with their *characters,* which are both revealed and reinforced by their actions.

This is true even of Christ's own character: unlike the Temple's merchants, Christ has avoided conforming to the patterns of this world and the sinful culture of its social systems (Roman 12:2).[50] Yet Christ does not escape or self-extricate from the power matrices of Jewish culture, but instead he re-invests himself in them; for instance, he is recognized as a rabbi for his teaching (Mark 11:17-18). Having previously participated as a student in the character-shaping power flows of the Temple's pedagogy, Christ now wields the power of being a rabbi within the Temple's social complex. The student has become the teacher. Whereas the immature Christ asked questions of the rabbis, the mature Christ asks questions of the laity.[51]

However, Christ's maturation process has occurred both *inside* and *outside* of the context of a cultural system known as the Temple. Twice in Mark's account of the Temple visit, Jesus and his disciples leave the Temple and the city in the even-

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48 "And he would not allow anyone to carry anything through the temple."

49 "And he entered the temple and began to drive out those who sold and those who bought in the temple." This seems to be Christ's most vulgar display of power on record, and at first blush it is difficult to discern what is kenotic, cruciform, and selfless in his attitude. Recall, however, that he had just entered Jerusalem in the most carnivalistic manner possible, planning and executing a ridiculous "zero's welcome" of a donkey ride into town (Mark 11:1-11). Such an entrance may be described as "triumphal," but it can scarcely be described as "power-hungry."

50 "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind."

51 Jesus's teaching takes the form of a rabbinic *antithesis* between a rhetorical question of scriptural interpretation and a pastoral response concerning community practices.

ing (Mark 11:11, 19). This contrasts with Luke's story of Christ's childhood, when Jesus fails to leave the Temple or the city on time with his family (Luke 2:43-44). This suggests in the mature Christ an intentional separation of self and system, whereby Jesus differentiates himself from the role offered to him by the Temple complex. As fully human, Jesus cannot remove the identity-forming signature of the Temple institution from his being; yet his maturation into godliness and wisdom (Luke 2:54) involves both a break with and a re-investment in social systems such as the Temple. For instance, Christ exits the sinful Temple, but returns the next day—not with a vengeance, but with justice. As in Luke's account, Christ recognizes the Temple as his Father's house, yet here he extends the Temple habitat to "all the nations," whose collective *habitus* deserves to be shaped for—and by—prayer-filled worship (Mark 11:17).

Open Questions

This paper stands as less of an answer and as more of a problematic question: how are Christians to maintain simultaneously that Christ was sinless and that he was a fully human member of fallen systemic Powers? In order to provide a tentative resolution to this paradox, I have sketched the possibility that Christ's self-sacrificial identity patterns (in the face of fallen systemic Powers) may have enabled the reworking of the systemic conditioning patterns of creaturely life. Theologians who continue to ponder this question might address a number of related themes: the relationship between scientifically historical understandings of the evolution of humankind and its theological-anthropological bearing on an Adamic Christology, the degree of character change that is practically possible (as debated by virtue ethicists and theologians), the human conditioning *of* and *by* the ecological environment, and the effect that the question of non-peccability (the unrealized possibility to sin) over against impeccability (the impossibility to sin) has on orthodox Christian theology. Most importantly, further work on this question will examine the ethical and ecclesiological implications of all this for us living today in the wake of Christ's earthwork.

Moral Formation *and* Christian Doctrine:
"The Conjunction against which We Must Now Struggle"

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Abstract

This essay explores the importance of Christian doctrine for moral formation. It asks why theological study can be transformative. It is not, as is commonly thought, simply the unambiguous power of the biblical text itself. Indeed, the connection between Scripture and the Christian life is not always clear. I argue that human agency in the form of teaching, the root of doctrine, bridges the gap between the text and the moral life. In the economy of God's redemptive activity, the text is involved in moral transformation as human agents express claims about its authority and validity. This means that the doctrinal claims of the church sets readers or hearers in the scriptural world. The essay concludes with a description of the content of doctrine that functions in this way.

[W]hat we do not need, if we are better to understand the nature of our existence as Christians, are further nuanced accounts of the relation of doctrine and ethics. For such accounts too often simply reproduce the presuppositions that created the 'and' which divides theology and ethics into separate realms, the conjunction against which we must now struggle.

— Stanley Hauerwas[1]

Like any self-aware educational institution, the college at which I teach regularly surveys its students to see what parts of college life are functioning to advance our

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1 Stanley Hauerwas, "On Doctrine and Ethics: Problematising the Relation between Doctrine and Ethics," in *The Cambridge Companion to Christian Doctrine,* ed. Colin E. Gunton (Cambridge, U.K. Cambridge University Press, 1997), 35.

objectives and which are not. College life for our students includes the usual mix of social engagements, sports, chapel, classes and service opportunities. What continues to surprise those who evaluate these reports is the recognition among students that *their course work in theological and biblical studies is transformative*. Students regularly cite classes as one of the components of their experience that "changed their life." In an age of cutbacks and austerity this certainly relieves those of us whose livelihoods depend on this type of teaching.

The assurance is nice but provocative: How does biblical and theological study, rather arcane fields, participate in this type of transformation? My assumption is that Christian institutions concerned with faith formation participate in the catechetical mandate. Even though a theological college isn't a church, it can still take part in the ecclesial task of moral formation, which particularly in pluralist societies has become a topic of deep concern. In Canada recent reports show not just that we live in a very diverse nation, but that the situation is fluid. Here only 1 in 3 young people who attended church as children still do, and only about half of those who no longer participate in ecclesial life continue to identify with the Christian tradition at all.[2] It is this sort of data that prompts the reflection in this essay. Statistics like these make us wonder how the Christian life is to be cultivated as a distinctive way of being that contributes to the common good and witnesses to God's own goodness.

Take Up and Read

The biblical text itself deals not only with propositional claims, beliefs, or a noetic sense of faith, but also with faithfulness and the moral life. This is beyond dispute. The text has been instrumental in the western legal tradition as well as numerous historical and ongoing prophetic subversions of the status quo. Its influence can be detected both on the social or political level, but also on more personal strata. Consider an example, what Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes as his "grand liberation." In 1936 Bonhoeffer wrote to a friend named Elizabeth Zinn describing a key transition in his life,

> I came to the Bible for the first time. It is terribly difficult for me to say that. I had already preached several times, had seen a lot of the church, had given speeches about it and written about it—but I still had not become a Christian, I was very much an untamed child, my own master. I know, at that time I had turned this whole business about Jesus Christ into an advantage for myself, a kind of crazy vanity. . . . It was from this that the

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2   News release from The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, September 6, 2012; http://www. evangelicalfellowship.ca/page.aspx?pid=14662 (accessed May 1, 2013).

Bible—especially the Sermon on the Mount—freed me. Since then everything is different. I am clearly aware of it myself; and even those around me have noticed it. That was a *grand liberation*. . . . I now saw that everything depended on the renewal of the church and of the ministry. . . . Christian pacifism, which I had previously fought against with passion, all at once seemed perfectly obvious. And so it went further, step by step. I saw and thought of nothing else. . . . My calling is quite clear to me. What God will make of it I do not know. . . . I must follow the path.[3]

The change he describes took place in 1930-31 during his stay in New York. As he describes it, his encounter with Scripture gave him both freedom from self-interest and a sense of vocation. Notice Bonhoeffer does not point to his formal academic engagement at Union Theological Seminary nor to the various spectacles of American religiosity, of which there are many, but to Scripture as the agent that precipitated his transformation. Bonhoeffer's is a twentieth-century example, but of course there are others—the result of Augustine's response to the child's "*tolle lege*" and Luther's wrestling with Rom 1:17. Certainly, there are countless less famous examples as well: Vernon Wayne Howell's life was changed when in a prayerful moment his attention was drawn to Isaiah 34; at least that's how the story goes.

Yet one wonders if it is as simple as that. Despite the revivalist notion that the two material causes of Christian transformation are the troubled heart and Holy Scripture, the process by which reading or hearing Scripture gives birth to a transformed moral life is not at all clear. Consider a common component of both sermons and devotional reading: the ubiquitous "application." Countless sermon outlines have just this word somewhere near the bottom. The preacher explains what the author intended the text to mean and then "applies" it. The bridge between the world of the text and the life of the Christian community is this rickety span of application, which too often seems to mean something akin to brute similarity or even inference.

There is, I would suggest, something of a crisis of today precisely related to the move from "meant' to "means," both in preaching and in moral theology more technically. Some, whom Kevin Vanhoozer would call "epic" theologians, believing there is really no gap: we can know what was intended by the author and believe the text means exactly the same thing to us. Others, whom Vanhoozer would

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3   As quoted in Mark Thiessen Nation, Anthony G. Siegrist, Daniel P. Umbel, *Bonhoeffer the Assassin? Challenging a Myth, Recovering his Call to Peacemaking* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013), 21 (emphasis added).

label "lyric" theologians, assume the ditch cannot be crossed with even the most sophisticated modern historiography. Instead, the lyric theologian thinks Scripture presents us with an opportunity for our own self-expression.[4] Academic specialists sometimes lose sight of the challenge, because as biblical scholars we spend little time reflecting on the way the text lands in the church, or because as theologians we hardly engage Scripture at all. Though this does little to harm our academic careers, it has contributed in no small way to a general befuddlement among Christians.

To show the depth of this challenge I'd like to skim a few examples that are more sophisticated than the bare inference of "application." I'm particularly interested in texts that are written for non-specialists, not high-flying works of theory, but books written in a pastoral tone. First, consider the prologue to Craig Bartholomew and Michael Goheen's *The Drama of Scripture,* which is an introductory text in biblical theology. To paraphrase the subtitle, its intent is to help students find their place in the biblical story. This is a useful book written by established scholars; it has been required reading in an introductory course I team-teach. Yet think about the following sentences from the perspective of moral formation: "As we enter deeply into the story of the Bible, God will be revealed to us. We will also find ourselves called to share in the mission of God and his purposes with the creation."[5] Let's sidestep for a moment the curiously passive way of speaking about revelation, and notice the way the "story of the Bible" is linked to sharing in God's mission. The authors laid the groundwork for this a couple of pages earlier when, drawing on the work of Leslie Newbigin, they discuss grand narratives, i.e. the "Western story" and the "scriptural story." Their point is that "[b]asic stories are in principle" both normative and comprehensive.[6] The result is that Scripture is linked to the Christian life with a vaguely philosophical principle—a theory about narratives.

Another, more recent, example comes from a book titled *A Community Called Atonement*. I'm drawing our attention to this work, because in many ways its authorship represents a best-case scenario. Scot McKnight is an able NT scholar and effective popular writer. His work demonstrates obvious pastoral concern. The suggestion in *A Community Called Atonement* is that Scripture is "the Spirit-inspired story of Jesus as communicated, through, to, and for the church."[7] The goal is to "shape the identity of God's people." He continues, "The church invites

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4   Kevin Vanhoozer, *The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical Linguistic Approach to Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2005), 83-93. As might be suspected, Vanhoozer is reflecting on Lindbeck's classic typology.

5   Craig G. Bartholomew and Michael W. Goheen, *The Drama of Scripture: Finding Our Place in the Biblical Story* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2004), 22.

6   Ibid.*,* 20.

7   Scot McKnight, *A Community Called Atonement* (Nashville: Abingdon, 2007), 145.

everyone to learn this story and to let this story become each person's story." Further down the page the working theory surfaces even more clearly: "The best way to describe Scripture is that it is identity shaping. "[8]

What does it mean to say that Scripture is "identity shaping"? How does Scripture affect this psychological process? McKnight writes,

> The church becomes a community called atonement every time it reads the story of Jesus and every time it *identifies itself* with that story and every time it invites others to listen in to hear that story. Reading Scripture and listening to Scripture and letting Scripture *incorporate* us into its story is atoning.[9]

In McKnight's view the bridge between text and reader is a psychological process of identification and the social process of incorporation. We might wonder, then, how one encounters Scripture such that the stories of Jesus are formative in ways the genocides of Joshua are not? A number of recent books have in fact pointed out that some Christians have identified themselves with the perpetrators of these ancient accounts of violence. Christians have felt themselves incorporated into a people that conquers by the sword.[10] It may be a bit unfair to poke our noses into McKnight's book this way. He obviously wouldn't support such a reading.[11] My point, however, is not to critique either of these books specifically. I simply want us to notice that in them we see appeals to philosophical, psychological, and social modes of connection between the text of Scripture and the formation of the reader.

Earlier I referenced the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. What is intriguing about his approach to Scripture and moral formation, despite his mention of pacifism in the long quotation I read, is his consistent rejection of "ethics". In what was probably intended to be the first chapter in his *magnum opus,* a book under the simple title *Ethik,* he writes, "The knowledge of good and evil appears to be the goal of all ethical reflection. The first task of Christian ethics is to supersede that knowledge. . . . [I]t is questionable whether it even makes sense to speak of Christian ethics at all."[12] Bonhoeffer was a sort of protégé of Karl Barth, and Barth's take is even stronger. In volume II.2 of his *Church Dogmatics* Barth

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8   Ibid.*,* 146. In the same context he invokes Kevin Vanhoozer's theo-dramatic description to say that it is to be performed (147).

9   *Ibid.,* 148 (emphasis added).

10 For example, see the opening of Eric Seibert, *The Violence of Scripture: Overcoming the Old Testament's Troubling Legacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012).

11 Unfair, because one of McKnight's central points is that we should think of the atonement as Christ's identification with humanity for the purpose of our being incorporated into his life (McKnight, 107).

12 Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, ed. Clifford J. Green, trans. Reinhard Krauss, Charles C. West, and Douglas W. Stott, Vol. 6 of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Works* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2005), 299.

writes, "Strange as it may seem, that general concept of ethics coincides exactly with the conception of sin."[13] What both Barth and Bonhoeffer are worried about is the creation of a theoretical system that stands in for the living, speaking God. They would, it seems to me, be similarly worried about social, psychological or philosophical bridges mediating Scripture's formative mandate.

This is precisely why the contemporary theologian John Webster considers Bonhoeffer a model reader of Scripture. Webster writes, "More than anything else, it is *listening* or *attention* which is most important for Bonhoeffer, precisely because the self is not grounded in its own disposing of itself in the world, but grounded in the Word of Christ."[14] I'm drawing here from Webster's little book *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch,* which among other things is a flag of resistance hoisted against the tradition-centered, cultural-linguistic construal of the church where doctrine functions like the basic grammar of a community's speech. Webster is concerned not to let Scripture be subsumed under ecclesiology, but would rather have us reverse the relationship so that the church is understood essentially as a listening community. Webster puts it quite pointedly: "The definitive act of the church is faithful hearing of the gospel of salvation announced by the risen Christ in the Spirit's power through the service of Holy Scripture."[15] Let's be indulgent for a moment and ignore what Webster, the systematic theologian, says about the risen Christ's announcement. Let's focus in on the oh-so-Protestant notion of hearing or listening. Can we simply lock that in as an explanation for Christian moral formation?

If all that is going on is reading or listening, how is the church different from a reading group? In his engaging little book *The Pleasure of Reading in an Age of Distraction* Allen Jacobs considers the nostalgia of former students for the formality of college learning. Jacobs wonders if the experience might in fact be replicable outside the academic seminar,

> [L]et's imagine a Platonically perfect book group, one that would meet every need for the former literature majors who sometimes write to me with longing for the good old days of college. What would characterize such a group? First and most important, people committed both to careful reading and serious conversation; second, books with sufficient complexity and thoughtfulness to generate significant debate, whether about the work's own structures and procedures or about the

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13 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics,* II.2, ed. G. W. Bromiley and T. F. Torrance, trans. G. W. Bromiley, et. al. (1957; repr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010), 518.

14 John Webster, *Holy Scripture: A Dogmatic Sketch* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 83.

15 Ibid.*,* 44.

issues they raise. Given such circumstances, the solitary act of
reading and the communal act of conversing could merge into
a single and beautiful entity.[16]

One can imagine of course that in such a "Platonically perfect book group" application is inferred, basic stories are discovered, identities are shaped and individuals feel incorporated. So what distinguishes the engagement of Christian communities with Scripture from the book group in the mind's eye of Jacobs?

Earlier I mentioned the moment when Vernon Wayne Howell read Isaiah 34. That moment isn't particularly famous, not like the conversion of Augustine or the enlightenment of Luther. It's not even as well-known as the "grand liberation" of the modern martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The phrase from Isaiah that caught Howell's attention, at least according to some sources, was one of the middle lines from verse 16: "none shall be without a mate."[17] Howell had fallen in love with the pastor's daughter; the biblical line gave him the courage to approach her father. The problem was, her father did not exactly warm to the idea of giving his daughter to the young man, was quite cold to it actually, and Howell was eventually expelled from the congregation. Later the young man connected with a related community, a group known as the Branch Davidians. In 1990 he successfully petitioned a judge, "for publicity and business purposes," to change his name to approximate that of the ancient Persian king Cyrus or "Kurosh." In 1993 David Koresh, claiming to be re-establishing the Davidic kingdom, was involved in a violent confrontation with government authorities. He died during the final assault, along with 73 followers and children.[18] The story of David Koresh, along with those of countless other mis-readers of Scripture, calls into question any notion that Scripture has within itself the power necessary to form faithful Christians. "When it came to the Bible," Malcolm Gladwell writes, Koresh "was without peer."[19]

The Missing Role of Doctrine

The overlooked linked between Scripture and Christian moral formation is doctrine. Doctrine mediates the scriptural world to contemporary subjects. With this

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16 Alan Jacobs, *The Pleasure of Reading in an Age of Distraction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 138.

17 Quoted from the English Standard Version.

18 For a general account of Koresh's life see, "Who Was David Koresh," on the CNN website; http://www.cnn.com/2011/US/04/14/waco.koresh/ (accessed May 2014); see also the biography on the PBS Frontline website; http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/waco/davidkoresh.html (accessed May 2014).

19 Malcolm Gladwell, "Sacred and Profane: How Not to Negotiate with Believers," *The New Yorker* (March 31, 2014); http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2014/03/31/140331fa_fact_gladwell?currentPage=all.

assertion, though, we must keep in mind the Barthian worry, which is that theory might stand in the place of an active God. As well, Stanley Hauerwas has observed that hermeneutical *theory* sometimes attempts to take the place of the hermeneutical *community*.[20] Put another way, moral concern, and thus any account of moral formation, must reckon with the fact that what we're after is not just maintaining the current social architecture, but also a reconfiguring of our communities and selves. The political philosopher William Connolly helps us see the devastatingly challenging nature of this when he writes, "it is extremely probable that all of us today are unattuned to some modes of suffering and exclusion that will have become ethically important tomorrow as a political movement carries them across the threshold of cultural attentiveness and institutional redefinition."[21]

The inability of some forms of Christian doctrine to create space for positive movement has led to a widespread questioning of doctrine's place. If understood as a charting of true belief fully attained and timeless, doctrine can stifle Scripture's witness against oppression and suffering. This is why Webster is right to say, though perhaps too optimistically, "Scripture is as much a de-stabilising feature of the life of the church as it is a factor in its cohesion and continuity."[22] Webster may be too optimistic because his emphasis on listening and reading can minimize our realization that sin clouds our ability to hear the Word of God to us in the biblical text. The question then is this: How can members of the Christian community learn to listen to Scripture well?

What is not often observed is that listening—especially listening as comprehending—cannot be an entirely passive activity. If it were there would be little if any difference between David Koresh and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The challenge is to define doctrine in such a way that it enables listening without protecting Christian communities from the necessary destabilization of an external voice. That is the constant formal challenge. The occasional challenge, at least in the conversation outside scholarly circles, is that the very term "doctrine" has a dated ring. This is partly because the term is used infrequently in modern translations of the Bible. In older ones, the King James Version for instance, the Greek terms *didachē* and *didaskalia* are regularly translated as "doctrine." In modern translations like the English Standard Version the terms are usually translated as "teaching." Acts 2:42 is an example: the KJV refers to the "apostle's doctrine," where the ESV refers to their "teaching." What is regrettable is that the downplaying of doctrine has not been replaced by a focus on teaching in theological and pastoral work.

This prosaic change of terminology is one of the factors enabling a contempor-

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20 Stanley Hauerwas, "The Church as God's New Language," in *The Hauerwas Reader,* ed. John Berkman and Michael Cartwright (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001), 152.

21 William E. Connolly, *Why I am not a Secularist* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 68.

22 Webster, *Holy Scripture,* 46.

ary separation of Scripture and doctrine, and as well doctrine from ethics.[23] Other factors are the fragmentation of the theological school where pastoral theology is hived from dogmatics, and where biblical studies is similarly situated. This is amplified by a contemporary proclivity to specialization and technical proficiency. In the evangelical world of North America the problem is further exaggerated by an anti-intellectualism native to the revivalist movement. One way to see the effects of this are the numerous institutional doctrinal statements that make little if any mention of ethics. When institutions are concerned with the moral life they usually create a second set of documents to codify behavior. The corrective is not that doctrine and ethics should be "linked" but the realization that doctrine is a constitutive part of Christian moral formation calling forth action as well as belief. Doctrine directs traffic between reader and the biblical text. It cuts off some avenues and expedites others.

Assertions like this often conjure up old ghosts, debates about the relative importance of tradition and Scripture, in this case transformed into a power struggle between doctrine and Scripture. What gets us past this false choice is the recognition that doctrine is *teaching*. Doctrine is best understood not as a timeless list of truths, grammar rules, or renderings of a spiritual experience. Lindbeck, Vanhoozer, Webster, and others have noted the shortcomings of these three options. Rather, doctrine is best understood as *carefully considered teaching about God and creation in light of the witness of Scripture*. This description helps us see that the bridge between Scripture and moral formation is the teaching community. Through teaching, whether formal or informal, followers of Jesus make claims about God and creation that open up new avenues of self-understanding and apprehension of the world among hearers. Through this activity people can identify with the text of Scripture, they can find themselves within the drama of God's redeeming work.

Recovering the simple understanding of doctrine as *teaching* clarifies its necessary role in ethical formation. The moral life is something we learn. Doctrine not only summarizes and synthesizes the biblical witness, as many have noted, but it also enables readers to encounter the text itself as Christian Scripture. Doctrine is thus teaching *about* Scripture, and in this way teaching about the text's subject matter, creator and creation. While I'm not sure that this simple definition will satisfy my Catholic friends, it should be recognized that doctrine inherently includes tradition because it recognizes the necessity of receiving teaching. Remembering that doctrine is teaching reminds us that it requires an agent—the teacher, one who has been taught. As well, recognizing the role of the teacher makes obvious the fact that Christian formation, in both its moral and ideational

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23 Stanley Hauerwas provides a brief narration of the separation of doctrine and ethics in "On Doctrine and Ethics," 21-40.

facets, is inherently dialogical. In a post-Christendom society the teaching church must reckon with the freedom of learners to accept or reject what it is they are saying. This does not negate the authority of the church's doctors but qualifies it vis-à-vis the rest of the *ecclesia* and the freedom of those beyond who may or may not be convinced. For the teaching church the hermeneutical community emphasized by Anabaptists like John Howard Yoder and Jim McClendon is unavoidable.

Let me push my point a bit by summoning the biography of another theologian, this time that of Ellen Charry, who teaches at Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1999 Charry was featured in an article in the American evangelical publication *Christianity Today* that described her as one of the "new theologians." In that piece author Tim Stafford notes that Charry came to faith as an adult. He writes, "Charry must be one of the very few persons in all the modern world won to Christ though the reading of theology." She had been a social worker in Philadelphia and New York and was searching for a way to put her head and hands together. She found God while studying religion at Temple University.[24] In the same article Charry describes a key juncture in her study, which was reading Karl Barth. Charry told Stafford, "Barth just undid me. . . . Barth enabled me to first taste that God is a reality and not an idea." As well, she describes a moment in her reflection on the Augsburg Confession: "Justification by grace through faith . . . what are we talking about? So I decided to try it on. I lifted my arms up and I put in over me like a dress, the doctrine . . . . I tried it. And I fell off the chair. . . . I tried it on like a dress, and I just fell over."[25] The link between Scripture and doctrine is only implied in Charry's experience; certainly Barth and the Augsburg Confession teach. This cannot be said in the same way for literature groups. Doctrine as teaching is obviously anything but a *new* idea, but why is doctrine so often equated with a freestanding body of information?

The helpful thing about certain academics is that they not only have biographies but they reflect with some substance on these very topics. In the case of Charry my attention is drawn to her book *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine.* Working under the assumption that both insight and practice are viable components of moral formation, she sets out to recover a sapiential approach to theology and human excellence. Charry describes this as "engaged knowledge," that is, both information and attachment to that information. She observes that both eastern and western streams of ancient Christianity affirmed that "God was the origin and destiny of human happiness, that knowing and loving God are the foundation of human self-knowledge and direction, and

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24   Tim Stafford, "The New Theologians," *Christianity Today* (February 8, 1999), 30-49.
25   Ibid., 47.

that life's goal is conformation to God."[26] The problem, as she identifies it, is that over time the sapiental approach has lost influence. This is particularly true in modernity when theology ceased to be understood as a practical discipline.[27]

Another way of describing the faded sapiental assumption is to say that doctrine itself has ceased to be understood as salutary. The burden of Charry's argument in *By the Renewing of our Minds* is to show that this has not always been the case. She aims to demonstrate that for pre-modern or "classic" theologians doctrine was understood as bringing health and nourishment, not just information. Or as she states near the end of her study, her goal is to "highlight the indivisibility of the intellectual and pastoral interests of classical doctrinal exegesis."[28] Webster, whom we encountered earlier, weighs in affirmatively when he says that modern theology has become dominated by the rhetoric of cognate disciplines. He writes "Much theology in the classic mould was, by contrast, centrally (though not, of course, exclusively) concerned with the instruction, guidance and information of the disciples of Jesus Christ."[29] For Charry's part she attempts to prove her point by dealing with the hard cases. If she can show that in the most unlikely of places—e.g. Augustine's *De Trinitate* and Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo*—doctrine was understood as salutary, then surely it was understood this way in general. What this shows, Charry believes, is that "when Christian doctrines assert the truth about God, the world, and ourselves, it is a truth that seeks to influence us." She continues, "In the older texts, evangelism, catechesis, moral exhortation, dogmatic exegesis, pastoral care, and apologetics were all happening at the same time because the authors were speaking to a whole person."[30]

None of the classical theologians, Charry surveys, Calvin, Basil, Augustine, among others, could have envisioned truth as something that did not help us become excellent persons. If something is untrue it is obviously harmful. The inverse is likewise the case; "truth, beauty and goodness are affective."[31] So for the classical theologians, getting doctrine right was important, but not the end in itself. The end was pastoral: spiritual and moral formation, belief serving devotion. What is needed, then, to connect Scripture and ethics is not a theory about the function of narratives or psychological assumptions about how we identify with texts, not something called "practical theology" or "peace and justice theology," but rather just good theology undertaken in the classic mode. Where necessary it must revise what Christians teach, but mostly it must reconnect truth and moral excellence.

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26 Ellen Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 4.

27 Ibid., 5.

28 Ibid., 235.

29 Webster, *Holy Scripture,* 132.

30 Charry, *By the Renewing of Your Minds,* viii.

31 Ibid., 235.

The theologian must keep pastoral concerns before herself, as the pastor must never tire of speaking rightly about God. "For theology," as Charry says, "is not just an intellectual art; it cultivates the skill of living well."[32] Doctrine is not just the theory of the Christian life, which then needs to be applied. No, doctrine, which we encounter in moments of practice and reflection, is itself formational; it shapes character and virtue. Charry's study nicely adds a layer of meaning to our description of doctrine as teaching. It helps us see the relationship between the church's teaching, the Christian life, and human flourishing, each linked to the other through the mutuality of truth and excellence.

Doctrine—"A Simple Sketch"

It is the role of the teacher, or *to use Paul's term from Ephesians 4,* the *didaskalos,* that the popular-level proposals cited earlier fail to clearly acknowledge. Hidden beneath the claim that Scripture provides the basic story of the world or that it shapes the believer's identity is the fact that claims must be made about the text's status and its meaning. Texts themselves cannot make such claims; people do. Or to speak with the native tongue of a Christian, God does through creaturely agents. This means the impingement of Scripture on human lives is an ecclesial event, which is to say, an event marked both by human fallibility and divine rejuvenation.

To further describe the character of doctrine as teaching I want to turn once more to John Webster. Reflecting on the work of the sixteenth-century Lutheran theologian Zacharius Ursinus, Webster gives a minimalist definition of what doctrine or theology can provide, suggesting that it is but "a simple sketch or outline of the different parts of Christian teaching with an eye to their scope and interrelation." On this account he thinks it should use "quite minimal organization."[33] The goal of Christian doctrine is not the construction of a fully mature worldview or a historical uncovering of textual origins; rather, it is a "practical knowledge of God" or knowledge intended to further "the life of the Christian community, the salvation of humankind, and godly discipline." Therefore, it isn't surprising that Webster concludes that theology is less a scholarly discipline than it is "a process of moral and spiritual training and an exercise in the promotion of common life."[34] The theological work of the *ecclesia* and its designated pastoral and pedagogical agents serves the gospel by building up the community in the economy of God's grace. Theological work can provide an example of "attentiveness to and deference before the gospel."[35] Shifting from the activity of theology to the content of Christian teaching itself, Webster proposes that doctrine should serve Scripture.

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32   Ibid.*,* 240.
33   Webster, *Holy Scripture,* 113.
34   Ibid.*,* 116, 128.
35   Ibid.*,* 129.

Doctrine traces or indicates Scripture. The dogmatic conclusions of theology aren't superior to Scripture—they aren't improvements; instead, doctrine helps readers "find their way around the biblical worlds."[36] Therefore, we must be cautious to maintain control over theological rhetoric so that it doesn't give the impression that doctrine is an unbending list of truths floating free from Scripture. If we don't, Webster points out, there is a risk that theological rhetoric can "de-eschatologize the church's apprehension of the gospel."[37] We may think the glass we see through is the crystal of the New Jerusalem.

What I find helpful about Webster's reflections here is that despite his aversion to heavily methodological exegesis, he grants space for the church as a catechetical community to teach. This is not the poetics of self-creation, but humble instruction that connects us to the center of the biblical witness. It represents the partly formed fruit of theology—pedagogy with the goal of helping individuals and communities realize the goodness of God and their full humanity. As teaching in the economy of grace, doctrine creates space within the closed world of the text and the closed world of our own experience, for readers and hearers to enter into the territory of the Triune God. This is the role of the traditional themes of dogmatics. The doctrine of "justification by grace through faith" is a rendering, albeit neither total nor perfect, of the content of Scripture such that hearers find it addresses them and evokes a response. As so often is true of God's way with creation, doctrinal teaching is an instance of God's use of frail human creatures to make apprehensible the truth of his love.

In conclusion, let me refer to Jesus's reply to a questioner recorded in the Gospel of Mark. In the twelfth chapter of that Gospel he states that the greatest commandment is to love God with heart, soul, mind, and strength. Jesus ties this to the overtly ethical command of loving one's neighbor as oneself. It is difficult at times not to allow the distinction between the first and second commands to become a separation. Part of the problem is that we miss in the first the fact that the love of God involves more than mental affinity. Such a love for the world's creator and redeemer involves the formation of particular disposition and desires. This challenge has its corollary in a general temptation to see doctrine as merely informative, separated from the process of moral formation. I've tried to argue that this ought to not be the case, that doctrine as a part of the teaching mandate of the church functions in a life-giving way as it forms persons in relationship to the true and the good. As the performance of a teacher empowered by the Spirit, doctrine provides the agential capacity necessary to evoke a response from hearers in ways that texts alone cannot.

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36 Ibid., 129.
37 Ibid., 130.

BOOK REVIEWS

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Paul in Acts and Paul in His Letters. Daniel Marguerat. WUNT 310. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013. ISBN: 3161510620. Pp. ix + 295. $203.00 (USD).

Daniel Marguerat has collected several of his essays into a monograph *Paul in Acts and Paul in His Letters*. His expressed concern is that of the reception of Paul in early Christianity, particularly the relation between Paul's letters and his presentation in Acts. In an effort to break the polarized discourses of harmonization vs. incompatibility, Marguerat develops three poles of reception that build upon an earlier typology suggested by François Bovon. These three poles represent three parallel and mutually informing aspects of how early Christian communities responded to Paul's absence (death). The "documentary" pole involves the collection and shaping of Pauline letters. The "biographical" pole remembers and glorifies the activities of Paul as missionary. The "doctoral" pole involves the pseudepigraphic invocation of Paul, especially in terms of intertextual conversation with "proto-Pauline" letters. Marguerat proposes a hermeneutical shift that does not posit Paul's letters as authentic material from which Luke's account may or may not deviate. He identifies the "norm" of Pauline identity not as constituted by his letters *per se*, but rather as extant in the shift and continuity of his reception.

In chapter two, Marguerat investigates the image of Paul portrayed in Acts, especially as this image comes into contact with the evidence of the Pauline epistles. Marguerat identifies so-called discrepancies on both the level of information about Paul and on the level of Pauline theology. This chapter engages the methodological issues raised in the previous chapter in greater detail, seeking to shift the types of questions we ask of Pauline biography. Marguerat is interested in dispensing with positivistic expectations while appreciating the Lukan "historiographical point of view" (28). In addition, Marguerat wishes to challenge some of the more naive expectations of eyewitness testimony, i.e., that the author of Acts was actually present with Paul during some of his missionary journeys. In order to combat these polarized discourses, Marguerat develops his theory of reception, touched on in the previous chapter. These poles serve as a base from which to launch an analysis of the Paul in Acts and in his own letters. Marguerat makes some interesting points here that are worth keeping in mind throughout his analyses. Luke is situated within a "Pauline movement," in which memories of Paul (not his writings) are valued. Paul's image should be considered as a vector within early Christian identity formation, and not in isolation from such historiographical considerations. Paul is "emblematic" of Christianity, reflecting a rupture from Judaism as a result of an experience with Christ. However, certain "third generation" considerations influence Luke's historiography at the expense of some of the more "Pauline" emphases.

One of these is Paul's approach to the law, which is taken up in chapter three. The issue here is that Paul seems to hold a dual perspective on the law: it cannot save, but he seems rather adamant to keep it. Marguerat's reading sees that while the Law has been replaced by faith in terms of its ability to save, it remains a "reservoir of the divine will" (55) and therefore remains relevant for Christian identity. This identity is of primary concern to Luke, over and above the soteriological shift taking place in the earliest period of "Christianity." Thus, for example, at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, the very issues of circumcision and the keeping of the law facilitate connections with Gentile Christians' observance of the law, while maintaining strong continuity with a Jewish heritage.

At this point it is worth noting that I think that this book can be read in two ways. First, the reader can appreciate each chapter as though it is an independent article. Each one is worth the read and contributes to the primary issue it sets out to engage. However, Marguerat notes in the preface that the thirteen chapters "follow the path of reverse chronology: starting with the reception of Paul and moving back to the apostle's writings" (v). The significance of this strategy is only appreciable when the book is read from cover to cover. Following the first few chapters (above) that explicitly engage "Paul in Acts," Marguerat focuses more upon Luke as a historian. Chapter five examines testimony to Jesus's resur-

rection in Acts; chapter six, Luke's patterns of characterization; chapter seven, Luke's replacement of the Temple with the home as a locale for forming identity; chapter 8 posits Luke's account as a testimony to the resurrection; and chapter nine queries Luke's interest in meals. There are only brief points at which the character of Paul figures into these explorations.

Following these are four chapters that are devoted specifically to issues that pop up in the letters themselves. Chapter eleven is a rather lengthy discussion of Paul's view of justification by faith, in which Marguerat takes a chronological approach to the theme. Some elements of this chapter ought to be considered in relation to chapter three (Paul and the law in Acts). Paul's opposition to the law (that is, the relation between justification and the law) is a rather late development in his thought, brought about by a Pharisaic approach to the law that restricted justification to Jews. This was a perspective that Paul himself had to come to terms with at his conversion to Christ, now relived due to Judaizing teachers at certain of Paul's congregations. Chapter twelve engages the nature of the relationship between Paul and the Thessalonians, in which Paul's heightened emotional language subverts his apostolic privilege. Chapter thirteen looks at Paul's discussion of the woman's veil, where Paul reinterprets the creation "order" in more egalitarian terms. A common thread in each of these chapters is Marguerat's careful attention to the theological reasoning in many of Paul's arguments.

What may at first appear to be a rather disconnected set of essays, then, actually serves to illustrate the argument that Marguerat stresses at the beginning of the book: the notion of three distinct poles of Pauline reception. Other studies that focus only on points of contact between Paul's letters and Luke's account are prone to miss some of the distinctive characteristics of each genre. By not perseverating on the diverse accounts of Paul's conversion experience, for example, Marguerat is able to appreciate these accounts in the context of their particular pole. Thus, the most significant aspect of this work is Marguerat's careful concern regarding Pauline *reception*. All portraits of Paul available to modern readers are mediated through one of the three poles of reception. The benefit of this approach is that it avoids privileging one of our access points to Paul over another. There has been a tendency in Pauline scholarship to pit the Lukan portrait of Paul against the "authentic" Paul found in his letters, which can stifle creative readings of both sets of texts. Marguerat reminds us that the only Paul we have is a received and constructed one, and that this ought to affect our disposition towards Lukan historiography. I appreciate this point very much. My only complaint is that Marguerat fails to connect the latter chapters to the question of Pauline reception, leaving much for the reader to infer. There could have been a concluding chapter that drew together some of the implications for Pauline reception and Lukan historiography. With that said, this collection is a rewarding read, both for those with

an interest in the book of Acts as well as those interested in the reception of Paul in early Christianity. I would especially welcome studies that further explicate the dynamics of Marguerat's three poles of Pauline reception.

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Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics. Bradley H. McLean. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ISBN: 9781107683402. Pp. viii + 320. $26.99 (USD).

Bradley's McLean's stated goal with *Biblical Interpretation and Philosophical Hermeneutics* is answering the questions, "What difference would it make to the discipline of biblical studies if scholars were to disavow their 'subjecthood'?" and, "What difference would it make if scholars were to cease reading the scriptures as objects of inquiry?" (vii). By no account should McLean be considered unsuccessful at addressing either of these questions, for he displays a consistently impressive command of the subject matter of philosophical hermeneutics and a creative flair for applying it to the bible. Neither of these feats should be taken for granted, as McLean consistently provides lucid summaries of a number of quite dense and technical philosophical thinkers, as well as engaging examples of what it might look like to bring their ideas to bear on the handling of a given text. Although McLean appears to be writing for a general confessional audience and not evangelicals specifically, his contribution to this subject area should be met with widespread appreciation in light of the frequent terminological confusion within evangelical publications often claiming to address "hermeneutics," but really covering what would properly be called criticism or exegesis.

A brief preface notes that the starting point of this project is the failure of the historicist model of interpretation founded on the schema of the interpreter as a sovereign subject and the text as a detached object. Despite the advances in knowledge afforded by historical investigation, it resulted in the profound alienation of believers from scripture due to a newfound emphasis on its historical distance from modern people, as well as the collapse of the use of history as a foundation for faith. McLean's thoughtful introduction fleshes this out more, setting out the concepts of the "founding sense-event" and "present sense-event" of a text, noting that interpretation has not truly taken place without the determination of present significance, and that a strictly historical approach does not account for the role of the situated scholar.

Part One of the book is entitled "The Crisis of Historical Meaning," and it contains four chapters covering the concepts and figures that led up to the aban-

donment of confidence in historicism that occurred with Troeltsch. McLean helpfully engages with modern linguistics in explicating the difficulty of precisely defining "meaning," and sets forth a sophisticated, stratified model that consists of the categories of "expression and signification" (semantic meaning), "denotation" (reference), "manifestation" (authorial intent), and "sense" (value). He then summarizes Schleiermacher's understanding of authorship, follows it with Dilthey and Husserl's attempts at saving the humanities, and finishes with the situation of the widespread realization of the mythical nature of the assumption of progress and the constructive (as opposed to descriptive) nature of historical investigation.

Part Two, "On the Way to Post-Historical Hermeneutics," consists of chapters giving summaries of Heidegger, Bultmann and Barth, and the reality-shaping nature of language. At just over forty pages, the chapter on Heidegger is the longest in the book, but the persistent reader will be rewarded with a succinct summary of *Being and Time*. With this background in place, the influence of Heidegger on Bultmann's demythologizing approach to the New Testament is easy to appreciate, although the scant three pages afforded to Barth's response to Bultmann seem unbalanced in comparison.

Part Three, "Post-Historical Hermeneutics," covers the usual array of thinkers associated with the continental tradition. Gadamer, Habermas, Ricoeur, and Levinas are all summarized and mined for insights on the process of biblical interpretation, along with a final chapter on Deleuze and Guattari. Gadamer's model of interpretation (as dialogue with tradition for the purpose of practical wisdom) and Habermas's ideologically based approach are productively synthesized by Ricoeur, whose own resourcing of Marx, Nietzsche and Freud are ably articulated by McLean. The problem of ethics is raised to the forefront in the discussion of Levinas, whose location of an ethical responsibility prior to one's "fore-structure" of understanding the other exposes the merely pragmatic appeal to ethics by the likes of Habermas as comparatively impotent. Although the obscurantist tendencies of continental philosophers is a truism, the chapter on Deleuze and Guattari nonetheless manages, quite adequately, the unenviable task of covering the jargon-heavy, interior-meaning-defying prose of the two French thinkers. A concluding chapter offers a brief summary of the high points of the book's narrative of the collapse of historicist interpretation, while providing some humble suggestions regarding a way forward.

There is much to commend in this volume, in particular the examples that McLean occasionally provides to show how the concepts of a given thinker may illumine a given interpretive act. This is an area where comparable volumes on hermeneutics can be unsatisfying. For example, Heidegger's phenomenological reading of 1 Thessalonians 5 is covered, showing readers how Paul's treatment of

the question of the timing of Christ's return can be handled in terms of Heidegger's concepts of *kairos* ("a time of struggle, crisis, and decision") and *chronos* ("historical time," 131). Paul redirects his audience's inquiry about timing towards issues of *living*—in keeping, for Heidegger, with his own call to reject "theoretical detachment" and "contemplate the 'how' of living in the present" (131).

With this acclamation in mind, several areas of weakness must be noted. First, McLean's otherwise exemplary appraisal of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (the principle of linguistic relativity, i.e., how linguistic structure relates to cognition and/or worldview-formation) fails to note the weakness inherent in the hypothesis and the extant critiques thereof, such as that of Sampson (*Schools of Linguistics: Competition and Evolution* [London: Hutchinson, 1980], 81-102). Second, while correctly recognizing that the true foundation of hermeneutical theory is located in philosophical issues such as the nature of the human being and the question of how knowledge is acquired, McLean restricts himself entirely to working with thinkers from the continental tradition on these important questions. It could be argued that analytic philosophers have not engaged in the same level of reflection on the question of hermeneutics as have continental thinkers, but the lack of interaction with their perspective on the underlying issues of epistemology and the nature of language is a troubling omission. Third and most important, this book simply does not deliver on its claim to provide a vision for a new kind of "post-historical" hermeneutics. McLean's remarks regarding an "ontological foundation of ethics," an appreciation of the "surface" and "depth" dimensions of a text, the task of "associating" bodies to "enact a present sense-event," and the adoption of a "nomadic" posture are provocative enough, but insufficient as the articulation of a robust new interpretive model.

These drawbacks notwithstanding, McLean's book provides an outstanding overview of key thinkers within the field of hermeneutics and is a useful tool for those involved in biblical studies. Whether or not one finds his diagnosis of a present "crisis" of interpretation accurate or relevant, the issues raised by this volume are ones that all biblical scholars, and not least of whom evangelicals, need to ponder deeply and carefully.

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Paul and the Miraculous: A Historical Reconstruction. Graham H. Twelftree. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 0801027721. Pp. 320. $32.99 (USD).

Although scholars have long characterized Paul as a teacher and theologian, Graham Twelftree, currently serving as the Charles Holman Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at Regent University's School of Divinity, has produced an exceptional text which recovers "the historical Paul in relation to the miraculous" (17). Detecting obscured references within Paul's letters regarding the miraculous, the author draws connections to historical cultures, presenting a relatively new angle on Paul: there is more to the historical man than theology, rhetoric, and mission.

Twelftree's investigation is a meticulous historical-critical exploration of the inherited practice and tradition of Paul's Jewish beliefs, cultural influences, and the innate features of the nascent Christianity he adopted at conversion, organized into a brilliant sketch of a more accurate historical Paul. He considers miracles, prophetic ministry, and charismata, from the view and expectations of Paul and those around him. Twelftree's new historical Paul challenges the "significant Pauline studies since the rise of the critical approach to religion" which have "shown clearly that the topic of the miraculous has not been prominent" (17).

The author keeps three perspectives—"what views Paul is likely to have inherited," "how Paul describes aspects of his own experience," and "looking back on Paul through the lenses of his interpreters" (18-19)—in view throughout the book, resulting in a conscientious, if not exhaustive, treatment of the apostle. Thus, Twelftree's work provides both a thorough approach to deeper exegetical studies about Paul and an excellent survey for those looking to resolve any issues they may have with miraculous ministry. This makes the volume an ideal textbook for seminaries as well as a helpful reference for ministry leaders.

The book is divided into five parts, the first part summarizing the "discussions so far" (7) and further indicating the lack of attention to the miraculous in Paul's story. The author here states that his purpose is to encompass an element of the miraculous and its place in Paul's mission, thereby adding to his renowned "theological enterprise" (26). Part Two offers four chapters dedicated to "Paul's Inheritance" of worldviews from his former religious practices and his new Christianity, as well as commonly held views of the prophets, prophetic activity, and the miraculous. Twelftree accomplishes this by consulting the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo, and Josephus, examining documents concerning first-century thought in light of the connection between "prophets, prophecy, and the miraculous" (61).

In Part Three, Twelftree searches Paul's own testimony, arguing that "Paul's

experience of the miraculous dramatically changed his life, determined his mission and significantly contributed to and modified his theology" (154-55). Probing his letters for evidence from his experience and ministry, this section uncovers a curious twist in Paul's definition of the miraculous: the apostle considers *negative* circumstances as miraculous events, not just positive ones. His experience with weakness and suffering, and not least his "thorn in the flesh," is negative in character, but Paul considers it nonetheless miraculous. The author unfolds Paul's understanding of the positive and blatantly miraculous experiences in his letters—his conversion, for example—as well as the more subtly miraculous, such as the gifts of the spirit.

In Part Four, the discussion turns to how others interpreted Paul, beginning with Luke's narrative in Acts, and the claim that Luke is "constantly twisting real history to theological ends" (231, quoting Gerd Ludemann's *The Acts of the Apostles: What Really Happened in the Earliest Days of the Church* [Amherst, NY: Prometheus 2005], 297). Among the materials examined are "pseudepigraphal and epistolic texts, narratives about Paul, writings representing anti-Paulinism, and Paul as an object of interpretation" (229).

Finally, Part Five recaps Twelftree's proposal that "the historical Paul is only adequately reconstructed if the miraculous is seen as important and integral to his life, his theological enterprise, and his work as a missionary and pastor" (308). He reiterates pre-suppositions of Paul's Pharisaic experience, his Christianity, and how Luke conveys "some reliable traditions" despite his "unreliable witness" (311). Twelftree ends with a presentation of "four conflicting portraits of Paul and the miraculous" (325) which he then resolves.

In this highly methodical volume, Twelftree probes many areas of potential influence, inquiring whether Paul was primarily a theologian as usually depicted or if Paul could be considered first as a prophet or apostle—and if so, whether these titles would carry the weight of cultural expectations of miraculous ministry and activity. Readers are led by way of this suggestion into a deeper investigation of Paul's definition of the miraculous, setting the stage for the book's *denouement*, where Twelftree reviews current theological conversations, undaunted by their perplexities (e.g., the relative absence of miracles in Paul's letters, contrasted with the colourfully miraculous Paul in Acts; or how Paul compares with Jesus, whose story is even more intensely splashed with the miraculous). At first, one might question this study's intensity, as there is so little explicit mention of the miraculous within Paul's letters. But Twelftree, typically thorough, procures and examines every available clue, noting the influence of the historical assumptions of culture and the unexpected scope of Paul's delineation of miracles, significantly contributing to the historical Paul.

Although the author claims this is not an exhaustive work, it is more suitable

for an academic audience (demonstrated by concentrated referencing to primary sources and other scholarly works, with exegetical management of Greek and Hebrew texts). It reads as a fascinating forensic study of the worldviews, practices, and expectations of the miraculous Paul may have acquired. Students of history, theology, *and* ministry will benefit from this work. But Christian leaders in search of accurate historical information will find this a particularly valuable resource for addressing the supernatural aspect of ministry, for Twelftree's questions mirror those of contemporary inquirers: "What was Paul's experience of and his view of his involvement in miracles and the miraculous?" "How important did Paul consider miracle working?" "How does he relate such a power-based ministry to his theology of weakness…?" (6-7). In what space remains, I will unpack four ways in which Twelftree's work on the influence of the miraculous on Paul's life, theology, and mission might inform contemporary, supernatural ministry.

First, Twelftree helps readers understand that Paul's involvement with the supernatural was influenced by his culture and background; ministries today may need to reconsider this influence in their own ministerial practices, as well as in the interpretation of the practices of other ministries and cultures, regarding the miraculous. Second, and closely related, Twelftree notes that, whether for self-imposed or culturally imposed reasons, the miraculous did not—at least in Paul's letters—take centre stage in his ministry. This speaks to ministries today that may feel restrained by their own understanding or culture. Also, the evidence that Paul participated in miraculous ministry, despite the apparent obscurity, confers a healthy legitimacy on engaging the miraculous, without overemphasizing it as a category of experience.

Third, Twelftree sheds light on Paul's understanding of negative events as miraculous, and thereby presents a helpful perspective on suffering from which contemporary believers can borrow encouragement. Although hindered by his difficulties, Paul is able to recognize God's hand at work in anguish. In this, the author also adds to contemporary dialogues on theodicy. Fourth, Twelftree soberly addresses the inconsistency between the rather sensationalistic presentation of Paul in Acts (perhaps reflecting more on the *author's* conservatism than on the integrity of Luke's testimony, as Twelftree suggests) and in Paul's own letters. Nevertheless, in regards to ministers involved in a theatrical demonstration of supernatural ministry, Twelftree's restrictive handling of Luke's writings provides some healthy parameters.

Throughout the book, readers will see that Paul tussles with many of the same issues the Western church does with respect to the miraculous and its reception or rejection. Those who face limitations or excesses concerning the role of the miraculous in ministry will find new ways to relate to the historical Paul as Twelftree portrays him, while those who seek to reconcile supernatural ministry with the

broader practice of mission in contemporary settings will be satisfied with the author's supportive insights.

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> *God, Sexuality, and the Self: An Essay 'On the Trinity.'* Sarah Coakley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013. ISBN: 0521558263. Pp. vii + 365. $24.59 (USD).

This is the first installment of a projected three-volume systematic theology by Cambridge's renowned Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity. As such, this volume continues several of the trajectories that Sarah Coakley has explored previously, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity, theological anthropology (via gender and desire), and asceticism. In a manner reminiscent of patristic writing, these three themes interpenetrate and mutually enrich each other—or at least, this is what Coakley hopes to show. As a work of "systematic theology," this project is notably distinct for two main reasons. First, Coakley aims to write to a non-specialist readership, so she minimizes the amount of jargon and technical language at play in her writing; she even includes a glossary. Second, Coakley attempts to chart a new course using a methodology that she terms *théologie totale*, a multileveled exploration of theological ideas and their expressions in multiple contexts and from multiple vantage points; it places contemplation and apophatic thought at the very heart of theological enterprise and, as such, must remain in principle "unsystematic."

The broad outline of Coakley's explorations proceeds as follows. After summarizing the book's general direction and various strands of argumentation, Coakley presents the methodology of *théologie totale* in relation to a sweeping discussion of the history of "systematic theology" and its contemporary cultured despisers. In the second chapter, Coakley shows more fully how systematic theology might proceed in a way that challenges its inherent temptation to idolatry; feminist resources, alongside the ascetic practice of contemplation, are used as tools by which to guard against creating God in the theologian's image. In chapter three, Coakley demonstrates how Trinitarian theology's emergence in the patristic period dangerously subordinated the Spirit to the Father and the Son. This subordination of the Spirit, she claims, was typically located in treatises that examined the Trinity explicitly and directly, but the same authors often presented a different logic—one in which the Spirit had a priority—when they wrote on ascetical topics. Coakley calls this model a "prayer-based model of the Trinity" or an "incorporative model." In this approach, the Spirit is not treated as subordinate,

but is rather viewed as the creating movement within God to open up a realm for the world and humanity within the Trinity itself. Biblical precedent for this view is found in Romans 8, where the Spirit enflames creation's desires for its renewal in Christ ("groanings") and, as such, instigates the movement of God into creation in order to drawn it up into the divine life. Coakley's prayer-based model forms the key constructive edge of the book from a doctrinal perspective.

The next two chapters contain theological explorations in somewhat atypical contexts. In her fourth chapter, Coakley describes sociological research that she had undertaken on behalf of the Church of England. She assessed the theological ideas of two English churches—one being an established church that had experienced a charismatic renewal and had since sought to bring it into a more stable ecclesiastical life, and the other, a group that had broken away from the former church and that had hoped to sustain, rather than tame, their charismatic experience. Coakley's initial suspicion was that the break-off congregation would have also exhibited evidence of the prayer-based Trinitarian theology at work. However, there was a less-than-clear correlation between certain social forms ("church" versus "sect") and sorts of Trinitarianism (though Coakley does note significant but subtle theological differences between the two churches). Chapter five examines how visual depictions of the Trinity manifest various gender constructions. Through a hermeneutics of suspicion, Coakley attempts to discover evidence that her prayer-based model of the Trinity manifests in a way that obscures patriarchal gender stereotypes. In the end, Coakley finds a predominant amount of depictions that would subordinate the Spirit and proliferate crassly literal male anthropomorphisms. But she also notes a small deposit of evidence that suggests that the Church's artists have been able, at times, to implement more circular and less hierarchical images to depict the Trinity and to incorporate explicit female elements into representations of the divine life.

To complete her study, Coakley returns to textual theological analysis, this time of the writings of Gregory of Nyssa and Augustine (an "eastern" and a "western" theologian). Coakley seeks to show how desire for God and sexual desire were correlated and aligned by these two thinkers. In her final chapter, Coakley further explores the relation of divine desire and sexual desire and finds a dialogue partner in Christian Platonism, particularly that of Pseudo-Dionysius. In the end, Coakley believes that her method of *théologie totale* is able to discern a view of divine and human desire, purged of male-only imagery by the integration of apophaticism and contemplative practice. This even leads her to suggest a path forward in the stubborn dispute over the *filioque*. In her view, the practice of contemplative prayer might purge Trinitarian thinking from patriarchal structures and assumptions and allow space to conceive of the Spirit without being caught up in a dominant Father-Son relation. And it is this new freedom from binary concep-

tual structures that allows the possibility of conceiving of the Trinity as a truly reciprocal relation of three in one.

Coakley is to be commended for framing her *magnum opus* in a way that is accessible to the non-specialist reader. Even more importantly, Coakley has done a remarkable service in her attempt to recapture the role of contemplation and asceticism in the theological enterprise. When this integration of theology and spirituality also intersects with questions of gender and sexuality, the result is a work that is richly textured, deeply human and theologically interesting. I offer just two critiques. The first of these is historical: in my opinion, Coakley has not shown persuasively that the early Christian writers conducted one doctrinal project when discussing the Trinity explicitly (the so-called linear approach that ends up subordinating the Spirit) and then exhibited a different Trinitarian logic when discussing prayer (the prayer-based model). I would contest her assertion that there are actually two different trinitarianisms going on. Rather, the difference between the two sorts of writing seems to me to be best attributed to the distinction between the relation of the immanent Trinity to the economic Trinity and how these approaches are implemented in the "logics" of the different discourses. God exists in himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (the immanent Trinity), and this is described one way by the patristic writers, but their discussions of asceticism require attention to how God acts in the world (the economic Trinity), and this may take the form of a different "order"—one that starts with the Spirit. This would seem to undermine the patristic precedent for a "prayer-based" model of the Trinity.

A second critique of this book relates to its form and structure. Since the various chapters range so broadly across many different academic disciplines, Coakley rarely interacts explicitly and directly with the breadth of scholarly discussion in fields such as sociology, anthropology, art history and the like. That Coakley is aware of major works in this literature is evidenced by the annotated bibliographies (of a sort) at the end of each chapter. However, this format (as opposed to detailed footnotes) undercuts her ability to carry on a scholarly discussion as it would naturally occur in the course of her argument. I fear that this style may be symptomatic of her methodology itself, insofar as she stops short of sustaining and developing the strands of her presentation in a thorough and comprehensive fashion. I appreciate that she intends her *théologie totale* to be unsystematic, but it is hard to know how such a presentation is to be open to criticism if it offers itself in a format that does not "show its cards."

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Classical Christian Doctrine: Introducing the Essentials of the Ancient Faith.
Ronald E. Heine. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. ISBN: 978-0-8010-4873-9. Pp. 182. $15.68 (USD).

It is instructive that in his opening chapter Ronald Heine, professor of Bible and Christian Ministry at Northwest Christian University, refers to Thomas Oden's, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy*. Oden's book, along with much of the rest of his scholarly work, is a clarion call for a return to classical Christian orthodoxy.

> The gains of modern life have been accompanied by the loss of wonder. The achievements of the end of the previous millennium have left us with a deep sense of rootlessness and moral confusion. This, then, is a fitting moment to ponder who we are in relation to our human past.
>
> The modern worldview is ebbing. Though perhaps not yet wholly extinct, it is low in emergent vitality, awaiting the lingering expiration of failed ideologies: individualism, narcissism, naturalism, and moral relativism. Others may term its death something other than the end of the modern way of knowing, but I have no better way of naming it.[1]

In response to this death, Oden describes the rebirth already under way: "Seekers among Christians and Jews today passionately long for an accurate and plausible recollection of historical wisdom. Theirs is a passion for roots, a yearning for depth, an appetite for prudence, a longing for tradition."[2]

This longing is rewarded by reading *Classical Christian Doctrine*, a "book [that] introduces the most basic doctrines of the Christian faith that have been held by a majority of Christians since the earliest centuries of the faith" (2). The basic structure of the book follows that of the Nicene Creed, with several chapters coming together to explain the formation of trinitarian doctrine, and individual chapters on christology and pneumatology, creation and redemption, ecclesiology, baptism, and eschatology. Throughout, Heine's engagement with both biblical and philosophical sources is commendable and relatively rare in this field. His handle on the thought of key figures is sound, and he shines particularly in the early chapters on trinitarian and christological development.

A fine example is his third chapter entitled, "'And the Word was God': The Christian Faith and the Greek Philosophers." It is an understatement to say that

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1   Thomas Oden, *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity*, (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2003), 2-3.
2   Ibid., 10.

evangelical students of theology are normally ill-equipped to enter into early theological debates because they are rarely introduced to Greek philosophy. With Tertullian, we often wonder: "What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?" Yet the truth is—at least in the formative years of Christian theology—quite a lot! In a mere four pages, Heine is able to offer a wonderfully succinct overview of how Greek philosophers understood the idea of the *logos*. He briefly surveys Plato and Aristotle, the Stoics, and the Middle Platonists (including Philo). Whether or not John intended to draw on the riches of the Greek philosophical tradition in the prologue of his gospel, it is without question that later Christian theologians (such as Justin Martyr) saw in this confluence the providence of God. I can think of no other introductory work of systematic theology that so attentively delineates this fundamental history.

The one chapter that seems misplaced is the final one on millenarianism. Heine even acknowledges that the doctrine "is related to the return of Christ but is relatively marginal to the Christian hope" (167). "The doctrine is included," he writes, "because it is sometimes a point of strife between churches today" (167). Fair enough, though I wonder if such an approach only reinforces an emphasis on marginalia. I would have preferred a closer examination of the "life of the age to come," which he only touches upon.

This is a remarkable book, not least in that Heine is able to concisely summarize difficult theological concepts and controversies without undue simplicity. Moreover, alongside Heine's clear prose are placed poignant excerpts from the works of various church fathers. The combination helps the reader feel as though she has really entered those early theological debates. In light of Oden's reflections above, I think the real value of the book lies in Heine's ability to portray to the beginner that Christian doctrine develops not merely through the unhinged reflections of individuals on scripture, nor through authoritarian control; there is real disagreement, and yet the center holds as the Spirit guides the body of Christ in its reflection on the triune God. Of course, the idea of a normative Christian tradition developing beyond the biblical canon may be difficult for some to accept—especially those, like Heine (and myself), who are rooted in biblical restoration movements. But then, the epistemic optimism that fueled those nineteenth century movements seems all but lost; maybe it is time again to trust in the Spirit's work in the church through history.

A proposal like this, however, raises other, more difficult questions: How do we actually *recognize* the Spirit's work in the church through history? Is the Vincentian Canon[3]—what has been held always, everywhere, and by all—objectively applied (as it seems to be by Heine) really useful? That is, is the "tradition" pro-

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3   Heine does not actually use the term, but the method is certainly at work.

posed by Oden and taken up by Heine really just another form of epistemic optimism? Who is to decide what is or is not a part of the universal tradition? The objection of John Henry Newman remains relevant: "The rule is more serviceable in determining what is not, than what is Christianity."[4] Perhaps then, following Newman, the development of doctrine must remain intrinsically tied to the incarnational principle also known as the church, and therefore (dare I say it) the Magisterium?

Either way, I am certain that my students need historical wisdom, so I will be inviting them to read *Classical Christian Doctrine* this semester.

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4   John Henry Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, (Lexington, KY: CreateSpace, 2012), 5.

CANADIAN EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

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