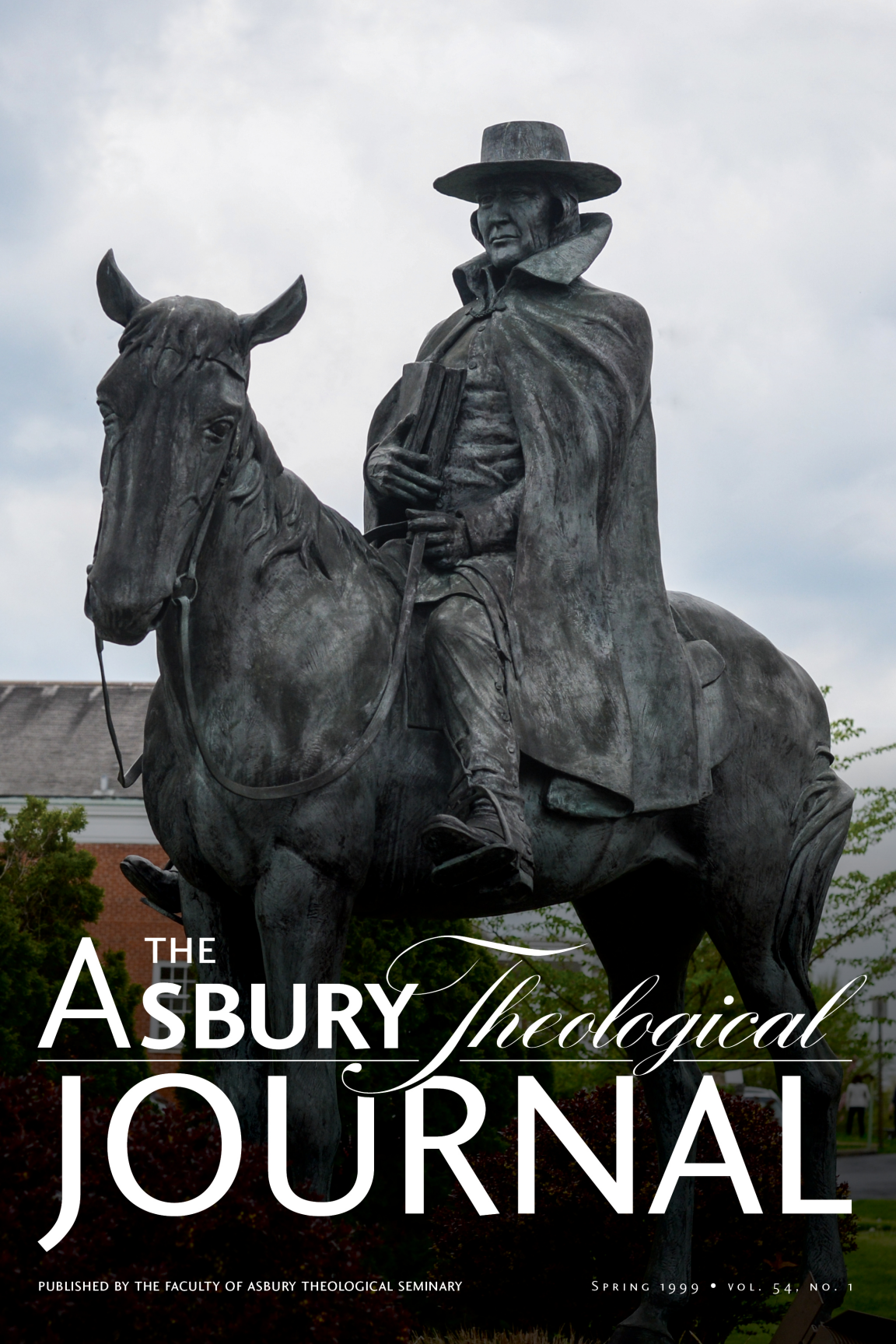




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CANONICAL READING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF CRITICAL SCHOLARSHIP

ROLF RENDTORFF

I

In the early seventies of this century a new term appeared in biblical scholarship: *Canonical Criticism*. It was James Sanders who explicitly introduced this term in his essay *Torah and Canon* (1972). The discussion on this program was from its very beginning also closely linked to work of Brevard Childs. In the meantime this term and its manifold implications are widely used and debated.

Let me first of all say something about terminology. The word 'canon' has been used, of course, much earlier in Bible scholarship, but under a different aspect. We can now distinguish between two main aspects of canon studies. I quote the categorization by one well-known expert in this field: Sid Leiman in the foreword to the second edition of his book, *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture* (1991), speaks about two related but distinct categories, not to be confused with each other. The one category may be termed 'canonization studies.' Its focus is on the history of the formation of the biblical canon from its inception to its closing. The other category has been termed 'canonical criticism.' Its focus is primarily on the function of the biblical canon throughout the religious history of a particular faith community. For the latter Leiman mentions explicitly Childs and Sanders, "among the founders and major proponents."

In my eyes the first category is very important, not only from a historical point of view but also to understand under what circumstances and religious conditions the canon of the Bible, as we now have it, came into being. Yet for me personally the second category is the field I am involved in. This field tends to be "theological and constructive," to quote Leiman again. This is exactly my personal interest. The main impulse to work in this field I received from Brevard Childs. His book, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (1979), had a great impact on my work with the Hebrew Bible. Before the appearance of this book I had already begun, by myself, to

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widespread debate on 'diachronic' and 'synchronic.' In this debate these two approaches are often taken as contradictions. But this is not for canonical exegesis as I understand it. Of course, the emphasis on the final shape of the text entails a kind of synchronic reading. But canonical exegesis does not deny that the text has its diachronic dimensions, and it does not close its eyes to certain tensions and even contradictions within one individual biblical text as well as among different texts. The term 'final shape' even implies the awareness of earlier stages of the text before it got shaped in its final form. The question is how to deal with the assumed earlier stages and how to relate them to the final one.

There is still another term that comes closer to the idea of canonical interpretation, namely: 'holistic interpretation.' A very good example of this method is Moshe Greenberg's commentary on Ezekiel in the Anchor Bible. He puts his holistic reading explicitly against the common modern critical exegesis which he sees often guided by prejudices. In contrast to that Greenberg himself pleads for a "listening to [the text] patiently and humbly."¹ I like this saying very much: "listening to [the text] patiently and humbly." That is exactly what I think we have to do.

II

It would go beyond the scope of this lecture to deal with all aspects connected with the idea and concept of canonical criticism. There is a lot of literature about these questions, including several doctoral dissertations. I will mention just two of them. The first is the book by Mark Brett *Biblical Criticism in Crisis? The Impact of the Canonical Approach on Old Testament Studies* (1991). This title obviously suggests the title of Brevard Childs' book from 1970 *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (without the question mark!). Brett discusses Childs' approach under hermeneutical aspects. Even more explicitly this is done by Paul Noble in his book *The Canonical Approach: A Critical Reconstruction of the Hermeneutics of Brevard S. Childs* (1995). There are also many articles and essays in this field. Yet this kind of literature mainly deals with theoretical problems about what a canonical approach could be and should be, and in particular, whether and how Brevard Childs met his own criteria or that of the respective critical writer. All this might be useful and in a sense necessary. But what is still missing is the demonstration of how a canonical approach would be executed in the exegetical practice. Up to now there are very few examples of exegesis done from such a point of departure. But in my view this would be the test for the value of the method. What does it mean for biblical text if it will be interpreted by a canonical approach? Therefore I myself want to step down to the level of concrete exegetical questions. This will, of course, include reflections about the hermeneutical problems involved, but those problems will not be in the foreground.

Let me just mention that this is exactly the intention of the Old Testament theology I am writing. It contains a reading of the whole Hebrew Bible from its first verse to its last one, according to the given text. But it is written with the full awareness of the critical reading of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. I am very curious about the reaction this book will find in the field of Old Testament scholarship.

Given my approach to understand canonical exegesis as a continuation and improvement of historical-critical exegesis I have to start from a point where historical-critical interpretation of a text often ends. One of the main activities of exegetes in the traditional

field is to detect tensions and inconsistencies in the text which leads to a separation of different levels within the text and finally to a distinction of 'sources' and the like. Actually this leads to a destruction of the given text and to establishing new texts out of the pieces. Often commentaries in this tradition do not interpret the text we have before us in the Bible but their own 'reconstructed' texts as, e.g., the Yahwist or the Priestly Code, etc.

Let us reflect for a moment what is going on here. I want to emphasize two things. First, the interpreter decides according to his or her own criteria whether the text is homogeneous or not. Of course, in many cases those criteria are not developed by the individual interpreter but are commonly accepted by the scholarly guild; but nevertheless they are defined by modern Bible scholars. The first task of the canonical interpreter would be not to *destroy* the text by critical analytical operations but to try to *understand* it in its given form and wording. It was one of the great errors of the modern critical exegesis to judge biblical texts, and that means: critique texts, according to modern criteria. Of course, during the last century we learned a lot about the literature and the way of thinking in the Ancient Near East; but nevertheless, in exegetical decisions many arguments from the nineteenth century are still taken as valid. What the canonical interpreter has to do is, according to the earlier quoted formulation by Moshe Greenberg, "listening to [the text] patiently and humbly." No one single argument having put forward by earlier exegetes against the integrity of a text can be accepted by a canonically working interpreter without rigid scrutiny.

Secondly, the usual work of the critical interpreter is to 'reconstruct' certain earlier or 'original' texts. This 'reconstructing' of texts seems to me to be another major mistake of the traditional historical-critical methodology. Reconstructing earlier texts means fabricating new texts that never existed except in the minds or, so to speak, in the laboratories of scholars—even if it is widely accepted and thousandfold written about. But actually such a text does not 'exist.' In particular, such a text can never be subject of exegesis, and one cannot explain its message, such as a message of 'J' or of 'P' or even a message of the newly discovered 'Holiness School.'

Of course, in certain cases there will remain a tension within a text. The question is how to handle it. The usual critical way will be to emphasize the differences between two or even more levels of the text and to take them as parts of 'sources,' label them with certain names or numbers, etc. The canonical interpreter first of all will try to understand the relations and interrelations between the seemingly different elements of the text. Let me explain this by one very elementary example. For me it is obvious that the Book of Genesis is not written by one single author. In particular those elements that are usually defined as 'priestly' are clearly distinguishable from the rest. In this respect I believe that at least some basic insights of modern Pentateuchal Criticism are convincing and even fruitful. The question is how to handle those insights. Obviously chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis are written by different authors in a different language, putting the just created man in different surroundings. Traditional critical exegesis would emphasize the differences and interpret the two chapters independently from each other or even in a certain contrast to each other. Canonical exegesis will also ascertain this difference; but it will not stop there, because only now begins the real exegetical task: to try to understand the message of the given text. This implies the conviction that those who shaped the given text had a certain

idea of the relationship between the two stories and even of their common message.

This is a fundamental point. Modern scholars often believe that the so-called 'redactors' just put different texts together without caring much about inconsistencies. Therefore the scholar has to put things straight, to repair, so to speak, the mistakes ancient redactors had made. That leads very often to a separate and even independent interpretation of the individual parts of the 'reconstructed' text. This is definitely the case with the two accounts of creation in the two first chapters of the Book of Genesis. The first is written by 'P,' the second by 'J.' As I said before, there are indeed two different voices discernable. But now the interesting and really important question is: How do they sound together?

Let me just mention one main aspect: In chapter 1 God says to the just created human beings: "Fill the earth and master it" (1:28). What does this mean? One explanation is given in the second chapter. God puts the man into the garden he has made in order "to till it and keep it" or "tend it" or even better "guard it" (2:15). Looking from here it is obvious that to 'master' is not to 'subdue' or to 'rule' but to work carefully and to guard. It seems to me obvious that the author of the given text understood the relationship between the two chapters that way. They are not in contrast to each other but related to each other.

At this point there exists still another traditional mistake. Usually the first section is quoted as Gen. 1:1-2:4a. This implies that the phrase "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created" belongs as a *subscription* to the first account of creation. But this runs counter to all the other appearances of this phrase. It is always the *superscription* of what follows. Critical scholars believed that this 'priestly' worded phrase must belong to the 'priestly' chapter 1. Recently scholars began to understand that putting this 'priestly' phrase at the beginning of the following non-priestly text shows the deliberate joining of the two stories by a sophisticated writer. I mention two well-known scholars who definitely declared that this *'elleh tôl dôt'* formula has to be understood as a heading of the following 'yahwistic' account. The first one is Frank Coss who made this point in his book *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (1973); the second one is again Brevard Childs who in his *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* wrote that this formula in Gen. 2:4 "serves as a superscription to the account which follows and can, under no circumstances, either be shifted to a position preceding 1:1, or treated as a subscription to 1:1-2:4a" (p. 145).

The person who put this verse at the beginning of the second account of creation obviously cannot be called a 'redactor' in the traditional, rather depreciative sense. On the contrary, he makes the reader understand the continuity between the two accounts that look at creation from different points of view. Saying that includes, on the one hand, that in this case the diachronic element is fully to be accepted. This does not at all mean that traditional diachronic reading is to be accepted everywhere where it is now assumed by the majority of scholars. In many cases a more differentiated understanding of the intentions of the texts will lead to a new insight in the homogeneity of a text. But the example of Genesis 1 and 2 shows us that in a number of cases (also from a canonical point of view) certain diachronic distinctions within one text remain to be accepted. But on the other hand, taking the given text seriously means that it can never be the task of exegesis to separate individual parts of the text from each other and to 'reconstruct' earlier versions

of a text. As I said before: this kind of reconstruction means to destroy the given text and to put a new text in its place that actually never existed. Diachronic observations can only lead to certain insights or even assumptions about certain elements of the *prehistory* of the text. Therefore they have to be seen from the point of view of the final form of the text. It is this final text that has to be interpreted. Neither did the final authors of the text want us to separate what they had put together nor had any believing community through the ages ever heard about the message of a 'Yahwist' and a 'Priestly Code' and whatever. They had the Book of Genesis, and they had it as part of the Pentateuch, the Torah. There is no *text* in the strict sense of the word earlier than that.

The same is true for other books of the Hebrew Bible. In some cases the problems are more complicated as in the Book of Isaiah. Many Old Testament scholars take it simply for granted that there existed a Deutero-Isaiah and also a Trito-Isaiah. Both of these assumed prophets or authors are never mentioned within the Book of Isaiah. This is one of the cases where we can see one particular disturbing way of using the historical-critical method, namely to destroy the biblical books. If you take the well known *Introduction to the Old Testament* by Otto Kaiser, you will find the three assumed parts of the Book of Isaiah dealt with in different chapters as if they did not belong to the same book. Another example: a recent German *Habilitationsschrift* had on its printed title the word '*Deuterjesaja-Buch*,' 'The Book of Deutero-Isaiah.'² I wrote a letter to the young colleague asking him what he meant by this 'book,' which I have never seen. But I did not receive an answer.

In my eyes the starting point for any interpretation of the Book of Isaiah has to be that there is only *one* Book of Isaiah and not two or three. It is the task of the interpreter to try to understand the concept behind putting together texts from obviously different times into one book under the name of one prophet. Here things are more complicated than in the Book of Genesis because it is quite evident that certain texts within the Book of Isaiah belong to different periods. In the first part of the book Israel is confronted with the threat by the Assyrians in the years between 734 and 701. Later the Israelites obviously are in the Babylonian Exile, and the name of the Persian king Cyrus is mentioned who captured Babylon in 539. And even later the Israelites are seen back in Jerusalem having built the Second Temple. But the intention of the Book of Isaiah is not to serve for later generations as a source for reconstructing historical events. Again the question is, why are these seemingly divergent texts put together?

This is an interesting and sometimes disturbing question. But I am glad to tell you that for a number of years in the framework of the *Society of Biblical Literature* there has existed a seminar or group devoted to the 'Formation of the Book of Isaiah.' Here this kind of question is asked and discussed. I have to confess that even in that group we are still far from any agreement about the details, but at least we have begun to ask questions related to the Book of Isaiah as a whole.

The same is true with regard to the Book of the Twelve Prophets. I believe that here things are still more complicated because those who collected these twelve writings explicitly mentioned the names of the different prophets and in a number of cases also the date of their preaching. But again, the question is, why did they put together these twelve writings in a book that from the earliest times on has been taken as *one* book? Here also a seminar has been constituted within the *Society of Biblical Literature* dealing

with the 'Formation of the Book of the Twelve.'

Finally I will have the privilege of lecturing in a few days at the annual meeting of the SBL on *Reading the Psalter as One Theological Book*. In the Psalter things are again different. In a sense the situation is comparable to the Book of the Twelve Prophets insofar as we have clearly defined individual psalms. But there are also many hints of interrelationships between certain psalms by headings and other elements. In addition there is the division of the Psalter into five parts or 'books' which is also deliberate and meaningful. Personally, I find it particularly interesting that a number of psalms have headings referring to certain situations in the life of David. Here we have another example of diachronic and synchronic reading. It is obvious that these headings are added to the psalms at a later time. But those who added it had of course a clear idea why they did it and what they wanted to express by that. It is particularly important that the majority of these headings refer to situations in David's life where he suffered from persecution and also from the outcome of his own sins. So it is a very specific image of David that is presented in these psalms. It would be the exegetical tasks to interpret these roles of David as an example for those who pray lamentation psalms. Of course, this is just one of the many aspects that have to be taken into consideration when reading the Psalter holistically.

So in different fields the question of the unity of biblical books is asked in a new way. This does not at all mean that all the scholars involved are engaged in that kind of canonical reading I have in mind. But nevertheless, some very important steps have been taken in a direction that can lead to a new kind of scholarly approach to the texts of the Hebrew Bible.

In this first lecture I tried rather briefly to deal with the exegetical problems of a canonical interpretation of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament. This whole field is at the same time of high theological relevance. This includes the question of the Old Testament as 'canon' from a Christian point of view. Can the Old Testament itself be understood as a canon in the theological sense or is it only to be taken as the first part of the Christian Bible that has no independent theological relevance? This will be one of the questions I will speak about in my lecture on The Old Testament: Jewish and Christian Bible.

NOTES

1. M. Greenberg, "The Vision of Jerusalem in Ezekiel 8-11: A Holistic Interpretation," part 1 reprinted in M. Greenberg, *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought*, 1995, pp. 227-234.
2. R.G. Kratz, *Kyros im Deuteronomium-Buch*, FAT 1 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1991).

THE OLD TESTAMENT: JEWISH AND CHRISTIAN BIBLE

ROLF RENDTORFF

I

First of all, I have to query the title of my own lecture. Can the 'Old Testament' be called 'Jewish and Christian Bible'? Of course, in a strict sense it cannot. 'Old Testament' is an exclusively Christian term. There can only be an 'Old' Testament if there is also a 'New,' and only both Testaments together form the Christian 'Bible.' This is true even if the term 'Old Testament' is commonly used in different contexts, also where Jews are included; but obviously this usage is not correct.

But what term shall be used instead? In the scholarly field there is now frequently spoken of 'Hebrew Scriptures.' This is an interesting term, and I want to look at it in some more detail. One of the traditional names for the Jewish Bible is the Holy Scriptures, which were written in Hebrew anyhow. So Hebrew Scriptures seems to be a specifically Jewish term. But this is only half the truth. The term 'the Scripture,' ἡ γραφή, or, 'the scriptures,' ἀγγραφαί, appears frequently in the New Testament, referring to what was the 'Bible' of the writers and readers of the New Testament, that is to the Jewish Bible, the Holy Scriptures (cf. Rom. 1:2). In whatever language the people of the New Testament times might have read their Bible, it is obvious that 'Scriptures' is a common Jewish and Christian term.

The first Christians were Jews, Jesus included, and they quoted from their Bible, that is, from the Jewish Bible. But after the separation of the Christian community from the majority of the Jews, the Christian Bible was no longer simply the Jewish Bible. It became something else, a two-part Bible whose first part was more or less in accordance with the Jewish Bible. At this point our specific problem begins. First, the Christian Bible was no longer in Hebrew, but in Greek. Of course, also the majority of Jews in the world of Late Antiquity lived in Greek speaking contexts, so the language must not have been a reason for conflict or antagonism. But since the

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Christians had adopted the first Greek translation of the Bible, the Septuagint, many Jews ceased to use this translation. So the Septuagint became the first Christian 'Old Testament.'¹ One of the main consequences was the fact that now both parts of the Christian Bible were written in the same language, in Greek. So it seemed to be really *one* Bible.

Later in the Western churches the Latin translation, the Vulgate, dominated, which is still in liturgical use in the Roman-Catholic Church. But the Reformation turned to the study of the original languages of the Bible. One very important result of this change was the fact that from now on the Old Testament and New Testament appeared to be two different books, written in two different languages. The consequences are obvious when, in particular, the Enlightenment theologians concentrated more and more on the biblical texts in their original language. The final step was the almost complete separation of Old Testament and New Testament studies in the academic world.

One might imagine that now the scholarly study of the Hebrew part of the Bible would have become a common effort of Jewish and Christian scholars. Obviously, this was not the case, and for different reasons. Here one very important aspect of the above mentioned problem of naming the 'Old Testament' becomes visible: Jewish scholars were *de facto* excluded from the academic study of their own Bible because these studies were exclusively executed as 'Old Testament studies' in the framework of confessional Christian theological faculties.² On the other hand, this kind of biblical studies did not belong to the main interests of Jewish studies, so that even in Jewish scholarly institutions in the nineteenth and early twentieth century there was not too much endeavor in this field.

Reflecting on the reasons why in the meantime things have changed I think that one of the actual causes is the fact that the center of biblical studies moved from Europe to North America with its different system of higher education. Here Bible studies and Bible teaching are now executed in a great variety of different universities, schools, seminaries, etc., most of them in one way or the other being involved in the development of "the modern secular university...in the United States."³ The opportunities for Jewish students to study Bible in a modern context are much better than ever before, and likewise the chances for Jewish scholars to get a teaching position in this field.

The second important development is the gradual change of Christian-Jewish relations. Today many Christians, in particular Christian Bible scholars, are aware of the fact that the first part of their Bible had been the Jewish Bible before Christianity came into being, and that it still *is* the Jewish Bible. Through the centuries much too often Christian theologians were not aware of this or even denied any Jewish claim upon the Old Testament after Christ. Since at least the majority of Christian Bible scholars have given up this kind of supersessionism there is now room for new reflections. Recently, there is a discussion among Christians who are engaged in Christian-Jewish relations about using any other term instead of 'Old Testament' because some feel that even the term Old Testament itself includes an element of expropriating the Bible from the Jews. Some prefer the term 'First Testament' in order to avoid the word 'old' which could be—and often is—understood as 'outdated.' Others speak about 'the Jewish Bible' or 'Israel's Bible.'

Anyhow, since among Christian Bible scholars the idea of having a monopoly of the Old Testament is not adhered to any longer it is much easier to use a common language as, e.g., Hebrew Bible or Hebrew Scriptures. But now we are back to our question from

the beginning: In what sense are the Hebrew Scriptures part of the Christian Bible? Along with the above mentioned question of the different languages there is the problem of the structure of the canon. The different versions of Christian Bibles do not reflect the tripartite canon of the Hebrew Bible, the Tanakh. The main change is the position of the prophetic books. As you know, in the Hebrew Bible the prophetic books follow the books of Samuel and Kings while in the Christian Bibles they are put at the end of the canon. Also a number of other books have different positions in both canons, such as Ruth, Chronicles, Ezra/Nehemiah, Esther, Threni, and Daniel. Finally in the Roman-Catholic canon the so-called Apocrypha are included. Whatever the particular reasons for those changes might have been, the theological 'message' of the canon(s) of the Christian Bible(s) seems to be different from that of the Hebrew Bible.

What does this mean for the approach of Christian scholars to the Hebrew Scriptures? Surprisingly enough, the majority of Christian Bible scholars actually work in the framework of the canon of the Hebrew Bible. This is particularly evident with the classical works on the 'Introduction to the Old Testament' by Otto Eissfeldt,⁴ Rudolf Smend,⁵ Brevard S. Childs,⁶ and others, my own included.⁷ These scholars arrange their books according to the tripartite Hebrew canon, even using the Hebrew titles Torah, Former Prophets, Latter Prophets, and Writings. Here it becomes evident that notwithstanding the divergent theological traditions the textual basis for the studies of Jewish and Christian Bible scholars is actually the same. This is particularly visible in the common use of the *Biblia Hebraica*, first *Kittel* and then *Stuttgartensia*, presenting the text of the Hebrew Bible according to the Jewish Masora, worked out by German Protestant scholars.

So far there is a broad and solid textual basis for common scholarly work of Jews and Christians with the Hebrew Scriptures. In many fields of exegesis, philology, history, etc., there developed in the last decades a fruitful interchange between Jewish and Christian scholars, in many cases without any consideration of religious or confessional background.

II

But the moment we enter the field of theology things become complicated. The first reason for that is the fact that 'theology' is a central Christian term while it is not in use in Jewish religious tradition. In the famous *Encyclopaedia Ioudaica* from 1972 we read, "Therefore it has been frequently asserted that Judaism has no theology."⁸ In a 1992 volume on *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology* there appears only one Jewish scholar, Jon D. Levenson, who is quoted from a 1985 publication saying: "the sad fact, however, is that the endeavor known as 'Old Testament theology' has been, as its name suggests, an almost exclusively Gentile affair."⁹ 'Gentile' obviously means 'Christian,' in particular, 'Protestant.' In 1987 Levenson published an essay entitled *Why Jews Are Not Interested in Biblical Theology*.¹⁰ In this essay he is going to explore why there is no Jewish equivalent of Walther Eichrodt's or Gerhard von Rad's well-known works. In 1987 Moshe Goshen-Gottstein published an article "on the possibility and necessity of a hitherto nonexistent area of academic study in the field of biblical religion: the theology of Tanakh."¹¹

In recent years on the Jewish side things are beginning to change. But what about Christian theology of the Old Testament? Is it as close to Jewish studies as are many of the other fields of biblical studies? Obviously not. It is sometimes disturbing to realize that

the same Christian Bible scholars who are using the Hebrew Scriptures every day in their exegetical work turn to a totally different direction of thinking the moment they speak about theology of the Old Testament. I want to quote a quite recent example. The well-established *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie* published in its 1997 volume an article by Hermann Spieckermann from Hamburg on 'Die Verbindlichkeit des Alten Testaments' (The Normativity of the Old Testament). The essay is summarized by a series of theses which begin with the sentence: "Theology of the Old Testament is a Christian discipline." Then the third thesis says: "Both Testaments bear witness to Jesus Christ, each according to their own ways.... The basis of cognition (*Erkenntnisgrund*) of the one truth of both testaments lies in the New Testament." The author does not even mention the fact that there does exist a Jewish religious community whose Bible is the same as the Christian Old Testament. It is obvious that for this kind of Christian theologian the Old Testament has no other theological message than a Christian one. In other words, the Old Testament has no individual message at all because there is only "one truth" witnessed by both Testaments.¹² This is just one most recent example of a long Christian tradition of a total theological monopolizing of the Old Testament.

A much more differentiated position is presented by Brevard Childs.¹³ He is also of the opinion that it is the "fundamental goal" of biblical theology "to understand the various voices within the whole Christian Bible, New and Old Testament alike, as a witness to the Lord Jesus Christ, the selfsame divine reality."¹⁴ But the way he chooses to explain such an understanding concedes much more theological relevance to the Old Testament. The first main part of his book, covering more than one hundred pages, is dedicated to "The discrete witness of the Old Testament."¹⁵ Then follows the second main part on "The discrete witness of the New Testament" and finally the third main part on "Theological reflection on the Christian Bible." This third part deals with a number of thematic topics always leading up to dogmatics. But even in this part each of the individual chapters begin with a paragraph on the Old Testament witness on specific topics such as "The Identity of God," "God the Creator," etc. So the voice and message of the Old Testament in its own right is heard throughout the book, even if it is finally included in the common testimony to Jesus Christ.

Childs' book makes obvious two basic elements in this kind of Christian biblical theology. First, in this context there is no independent theology of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament because the theological reflection on the Old Testament is from the outset part and parcel of a Christian 'biblical theology' which embraces both parts of the Christian Bible. Secondly, Old Testament theology is finally part of Christian dogmatics. This becomes quite clear from the overall structure of the Childs' book. This is of particular interest because almost every account of the history of 'biblical theology' begins with Johann Philipp Gabler's famous *oratio* from 1787 about the discrimination between biblical and dogmatic theology.¹⁶ This has always been taken as the beginning of liberation of biblical theology from dogmatic preconditions and of the development of an independent biblical theology. Now Childs explicitly revokes this separation pleading for "a return to pre-Gabler position"¹⁷ and leaving the final words to dogmatics.

But this is only one side of the present situation in the field of Christian Old Testament theology. Already the often mentioned theologies by Walther Eichrodt and Gerhard von Rad were far from any supersessionist attitude and also did not concede any role for dog-

matics in unfolding the theology of the Old Testament. Of course, in particular von Rad was fully aware of the fact that the Old Testament is only one part of the Christian Bible. Therefore in the last main part of his *Old Testament Theologie* he drew, very carefully, certain lines from the Old Testament to the New, but he did so only after he had finished his explication of the message of the Old Testament in its own right.¹⁸ In general, the same could be said about the majority of other works on Old Testament theology in the period before and after von Rad. Most of the authors do not subjugate the Old Testament to theological criteria taken from Christian theology, be it the New Testament or dogmatics. Some do not at all deal explicitly with the relationship of the Old Testament to Christianity, as e.g., Eichrodt,¹⁹ Zimmerli,²⁰ etc. Others are treating these problems more explicitly as e.g., Terrien,²¹ Westermann,²² and most recently Brueggemann.²³ But all of them are emphasizing the independent theological relevance of the Old Testament while at the same time reflecting its relationship to the New Testament in different ways.

III

I believe that the basic precondition for a fruitful working together of Christians and Jews towards a theological reading of the Hebrew Scriptures is the full acknowledgment by the Christians that these Scriptures are the Holy Scriptures of Judaism as well as of Christianity. Therefore it would be impossible to speak about the theological relevance of the Hebrew Scriptures exclusively under Christian aspects. I mentioned before that in my view the majority of Christian Bible scholars have given up the traditional Christian supersessionism. Unfortunately, when speaking about theology many of them fall back into a kind of exclusivism. Possibly they would not explicitly deny any theological relevance of the Hebrew Scriptures for Judaism. But they are not interested in this question because they do not understand that this would have any importance for themselves.

In my view, the problems lie still deeper. Christian theologians often forget that Christianity grew out of Judaism and that therefore Christian interpretation of the common Hebrew Holy Scriptures is always the second in order. Judaism has its own interpretation which is much more immediate to the Hebrew text,²⁴ while Christian interpretation is mediated through another collection of writings, the New Testament. But the question is how this mediation works and what the consequences are for a Christian understanding of the theology of the Hebrew Scriptures.

I believe that at this point the traditional Christian interpretation of the Bible is committing a bad mistake. Usually the New Testament is taken as the starting point for comparing the two Testaments and for asking the question of the relevance of the Old Testament for Christian belief. By this procedure only a very small sector of the message of the Hebrew Scriptures comes in view. But such an approach, to quote Childs, is "highly misleading and one-sided in the extreme," because in the early church "the Jewish scriptures were held as the authoritative voice of God.... The problem of the early church was not what to do with the Old Testament in the light of the gospel, which was Luther's concern, but rather the reverse. In the light of the Jewish scriptures which were acknowledged to be the true oracles of God, how were Christians to understand the good new of Jesus Christ?"²⁵

I am quoting Childs because he himself could have contributed to such a misleading view by saying in the same context that "it is basic to emphasize that something totally

new began with the resurrection, and this sharp discontinuity in Israel's tradition is rightly reflected in the formation of two separate and distinct testaments. The old came to an end; the new began." But then he shows in many details the fundamental relevance of the Old Testament for Christian belief. Let me just refer to one basic point: the understanding of God as creator was simply assumed and largely taken for granted as true. ... In a word, large portions of the New Testament reflect an unbroken continuity with the Old Testament trajectory of creation traditions."²⁶ And for Christians it is the First Article of the Apostolic Creed, speaking about God the creator, that is only understandable on the basis of the witness of the Hebrew Scriptures.

IV

What does this mean for a Christian approach to the Hebrew Scriptures? First of all, there is no reason to approach the Hebrew Bible from a specific 'Christian' point of view. The customary way by many Christian theologians to approach the Hebrew Bible backwards from the New Testament or Christian dogmatics fails to do justice to the actual relevance of main theological topics of the Hebrew Bible for Christian thinking and belief without any specifically Christian interpretation. That God is *one*, and that there is no other God, early Christians knew from their own Jewish tradition, and they "continued as good Jews...to worship the one God of the Old Testament" (Childs),²⁷ that is, of their own Bible. The same is true for other topics such as God the creator and the whole understanding of human life within the creation including the responsibility of humans for the preservation of the created world. Just today this is a specifically important point when many Christians are reflecting upon ecological problems. They will not find too much help from the New Testament, but will find much from the Hebrew Scriptures.

Another important field are the Psalms. Nowhere in the Bible will the Christian reader find that much guidance and instruction for prayer, individually and in common, as in the Hebrew Scriptures. But even more: Christian religious service is not imaginable without Psalms. Even at very specific points of Christian liturgy certain Psalms are indispensable as, e.g., Psalm 103 for unfolding God's merciful behavior towards sinful humans:

The Lord is merciful and gracious
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
He will not always accuse,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
He does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.

No Christian pastor or priest would tell his congregation they should not understand what they are praying or listening to according to the wording from the Old Testament, the Hebrew Bible, but in any different 'Christian' way. That God is merciful and that humans could not live without being conscious of that is one of the fundamental elements of the message of the Hebrew Scripture from its very beginning. Already after the flood God said:

I will never again curse the ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done.

I could continue to name basic elements of the Hebrew Scriptures that are more or less self-evident parts of Christian thinking and belief. There are other elements that need additional reflection. As a major example I choose the concept of divine election. The election of Abraham and his descendants meant first of all the separation of one group of humans to the exclusive service of the *one* God. Insofar as all those who are staying in this line of worship of the one God are included in this election. In a more specific sense the election of Abraham meant the election of the Jewish people. At this point there arose a problem for the Christian community. At the beginning, the followers of Jesus formed a group of Jews who adhered to a peculiar messianic belief, but remained members of the Jewish people. Later more and more non-Jews joined this group and finally became the majority. From that point on the now so-called 'Christians' (cf. Acts. 11:26) progressively became a community different and separated from the Jewish people. Now from a theological point of view the question arose whether and how this new community could claim belonging to the addressees of the divine promises given in the Hebrew Scriptures to the people of Israel.

Unfortunately, to quote Krister Stendahl, "something went wrong in the beginning,"²⁸ because this problem was not reflected in a way that could have done justice to both sides. Instead the Christians declared themselves to be the only legitimate heirs of Abraham's election. They occupied not only titles like 'People of God' or 'the Chosen People,' but even called themselves 'the New Israel' or 'the True Israel' and the like. It is important to realize that this had not yet happened in the times of the New Testament itself. In particular the apostle Paul clearly spoke about 'Israel' in its original sense, even emphasizing his own membership in this people (Rom. 11:1, cf. 9:3). But nevertheless, things developed in the wrong direction. Therefore, as we learned from Krister Stendahl and others, at this point we need a new departure. Certainly, something has been achieved in this field during the last few decades, but we are still far from a commonly accepted Christian position without the traditional supersessionism.

V

But back to the Hebrew Scriptures. Let me try to summarize some points that are basic in my eyes.

First: for Christians the Hebrew Scriptures are part of their Bible. That means that the Christian interpreter need not justify his or her using these scriptures. He or she stands in a long tradition of reading this part of the Bible which includes a broad spectrum of theological and social implications that shape his or her approach. I feel it to be important to emphasize a certain self-evidence of a Christian approach to the Hebrew Scriptures.

Secondly: the Christian interpreter of the Hebrew Scriptures has always to be aware of the fact that there is still another approach from the Jewish side. This awareness should include the realization that this part of the Bible was written and composed by Jews at a time and in a context when Christianity did not yet exist. Therefore the Jewish interpreta-

tion is much more immediate to the Hebrew Scriptures. In broad fields of biblical topics this awareness must not actually influence or even alter the way of reading and interpreting; but it should be a kind of warning sign not to bring in, perhaps unconsciously, certain elements of Christian interpretation that only could have developed after the conclusion of the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures.

Thirdly: one particular problem are those traditions in the Hebrew Scriptures that are immediately addressed to the Jewish people. Of particular relevance are the already mentioned ideas of Israel's divine election and of God's covenant with the people of Israel as well as the promise of the land. In these fields Christians have to be particularly careful not to occupy those ideas in a way that actually would mean an expropriation from the Jews. By such an interpretation Christians would simply get themselves in the wrong, even if there might be a long Christian tradition of this kind of interpretation. Yet even these points are of particular relevance for a new self-identification of Christianity towards Judaism. The relation of the Christian church to the Jewish people in view of the biblical ideas of election and covenant are in my view among the most important topics to be reflected by Christians in order to properly define their position in the religious world marked by biblical traditions. As far as I can see there has not yet been enough theological work done on this topic.²⁹

Fourthly: there is a number of fields where Christian theology developed ideas that explicitly go beyond the Hebrew Scriptures. The major field is, of course, the question of messianism. But I do not feel that this must be a really controversial field as far as Christian interpreters would make a clear distinction between the words of the Hebrew Bible that express a messianic expectation. Others include certain elements that could be interpreted in a messianic way even if the interpretation remains controversial. But all these texts speak about the future by expressing promises, expectations and hopes. Christians would say that certain of these promises are fulfilled in the appearance of Jesus Christ. But in my view they could never claim that such a Christian interpretation is *the* correct or even the only possible interpretation. Even less could they argue that the texts of the Hebrew Bible themselves speak about Jesus Christ. Here things have to be clearly kept apart. The pattern of 'promise and fulfillment' in this field can only be a Christian one which goes beyond the exegesis of the Hebrew Scriptures.

There are other fields where things are more problematic. As an example I mention the topics of sin and atonement. The Hebrew Bible presents a full system of cultic performances for atonement while one of the basic elements of Christian theology is the idea that through Jesus Christ for the believers sin is forgiven once and for all. But this confrontation is an extreme narrowing of the problems because actually in both contexts things are much more differentiated. The Hebrew Bible includes a wide range of texts speaking about divine forgiveness of sins in a non-cultic way, beginning from Primeval History through the Sinai story, texts in the Book of Isaiah, and many psalms, to mention just some of them. All these texts are open to Christian interpretation and adaptation. On the other hand there are in the Christian tradition many elements of cultic or quasi-cultic handling of atonement and forgiveness that are, of course, different from that in the Hebrew Bible but nevertheless not fundamentally contradictory.

I could continue speaking about the often declared antithesis of 'law' and 'gospel.'

Here the same is true: a simple confrontation fails to do justice to both the Hebrew Bible and Christian belief. The Hebrew Bible is full of 'gospel,' and the Christian tradition, not only Catholic but also Protestant, is far from being without 'law.' Nevertheless, here we are entering a complex field of theological interpretation. But when going into detail it will become quite clear that there are not only differences between Jews and Christians but also within the two communities and in particular between scholars belonging to one or the other of the two. It would go beyond the scope of this lecture to enter this field of discussion. But it is important not to introduce post-biblical dogmatic alternatives into the interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures.

VI

To come to an end, it is my conviction that the Christian Bible scholar first of all has to interpret the Hebrew Scriptures in their own right. This includes explaining the *theology* of these Scriptures. The Bible scholar has to read and interpret the Hebrew Scriptures very carefully before making the step beyond these scriptures into the realm of his or her religious tradition. In this respect the task of the Bible scholar is limited, but highly necessary.

The next step would be to reflect methodologically on the reception and interpretation of "the discrete witness of the Old Testament" (to use Childs' terminology) in early Christianity. Earlier I mentioned the mistake only to look at those elements of the Old Testament tradition that are explicitly received and interpreted in the New Testament. We have to overcome this narrowing of our view and to recover the wide field of Old Testament traditions which have shaped basic elements of our Christian belief. In this field we would really need a close cooperation between scholars of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament who are strongly committed to understand and to explain the 'biblical' religion of the early Christians, i.e., their being rooted in their Jewish scriptures, be it in Hebrew or Greek. Only out of such a basis would it be meaningful to point out the divergences of certain Christian views and beliefs from the common Jewish understanding of the Scriptures. But looking from such a starting point the evaluation of those differences and its further developments would become different.

To understand our Old Testament not only as part of our Christian Bible but at the same time as part of the Jewish Bible, and to respect the right of our elder brothers and sisters to read their Bible in its own right, could be an important contribution to a peaceful living together of the two communities of biblical tradition and by that also of the whole of humankind whose creator is the *one* God who in the beginning created the heavens and the earth.

NOTES

1. See E. Tov, "The Septuagint," in M.J. Mulder, ed., *Mikra: Text, Translation, Reading and Interpretation of the Hebrew Bible in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*. Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum, section 2, part 1 (Assen/Maastricht: Van Gorcum and Philadelphia: Fortress, 1988), pp. 161-88, quotation from p. 163.

2. For these developments see in particular M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Christianity, Judaism and Modern Bible Study," *Congress Volume Edinburgh 1974*. VTSuppl. 28(1975): 69-88.

3. E.S. Frenichs, "Introduction: The Jewish School of Biblical Studies" in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (see note 2), pp. 1-6, quotation from p. 5.

4. O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).
5. R. Smend, *Die Entstehung des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1978, 1989).
6. B.S. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testaments as Scripture* (London: SCM Press, 1979).
7. R. Rendtorff, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986).
8. *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 15, col. 1103.
9. B.C. Ollenburger, E.A. Martens, G.F. Hasel, eds., *The Flowering of Old Testament Theology: A Reader in Twentieth-Century Old Testament Theology, 1930-1990* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), p. 429.
10. J. Neusner, B.A. Levine, E.S. Frerichs, eds., *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 281-307.
11. M.H. Goshen-Gottstein, "Tanakh Theology: The Religion of the Old Testament and the Place of Jewish Biblical Theology," in P.D. Miller, et. al (eds.), *Ancient Israelite Religion, Festschrift F.M. Cross* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), pp. 617-644.
12. H. Spieckermann, "Die Verbindlichkeit des Alten Testaments: Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen zu einem ungeliebten Thema," in *Jahrbuch für Biblische Theologie*, vol. 12, 1997 (Hermeneutik, Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 1998), pp. 25-51, quotations from pp. 46, 47, 49.
13. B.S. Childs, *Biblical Theology of the Old and New Testaments: Theological Reflection on the Christian Bible* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1992).
14. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 95-207.
16. See now R. Knierim, "On Cabler," *The Task of Old Testament Theology: Substance, Method, and Cases* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 495-556.
17. Childs is here quoting an earlier essay by G. Ebeling, "The Meaning of 'Biblical Theology,'" *Word and Faith* (London and Philadelphia, 1963) pp. 79-97.
18. G.V. Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper & Row, 1962-1965).
19. W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1961/67).
20. W. Zimmerli, *Old Testament Theology in Outline* (Atlanta: John Knox, 1978).
21. S. Terrien, *The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology* (New York: Harper & Row, 1978).
22. C. Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology* (Atlanta, 1982).
23. W. Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament: Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1997).
24. It is not my task here to speak about the relevance of post-biblical interpretation of Scripture for Judaism. I think that my rather general formulation 'much more immediate' will do justice to the relation between Jewish and Christian interpretation of Scripture.
25. Childs, *Biblical Theology*, pp. 225-226. Childs is here referring to H.V. Campenhausen, *The Formation of the Christian Bible* (Philadelphia and London, 1972), p. 64f.
26. Childs, *Biblical Theology*, p. 391.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 365.
28. Krister Stendahl, "Judaism and Christianity II: A Plea for a New Relationship," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, New Series 1:1 (1967), pp. 2-9; reprinted in K. Stendahl, *Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984), pp. 217-232, quotation p. 224.
29. In Germany this discussion began in the last few years, among others in the journal *Kirche und Israel* since 1991.

THE LIMITS OF A LIMITLESS SCIENCE

STANLEY L. JAKI

The title of this essay is paradoxical and intentionally so. It aims, as do all paradoxes, at alerting the mind to something that should be obvious, but is not necessarily so. For little attention is paid to the obvious fact that whatever one's idea about science, it does not reflect a consensus about it. In fact there are almost as many ideas about science as there are philosophers of science. But there is at least one aspect or feature of science which must be included in all ideas about it. Indeed, as will be seen, that feature guarantees a limitless application of science or of the scientific method, and, at the same time, constitutes its most tangible limit. The feature relates to the fact that for a proposition or reasoning to qualify as science, it must be subject to being tested in the laboratory, or, in general, by scientific instruments.

This does not mean that a reasoning which cannot be tested in the laboratory is unreasonable. It is not possible to dispute, without waxing philosophical, that philosophy is not a reasoned discourse. Theology, as cultivated within Christian circles, was long ago proposed as a science by no less intellects than Augustine and Thomas. But they and an army of lesser though still eminent intellects called philosophy and theology a science only because they saw in it a discourse consistent with its basic premises and presuppositions. It is in that sense that they took philosophy and theology for *scientia*. One wonders whether they would insist on that name nowadays when the word *science* has a very special meaning attached to it. That special meaning is tied to the word laboratory and the kind of work done there.

For although the word "laboratory" may, etymologically, mean any place where one "labors," it actually denotes a place where one works for one single purpose: to make observations or measurements which are accurate, so that accurate predic-

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tions may be made on their basis. Science, in that sense, is synonymous with measurements, which are accurate because they can be expressed in numbers. Those numbers relate to tangible or material things, or rather to their spatial extensions or correlations with one another in a given moment or as time goes on. All the instruments that cram laboratories serve the accurate gathering of those numbers, or quantitative data.

This is most evident with respect to physics, the most exact form of what in modern times is called science. Any branch of physics is an example of this. There is a science of dynamics because something about what is perceived as attraction among bodies can be measured. There is a science of acoustics because the intensity and speed of sound are measurable. There is a science of optics because a great many things can be measured about light rays, such as the diminution of their intensity with distance, and their ways of propagation. There is a science of electricity, because one can measure the magnitude of electric charges and the forces of attraction and repulsion among them. There is a science of electromagnetism because it is possible to measure the interaction of electrical and magnetic forces that generate electromagnetic waves. These in turn have velocity, amplitudes, frequencies, and a number of other parameters that can be measured. There is atomic and nuclear physics because atoms and their nuclei have measurable properties. Astronomy is a science because the size of stars, their distances from one another, and the processes within them can be so many objects of measurement.

Outside physics, all branches of science have tried to emulate physics by restricting their work as much as possible to measuring. In that respect chemistry has achieved a status of exactness practically equivalent to that of physics. Great advances have been made toward exactness in biology ever since Harvey made measurements that revealed the circulation of the blood through the body. Every page of modern molecular biology and biophysics attests to the overriding importance of measurements.

In very recent times psychologists, historians, sociologists, and economists claimed for their studies a scientific status. One speaks today even of political science, or the science of politics. The reason is that in all those fields a great deal of systematic data gathering can take place on the basis of which much can be said about future developments either in individuals or in society. But whenever perfect accuracy is claimed for such predictions, the free character of individuals and of society, together with the freedom of scientific research, is called, at least implicitly, into doubt. At any rate, the gathering of data and measurements in those fields never achieved a predictive accuracy which is on hand in physics, astronomy, and chemistry. In all these fields, science is practically synonymous with the very special work done in laboratories. The work is to take measurements.

Physicists have expressed in various forms their awareness of the importance which measurements have in their efforts. In doing so they have also voiced crucial points about what is involved in making measurements. One such point is the scientific status that can be given to a branch of investigation insofar as it includes measurements. In fact, some physicists spoke as if knowledge not based on measurements was mere "hot air," to recall Lord Rutherford's aside to Samuel Alexander, a well-known metaphysician.¹ At other times they merely hinted at the lower status of non-scientific knowledge. Such was the case when Lord Kelvin, in discussing in 1883 the electrical units of measurement, recalled a favorite comment of his on what constitutes science: "I often say that when you can

measure what you are speaking about and express it in numbers, you know something about it; but when you cannot measure it, when you cannot express it in numbers, your knowledge is of a meagre and unscientific kind: it may be the beginning of knowledge, but you have scarcely, in your thoughts, advanced to the stage of science, whatever the matter may be."²

There is no point in speculating to what extent Lord Kelvin wanted to slight thereby other sciences and non-scientific branches of knowledge. Even in physics it was true that a branch of it, or any theory indeed, increased in scientific value in the measure in which it involved measurements, that is, numerical values. The most concise expression of that view is due to Robert Mayer, one of those who put the mechanical theory of heat on a firm footing. His dictum, "In physics numbers are everything, in physiology they are a little, in metaphysics, they are nothing,"³ also states a parameter along which various branches of learning can be seen as qualifying in various degrees as science.

Mayer, a physician by training and profession, would, of course, find himself contradicted today by the role of numbers, that is, exact measurements, in physiology. His remark on metaphysics could be justified only insofar as numbers were taken to be equivalent to making measurements. Obviously, ideas cannot be measured by calipers or dissected by microtome. However, insofar as numbers represented the metaphysical category of quantities, Mayer should have known that the best metaphysicians have always viewed the category of quantities as being above all other categories. More of this later. Still, Mayer was correct in saying that in physics numbers were everything. In reference to physics he was fully justified in declaring: "One single number has more real and permanent value than an expensive library full of hypotheses."⁴ He had in mind his many years of labor to establish as precisely as possible, and in most varied circumstances, the mechanical equivalent of heat.

To that kind of labor, done in laboratories, physicists have often assigned the status of judiciary tribunal for science. Einstein had in mind certain numerical values implied in his general theory of relativity when he said in 1919 that "if a single one of the conclusions drawn from it proves wrong, it must be given up; to modify it without destroying the whole structure, seems to be impossible."⁵ The experimental evidence that the separation of the components of the fine structure "doublet" in H_{α} is only 96 percent of that predicted by Dirac's relativistic quantum theory, forced the working out of quantum electrodynamics. Many other examples are provided by classical and modern physics about the supreme role played by measurements.

No wonder that physicists could speak of their being devoted to measuring things and processes as if it had been an obsession with them. A. Kundt, a physicist famous for his measurements of the velocity of sound in gases and solids, once stated that "in the end one might just as well measure the velocity of rainwater in the gutter." What he meant, of course, was not a commitment to measuring for the sake of measuring, a sort of a scientific *l'art pour l'art*. He meant the establishment of a numerical figure that forms part of a meaningful scientific theory. It was in that sense that F. Kohlrausch, a physicist also famous for his painstaking as well as decisive measurements, found Kundt's suggestion congenial to his own way of thinking: "I would be delighted to do so!"—was his comment.

Science is competent wherever and whenever the object of investigation offers a quan-

titatively determinable aspect. The range of science is not limited either by the dimensions of quarks or by the distance to the farthest galaxies. Science touches on all matter—whether solid, liquid, gas, plasma, or a mere flow of energy waves—insofar as matter is extended and therefore measurable. Consequently, science is applicable wherever there is matter in any form whatsoever, because all such matter has quantitative parameters. In that sense science is limitless and its statements are unlimitedly, that is, universally valid throughout the universe of matter.

It is another point that the total amount of matter, which is measurable, has to be finite. An infinite amount of measurable matter would be the embodiment of an actually realized infinite quantity which is, of course, a contradiction in terms. Again, it is another matter that the quantitative ascertaining by science of the quantitative structure of matter can never have an end to it. A physical theory can never be final for two reasons. For one, physicists can never be sure that they will never stumble on some previously unsuspected features of matter. Also, even if they were to succeed in formulating a “final” theory, they can never be sure theoretically whether it is really final. For as long as Gödel’s incompleteness theorems are valid, the mathematical structure of that theory cannot contain within itself its own proof of consistency.⁷

Science, insofar as it deals with quantities, is not limited by non-quantitative considerations. No non-quantitative set of considerations, be they metaphysical, theological, or aesthetic, can set a limit to the competency of science. But this limitless character, which science enjoys with respect to the quantitative aspects of reality, is also the source of its drastic limitedness. This is clear even within that most quantitative of all sciences which is physics. Thus to take only one branch of physics, electromagnetism, its scientific status rests on the fact that electromagnetic waves have measurable properties. Perplexities envelop that status no sooner than one yields to logic by saying that if there are waves, electromagnetic or other, there has to be something which performs that wave-like motion. For if that something is called electricity, an answer is given that appears satisfactory until one asks: what is electricity?

An answer to that question evades the physicist. This was admitted even by Lord Kelvin, who stuck to the end to his conviction that ultimately every physical process and property had to be mechanical. Yet this was not what he said to a young foreman in a big Glasgow electrical equipment factory, who happened to guide through the plant the great physicist, without recognizing who he was. After Lord Kelvin listened with great patience to elementary instructions about condensers, insulators, magnets, and whatnot, he decided to give a gentle lesson to the all-knowing young man, by asking him: “What is electricity?” On finding, not surprisingly, that the young man was at a loss for words, Lord Kelvin gently assured him: “This is the only thing about electricity which you and I do not know.”⁸

Physicists are, of course, apt to answer that electricity is a field, like gravitation. But then another question can be raised: What is a field? If we answer that a field is an oscillation, the answer begs the question: what is it that oscillates? A particular difficulty arises if one goes on to quantum electrodynamics with its fields of zero-point oscillations in the vacuum. Can such a vacuum be really empty, as it should if it is truly a vacuum?

The quantum-mechanical vacuum and its no less baffling conceptual affiliates are but the latest in the long list of such questions. Already in Newton’s time it was realized that

physics cannot answer the question: what is gravitation? Physics could only establish the fact that what is called gravitation has a quantitative property, known as the inverse square law. Almost two hundred years later, when Maxwell worked out his electromagnetic equations, much effort was spent, but in vain, on finding out what it was that acted according to those equations. The most popular theory, indeed conviction, was that the something in question was the ether, but physicists could not measure anything about it. They could not even measure a presumed effect of it on the speed of light beams sent through it.

This famous null-result of Michelson's experiments forced physicists to declare the ether to be non-existent. Indeed this conclusion of theirs was valid insofar as the ether was thought of as something material and therefore an entity with measurable properties. Even today, after all the successes of quantum electrodynamics, physicists cannot improve on Heinrich Hertz, the first to demonstrate effects predicted by Maxwell's theory, effects naturally interpreted as produced by electromagnetic waves. In an almost despairing tone Hertz wrote: "Maxwell's theory is Maxwell's system of equations."⁹ Such is a concise expression of the radical limits put on science to say anything about the so called electromagnetic medium, be it called field or vacuum or whatnot.

Maxwell's equations, like all other equations of physics, are a set of quantitative correlations. Nothing more, nothing less. And the same can be said of the tensor equations of the general theory of relativity and of the matrices and wave equations of quantum mechanics. In other words, if Hertz's remark is right, one can say that Einstein's general theory of relativity is Einstein's system of equations, or a set of generalized quantitative correlations. Indeed, one may say that all theories of physics are generalized sets of quantitative correlations.

This conclusion sets very sharp limits to the applicability of science: wherever reality offers aspects with no quantitative properties to be measured, science is not applicable. In addition, as will be seen, the scientific specification of those quantitative properties cannot be taken for an initial installment on specifying non-quantitative properties of the same reality. Quantities forever remain quantities, conceptually that is. This is, however, not something to trouble scientists insofar as they assume, on the basis of common sense wisdom, that there are things and processes to measure and they are satisfied with measuring some features inherent in all things. But the same restriction of the applicability of science keeps troubling some scientists. These, being overawed by the success of the quantitative method, think that science should be applicable in every field of human experience and reflection.

This conviction of theirs can manifest itself in an almost incidental, yet very startling manner. A good example of this can be found in a chapter which deals with "The Flow of Dry Water," that is, non-viscous flow, in the *Feynman Lectures*, a highly regarded textbook on physics. There Feynman makes two final remarks. One is that from the relatively simple principles governing non-viscous flow an "infinite variety and novelty of physical phenomena . . . can be generated; . . . we just haven't found the way to get them out."¹⁰ This may be taken merely for an ambitious program for physics, provided one does not take the words, "physical phenomena . . . can be generated" for an endorsement of some ill-digested form of Platonism where numbers produce physical reality.

But a worse perspective, that has nothing to do with physics, transpires from

Feynman's next remark in which he bemoans the fact that "today we cannot see whether Schrödinger's equation contains frogs, musical composers, or morality—or whether it does not."¹¹ Feynman does not say categorically that it does. Yet by taking as plausible the possibility that Schrödinger's equation may contain all that, Feynman claims that science is limitless in a sense very different from the one already stated, namely, that science is applicable wherever there are quantitative properties to measure. This unlimitedness of science is extended by Feynman into a sweeping suggestion with no restriction whatsoever: Not only matter but everything else, morality included, can be measured, and indeed is contained in some future form of physics.

What Feynman put forward in an almost incidental way, other prominent physicists present in a systematic manner. An example is Roger Penrose's book, *The Emperor's New Mind*. There he argues that some new, and so far unknown form of general relativity, which is quantized and therefore statistical, will contain the full explanation of all human thought. There is much more to Penrose's idea than the far from demonstrated claim that thoughts can be measured. What Penrose really claimed was the old Platonic idea that ideas of quantities necessarily turn into real matter with quantitative properties. Therefore, since mathematical physics is the best way of dealing with the quantitative properties of matter, mathematical physics is declared to be all that we need in order to cope with existence, material as well as intellectual and moral.¹²

A variation on this claim is found in Stephen Hawking's book, *The First Three Minutes*. According to its grand conclusion, a theoretical cosmology, which is so perfect as to be free of boundary conditions, automatically assures the existence of the universe.¹³ Another prominent physicist, A.H. Guth of MIT, relies even more crudely on this rather naive cavorting, in the name of physics, with Platonism. According to him quantum cosmology gives the scientist the power to create universes "literally" and "absolutely out of nothing."¹⁴ If, however, physics turns the physicist into a Creator, there remains absolutely no limit to science.

Now, if such scientifically coated claims are true, one might as well follow the advice which David Hume gave at the end of his *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* and burn all books except those that contain quantities and matters of fact.¹⁵ Obviously, Hume meant only those facts that were material and therefore could be measured or evaluated in terms of quantities. At any rate, ever since Hume the book burning recommended by him has been busily done, at least in a metaphorical sense. It is, however, well known that during the French Revolution and kindred ideologico-political revolutions, pyres were made of books that lacked quantities and matters of fact as understood by Hume. Metaphorically, that book burning can be done (and this is the way it is done in the name of science), by declaring that anything that cannot be measured is purely subjective, almost illusory. Einstein himself claimed that since our experiencing the "now," which is the very center of human consciousness, cannot be measured, it is a purely subjective matter.¹⁶ He said the same thing about free will as well.¹⁷

But then should a scientist accept a prize, say the Nobel Prize, for his work if he was not really free when he worked for his discoveries? Are we to reward sheer automata with huge and prestigious awards? But how would this be a non-automatic process? In order to have a proper answer, one should first recall the penetrating observation of a sci-

entist, Henry Poincaré, who, about a hundred years ago, called attention to an elementary fact: "Even a determinist argues non-deterministically."¹⁸ Clearly, both within and outside science, the claim that science has no limits would, if rigorously applied, lead to absurd consequences.

Nothing would remain of the criminal justice system, if a criminal could claim, with a reference to Einstein, that his consciousness of having committed this or that crime was purely subjective. Should criminal justice courts admit purely subjective evidence and impose, on that basis, huge prison terms? If free will is purely subjective, what becomes of arguments, either scientific or philosophical, against free will? Those arguments then cannot be submitted as having objective validity. But an argument which is not the result of free deliberations, is not an argument. If, however, those arguments against the freedom of the will are not purely and blindly mechanistic processes, they are so many proofs of the existence of free will.

Such consequences are at times blissfully ignored by prominent scientists. Worse, they fail to notice that even in their own scientific field mere measurements and quantities do not suffice. A telling illustration of this comes from the Einstein memorial lecture which Professor Watson, the co-discoverer of the double helix structure of DNA molecules, gave at Princeton University on February 16, 1995. There he amplified his statement that all human life can be described in terms of molecules, with the words: "There is no need to invent anything else."¹⁹

Should one then say that life as such does not matter, because it cannot be observed or measured, in spite of the enormous successes of biochemistry, biophysics, microbiology, and genetic research? They certainly show the enormous extent of measurable parameters in life processes. But life itself still cannot be measured. Therefore, scientifically speaking, life does not exist. This paradoxical fact was in the mind of Claude Bernard, the great French physiologist, when he made, around 1860, one of his famous statements. On being asked whether, in reference to life, he was a vitalist or a mechanist, he replied that he had never seen life.²⁰ This was his way of calling attention to the fact that by becoming either a vitalist or a mechanist, one moved beyond science. There remains, indeed, much more to the question, "What is Life?" than can be dreamt of by biochemists or biophysicists who take the mechanistic outlook on life. Equally, biologists who espouse vitalism are dreaming when they imply that they can see experimentally purposiveness, this chief characteristic of life processes. Just as the mechanistic interpretation of life is a philosophy, so is vitalism. Both are bad philosophies, though in an opposite sense. In the former the claim is made that just because something (purposiveness) cannot be measured, it does not exist. In vitalism the claim is made that somehow purposiveness can be measured and therefore becomes part of experimental science.

Contrary to the claim that DNA is the secret of life, life remains the secret of DNA. Microbiology has not found a quantitative answer to the apparently purposeful action in all living things, from cells to mammals. Microbiology has not found a quantitative answer to the question of free will. Brain research cannot answer the question, "What is that experience, called 'now,' which is at the very center of consciousness?" For even by finding the exact biochemical conditions that are connected with the personally felt consciousness of the "now," the question what is that "now" remains to be answered. While

brain research may establish the biochemical processes whenever a given word is thought of, it cannot account for what it is for a word to have a meaning.²¹

Faced with that inability, the scientist can take two attitudes. One rests upon the mistaken conviction that the scientific method is everything and whatever cannot be expressed in quantitative terms, is purely subjective, that is, illusory. Such was, as noted already, the attitude of Einstein, who claimed that consciousness and free will are not objective realities, because they cannot be handled by physics. He might as well have called them sheer illusions. Clearly, it is better to take another attitude and acknowledge that there are some basic limits to a limitless science. Those limits appear as soon as a question arises that cannot be put in a quantitative form and therefore cannot be given a quantitative answer to be tested in a laboratory.

Such are indeed all the major questions of human existence. To answer the question, "To be or not to be?" we cannot turn to a science textbook. Strictly speaking, for Hamlet the question meant a choice between two courses of action: one was to continue to live by ignoring an immoral situation. The other was to take revenge and run thereby the risk that one's physical being would come to an end. Already that moral choice demands far more than some quantitative testing in a laboratory.

But Hamlet's question, "to be or not to be," has a meaning even deeper than whether an act is moral or immoral. That deeper meaning is not merely whether there is a life after death. The deepest perspective opened up by that question is reflection on existence in general. In raising the question, "to be or not to be," one conveys one's ability to ponder existence itself. In fact every bit of knowledge begins with the registering of something that exists. To know is to register existence. But this is precisely what science cannot do, simply because existence as such cannot be measured. Yet, worse than impotency is on hand in thinking about existence when it is done in terms of a philosophy that apes scientific parlance. A philosopher, no matter how eminent, makes a mockery of his field when he keeps asserting that "To be . . . is to be the value of a variable."²² Compared with this, it may strike one as an innocent joke to say, as did a graduate student of physics, that Hamlet was an internal combustion engine, with a very low efficiency, because he could have prevented the death of six people by simply killing one, his mother.²³

When science establishes, for instance, the quantitative knowledge that the earth's diameter is so many kilometers, it presupposes first of all the fact that something, the earth, does exist. And this holds true of any quantitative result of science, such as atomic radii, distances to other galaxies, the characteristic wavelength of the cosmic background radiation, etc. Atoms and galaxies are useful objects for science because they exist in such a way as to have quantitative properties. Moreover, science can, by refining more and more its measurements of those properties, establish such sets of them that are conveniently called new subatomic entities.

But it would be mistaken to assume, although this is customarily done, that science, or rather its quantitative method, finds new entities in the ontological sense. Science merely uncovers new aspects in the vast gamut of material existence. Were it otherwise, one would endorse the Platonic fallacy that it is the quantitative properties that give existence to material entities. Moreover, were such the case, nothing would exist that cannot be given a quantitative formulation. In that case such words as conscience, free will, purpose,

moral responsibility, to say nothing of the soul, would be so many empty words, standing for anthropomorphic illusions. But, there would not be, in that case, even scientific investigations, because there would be no scientists who would investigate things freely and be conscious of the fact that they are investigating.

In other words, there is a most fundamental limit to a limitless science. Science has no limits whenever it finds—and in whatever form—matter or material properties. There is no limit, for instance, to measuring the physiological processes that take place in the brain when one thinks as much as a single word. It is possible that one day brain research will be so advanced and exact as to give a complete quantitative account of all the energy levels of all the molecules in the brain when one makes the conscious reflection on the “now.” But even then there remains the radically non-quantitative character of that experience, a character clearly recognized by Einstein. He merely failed to recognize the limits of science when he stated that whatever cannot be measured and therefore be expressed in quantitative terms, cannot be objectively real.

Einstein failed in this respect, as did and do so many other prominent scientists. He failed a test to which his great idol, James Clerk Maxwell, gave the best formulation. Towards the end of his most distinguished career, Maxwell put in print the following words: “One of the severest tests of the scientific mind is to know the limits of the legitimate application of the scientific method.”²⁴ That method can be legitimately applied wherever one can find experimentally verifiable quantities.

The expression, “experimentally verifiable quantities,” is crucial. Theology too deals with quantities. Theology states that there is one divine nature in three divine persons; that in Christ two natures exist in one person; that there are seven sacraments and four canonical gospels. But none of these numbers can be tested in laboratories. Nor can there be a laboratory test of the philosophical and theological tenet that the world was created out of nothing. There can be no such test because the nothing, insofar as it is radically no thing at all, cannot have observable and therefore measurable properties. For the same reason science cannot establish the first moment of cosmic existence. For to prove that moment to be truly first, one has first to show that nothing preceded it. Such is, however, a purely negative proviso that cannot be given a quantitative, that is, scientific verification. Nor is the universe as such an object for science. Scientists cannot go outside the universe in order to observe the whole of it and thereby give to their knowledge of the universe that supreme scientific seal, which is observation with measurement.

Moreover, the notion of the universe is the vastest of all generalizations, although in more than a purely quantitative sense. The notion of the universe is the supreme form of universals. Quantitative or experimental considerations, that always relate to the particular, remain wholly insufficient to justify the validity of the universals, including above all the universe. Indeed, no branch of modern science, with one exception (evolutionary biology, of which more shortly), is so fundamentally dependent on philosophy as is scientific cosmology, and in no other field of science is philosophy more ignored, and indeed scorned.

In scientific cosmology, insofar as it deals with various components of the universe such as galaxies and globular clusters, philosophy can be safely ignored. The scientist merely has to assume, on a commonsense ground, that those objects do exist because they are observ-

able. Only when it comes to the universe as such, do scientific cosmologists claim to know something whose existence only a rigorously articulated philosophy, respectful of the universals, can demonstrate.²⁵ But in evolutionary biology one comes across indispensable philosophical terms at almost every step. Concerning the species, it is something that cannot be observed. Yet it has to exist if it is right to talk about the origin and transformation of species. One can get around this problem, which involves the philosophical problem of knowing universals, by defining a species as the totality of all individuals that can interbreed. But when we go to the genus and to even higher units, up to families, orders, phyla, and kingdoms, that definition does not do. Again, only the great generalizing powers of the mind can enable the evolutionary biologist to see a continuous connection along the paleontological record, although, as recent findings show, it is more riddled with huge holes and discontinuities than ever suspected.

Yet most evolutionary biologists have only contempt for philosophy, although it alone can justify their great unifying vision, which is much more than science, strictly speaking. What they do is climb the rungs of an essentially philosophical ladder in order to see much farther than would be allowed, strictly speaking, by the data on hand. However, once at the top of the ladder, they haughtily kick it away. In doing so they follow the example set by Darwin. With Darwin they try to discredit philosophy with their science, although philosophy enabled them to raise their eyes to heights where biological evolution can be seen, though only with the eyes of the mind. No wonder that the present-day perplexity of some leading paleontologists evokes the fate of Humpty Dumpty.

But just as scientists cannot ignore philosophy, philosophers and theologians can only at their gravest peril ignore the fact that quantitatively verifiable parameters as such lie outside their competence. Herein lies a basic limit of theology, philosophy, and various branches of the so-called humanities. The truth of any philosophical and theological statement that contains experimentally verifiable quantities, depends on experimental or laboratory verification, with measurement being its very gist. This verification only science can provide. Conversely, genuinely philosophical statements cannot have a scientific verification, which always has to be experimental and therefore quantitative, derived from measurements.

Experimentally verifiable quantities represent a basic demarcation line between the sciences and other forms of reasoned discourse, such as philosophy, theology, and so forth. In essence this point was concisely stated already in the *Categories* of Aristotle. This is not to suggest that there is strict logic in his listing number and speech (syllables) as "discrete" quantities and space and time as "continuous" quantities. But there is a perennial truth in his observation that there is no common boundary between two numbers. Nor is it possible to dispute his statement that "the most distinctive mark of quantity is that equality and inequality are predicated of it." Consequently, within the Aristotelian perspective numbers do not admit contraries such as the ones that occur between celestial and terrestrial motion, as well as among the basic types of motion (upward and downward) below the orbit of the moon. Moreover, "quantity does not admit of variation of degree. One thing cannot be two cubits long in a greater degree than another. Similarly with regard to number: what is 'three' is not more truly 'three' than what is 'five' is five."²⁶

Leaving aside Aristotle's dicta on space and time, let alone syllables, it should be clear that equality and inequality are, unlike numbers, not absolute, but relative properties that

reflect our judgments of similarities among various things. These similarities cannot be translated into absolutely valid numerical propositions. To quote Aristotle: "That which is not a quantity can by no means, it would seem, be termed equal or unequal to anything else. One particular disposition or one particular quality, such as whiteness, is by no means compared with another in terms of equality and inequality but rather in terms of similarity."²⁷ But it is precisely this kind of similarity that does not lend itself to strict, invariably valid, numerical evaluation.

Aristotle's own examples are worth recalling. A mountain, though a huge entity, can be called small; and a grain, though puny, large. In both judgments comparisons or similarities are at play. Similarly, it is possible to say that a house has many people in it, whereas a theater only a few. All this is but an aspect of what Aristotle specifies, in taking up the discussion of qualities, as the rule of the "more or less." Whereas all qualities can be presented as containing "more or less" of what is distinctive of them, this cannot be said of numbers. Aristotle did not suspect that with the coming of science in the modern sense, that is, a science in which quantities rule supreme, this quality of "more or less," so characteristic of his own physical science, would have to be jettisoned.²⁸

While Aristotle correctly specified the most important feature of quantities, he himself did not pay proper attention to it as he set forth his accounts of the celestial and terrestrial world. There his "qualitative" physics led him, time and again, into implicitly quantitative, and at times explicitly quantitative inferences that could not be reconciled with what was plainly observed. Thus, it should have been obvious in Aristotle's time that bodies of greatly differing weights fall to the earth in remarkably equal times. Peripatetic physics could have indeed been held up to well-deserved ridicule long before Galileo's time.²⁹ It was another matter whether it was right for Galileo to invoke Plato's reification of numbers in order to justify that equality and other geometrical or numerical features discoverable in the physical world.

Unfortunately, Aristotle did not set a pattern as to the conclusions to be drawn from what he so incisively stated about quantities. Hence the pathetic opposition posed by Averroist Aristotelians to the new physics of motion. To be sure, even three centuries later one could still be puzzled by the fact that the law of inertial motion, in which there is at least the continued novelty of spatial displacement, "worked," although it provided no "explanation" of how the novelty came about.³⁰ Yet once one accepted with Aristotle the special status of numbers or quantities, it should have been possible to state that spatial displacement, as a purely quantitative proposition, implied no ontological factors. Not that these factors were denied by the mathematical formalism of inertial motion; rather, mathematics could have no bearing on them. This is no less true of the Newtonian law of accelerated motion. For that law too is independent of whatever philosophical or ontological definition one gives to the force being constantly at work in order to make real the acceleration. For what Hertz said about Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism, can also be stated of Newton's theory of gravitation: it is Newton's system of equations. Nothing more, nothing less.

But it still goes against the grain to recognize that there is an insurmountable conceptual obstacle to the age-old striving after a unified form of knowledge. That obstacle lies in the way of any form of reductionism, crude or refined, vicious or well-meaning. This is

not to suggest that there will soon be an end to efforts that want to reduce man, and all his thinking and volitions, to a machine. Scientific reductionism is as strong, if not stronger, than ever. But that obstacle also vitiates all efforts to "integrate" science with philosophy and theology. For if pathetic is the claim that qualities—in their broadest sense, that is insofar as they include value- and existence-judgments—can be reduced to quantities, so is the effort to wring some theological truth out of any result of classical or modern physics. The reason lies in what Aristotle had already stated concisely about the unique status, among all categories, of the category known as quantity.

There is indeed an inefaceable line of demarcation between the conceptual domain of quantities and all other conceptual domains taken together. The conceptual domain of quantities is a most special domain that stands apart from the rest because all terms belonging to it have a peculiarly common characteristic. They all are strictly univocal, to use a term that, though increasingly unfashionable, never becomes antiquated. Quantities are like so many building blocks with well-defined contours. The coordination of those blocks can, of course, be exceedingly complex and complicated. This is brought out by a mere look at any advanced textbook of mathematical physics. But whatever that complexity and complicatedness, the art of handling those blocks—quantities—follows invariable rules. The art is always the same, because the art is a skill with the basic operations of arithmetic.

One can, of course, philosophize about quantities, but the operations performed with quantities have their own independence, precisely because quantities have a specific conceptual character that makes them distinct from all other concepts. All conceptualizations of numbers can be compared to strictly defined building blocks that remain forever identical to themselves. This is why their addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division are a straightforward matter, in principle at least. All other concepts are amoebas by comparison, or even less definite. For amoebas, although they constantly change, have a strict boundary membrane. Non-quantitative concepts have neither permanent shapes, nor distinct envelopes. This is why their definitions given in any dictionary are forever subject to slight and, at times, drastic rewriting.³¹ This is what Whitehead wanted to convey in warning against the dream of a "Perfect Dictionary."³²

What is actually being done in giving the dictionary definition of a word is to define it in terms of some other words. In the case of quantitative concepts, say a number, such as twenty, one juxtaposes so many unit areas. Thus the concept of twenty is the sum of twenty units. To represent any number other than one may be done either by the addition or the multiplication of the unit area. The starting point is always the unit integer. But there is no such strictly defined starting point when one defines non-quantitative words or concepts. There one has to superimpose partially several non-quantitative concepts, each corresponding to a given area which is not strictly circumscribed. Therefore that superimposition is never absolutely fixed or definite, partly because the words constituting the definition do not have distinct contours. Any definition of a non-quantitative concept may therefore best be compared to the partial superimposition on one another of, say, six or seven patches of clouds whose contours vanish at their presumed boundaries. The meaning of the concept then corresponds to the area where all the concepts used in the definition overlap. But the area of that overlap is not strictly definite.

When viewed from a distance, such an overlap, like any cloud, appears with distinct edges. This is why non-quantitative concepts function well in ordinary discourse. But when they are subject to a close analysis, they seem to evanesce. Such is the reason for the intellectual malaise created by logical positivism. On more than one occasion it prompted despair about the possibility of knowing anything at all. One wonders whether A.J. Ayer knew the true reason why he had to admit that almost everything was wrong with logical positivism.³³ The reason was the presumption that every good reasoning should be a "scientific" reasoning. In other words, logical positivists looked for strictly defined conceptual building blocks even within the non-quantitative realm, although there only patches of fog could be found.

Yet those non-quantitative concepts do not become less real, just because it is not possible to ascribe them quantitatively exact contours. Patches of fog are just as real whether looked at from a distance or from close range. Thus the notion of forest does not become invalid just because a forest, when looked at close range, merely shows single trees. Nor does the notion of forest become invalid just because it is not possible to define quantitatively the number of trees that would constitute not merely a grove but a forest. It is not possible to find the number of pages that would necessarily constitute a book and not a mere pamphlet. It is quite an arbitrary matter when librarians, in their despair, decide that 60 pages are needed at the minimum to make a book.

While no superimposition of patches of clouds would turn them into the kind of building blocks which quantities are, quantities would not remain quantities once deprived of their strict conceptual contours. This radical difference between quantities and everything else is still to be perceived in its true weight by champions of artificial intelligence, these latter-day protagonists of reductionism. While quantitative concepts can be given "exact" equivalents in the magnetic orientation of ferro-silicate domains within the chips, this cannot be done with non-quantitative concepts that represent the overwhelming proportion of human conceptualizations. They include the crucially important value judgments and existence judgments.

While this basic difference between quantitative and non-quantitative concepts may appear madness from the viewpoint of artificial intelligence, the human mind has no problem in living with that difference. It is an often underestimated marvel of the human mind that it can understand with equal ease quantities and qualities, an ease incomprehensible within the perspective of artificial intelligence programming. The human mind can grasp in a single act of knowledge entities, for instance, an aesthetically valuable painting, that convey ideas both quantitative and aesthetical at the same time and in the same act of perception. The mind is not disturbed by the fact that a human action, such as a step forward, is fully describable in quantitative terms, and yet non-describable in those terms insofar as that step was made really and freely, and for a purpose.

In order to awaken the minds of my readers and audiences to this fundamental fact of irreducibility, I used to present them with a paradoxical—but I hope not irreverent—twist to a statement in the gospel. The statement is well known: What God has joined together, no man should separate. Twisted, the phrase would go: What God has separated, no man should try to fuse together, lest confusion should arise. Human knowledge, whether we consider it to have come from the hands of God or not, concerns two separate realms,

quantities and non-quantities, and these two realms are irreducible to one another. It is not profitable for man to chafe under that restriction. Those who did, whether on the Hegelian right or the Hegelian left, created only confusion for themselves and others.

About quantities, insofar as they are embodied in matter and drawn out of it by measurements and mathematical operations, science alone is competent. In that sense, and in that sense alone, science is unlimited, while remaining limited to quantities. All other considerations that relate to non-quantitative features, are beyond the quantitative competence of science which is its sole competence. Conversely, quantitative considerations, insofar as they are to be empirically verified or measured, are beyond the competence of philosophy or theology, to mention only the principal fields of inquiry that do not aim at measuring anything in sensible matter.

This distinctness between the quantitative and non-quantitative (qualitative) realms of knowledge is not proposed as a starting point in knowledge. Sensory knowledge begins with the registering of external reality, or things in short. This is true even though what is most directly perceived in things is their size. This is why the category of quantities holds first place among all categories. Or as Aquinas states, "accidents befall substance in a definite order. Quantity comes to it first, then quality, after that passivities and actions." To continue with Thomas, "sensible qualities cannot be understood unless quantity is presupposed...and neither can we understand something to be the subject of motion unless we understand it to possess quantity."³⁴

This primary position of quantities among all categories is the reason for their conceptual isolation among them. Quantities do not admit analogical degrees of understanding. This constitutes their radical difference from other categories and even from substance and existence. Herein lies the error of those who, with Heisenberg in the van, tried to see in wave mechanics something analogous to the Aristotelian doctrine of potency.³⁵ One should therefore take it for distinct progress that physics has ceased to be called natural philosophy.

The inseparability of quantities from matter justifies the quantitative character of the scientific method. Compared with it, all other considerations about science are of secondary importance, no matter how intriguing they may be. Unfortunately, for the past thirty years or so, interpretations of science have been dominated by these secondary considerations. We have learned a great deal about the psychological aspects of scientific discoveries. We have learned much about sociological factors that promote or hinder scientific progress. We have learned a great deal about paradigm shifts, research programs, scientific styles, and so forth. But because the basic feature as outlined above has not been kept in focus, a great deal of confusion has arisen about science. One result of that confusion is the view that Taoist meditation is the chief propellant of the great insights of modern physics. To see that confusion for what it is, it is enough to contrast the definiteness of numbers (including quantizations of the energy levels in the Bohr atom) with the indefiniteness of both Yin and Yang in their mutual interactions.

To cut through that confusion one need not be a scientist, one need not even be a philosopher of science. One need only to remember the role of quantities in science. It takes no advanced mathematics to ask about any proposition, whether it includes quantitatively determinable parameters. Inasmuch as it does, it is a scientific proposition. There science, insofar as it verifies or disproves theories in their quantitative inferences, alone is

competent. Insofar as that proposition contains parameters other than quantitative, other branches of human discourse—philosophy, theology, esthetics, or whatnot—should be resorted to in order to evaluate them.

This multiple approach demands mental discipline in no small measure. First of all, the scientist should be aware of the fact that even the most appealing procedure may not be free of ambiguities. Symmetry in equations may seem to recommend itself on aesthetic grounds as an unquestionably worthy and fruitful goal. Yet those grounds will appear somewhat shaky as soon as one considers that there is nothing symmetrical in the "golden cut" or golden proportion in which ancient and modern artists have recognized something profoundly aesthetic. Also, an absolutely perfect symmetry is not applicable in relation to a physical universe in which nothing would move if there were not some basic imbalance built into it.

To overlook such ambiguities will not come easily to those whose chief training is in the one-way thinking of quantitative method and in nothing more complicated. They will be swayed time and again by the staggering measure to which matter can be manipulated through its quantitative properties. Science extends to wherever quantitative properties can be found and is competent to handle them. Beyond that, science is not only incompetent, but may be the source of most dangerous expectations. I have often stated that over the entrance of every laboratory and department of science one should carve the words of Maxwell, which I quoted above, about the severest test of the scientific mind. To those words should be joined a warning by Polykarp Kusch, a Nobel-laureate physicist. "Science," he said, "cannot do a very large number of things, and to assume that science may find a technical solution to all problems is the road to disaster."³⁶ To safeguard against such a disaster few considerations may be more effective in this scientific age than a reflection on the limits of an otherwise limitless science.

NOTES

1. As told by C.P. Snow, "The Moral Un-neutrality of Science," *Science* 133 (1961), p. 257.
2. Lord Kelvin, "Electrical Units of Measurements" (1883), in *Popular Lectures and Addresses* (London: Macmillan, 1891-94) 1:72-73.
3. R. Mayer, "Ueber notwendige Konsequenzen und Inkonssequenzen der Wärmemechanik" (1869) in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1893), p. 355.
4. Letter to Greisinger, July 20, 1844, in *Die Mechanik der Wärme in Gesammelte Schriften* (Stuttgart, 1893), p. 145.
5. A. Einstein, "What Is the Theory of Relativity?" in *The World as I See It* (New York: Covici, 1934), p. 80.
6. See E. Warburg, "Friedrich Kohlrausch: Gedächtnisrede," in *Verhandlungen der Deutschen Physikalischen Gesellschaft* 12 (1910), p. 920.
7. For details, see my *The Relevance of Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 127-30.
8. See E. Fuller (ed.), *2500 Anecdotes for All Occasions* (New York: Avenel Books, 1978), p. 192.
9. H. Hertz, *Electric Waves*, D.E. Jones, trans. (London: 1893), p. 20.
10. R. Feynman, R.B. Leighton, M. Sands, *The Feynman Lectures on Physics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1964), vol. II, section 41, p. 12.
11. *Ibid.*
12. See my review, "Mind: Its Physics or Physiognomy?" (1991) of Penrose's book, in my

Patterns or Principles and Other Essays (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1995), pp. 204-213.

13. As I argued in my review of Hawking's book, "Evicting the Creator" (1988), reprinted in my *The Only Chaos and Other Essays* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America; Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1990), pp. 152-161.

14. See my *God and the Cosmologists* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1989), pp. 138 and 258. New enlarged edition also by Real View Books (Fraser, Mich.: 1998).

15. D. Hume, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, Section 12, part 3. In *Philosophical Works* (1826), 4:193.

16. In a conversation with Camap. See the latter's "Intellectual Autobiography," in P.A. Schilpp (ed.), *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap* (La Salle, Ill.: The Library of Living Philosophers, 1963), pp. 37-38.

17. Just as Einstein viewed, in the name of science, free will as illusion, so did he view any abiding sense of human purpose and, of course, the immortality of the soul. For details and documentation, see my *The Purpose of It All* (Lanham, Md.: Regnery Gateway, 1990), pp. 182-83. Italian translation, *Lo scopo di tutto* (Milano: Ares, 1994).

18. "C'est librement qu'on est déterministe," goes Poincaré's priceless phrase in his essay, "Sur la valeur objective des théories physiques," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 10 (1902), p. 188.

19. Reported in *Trenton Times Advertiser*, February 25, 1995, p. 1.

20. Reported in E. Gilson, *From Aristotle to Darwin and Back Again. A Journey in Final Causality, Species, and Evolution*, J. Lyon, trans., with an introduction by S.L. Jaki (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), p. 28.

21. A point wholly ignored in standard high-level popularizations of brain-mind research, such as D. J. Chalmers, "The Puzzle of Conscious Experience," in *Scientific American* (December 1995), pp. 80-87.

22. W. Quine, "Ontology and Ideology Revisited," *The Journal of Philosophy* 80 (1983), p. 1.

23. In numerical terms the efficiency in question is 16 percent.

24. See *The Scientific Papers of James Clerk Maxwell*, ed. W.D. Niven (Cambridge, 1890), vol. II, p. 759.

25. See chs. 5 and 6 in my book, *Is There a Universe?* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1993).

26. *Categorias*, 6a. I am quoting the English translation in *Great Books of the Western World*.

27. *Ibid.*

28. Those who, in imitation of A. Koyré, contrast in such a way pre-modern with modern science, usually fail to refer to that phrase of Aristotle who himself overlooked its import in dealing with the physical universe.

29. For a list of plain absurdities in Aristotle's physics, see my *The Relevance of Physics*, pp. 26-28.

30. This puzzlement is the gist of the exchange of letters between Pierre Duhem and R. Garrigou-Lagrange. See my article, "Le physicien et le métaphysicien. La correspondance entre Pierre Duhem et Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange," *Actes de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences, Belles-Lettres et Arts de Bordeaux*, 12 (1987), pp. 93-116.

31. See my paper, "Words: Blocks, Amoebas, or Patches of Fog? Some Basic Problems of Fuzzy Logic," *Proceedings of the International Meeting of the Society of Photo-Optical Instrumentation Engineers, Orlando, Florida, April 10-12, 1996*, ed. B. Bosacchi and J.C. Bezdek (Bellingham, Wash.: SPIE, 1996), pp. 138-143.

32. See A.N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* (1938; New York: Capricorn Books, 1958), p. 235.

33. Quoted in B. Magee, *Men of Ideas: Some Creators of Contemporary Philosophy* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1978), p. 131.

34. St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences. Questions V and VI of his*

Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius. Translated, with introduction and notes by A. Maurer (4th rev. ed.; Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1986), p. 40 (Qu. V. art. iii).

35. For details, see my *God and the Cosmologists*, pp. 155-56.

36. Address to the Pulitzer Prize jurors, Columbia University, 1961, in *New York Herald Tribune*, April 2, 1961, sec. 2, p. 3, col. 5.

DEVELOPMENT OF WOMANIST THEOLOGY: SOME CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS

RUFUS BURROW, JR.

INTRODUCTION

Womanist theology is the most creative development and has been the most significant contribution to black theology and black religious scholarship since its emergence in the mid-1980s.¹ Proponents of this new way of thinking about and doing theology are primarily Afrikan-American women who have put black religion on trial² in a way heretofore unknown. Although influenced by both black theology and feminist theology, womanist theology is not a mere constellation of ideas from these camps. Instead, Womanists have focused first and foremost on their own experience and voice as they continue to clarify just what they mean to say and do as theologians whose reality is multidimensional. That is, they are women, Afrikan American, who believe they are frequently adversely affected by classism, colorism, and heterosexism.

This essay focuses on three things. First, I discuss contributions of the folklorist, anthropologist, and novelist Zora Neale Hurston to womanist theology and ethics. Second, attention is given the reasons black women religious scholars were initially critical of their male counterparts, and why they now prefer *womanist theology* as the best way of describing their work. Third, I discuss six important characteristics of womanist theology and ethics. I conclude with a consideration of several limitations or concerns about the womanist theological project. The hope is that these will soon come to center stage in womanist theology and ethics. Indeed, in light of the seriousness of the genocidal tendency reflected in intracommunity violence and murder among large numbers of young Afrikan-American males, they must. For womanist theology as we will see is, among other things, a *survival theology*. Therefore it must focus on issues like this in a way and to an extent that neither it nor black theology has to date.

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The roots of womanist thought, especially the idea of the strong, responsible, self-determined, in-charge black woman actually antedates American slavery. Influenced by the work of Cheikh Anta Diop, historian John Henrik Clarke observes that Afrikan women in antiquity frequently "ruled nations with unquestionable authority." Because of their own level of security many Afrikan men saw no need to be threatened by the advance of women "as far as their talent, royal lineage and prerogatives would take them." In addition, "the women of Ethiopia had rights equal to that of men, and equal power. Ethiopia was the first country in the world to have been ruled by a Queen."³ Barbara Omolade reminds us that prior to American slavery West Afrikan women "enjoyed high status, and the civil and human rights accorded all tribal members."⁴ These women participated in their societies as full persons and were accorded the same human and other rights as men. So deeply did they cherish their humanity and the rights accorded them that "from the beginning African women as well as men independently and collectively resisted enslavement."⁵

Black women religious scholars such as Jacquelyn Grant, Katie Cannon, Delores Williams, Karen Baker-Fletcher, Diana Hayes, Annie Ruth Powell, Marcia Riggs, Carroll A.W. Ali, Delores Carpenter, Emilie Townes, and Kelly Delaine Brown Douglas have adopted and adapted Alice Walker's term *womanist* as the best way of characterizing their work in teaching and ministry. Cheryl Sanders contends that there is a strong spirituality element in all the womanist writings, and that "arguably it is the spiritual appeal of the womanist concept that has caused so many black women thinkers to anchor their scholarly identity within the womanist nomenclature."⁶

Womanists have primarily focused on black women's experience of racism, sexism, misogyny, and economic exploitation during and after American slavery. As Alice Walker pointed out, women in the womanist tradition have generally been very mentally-emotionally strong, self-determined, sassy, survivalists, lovers of women and women's experience, as well as lovers of and caregivers to the black community. They have generally exhibited the trait of *being in charge*.⁷

ZORA NEALE HURSTON, WOMANIST THEOLOGIANS AND ETHICISTS

Katie Cannon was the first womanist theologian to publish a book on the subject. In her seminal text, *Black Womanist Ethics* (1988), Cannon found the above named traits to be those which best characterized the anthropologist, folklorist, and novelist Zora Neale Hurston (1903-1960). Hurston's work has had a strong influence on both Cannon and Alice Walker. Since Cannon believes that important clues to understanding black women's experience are found in the literary tradition of black women, it is not surprising that she and most other womanist theologians and ethicists have been influenced by one or more key writers in this tradition. For example, Karen Baker-Fletcher⁸ has been much influenced by Anna Julia Cooper (1858-1964), while Emilie M. Townes⁹ has been influenced by Ida B. Wells-Barnett (1862-1931). Marcia Riggs¹⁰ has examined the work and influence of more than a half dozen nineteenth-century black foremothers in the womanist tradition.

Zora Neale Hurston grew up in the rural town of Eatonville, Florida, the first all-black town to be incorporated. Her writings celebrate the culture of that area. Womanist characteristics were actually passed on to Hurston by her mother, Lucy Ann Potts. A school

teacher, Potts taught Hurston to always reach for the stars, i.e., to always aim high. Reflecting on what her mother taught her, Hurston said: "We might not land on the sun, but at least we would get off the ground..."¹¹ Hurston was taught by her mother to strive toward the continued *enhancement of her own individuality and sense of self*, despite the fact that they lived in the deep South at a time when Blacks had always to remember their place and to defer to Whites. In addition, black women were always expected to defer to men (of all races). What Hurston's mother taught her was quite revolutionary for that period.

Although her father, a Baptist preacher and the mayor of their town, strongly encouraged her to abide by the ethics of the white South, Hurston's mother persisted until her dying day in efforts to teach her *to be self-sufficient, self-determined, her own person, and her own thinker*. In *Jonah's Gourd Vine* Hurston rehearsed portions of her mother's deathbed speech in the fictional character of Lucy.

Stop cryin', Isie, you can't hear whut Ahm sayin', 'member tuh git all de education you kin. Dat's de onliest way you kin keep out from under people's feet. You always strain tuh be de bell cow, never be de tail uh nothin'. Do de best you kin, honey, 'cause neither yo' paw or dese older chillun is goin' tuh be bothered too much wid youh, but you goin' tuh git 'long. Mark mah words. You got spunk, but mah po' lil sandy-haired child goin' suffer uh lot 'fo she git tu de place she can 'fend fuh herself. And Isie, honey, stop cryin' and lissen tuh me. *Don't you love nobody better'n you do yo'self*. Do, you'll be killed 'thout being struck uh blow. Some uh dese things Ahm tellin' yuh, you won't understand 'em fuh years tuh come, but de time will come when you'll know....¹² (my emphasis)

Hurston was encouraged to love and respect herself, to stand tall, and to take charge of her life. Her mother urged her to be a survivor and to seek wholeness of self even in the face of near unbearable suffering, abuse and disregard for her personhood.

Essentially on her own from the age of nine and then a runaway at age fourteen, Hurston learned early what it meant to survive, to be self-determined, and fortitudinous. She developed what Alice Walker called "unctuousness,"¹³ the ability, the willingness, and the audacity to affirm her personhood and dignity in the face of incredible odds and persecution. Katie Cannon saw in this idea an important and necessary principle for the formation of womanist ethics.

What Hurston makes clear is that it is the quality of steadfastness, akin to fortitude, in the face of formidable oppression that serves as the most conspicuous feature in the construction of Black women's ethics.... Hurston portrays this moral quality lof "unctuousness" of life not as an ideal to be fulfilled but as a balance of complexities so that suffering will not overwhelm and endurance is possible.... Creatively straining against the external restraints in one's life is virtuous living.¹⁴

If one is Black and a woman she has always to be self-determined in the face of the odds, no matter how impossible it seems to overcome them. The "unctuousness" of Hurston meant that she was *committed* to pushing beyond all externally imposed limits every

moment of her life to stamp out all things that seek to demean both her and her people. In a sense Afrikan Americans have no choice but to be unctuous as long as racism, economic exploitation, sexism, colorism, black on black violence and murder, etc., converge to destroy them.

Much of Katie Cannon's writings on womanist ethics and her stance on moral agency is based on moral wisdom gleaned from her study of Hurston. Indeed, as noted above, many present-day womanist thinkers have been influenced by the writings, experiences, and activism of strong, self-determined nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Afrikan American women. So important to womanists is the literary and other work of these women that Cannon maintains that "there is no better source for comprehending the 'real-lived' texture of Black experience and the meaning of the moral life in the Black context than the Black woman's literary tradition. Black women's literature offers the sharpest available view of the Black community's soul."¹⁵ Although some may argue that Cannon states her case too strongly, we should remember that it is only in recent years that sustained attention has been given Afrikan-American women's experiences. Cannon's emphasis goes a long way toward reminding us of the lack of balance in the treatment of black women's contributions at a time when black men were the dominant black writers. Therefore what may seem like an overemphasis on Cannon's part regarding the significance of the black women's literary tradition actually helps to create balance, where previously there was none.

In any case, black women writers, in contradistinction to black male writers, have frequently tended to focus more on the black community and what happens there, rather than on its troubles and conflicts with outside forces.¹⁶ Black women writers, unlike their male counterparts, tend to be more concerned about uncovering the aesthetic, emotional, and intellectual values of the black community. They are less concerned about comparing these with the moral standards of the white community. Instead, their focus tends to be on rediscovering the values that have brought Afrikan Americans thus far on the journey. Black women writers emphasize what Afrikan Americans can become quite apart from values developed in the white community. In addition, black women writers stress—in a way that no other writers do—the need for black women to affirm, protect, and enhance their own sense of self and dignity, much like Zora Neale Hurston did. In addition, they search for and portray value consciousness in the black community. In this respect black women writers tend to be *race persons*, inasmuch as their focus is on rediscovering the positives of Afrikan American experience and culture and teaching these to the black community. This is knowledge that the entire Afrikan American community needs if it would survive toward liberation and wholeness.

Furthermore, black women writers have long understood the need to pass on historic life-saving values such as respect for self, family, the elderly, the community, spiritual values, the importance of working cooperatively to overcome problems, giving back to the community, and the value of hard work.¹⁷ For example, in Alice Walker's novel *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, we find the chief protagonist in the story doing this for his granddaughter, Ruth. He passed on to her the best of the moral wisdom of his people in the hope that she would some day know the freedom that neither he nor her father had known. Copeland counseled his granddaughter on what she would need to do in order

to both survive in a racist culture, and to ultimately become her own person.

Jacquelyn Grant observes that the misinformed have often labeled black women who exhibit womanist characteristics as being "domineering castrating matriarchs"¹⁸ which erroneously implies possession of tremendous power and decision-making both inside and outside black families. Womanists do not equate the traits of womanism with "domineering castrating matriarchs." To be strong-willed, self-determined, one who talks back, and highly intelligent does not in itself make a black woman domineering, despite others' perception—especially men's.

Alice Walker contends that the womanist is, minimally, a black feminist. But maximally she is much more. For "feminist," emerging from white women's experience and culture, does not adequately capture black women's experiences, struggles, and that "unctuousness" they have always exhibited. The term *womanist* clearly distinguishes between white and black women's experiences in a way that "feminist" does not. Womanist theology, for example, highlights the differences between the way black and white women think about and do theology. The womanist is one who is always active both in the struggle to overcome all forms of oppression affecting black women, as well as those forms of oppression which dehumanize other members of humanity. What it finally comes down to is that "womanist just means *being and acting* out who you are."¹⁹ And this does not necessarily make one a domineering castrating matriarch.

POINT OF DEPARTURE OF WOMANIST THOUGHT

The point of departure of womanist theology is black women's experiences in the black community, black churches, and throughout society. In addition, womanist theology urges that black women listen to and be inspired more by their own voices and experiences of the Christian faith than anything said or decided by men.²⁰ Womanist theology opens the door for black women to do theology out of their tridimensional experience of racism, sexism, and classism. Each of these must be taken into consideration, for each is a crucial aspect of Afrikan-American women's reality and experience. "To ignore any aspect of this experience is to deny the holistic and integrated reality of Black womanhood."²¹ Womanists, then, do not feel compelled to say that they are any one of these any more or less than the others. For womanists the question: "Are you black first and then a woman?" is at best a ridiculous one and does not take seriously their total reality as human beings who experience themselves always and at once as Afrikan American and woman. Many black women are in tune with the fact that they are oppressed because they are women *and* because they are Blacks of Afrikan descent. Black women who happen also to be poor are quite aware that they are disregarded and trampled upon because of their class status too. Indeed, if her sexual orientation is different from the traditional, womanist theology affirms that she also suffers from the evil of heterosexism. This means hers can be a quadruple and even a quintuple-dimensional oppression if colorism is included.

Womanist theology is a universalist theology in that its proponents address and analyze all forms of oppression, for all of these demean and degrade persons. Any practice that dehumanizes others separates and alienates persons from each other. Womanists, on the other hand, see and live by the conviction that there is a fundamental connectivity or interdependence among persons. Therefore, womanist theology is "not content with a lib-

eration that addresses only a particular person's or group's wholeness."²² Instead, womanist theology provides a sharp critique of the racism of white women and their failure to acknowledge and take seriously black women's experiences. It critiques the racism of white women and men as well as the sexism of all men. Womanist theology also challenges what it views as the heterosexism of representatives of all human groups. In addition, it contends against the male hatred and abuse of women in general, and black women in particular.

MISOGYNISTIC TREATMENT OF WOMEN

In the first years of its existence womanist theologians were acutely critical of the failure of black male liberation theologians to see and acknowledge black women and to include them in the dialogues on black theology. By excluding black women and making them invisible in their theology, black male liberation theologians did not feel compelled to address black males' misogyny and abusive treatment of black women. No person spoke to the issue of black male hatred and abuse of black women like the late Audre Lorde (1934-1992). She made it clear that no longer would black women accept the hateful and abusive treatment of their black male companions in silence. The silence was, ostensibly, for the purpose of not airing dirty laundry in public, and also in order to show political solidarity with black men. And yet the eerie silence has frequently meant a kind of hear no evil, see no evil, do nothing about evil, stance. It has often meant a passive acceptance in the black community of the abuse and misogynistic treatment of black women. For efforts are not frequently made to correct such practices. Lorde and growing numbers of black women have found this approach totally unacceptable, and therefore reject the practice of black women silently enduring such treatment in their own community and homes. No longer is political (or any other kind of) solidarity with black men worth misogynistic and abusive treatment and passively suffering in silence.²³

Black feminists and womanists²⁴ know that what the white woman protagonist, Arvey, experienced in Hurston's novel, *Seraph on the Suwanee* (1948), was not an isolated occurrence in either the white or the black community. Although a self-determined woman, Arvey is time and again the victim of spousal abuse, even though her husband never struck her, and always insisted that he loved her. Yet he controlled her and abused her psychologically. It is important to note that womanists do not accept the older view that violence has taken place only when a woman is physically abused and when one can actually see blood, swelling, and bruises on her body. Rather, womanists define violence in broader terms to include any act which violates or demeans the personhood of a woman, indeed of any person! By definition, then, even verbal abuse is a form of violence.

In addition to psychologically and emotionally abusing her, Arvey's husband, Jim Meserve, did not hesitate to let her know that she had no mind of her own, could not think for herself, and needed him precisely because of her inability (as a woman!) to take care of herself. And of course, if women have no mind of their own they have no way of properly guiding their will, and thus are incapable of responsible moral behavior. For moral behavior presupposes both *freedom of will* and *mature intellect* to guide the will to responsible moral choice. Indeed, Jim assumed that *women need men in order to keep them from hurting themselves*.²⁵ On this view women are seen as completely mindless objects

whose sole purpose for being is to serve men. Thus when Arvay insisted that even if she did love him she would have to *think* about whether to marry him, and that she would have to make up her own mind, Jim responded chauvinistically:

Women folks don't have no mind to make up nohow. They wasn't made for that. Lady folks were just made to laugh and act loving and kind and have a good man to do for them all he's able, and have him as many boy-children as he figgers he'd like to have, and make him so happy that he's willing to work and fetch in every dad-blamed thing that his wife thinks she would like to have. That's what women are made for.²⁶ (my emphasis)

Presumably the woman is capable of doing little else than spreading her legs at the man's beck and call and bearing, not children as such, but "as many boy-children as he figgers he'd like to have." Since she cannot think she knows not what else to do. But she need not worry about caring for herself. The man will do that for her too! For apart from child-bearing she is, after all, helpless.

It is instructive to note here that while still engaged to Arvay, Jim was advised by Joe Kelsey (his "pet Negro") to force her to submit to his will as a way of ensuring her obedience. The solution was to take her sexually and give her a good beating, and not necessarily in that order. "Most women folks will love you plenty if you take and see to it that they do," Joe told Jim. "Make'em knuckle under. From the very first jump, get the bridle in they mouth and ride'em hard and stop'em short. They's all alike, Boss. Take'em and break'em."²⁷ Jim thought long and hard about this advice. Not long afterward he raped Arvay.²⁸ This act of violence may or may not have been influenced by Joe's advice to Jim. But what is important to note is that neither of these men—white or black—was troubled by such degrading, abusive, and violent treatment of women. And at least in this regard we see an instance in which white and black men are actually able to unite—against women!

The point of this discussion is not to suggest that these are attitudes and practices that are unique to any particular race of men, nor that all men engage in such abuses. And yet it should be clear that these misogynistic attitudes and abusive practices against women have been documented in virtually every community where there are men and women. It does not matter that many men—and some women—pretend that such behavior does not occur in their community and home. The point is that too many women have testified to the contrary. Womanists vow not to take such abuse any longer—at least not without resistance.

SIX CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMANIST THEOLOGY

As observed above, Katie Cannon was the first black woman religious scholar to appropriate Alice Walker's term *womanist* for the theological project of Afrikan-American women. In a 1985 essay Cannon wrote:

Black feminist consciousness may be more accurately identified as Black womanist consciousness, to use Alice Walker's concept and definition. As an interpretive principle, the Black womanist tradition provides the incentive to chip away at oppres-

sive structures, bit by bit. It identifies texts that help Black womanists to celebrate and rename the innumerable incidents of unpredictability in empowering ways. The Black womanist identifies with those biblical characters who hold on to life in the face of formidable oppression. Often compelled to act or to refrain from acting in accordance with the powers and principalities of the external world, Black womanists search the Scriptures to learn how to dispel the threat of death in order to seize the present life.²⁹

In 1986 Jacquelyn Grant talked about the significance of "womanist" as the best way of characterizing the theology of black feminist theologians. For Grant the term stresses, among other things, the autonomy of black women. It "means being and acting out who you are and interpreting the reality for yourself. In other words, Black women speak out for themselves."³⁰ By the mid-1980s, then, black feminist theologians were beginning to appropriate the term "womanist" as the best way of characterizing their work.

In an insightful article³¹ Kelly Delaine Brown Douglas explains what womanist theology meant at the time of its appearance in the mid-1980s. Brown Douglas emphasizes that since it is still in the early phase of its formation, with many contributions still to be made by black women, the defining and refining of womanist theology continues. Brown Douglas names four important characteristics. But there are at least two other important traits implied in womanist thought which I believe should be highlighted as well.

A THEOLOGY OF SURVIVAL

Womanist theology is a *theology of survival*. This idea is consistent not only with Walker's definition of womanist, but with the experiences and legacies of nineteenth-century black foremothers. Black women in every era of this country's history have, as a rule, understood the necessity of doing whatever is necessary to protect and defend both themselves and black families, and thus the black community. Historically the black woman was thought of as a chief protector and defender of the black family.³² Womanist theology "gives special attention to Black women's day-to-day efforts to preserve Black life in a society that tends to devalue this life."³³ Accordingly, black women are considered the primary caregivers in black families and are the ones most likely to transmit to black children the most important values and cultural practices of people of Afrikan descent. Part and parcel to the idea of womanist theology as a survival theology is the view of God as creator, protector, and "sustainer" of Black (and other) people. To convey this idea womanist theologians use the testimonies of black women and the biblical witness in order to discern the role and place of survivability.³⁴ In a way no black male liberation theologian did Delores Williams emphasizes the survival theme in her book, *Sisters in the Wilderness* (1993). Historically black women have found ways for themselves and their families to survive in the face of incredibly difficult conditions. Williams could see that it is premature to talk about black liberation until black survivability is guaranteed. Indeed, survival and liberation go hand in hand. Each depends on the other.

A LIBERATION THEOLOGY

Secondly, womanist theology, like the black theology of black male theologians, is a *lib-*

eration theology.³⁵ It is not identical with black theology, however, for it is not being forged primarily by black men, but by black women. However, it is similar to black theology in that it has both a political and a theological component. That is, on the one hand womanist theology is concerned about power issues involved in relations between women and men and the dehumanizing ways these get played out at the expense of Afrikan-American women, who suffer all forms of abuse, exploitation, and oppression. Therefore, any theology developed by Afrikan-American women must necessarily be concerned with issues of power. This partially describes the political component of womanist theology, inasmuch as it names, analyzes, criticizes, and seeks means to eradicate the systematic mistreatment and devaluing of black women. In this sense womanist theology is also political and prophetic theology.

On the other hand, and not unrelated to the political component, womanist theology has a theological side. Indeed, it stresses the unity and wholeness of persons and other life forms, recognizing that there is one Creator-God who creates and sustains all life. It also emphasizes God's fundamental and infinite love and care for all persons—women and men. Womanist theology holds that since God willingly and lovingly creates and sustains *all* persons, any group that oppresses and demeans another is involved in sin. In addition, such behavior is offensive to God and diminishes even the perpetrators since all are interdependent or connected, and ultimately related to each through God.

This theological component of womanist theology is very important and suggestive. For the focus on the unity and interrelatedness of persons and God, as well as the emphasis on survival-liberation makes womanist theology akin to personalism in both its metaphysical and ethical senses. This, even though womanists have not used the term *personalism* in their work. Metaphysical personalism stresses not only the unity of the ultimately real (or God) but the unity and interrelatedness of persons and the need for a being like the God of Jesus Christ as the chief unifying agent. Ethical personalism focuses on the inherent dignity of all persons, while grounding it in the idea of a personal God who loves and sustains persons and other life forms. This emphasis on human dignity necessarily implies the survival-liberation motif in womanist theology. For if to be a person is to be of inestimable worth, then everything humanly possible ought always be done to insure both the survival *and* the maximum enhancement and liberation of every human life. That womanists initially focus on the survival-liberation of black women because of their historic condition of multiple-dimensional oppression does not preclude the more universal emphasis on the humanity and dignity of all persons everywhere. Although there are strong theocentric and christocentric elements in womanist theology, one should not underestimate the significance of the anthropocentric element. Womanist theology is concerned with the plight and wellbeing of persons in the world, and most especially is it concerned about black women and the Afrikan-American community.

A GLOBAL THEOLOGY

Thirdly, we learn from Brown Douglas' essay that womanist theology is a *global theology*. Because it sees a basic communality or interconnectedness at the seat of reality, womanists maintain that anything that happens anywhere in the world affects—directly or indirectly—what happens everywhere. Therefore, the oppression of any group anywhere in

the world affects all other groups. This essentially means that the oppression of any group is the oppression of all groups. It also means that the group that oppresses another diminishes itself as well, since it acts contrary to moral law and what God expects of persons in the world. To intentionally demean and undermine the lives of others is to automatically demean one's own life. In this regard too, womanist theology is essentially personalistic, inasmuch as it affirms the interconnectedness of all persons. Indeed, personalism holds that reality is *a society of intercommunicating and interacting persons with the Creator-God at the center*.³⁶ Most specifically, womanist theology affirms that Afrikan Americans "are a part of a global community of oppressed peoples struggling for survival and freedom. It seeks to foster dialogue with other theologians of liberation, especially with women of color."³⁷ Therefore, not only are persons in general interrelated by virtue of the way God creates human beings, but groups who suffer from systematic forms of oppression are especially linked together. Because persons are thought to be connected with each other and with God, an offense against any person is also an offense against God.

A CHURCH THEOLOGY

Fourthly, womanist theology is "a *church theology*," inasmuch as it emerged from within the context of Afrikan-American women's religious and other experiences. Historically and presently Afrikan-American women have been the glue that has held the black church together. "Womanist theology affirms the involvement of women in the entire mission and ministry of the church."³⁸ This despite the fact that black churchwomen have frequently been denied the position of pastor and other leadership roles in the church. They fill the pews and the offering plates. They are the ushers, cooks, and Sunday school teachers. But the pulpit is reserved for the men. Although Brown Douglas maintains that womanist theologians open themselves to being accountable to black women in the pews who fight daily in the trenches of ministry, I wonder about this claim in light of one of the limitations of black liberation theology.

A major internal critique that some first generation black theologians made of black theology is that it failed to really connect with and influence a broad segment of black pastors, laity, as well as non-churchgoers. J. DeOtis Roberts is one of the staunchest critics in this regard.³⁹ C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya,⁴⁰ as well as the late Robert Hood⁴¹ call attention to this. James H. Harris, a pastor-scholar, also cites this limitation and proposes ways to bridge the gap.⁴² And of course this raises the question of who black liberation theologians are really accountable to (besides the God of Jesus Christ), since their primary audience, viz., the black community and its churches, is not responding to them in ways which indicate they even know who are the chief representatives of black theology. Nor do very many seem to know what black theology is and what it seeks to say and do.

I raise this issue in light of Brown Douglas' claim that *womanist theologians are accountable to black church women*. In my own experience in black churches I have not met significant numbers of black churchwomen who have heard of womanist theology, nor of its chief proponents. Many of those who have heard about it do not know what it is. This may have something to do with the types of churches I have attended, although many well-educated, middle-class, Afrikan-American church women know little or nothing of either black theology or womanist theology. Yet many of them become very curious and

excited when they hear the term *womanist theology*. This suggests an openness and willingness on their part to know more about it if someone with the knowledge would join in learning experiences with them. In any event, I would say that this is a matter that requires the close attention of womanist theologians and ethicists, lest they too become susceptible to the criticism some black theologians have made of the black theology movement and its actual relationship to black churches and the black community.

The next two characteristics of womanist theology are not named and discussed in Brown Douglas' informative essay. The foregoing discussion has implied each of them, but I want now to discuss both more explicitly. As with the four traits introduced by Brown Douglas I think that an entire essay can be written on each of these, since there are numerous implications of each for actually doing the day to day trench-work of womanist theology and ethics.

A PROPHETIC THEOLOGY

Although Brown Douglas did not make explicit reference to it in her article, one cannot read the fast developing literature on womanist theology and ethics without being impressed with its emphasis on themes of the eighth-century prophetic tradition, e.g., calling persons back to covenant relationship with God and doing justice and righteousness in God's world.⁴³ The prophetic tradition also emphasizes God's steadfast love and concern for persons, as well as God's persistent turning toward and searching for persons in the hope that they might be saved from destruction. Abraham Joshua Heschel aptly termed this divine turning toward persons *anthropotropism*.⁴⁴ Therefore a fifth major characteristic of womanist theology is that it is a *prophetic theology*. In this regard it continues the traditions of eighth-century prophecy, liberation theology in general, and Afrikan-American theology in particular. Womanist theology transcends these in its emphasis on being intentional about discovering, resurrecting, and unmuting the voices of Afrikan-American women. Only in this way can womanist theologians uphold the eighth-century prophetic tradition. Womanist theology seeks to give voice to voiceless black women, or as Anna Julia Cooper said, to unleash that "singing something" within the black woman.

Womanist theology, then, is "cutting-edge" theology. Its focus on the dignity of persons causes it to be concerned about the eradication of all forms of oppression, and the establishment of liberation and empowerment. Cutting-edge theology is always based on strong prophetic voices which criticize injustice, while advocating justice and righteousness. For justice must be done in a Christ-like spirit and attitude. Thus the need to do justice in a spirit of righteousness and respect for those being treated unjustly. This is consistent with eighth-century prophecy, as the prophets seldom spoke of justice without also speaking of righteousness. God's concern through the prophets was not simply that justice be done, but that it be done in ways that acknowledge and affirm the inviolable dignity of persons.

Although she would agree that there are many black women who have upheld this tradition, Emilie M. Townes names the nineteenth-century Christian social activist Ida B. Wells-Barnett as "a cutting-edge person" who "had a strong and willful prophetic voice on behalf of the injustices she saw heaped on Black folk in the United States."⁴⁵ Wells-Barnett fought almost single handedly against the systematic lynchings of black men in the latter and early part of the nineteenth and twentieth century, respectively. In addition, Marcia

Riggs has edited *Can I Get A Witness?: Prophetic Religious Voices of African-American Women*,⁴⁶ a volume which highlights a number of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Afrikan-American women for whom the prophetic tradition of the church is (or was) the pivot of their work.

The prophetic voice is characterized by a sense of one's call; the ability to discern God's will and word of truth for the people; the courage to name and expose unjust and oppressive conditions in society; a strong spirit of self-determination which makes one a moral agent who will neither passively accept wrongdoing nor fail to criticize it; the necessity to confront both injustice and the culprits; and the need to break down divisions and create communities of faith, justice, and unity.⁴⁷ The prophetic voice is also characterized by a clear affirmation of the absolute dignity and sanctity of human life.

Although womanist theology began to take shape in the mid-1980s and therefore is still in the early stages of its development, it has been evident from the beginning that this way of thinking has important historical roots which date back to, and antedates, slavery in the United States. That is, black women of Afrikan descent did not develop what we now know as womanist traits only after they were forced into slavery in this country. As Afrikans their entire worldview was a religious one and they already possessed a strong, deeply embedded sense of the worth of human life, and therefore knew the importance of the survival-liberation of persons. In addition, the Afrikans were strong, self-determined women. And although their native Afrikan cultures stressed family and community, the women could be very independent, forceful, in-charge, self-determined, military and even political leaders when the situation called for it. Indeed, in many Afrikan cultures in antiquity the women had equal power, voice, and privilege with the men.⁴⁸ So they came to American slavery already with a strong sense of personhood, self-determination, and dignity, which made it impossible for most of them to passively accept enslavement.

A PERSONALISTIC THEOLOGY

A deep sense of the dignity of persons, emphasis on survival-liberation, sense of self-determination, belief in a personal God who cares, and ability to be independent when necessary are important characteristics of womanist thought. These traits were also evident in many nineteenth-century black foremothers. However, these are also traits that one finds in the philosophy of personalism. This is the first and the oldest comprehensive American philosophy still in existence⁴⁹ and with a growing number of adherents, including this writer. It was first systematically formulated by the Methodist Borden P. Bowne (1847-1910), who taught philosophy at Boston University from 1876 until his death. The first Afrikan American to study personalism under Bowne was John Wesley Edward Bowen (1855-1933).⁵⁰ The most famous Afrikan American to study it (under Bowne's student, Edgar S. Brightman) was Martin Luther King, Jr.⁵¹ Essentially a metaphysics or way of thinking about reality, personalism is the view that persons are the highest (not the only!) intrinsic values, and reality is personal. Theistic personalism maintains that God is the Supreme Person in the universe; that Being in whom all life forms live and move and have their being. The most distinguishing feature about personalism is that it is a worldview, a way of thinking about, living and behaving in God's world.⁵²

Although fundamentally a metaphysics, *living* what personalism means is not foreign to

Afrikan and Afrikan-American experience. Nor is it foreign to the experiences of women of Afrikan descent. That womanists have not used the term personalism does not detract from the fact that personalistic ideas are found throughout their work. We see this most particularly in their emphasis on the dignity, self-determination, moral agency of black women, and their belief in a personal, loving, and just God. These are fundamental tenets of personalism as well. Furthermore, personalism can provide for womanist theologians a conceptual framework for grounding their belief in the sacredness of black women and their conviction that God is personal. A sixth trait of womanist theology, then, is that it is a *personalistic theology*.

CONCLUSION

Unlike Jacquelyn Grant⁵³ and Emilie Townes,⁵⁴ I hesitate to actually name nineteenth-century black foremothers "womanists," for they themselves did not know this term. In this I stand with Karen Baker-Fletcher.⁵⁵ However, in light of the chief traits of womanist thought it is appropriate to say that nineteenth-century black women exhibited the traits of womanism, and therefore were at least forerunners to this still developing tradition.

Womanist theologians remind us that this way of thinking about and doing theology is still in its early stages. Cheryl Sanders names seven topics that will likely have ongoing importance in womanist theology and ethics. These include: spirituality, theodicy, ontology, dialogue with black male and white feminist theologians, biblical ethics, biomedical ethics, and black church relations.⁵⁶ In each case Sanders identifies one or more womanist who focuses on the topic. Some important omissions from Sanders' list include intracommunity violence and murder among young Afrikan-American males, and black women and men in prison.

Black on black violence and murder and the exorbitant number of Afrikan-American men and women in jails, prisons, and other "correctional" facilities are means of making them disappear either permanently or for shorter or longer periods of time from the black community. This terrible waste of human resources and talent destroys rather than builds community. We have witnessed and heard about too many killings of young Afrikan-American males by other young Afrikan-American males, a tragedy that has gone beyond epidemic proportion. This is why Jewelle Taylor Gibbs and her colleagues have argued so cogently and passionately that young black males between the age of 15 to 24 are an "endangered species."⁵⁷ Indeed, when we add to this the tragedy of substance abuse, whether through use of alcohol or crack cocaine, there is in place a very effective but sinister method of reducing the population of the black community.

In addition, Karen Baker-Fletcher sees as a major task of womanist ethicists the resistance to and unmasking of the color-line as "an artifice constructed to deny relatedness and to preserve illusions of the righteousness of racial injustice." Her reading of the writings of historical black women convinces her that womanist ethics is an "ethics of courage, survival, liberation, resistance against oppression, and belief in the sacredness of all persons."⁵⁸

Therefore there is no place for colorism, a type of intracommunity racism among Afrikan Americans whereby "oppressive negative color stereotypes" are internalized. This phenomenon arose during American slavery. The rapes of black women by white men produced children of very light complexion. By comparison these children were frequent-

ly treated better than darker complected ones. Colorism has both to do with the physical complexion and with the socio-political stance of Blacks. It also has to do with making distinctions between who is more authentically Black in the Afrikan-American community. Fortunately Katie Cannon, Diana Hayes, and Karen Baker-Fletcher are womanist theologians who have no patience with such foolishness.⁵⁹

As I cite these concerns I want also to point out that unlike black theology which emerged nearly thirty years ago, womanist theology has only been in existence since the mid-1980s. The signs are that womanists are increasingly aware of these and related issues. So in my judgment there is no cause for alarm at this point.

I agree with J. DeOtis Roberts only in a qualified sense when he says that womanist theology has existed long enough that it is now fair game for external criticism,⁶⁰ i.e., criticism from other than womanist scholars and activists. Womanists need more time to further define and clarify their field and to identify what they consider the key issues for Afrikan-American women, the black community and church, and for humanity in general. At least it seems to me that womanists are the ones to say when it is time for such critique, or when they themselves will respond to it. This is not to say that criticisms should not be made, however. For I have pointed to a number of limitations or concerns above. And yet my gut tells me that for a while longer any external criticisms should, as far as possible, at least be kept within Afrikan-American circles. I think it is still too soon for hard criticisms to be made outside womanist circles and especially in unfriendly public forums.

This notwithstanding, I know from experience that external criticisms of new movements generally come early. But when a group's voice has been effectively silenced, or at best muted for several hundred years, it is reasonable to allow time and space for the members to find their own voice and to express all that has been pent up for so long, without being menaced by hard, frequently brutal and insensitive external criticisms. It is important to first know what the representatives of womanist theology and ethics are saying, and why. There will be plenty of time for criticism.

However, in light of the ascendancy of substance abuse, i.e., its sell and use, proliferating acts of violence and murder by young Afrikan-American males against Afrikan Americans, exorbitant rates of unemployment and underemployment in the black community, and many other problems confronting black families, I understand perfectly the concern that Roberts raises. He clearly does not invite criticism of womanist theology and ethics for criticism's sake. A senior representative of the black theology movement approaching retirement, he has seen too much of the aforementioned family and community-destroying practices. Since womanist theology and ethics seeks to be both particularist and universalist in outlook and to focus on the well-being of the black family, it follows for Roberts that they should be more vocal about issues that are destructive to family and community. Indeed, Delores Williams and Kelly Brown Douglas address some of the issues of black female-male relations in a collection edited by Cheryl Sanders, *Living the Intersection: Womanism and Afrocentrism in Theology* (Fortress Press, 1995).

Nevertheless, I do think it quite appropriate that I, a male Afrikan-American theological social ethicist, should read, discuss, teach, and reflect on the emerging literature in womanist theology and ethics for my own and the instruction of uninformed men and women in seminary, church, and society. And yet I feel compelled to do this as humbly

as I can, and without the presumption of being an expert. I must seek the forgiveness of Afrikan-American women and confess my own complicity in systematic sexist attitudes and practices against them. In addition, it is my intention that the decision to read, reflect on, discuss, write about, and teach womanist theology and ethics be supportive of the work of scholars, pastors, and activists in the womanist tradition.

NOTES

1. James Cone and Gayraud Wilmore, eds., *Black Theology A Documentary History Volume Two: 1980-1992* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993), pp. 7, 257.
2. See Mark L. Chapman's excellent discussion on womanist theologians' sharp prophetic critique of the limitations of pre- and post-Black Power religion in *Christianity on Trial: African-American Religious Thought Before and After Black Power* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1997), pp. 6-7, chapter 5.
3. John Henrik Clarke, "Woman's Place in African Antiquity" in *Crisis in Black Sexual Politics*, Nathan Hare and Julia Hare, eds. (San Francisco: Black Think Tank, 1989), pp. 121, 122.
4. Barbara Omolode, "Black Women and Feminism" in *Women and Values: Readings in Recent Feminist Philosophy*, Marilyn Pearsall, ed. (Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1986), pp. 139-140.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 140.
6. Cheryl J. Sanders, "Womanist Ethics: Contemporary Trends and Themes," Harlan Beckley, ed., *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics 1994* (Boston: The Society of Christian Ethics, School of Theology, Boston University), pp. 302-303.
7. See Alice Walker's four-part definition of womanist in her book, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983), pp. xi-xii.
8. Karen Baker-Fletcher, *A Singing Something: Womanist Reflections on Anna Julia Cooper* (New York: Crossroad, 1994).
9. Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993).
10. Marcia Riggs, *Awake, Arise and Act: A Womanist Call for Black Liberation* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Pilgrim Press, 1994), chapters 4, 5.
11. Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on a Road* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1942 [1971]), p. 21.
12. Hurston, *Jonah's Gourd Vine* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990 [1934]), p. 130.
13. Alice Walker, foreword to Robert Hemenway, *Zora Neale Hurston: A Literary Biography* (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1977), p. ivii.
14. Katie G. Cannon, "Unctuousness as Virtue According to the Life of Zora Neale Hurston" in *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community* by Cannon (New York: Continuum, 1995), p. 92.
15. Cannon, *Black Womanist Ethics* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1988), p. 90.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 87.
17. See Rufus Burrow, Jr., "Afrikan American Children: Values that Save" (Forthcoming issue of the *A.M.E. Church Review*).
18. Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1989), p. 205.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See Delores Williams, *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Challenge of Womanist God-Talk* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993), p. 203.
21. Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, p. 209.
22. Emilie M. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope* (Atlanta, Ga.: Scholars Press, 1993), p. 198.
23. See Audre Lorde, "Sexism: An American Disease in Blackface" in *Sister Outsider* by Audre Lorde (Freedom, Calif.: The Crossing Press, 1984), p. 65.

24. Although Alice Walker maintains that a womanist is "a feminist of color" it is not assumed here that every feminist of color is a womanist.
25. Hurston, *Seraph on the Suwanee* (New York: Harper, 1976 [1948]), p. 17.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 56.
29. Cannon, "The Emergence of Black Feminist Consciousness" in *Katie's Canon: Womanism and the Soul of the Black Community*, p. 56. This essay first appeared in Letty M. Russell, ed., *Feminist Interpretation of the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), pp. 30-40.
30. Grant, "Womanist Theology: Black Women's Experience as a Source for Doing Theology, with Special Reference to Christology" in *Black Theology: A Documentary History 1980-1992*, James H. Cone and Gayraud, eds. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1993), p. 278. This article was first presented as the Charles B. Copher Annual Faculty Lecture at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1986, and was published in the *Journal of the Interdenominational Theological Center* 13 (Spring 1986).
31. See Kelly Delaine Brown Douglas, "Womanist Theology" in *Black Women in America: An Historical Encyclopedia*, Darlene Clark Hine, ed. (New York: Carlson Publication Inc., 1993), II:1276-1277.
32. Claudia Jones, "An End to the Neglect of the Problems of Negro Women!" in *Daughters of Africa*, Margaret Busby, ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p. 262.
33. Brown Douglas, II:1276.
34. *Ibid.*
35. *Ibid.*, II:1277.
36. See Edgar S. Brightman, *An Introduction to Philosophy*, 3rd. edition, rev. Robert N. Beck (New York: Holt Rinehart Winston, 1964), p. 314, and Borden P. Bowne, *Personalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), pp. 277-279.
37. Brown Douglas, II:1277.
38. *Ibid.*
39. See J. DeOtis Roberts, *A Black Political Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), p. 236 #9, and also his book, *Black Theology in Dialogue* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987), pp. 18, 115.
40. See C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, *The Black Church in the African American Experience* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990), p. 179. "Both the survey data and the qualitative responses show that thus far the movement of black liberation theology has had a relatively limited influence upon the urban clergy and their congregations." The authors state further that "the great majority of black urban ministers in the United States—at least two-thirds of them—have not been affected by the movement at all."
41. See Robert Hood, "The Spirit as a Source for Liberation," lecture given at Christian Theological Seminary, February 25, 1987.
42. See James H. Harris, *Pastoral Theology: A Black-Church Perspective* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991).
43. See Walter Harrelson, "Prophetic Ethics" in *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, James F. Childress and John Macquarrie, eds. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986) [1967], pp. 508-509, and James L. Mays, "Justice" Perspectives from the Prophetic Tradition" in *Prophecy in Israel*, David L. Petersen, ed. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), pp. 144-158.
44. Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: Harper, 1962), pp. 440-443.
45. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, p. 206.
46. See Marcia Riggs, ed., *Can I Get A Witness?: Prophetic Religious Voices of African-American Women* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis, 1997).

47. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, pp. 206-210.
48. Clarke, "Woman's Place in African Antiquity," pp. 121-122.
49. William Werkmeister, *A History of Philosophical Ideas in America* (New York: Ronald Press, 1949), p. 103.
50. Burrow, "John Wesley Edward Bowen: First Afrikan American Personalist," *Encounter*, vol. 56, no. 3, Summer 1995, pp. 241-260, and "The Personalism of John Wesley Edward Bowen," *The Journal of Negro History* (Forthcoming issue).
51. Martin Luther King, Jr., *Stride Toward Freedom* (New York: Harper, 1958), p. 100.
52. Burrow, "Borden Parker Bowne and the Dignity of Being," *The Personalist Forum*, vol. 13, no. 1, Spring 1997.
53. Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus*, p. 205. Here Grant names Sojourner Truth, Jarena Lee, Amanda Berry Smity, Ida B. Wells, Mary Church Terrell (19th century), Mary McLeod Bethune, Fannie Lou Hamer (20th century) and "countless others" as womanists.
54. Townes, *Womanist Justice, Womanist Hope*, p. 212. Townes names Ida B. Wells-Barnett as a womanist.
55. Karen Baker-Fletcher, *A Singing Something: Womanist Reflections on Anna Julia Cooper* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), p. 154.
56. Sanders, "Womanist Ethics: Contemporary Trends and Themes," *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 1994, p. 302.
57. See Jewelle Taylor Gibbs, ed., *Young, Black and Male in America: An Endangered Species* (New York: Auburn House, 1988). See especially chapters 1, 7-8, 10.
58. Baker-Fletcher, "Dusting Off the Texts: Historical Resources for Womanist Ethics," Beckley, ed., *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 1994, p. 298.
59. See Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, "Katie Cannon: The Fruit of My Labor" in *I've Known Rivers: Lives of Loss and Liberation* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 52, 53; Diana Hayes, *Hagar's Daughters: Womanist Ways of Being in the World* (New York: Paulist Press, 1995), p. 48; Karen Baker-Fletcher, "Dusting Off the Texts: Historical Resources for Womanist Ethics," Beckley, ed., *The Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 1994, p. 298.
60. See Roberts, *Liberation and Reconciliation: A Black Theology*, rev. ed. (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1994), pp. xiv-xv.

WILLIAM BRAMWELL: THE LAST OF THE ANCIENT METHODISTS

CHARLES GOODWIN

On Monday, September 20, 1853, Thomas Collins, who was stationed in Bradford, took his two daughters, "Emmy and Maria to Westgate Hill, to Bramwell's grave. The spot where rest the remains of that man of prayer is truly lovely."¹ Twenty-two years earlier when he had begun his ministry as a Wesleyan minister at Wark, Northumberland, his father had exhorted him, "Serve Bramwell's God as Bramwell served him, and he will be with thee as he was with him."² No such veneration is paid to Bramwell's memory today. John Kent does not see fit to mention him in his essay on "Wesleyan Methodist to 1849" in the second volume of "A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain;" and W.R. Ward describes him, in what Michael Watts calls a "ludicrous understatement,"³ as "a Methodist preacher with aspirations to be a revivalist."⁴ This of a man who so revived the work of God in every circuit on which he served that in thirty-three years of active ministry at least 4,850 new members were added to the Wesleyan Methodist connexion.⁵

This modern neglect of Bramwell may be due to his being the last great heir to a type of Methodism which was gradually disowned by the Wesleyan connexion in the five years following the death of John Wesley. A type of Methodism referred to by Wesley as "ancient Methodism." This ancient Methodism, according to John Wesley, was founded upon the principle of itinerant preachers. In 1789 Wesley warned the Methodist people that "if itinerancy is interrupted" then Methodism "will speedily come to nothing."⁶ The concept of "ancient Methodism" was intended by Wesley to define the nature of Methodism as a revival movement within the Church of England. The practice of itinerant preaching within the Church of England went back, claimed Wesley, to the sixteenth century "Twelve were appointed by Queen Elizabeth to travel continually, in order to spread true religion through the kingdom."⁷ The concept of ancient Methodism also served to distinguish

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Methodism from Dissent. Although Dissent had its own tradition of itinerating preachers, dissenting chapels were founded upon the principle of each congregation having its own minister. Methodism's system of itinerant preachers traveling a circuit of widely dispersed societies was designed to prevent the preachers from becoming too closely associated with any one particular society. And so Wesley could exhort his preachers, "It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society, but to save as many souls as you can: to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance."⁸ From this point of view Methodism could be legitimately regarded as "a great agency for the converting of the souls of men."

William Bramwell was an "Ancient Methodist" in the sense that he believed in an itinerant ministry traveling large circuits committed to the task of converting sinners. This was what he called "the old centre" of Methodism. Between 1791 and 1795 Methodism was torn apart by bitter disputes over its future identity. One party wanted to preserve Methodism as a revival movement in its own right with an ordained ministry endowed with the authority to administer the sacraments. This dispute was settled in 1795 with the "Plan of Pacification" which forbade Methodist preachers to be ordained, but did allow Methodist services to be held at the same hours as those in the Church of England, and allowed Methodist preachers to administer the sacraments in those chapels where the majority of members were in favor of the practice.⁹

Bramwell was not happy with the conflict or with the terms of its resolution. The whole episode had been a "labouring for forced unity and external peace," a "debating on forms and shadows," which had distracted the Methodist preachers from "that active vital holiness, that lamenting love, which first actuated the first Methodist preachers: 'to seek first the 'enlarging of the Redeemer's kingdom' through the conversion of the souls of men."¹⁰ Bramwell continued throughout his ministry to lament the way in which the rich and mighty Wesleyans "too frequently usurp improper authority, which damps too much the living flame among the simple."¹¹ On two occasions his grief at Methodism's disavowal of its ancient identity moved him to consider leaving the Wesleyan connexion. At Leeds, in 1797, Bramwell and Henry Taylor were involved in secret talks with Alexander Kilham of the New Connexion at which "both spoke freely on the necessity of reform, and seemed determined to have this effected or leave the Connexion."¹² At Leeds, again, at the beginning of 1802, Bramwell did leave the Wesleyan Connexion for a short period with a view to forming his own revival movement because of his dissatisfaction with his superintendent minister's action in stopping the noisy prayer-meetings being held at the newly opened Albion Street chapel, and with the decision to divide the circuit.¹³ On both occasions he was persuaded by his brethren to reconsider his decision.

This vacillating behavior brought Bramwell a scathing rebuke from Lorenzo Dow, the American revivalist. "It appears to me that Wm. B. ought to have launched out as a champion for God, but unbelief to trust God with his family, &c. caused him apparently to shrink.... It appears that he saw the formality and danger into which the English Connexion were exposed, and sinking: he came out for a space, and God began to open his way, but through unbelief, the reasoning of Satan, and the solicitation of his brethren, he was prevailed upon to shrink, recant in part and return: in consequence of which, some pious ones, who requested Christian liberty to pray with mourners, &c. and united

with him to dissent, were left in a dilemma here."¹⁴

Bramwell's peers have given us a more balanced appreciation of him. His official conference obituary reads:

WILLIAM BRAMWELL who was a man of eminent piety, of considerable preaching talents, and of great resolution and industry. In humility, in self-denial, and a readiness to take up his cross daily—in ardent love to God, compassion for perishing sinners, and in holy zeal for the prosperity of Zion, he shone with distinguished lustre. He most cordially believed the Methodist doctrines, and set them forth in the most prominent manner. He was an excellent disciplinarian, ever aiming to promote the spiritual improvement of those among whom he laboured, both by precept and by example. If, at any time, there appeared an instability of conduct in his attachment to the Methodist body, it ought to be attributed rather to error of judgment, and the undue influence of individuals who endeavored to warp his affection, than to want of cordial attachment. As he advanced in years he grew in grace. His communion with God was constant, and as he approached towards the eternal world, he evidently ripened for the heavenly garner. His conversation was truly spiritual, especially towards the close of his life; and he often expressed an earnest 'desire to depart and be with Christ.' He was a man of much prayer and strong faith—a burning and shining light—and lived in a blessed readiness for that sudden death, which removed him from earth to the unfading glories of heaven. This has comforted his bereaved friends, and enabled them to mingle sentiments of joy for his gain, with feelings of sorrow for their own loss.¹⁵

William Bramwell was born at Elswick, Lancashire, 1759. His parents were devout Anglicans and he was devoutly religious from childhood. As an adolescent he sought to relieve a troubled conscience by a series of austerities involving kneeling for hours on his bare knees on a sanded floor while he confessed his sins and repeated his prayers; meditating in the solitude of woods; and fasting and taking lonely walks throughout the night. Apprenticed to a currier at Preston, and while attending the sacrament in the parish church at Preston, he received some insight into the nature of saving faith. He was led by a Methodist to attend a cottage meeting addressed by Christopher Hopper. At the second meeting he joined the Society. He finally attained the assurance of the forgiveness of his sins at a service conducted by John Wesley who recognized his spiritual state of mind. "Dear brother, can you praise God?," Wesley asked him. "No sir." "Well, perhaps you can tonight," rejoined Wesley, lifting up his hands and smiling upon the doubting youth. Bramwell became an active Methodist to the displeasure of his parents who threatened to disown him. He conducted the 5 a.m. prayer meeting, became a class leader and local preacher. Thanks to his efforts, and those of four other dedicated young men revival took place, the membership doubled, a large preaching house built, and the prejudice against the Methodists removed.¹⁶

Bramwell became a traveling preacher in 1785.¹⁷ He was a model Methodist preacher. He accepted Wesley's teaching that it was his duty to preach the gospel in order to save souls, and to consolidate the conversions he achieved by observing the system of

Methodist Discipline as drawn up by Wesley. His mornings were spent in his study. He was a self-educated man well versed in the biblical languages, and in French. His afternoons were spent in visiting from house to house: "These visits were short and spiritual. If possible he would have the whole family collected, and having ascertained their several religious states he would pray for each by name."¹⁸ The theme of his preaching was entire sanctification; "He preached a present and full salvation through faith in the Redeemer's blood...on the entire destruction of sin and the complete renewal of the heart in holiness.... This was his constant, his favourite theme." It was Bramwell's conviction that "evangelising success varied directly with fidelity to the preaching of sanctification." In this conviction he was of one mind with John Wesley who wrote of the growth of Methodism at Launceston: "Here I found the plain reason why the work of God has gained no ground in this Circuit all the year. The preachers have given up the Methodist testimony. Either they did not speak of perfection at all (the peculiar doctrine committed to our trust), or they spoke of it only in general terms, without urging the believers to 'go on unto perfection' and to expect it every moment. And wherever this is not earnestly done, the work of God does not prosper."¹⁹ As a result the normal round of Methodist meetings became occasions for conversions: "Sometimes in a single Love-feast a score of souls were renewed . . . at a single band or prayer-meeting as many as seven or eight were saved."

This kind of growth through the steady exercise of a normal ministry was the general aim of most Methodist Preachers based on the Conference Minutes for 1768 where Wesley proposed promoting revivals through "a diffusion of Methodist literature, field and morning preaching, the enforcement of Methodist Discipline, good singing, quarterly fasts, the preaching of the doctrine of Christian Perfection, house-to-house visitation, attention to the young, continued union with the Established Church, and, above all and more than all, more inward an outward holiness among the preachers...."²⁰ Where Bramwell departed from the norm was in his use of importunate prayer to deliberately "work up" a revival. His aim on entering a circuit was to create a sense of excited expectation for revival. He began by praying each day before breakfast—at four in the morning in summer, and at five in winter. This regular habit of prayer was supplemented by colossal exertions in prayer in circuits where he felt that the spiritual vitality of the people to be at a particularly low ebb. At Leeds he prayed for hours at an end in the woods—and he prayed very loudly! He also used female prayer-leaders—most notably Mary Barit and Ann Cutler. Of Mary Barit's work at Leeds between 1795-1797 he said: "I never knew one man so blessed as this young woman in the salvation of souls."²¹ He attributed the eventual outbreak of the Great Yorkshire Revival in the winter of 1792 and the spring of 1793 to the work of Ann Cutler (one of his converts from his days as a local preacher at Preston) who "joined us in continual prayer to God for the revival of His work. Several, who were the most prejudiced, were suddenly struck, and in agonies groaned for deliverance. The work continued in almost every meeting, and sixty persons in and about Dewsbury received sanctification, and walked in that liberty. Our love-feasts began to be crowded, and people from all the neighbouring circuits visited us. Great numbers found pardon, and some perfect love. The work in a few weeks broke out at Greetland. Ann Cutler went over to Birstal and was there equally blessed in her labours. She went into

the Leeds circuit: and, though vital religion had been very low, the Lord made use of her at the beginning of a revival, and the work spread nearly through the circuit.... She and a few more were equally blessed in some parts of the Bradford and Otley circuits. Wherever she went there was an amazing power of God attending her prayers."²²

Bramwell was conscious of the opposition within Methodism towards the noise, disorder, spurious conversions, and loss of converts associated with revivalism and drew up some "Regulations for the conduct of Revival Prayer-Meetings to prevent spurious noise and disorder and unnecessary loss of converts." He recommended that:

- two or three people saying short prayers in succession should open the prayer-meeting. A person in distress should be approached and spoken to in a low voice by only one other person;
- any "praying company" gathered round a "mourner" should pray in succession, and as quietly as possible. While this was going on a "proper person" should continue to lead the meeting, and keep the rest engaged in general prayers and hymn singing until one of the "mourners" was "set at liberty" when all those present would join in acknowledging their "deliverance";
- a person should be appointed to make a note of the names and addresses of the people professing conversion so that they could be contacted later with a view to join a class, and to being introduced into the life of the society;
- great care should be taken in selecting only people of the highest character to lead prayer-meetings; and that care be taken not to depend too much on any particular persons by expecting them to take the most active or useful part therein, lest our dependence be more in man than in God."²³

There was another sense in which Bramwell was the last ancient Methodist. In Bramwell's person and ministry the charismatic character of John Wesley's ministry at Bristol in 1739 was revived. Dreams and visions played their part in his revivals. At Bingley (in the Birstal Circuit) in 1793, the trances of the ill-fated young girl, Elizabeth Dickinson, "drew thousands to prayer-meetings." At Nottingham the situation was nicely primed for Bramwell's arrival in 1798 by Thomas Tatham, one of the leaders, who interrupted a Sunday morning service to inform those present that he had been given a divine vision promising a welcome and the forgiveness of sins to the vilest sinner.²⁴ Bramwell, himself was credited with extraordinary powers in the best charismatic traditions. He could read the inmost depths of the human heart. Once he looked earnestly at a woman who had been a member of the Methodist Society for many years and told her she was a hypocrite, and that if she didn't repent and become converted hell would be her everlasting portion! The woman was duly convicted of her guilt, and later that day experienced the conversion Bramwell had told her to obtain.²⁵ Bramwell had the supernatural gift of foreknowledge. On one occasion he warned a woman not to embark upon a voyage to North America. She took heed of his warning, and the boat was duly lost at sea with the loss of all its crew and passengers. He could heal people. At Thorgumbald on the Hull Circuit in 1805 the recovery of a young girl from severe whooping cough was dated from the day he prayed for her restoration to health.²⁶

Bramwell was an imposing figure of a man. "In appearance he was nearly six feet high, and robust; his features were large, strong, and dark, like those of a bronze statue, and his eye piercing as an eagle's."²⁷ His effect upon those who attended his services was described by Alexander Bell, one of his converts. "The gravity of his appearance in the pulpit, his impressive mode of giving out the hymns, his powerful and pleading spirit in prayer when he seemed to commune with his Maker at the mercy-seat, and then the bold, impassioned, and energetic manner of his preaching, not only rivited my attention to his subject, but awakened in my heart such emotions as led me there and then to give myself to God and His people."²⁸

Bramwell, however, was the victim of historical process. Just as the early church "changed from a charismatic movement to a practicable and institutionally consolidated way of life"²⁹ so did Methodism. The "Higher Powers" of Methodism had ambitions to make Methodism into a church, and the revivals sponsored by Bramwell with their independent, undisciplined ways were an unruly, disruptive threat to that ambition that had to be disciplined and brought to heel. The ideal was renewal conceived as steady, consolidated growth in genuine members and piety. The concept of Methodist ministry and growth for the nineteenth century was clearly expressed by George Smith in his "History of Wesleyan Methodism" when he said of the revivals that attended the ministry of Gideon Ouseley and others between 1805 and 1809: "Undue importance should not be attached to those special manifestations of grace usually called 'revivals'—when great numbers of persons are awakened and brought unto God in a comparatively short time—as a means of Methodist progress and increase. The ordinary operation of the Spirit, blessing the word, and leading the hearers to turn from their sins to the Lord, has ever been the means of rearing up and maintaining Methodist Societies. The pious labours of godly ministers, whose word descends as the dew, and under the fructifying influence of the Holy Ghost produces 'the fruits of good living to the praise and glory of God,' has been the normal state of Methodism in all stages of its progress; and the continued existence of this gracious power must ever be the means of prosperity to the Connexion."³⁰

The key figure in this development of Methodism was Jabez Bunting. It is significant that John Kent, who did not see fit to mention William Bramwell, calls Jabez Bunting "the last Wesleyan" in the sense that Bunting understood better than anyone else what Wesley intended for Wesleyan Methodism when he transferred his authority to a Conference composed exclusively of senior traveling preachers.³¹ Bunting's Wesleyanism was destined to be superseded as his Wesleyanism superseded that of William Bramwell. The revivalism of Bramwell, however, was to flourish outside the pail of Wesleyanism. The Primitive Methodists regarded themselves as returning to the primitive simplicity of Bramwell.³² The Holiness revival of the nineteenth century and the charismatic revival of this century are significant developments of Bramwell's kind of revivalism. And in the history of revivalism Bramwell occupies a significant, innovative place. Charles Finney is credited with the idea of "working up" or "inducing" a revival, but the conditions which he identified as necessary for working up a revival were those which characterized the revivals of Bramwell from 1791 onwards.³³ Bramwell therefore was not only the last of the ancient Methodists but also one of the first founding fathers of the Charismatics.

NOTES

1. Samuel Coley, *The Life of the Rev. Thomas Collins* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, nd. 1865?), p. 355.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
3. Michael R. Watts, *The Dissenters*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 139, n. 524.
4. W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (New York: Schocken Books, 1973), p. 81.
5. Kent (1785-1787) 450; Dewsbury (1791-1793) 100-200; Birstal (1793-1795) 600; Sheffield (1795-1798) 1250; Nottingham (1798-1801) 1400; Hull (1804-1806) 450; Sunderland (1806-1808) 1000 and Birstal (1812-1814) 500. Figures from Thomas Harris, *A Memoir of the Rev. William Bramwell* (London: Wesleyan-Methodist Book Room, nd. 1870?).
6. John Telford, ed., *Letters of John Wesley*, vol. 8 (London: Epworth Press, 1931), p. 169.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 168.
8. Henry Carter, *The Methodist Heritage* (London: Epworth Press, 1951), p. 193.
9. For a discussion of the issues involved see John C. Bowmer, *Pastor and People* (London: Epworth Press, 1975), pp. 19-67.
10. C.W. Andrews, *William Bramwell: Revivalist* (London: R. Culley, 1909), pp. 27-28.
11. Watts, *The Dissenters*, p. 139.
12. Sam Hulme, ed., *The Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion* (London: John Blackwell, 1848), pp. 104-105.
13. D. Colin, *Oxford Place Methodist Centre 1835-1985* (Leeds, England: Oxford Place Methodist Centre, 1985), p. 5. See also Watts, p. 138.
14. Lorenzo Dow, *The Dealings of God, Man, and The Devil as Exemplified in the Life, Experience and Travels of Lorenzo Dow in a Period of More Than a Half Century* (New York: Laport, Blakeman & Law, 1853), p. 214.
15. *Methodist Magazine* 1819, p. 392.
16. Abel Stevens, *History of Methodism*, 2:243-244 and W. Pilkington, *Flashes of Preston Methodism* (1916), pp. 15-27.
17. Bramwell traveled on the following circuits: Kent (1786), Lynn (1787), Blackburn (1788), Colne (1789), Dewsbury (1791), Birstal (1793), Sheffield (1795), Nottingham (1798), Leeds (1801), Wetherby (1803), Hull (1804), Sunderland (1806), Liverpool (1808), Sheffield (1810), Birstal (1812), London West (1814), Newcastle (1815), Manchester (1817-1818) I.K.B. Garlick, *Mr. Wesley's Preachers 1739-1818* (London: Pinhorn for the World Methodist Society, 1977), pp. 11-12.]
18. James Sigston, *Memoir of the Venerable Bramwell* (New York: Phillips & Hunt, 1860), p. 105.
19. Thomas Jackson, ed., *Works of John Wesley*, vol. IV (London: John Mason, 1865), p. 78.
20. Luke Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, vol. III (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872-75), pp. 22-23.
21. Deborah M. Valenze, *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985), p. 57.
22. Stevens, *History of Methodism*, p. 86; Zechariah Taft, *Biographical Sketches of the Lives of Various Holy Women*, vol. I (London: Printed by Author, sold by Mr. Kershaw, 1825-1828), pp. 313-331.
23. *Methodist Magazine* 1798, pp. 243-244. The regulations were part of an article entitled, "Thoughts on the Revival of Religion in the Prayer-Meetings" by "A Well Wisher to Zion." Since they are similar to less detailed regulations given in C.W. Andrews' memoir of Bramwell it would appear that Bramwell (rather than someone like Alexander Mather) was the author.
24. Julia S. Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion, Its Background and Early History* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 40-42.

25. Sigston, *Memoirs of Bramwell*, pp. 40-41.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 144.
27. Stevens, *History of Methodism*, p. 245.
28. Harris, *Life of William Bramwell*, p. 167.
29. Gerd Theissen, *Social Reality and the Early Christians* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1992), p. 257.
30. George Smith, *The History of Wesleyan Methodism*, vol. II (London: Longman, 1859), p. 18, 422.
31. John Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966), xii (The title of his W.H.S. lecture for 1955) and see pages 125-126 for a summary of what Kent means by the title.
32. See Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion*, pp. 174 and 199, n. 36.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 49.

HEBREWS 11:11

“BY FAITH SARAH RECEIVED ABILITY”

J. HAROLD GREENLEE

(*Note: The works referred to by their author in this article and the English Bible translations mentioned are identified in the bibliography at the end of the article. References are to their discussion or translation of this verse unless otherwise noted.*)

The purpose of this article is to show that the subject of Hebrews 11:11 is Sarah, not Abraham. I am confident, moreover, that the assumed need to make Abraham the subject is largely due to a misunderstanding of one phrase in this verse.

Someone reading the first part of Hebrews 11:11, Πίστει καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα...δύναμιν...ἔλαβεν for the first time—either in this shorter form or with the additions στεῖρα ‘barren’, ἡ στεῖρα ‘the barren one’, or στεῖρα οὖσα ‘being barren’ following ‘Sarah’—would surely have no reason to interpret it as anything other than “By faith Sarah herself also received ability....” The difficulty lies later in the verse.

We do, however, need to deal with these alternate readings, since they are significant. Indeed, GNT reads...Σάρρα στεῖρα...Sarah barren...’ although with a “C” decision, indicating that “the Committee had difficulty in deciding which variant to place in the text.”

As for internal evidence, it is an accepted principle that scribes were more likely to *add* a word or words intentionally, but to *omit* unintentionally. Metzger suggests that the majority of the GNT committee nevertheless considered ‘barren’ to be original but was omitted accidentally by similarity in appearance to the immediately preceding ‘Sarah’ written in uncial letters. However, these two words in uncial letters do not appear to be sufficiently similar to make such omission by homoioteleuton likely. I submit, rather, that it is far more likely that the original text read ‘Sarah’ alone, and that scribes not surprisingly made intentional additions in order to indicate

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Sarah's situation: 'Sarah barren', 'Sarah the barren one', and 'Sarah being barren'. Turning to external (manuscript) evidence, the textual apparatus of GNT and of Aland indicate, I am confident, that the support for 'Sarah' alone is as strong as, and probably stronger than, the support for the addition of 'barren', 'the barren one', and 'being barren' combined. In thus reading 'Sarah' alone I am in agreement with Alford, Bloomfield, Dods, Montefiore, Moffatt, Lünemann, Westcott, and the KJV, NAB, NASB, NJB, and REB. On the other hand, 'Sarah barren' or 'Sarah being barren' (it is not possible to determine with certainty which of these two readings some follow) is read by Miller, Bruce, Ellingworth-Nida, Lane, and the GNT, NIV, NRSV, TEV, TNT.

I am confident, then, that both internal and external evidence support the shorter reading. To anticipate a point to be discussed later, if the original text does not include *στεῖρα* in some form, the whole case for making this phrase a subordinate circumstantial or concessional phrase collapses, of course, and the verse can only be read, "By faith Sarah herself received ability...."

It is true that the subject of verses 8–10 and again in v. 12 is Abraham. How, then, is the change of the subject to Sarah in v. 11 justified? The words *καὶ αὐτὴ* 'herself also' are linguistically significant. They are doubtless emphatic, as Moll, Lünemann, and Ellingworth-Nida agree, both by their position and by the words themselves. According to Alford, these words indicate a transition to a new subject, with prominence. Moffatt thinks they refer to Sarah's physical condition. According to Bloomfield, Dods, Hewitt, Moll, Lünemann, Bruce, and Westcott they indicate a contrast with Sarah's former unbelief. Each of these interpretations has something to commend it. This is the only example of the persons of faith in this chapter who is introduced by such a phrase. If *καὶ* has the sense of 'also' (which I believe is preferable) it presents Sarah as a special instance in addition to Abraham, not merely one more in the list of heroes. If it means 'even' it may reinforce the emphatic sense of *αὐτὴ* 'herself.' In any case, *αὐτὴ* 'herself' may well imply a contrast with her initial unbelief and also refer to her physical condition.

At any rate, the phrase *καὶ αὐτὴ* 'herself also' is a linguistic device indicating that Sarah is not merely one more person in the list of heroes; she is presented in company with Abraham.

We now come to the crux of the problem, the phrase *εἰς καταβολὴν σπέρματος* "for laying down of seed." The problem lies in what I am confident is the erroneous and most unfortunate translation of this prepositional phrase as if it were an infinitive phrase, *δύναμιν καταβαλεῖν σπέρμα*, "ability to lay down seed." It is thus dealt with as an infinitive, clearly or apparently, by the Bauer and the Louw-Nida Greek lexicons, by Montefiore, Miller, Bruce, Ellingworth-Nida, Lane, and by the KJV, NAB, NASB, NIV, NJB, REB, TEV, TNT.

The problem is that translating this phrase as an infinitive implies that the subject of the infinitive is the same person as the subject of the clause; e.g., Jn. 4:43, *ἠθέλησεν ἐξελθεῖν* "he (Jesus) wanted to go out," and Mark 1:24, *ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς* "have you come to destroy us?" The difficulty is that it is probably true that *καταβολή* refers to the father's function in conception, not the mother's (although Westcott, KJV, NAB, NASB, NJB, REB, and TNT take it to refer to Sarah's function). Bloomfield and Montefiore take it as a loose reference to the whole process of conception. Hughes, Hewitt, Lünemann (and a few oth-

ers referred to in various commentaries) interpret this phrase as referring to “the founding of a posterity.”

Dr. Eugene A. Nida, retired Translations Department Secretary of the American Bible Society, in a personal letter to me dated 4/15/94, makes a further interesting comment on the implications of the principal verb ἔλαβε ‘(she) received’: “when you use the word λαμβάνω meaning ‘to receive’, this automatically functions as a false active, namely, a passive, so that if Sarah receives, then she, though the subject of the sentence, is also the one that experiences the receipt of the seed. She is therefore not the agent but the experiencer of the event.” See the similar note in Louw-Nida 57.125.

In order to retain καταβολή as referring to the father’s function but still hold to the translation of the phrase as an infinitive (requiring the subject to be the same as the preceding subject), several paths have been followed. One path is to regard the reference to Sarah as what Metzger calls “a Hebraic circumstantial clause.” This is accepted by Hagner (as one possibility), Miller, Bruce, Lane, and by NIV, NRSV, and TEV. This alternative requires accepting the addition of στεῖρα ‘barren’, which, as we mentioned above, is inferior on both external and internal evidence and without which this meaning is impossible. Moreover, this interpretation makes the phrase a “nominative absolute,” an irregular construction which has no parallel in the fine Greek style of this author and has few if any parallels in the entire New Testament. Blass-Debrunner-Funk’s grammar seems to cite no similar New Testament instance. As Ellingworth comments, “Hebrews generally is one of the New Testament books least marked by direct Hebrew influence, and [moreover] the construction in question is not prominent in the LXX.”

If the author had intended to introduce Sarah as a subordinate grammatical element he would surely have used the common genitive absolute construction, necessarily including ‘barren’ and almost certainly including as well the genitive of the poorly-supported (nominative) participle οὖσα ‘being’: *i.e.*, αὐτῆς Σάρρας (or the indeclinable form Σάρρα) στεῖρας οὖσης “Sarah herself being barren” (or possibly a clause of concession with εἰ καὶ and the indicative mood). Ellingworth indicates approval of this point of view (“Greenlee argues, correctly if perhaps too absolutely”) as I stated it in a previous but less-developed article,¹ although he finally accepts another alternative (see the following paragraph) as preferable. David Alan Black observes, “Another phraseological feature of Hebrews is the frequent use of the genitive absolute,” and he goes on to quote two rather complicated instances of this construction in Heb. 4:1 and 9:15.² In other words, the assumption of a nominative absolute construction here is nearly impossible for more than one reason.

Others accept the addition of στεῖρα ‘barren’ and resort to assuming (pointing to the common omission of the *iota*-subscript from uncial mss.) that the phrase concerning Sarah, instead of being nominative is the dative καὶ αὐτῇ Σάρρα (or the indeclinable Σάρρα) στεῖρα “together with Sarah barren herself also.” This alternative (with or without στεῖρα ‘barren’) is followed by Ellingworth, Hagner (as one possibility), Morris, and Lenski. This involves assuming the dative case instead of the nominative with no support from any reported ms., as Montefiore notes, nor by any ancient writer including the Greek Fathers, as Hughes states. Moreover, the author could have prefixed the preposition σὺν ‘together with’ before καὶ to make this meaning clear even without the *iota*-subscript. Granted, the

author does not use this preposition elsewhere; but it was surely in his vocabulary. And if an early scribe had felt that the phrase should be taken as a dative case he could easily have inserted σύν.

Still others have even resorted to suggesting, with absolutely no manuscript support, that the reference to Sarah was not a part of the original text and was added by later scribes. Those cited (but without approval) as favoring this manner of disposing of the problem instead of solving it (!) include Windisch and Zuntz (mentioned by Ellingworth and Hughes), Field (by Ellingworth and Moffatt), and Loisy (by Ellingworth).

The four preceding paragraphs refer to attempts, which I believe are simply "counsels of desperation," to resolve the problem of this verse. Moreover, I am confident that they are not necessary. There is apparently virtually no indication that this phrase caused problems for early scribes or the ancient writers, although Ellingworth seems to indicate possible questions by Chrysostom and Galen. If the early scribes had felt a difficulty here, they could easily have changed καταβολήν to λήμψις 'receiving' or a similar word.

The solution, I feel sure, is to be found in the proper translation of this troublesome prepositional phrase, εἰς καταβολήν σπέρματος, which is "for (the purpose of) deposition of seed." This translation leaves the subject of καταβολήν open, to be determined by the context and not limited to being the same as the subject of the verb ἔλαβεν 'received'. Consider, e.g., Matt. 3:11, in which John the Baptist states, ἐγὼ μὲν ὑμᾶς βαπτίζω· εἰς μετάνοιαν 'I baptize you...for repentance,' but it obviously was not John who was to repent. Καταβολήν, moreover, refers to the *fact* of 'deposition', not to the *process*. If, then, καταβολήν could refer to the wife's function, as some authorities mentioned above assume, then the phrase would naturally mean "for the deposition of seed (by Sarah)." If, on the other hand, καταβολήν refers to the husband's function, which is much more probable, then the phrase means "for the deposition of seed (in Sarah's body by Abraham)." The author did not need to name either Sarah or Abraham overtly, since it was clear who the participants were.

The above interpretation is followed by Alford, who indicates that the phrase implies giving to Sarah the power "to fructify seed deposited." He further states, "No Greek father, no ancient version, dreamt of any other meaning." Moffatt agrees, stating, "The general idea is plain...i.e. for Abraham the male to do the work of generation upon her." Dods implies agreement by pointing out that if the preposition εἰς is taken in the sense of "as regards" or 'in connection with' or 'with a view to', the difficulty disappears" concerning the meaning of καταβολήν.

With this interpretation, it follows, of course, that the referent in the rest of the verse is Sarah; it is presumably she who is said to be παρά καιρὸν ἡλικίας "beyond the normal age" (although it could refer to both Sarah and Abraham) and it is she who πιστὸν ἡγήσατο τὸν ἐπαγγειλόμενον "considered the one having promised to be faithful."

Perhaps a word should be said about the return to Abraham as subject in the following verse. As I said earlier, the καὶ αὐτὴ 'herself also' indicates that Sarah is mentioned not as another in the sequence of heroes of faith but is brought in as part of the discussion of Abraham, since of course she was a necessary participant in the event; so to continue in v. 12 with Abraham as subject is completely reasonable.

In summary, then, I maintain that both internal and external evidence support the shorter text, καὶ αὐτὴ Σάρρα ‘Sarah herself also’ (without στεῖρα ‘barren’), as the original. This makes it impossible to interpret the phrase as a concession. Even if στεῖρα ‘barren’ is accepted, the nominative case must be read, which clearly shows that the subject is Sarah. To assume the dative case or to assume that the reference to Sarah was not original, as we stated above, is totally without support.

In other words, the full verse is clear and unequivocal: “By faith Sarah herself also received ability for the deposition of seed [in her body by Abraham], even beyond (her/their) normal age, since she considered the one having promised to be faithful.”

NOTES

1. “Abraham’s Faith or Sarah’s—Heb. 11:11,” Notes on Translation 4,1 (Feb. 1990), pp. 37–41. Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics.
2. In “Literary Artistry in the Epistle to the Hebrews,” *Filologia Neotestamentaria* VII, Mayo ‘94, p. 49.

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Translations

- KJV—*The Holy Bible*. Authorized (or King James) Version. 1611.
- NAB—*The New American Bible*. Camden, New Jersey: Thomas Nelson, 1971.
- NASB—*The New American Standard Bible*. Nashville, Tennessee: Holman, 1977.
- NIV—*The Holy Bible: New International Version*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1978.
- NJB—*The New Jerusalem Bible*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1985.
- NRSV—*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1989.
- REB—*The Revised English Bible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- TEV—*Holy Bible: Today's English Version*. New York: American Bible Society, 1976.
- TNT—*The Translator's New Testament*. London: British and Foreign Bible Society, 1973.

BOOK REVIEWS

Balabanski, Vicky. *Eschatology in the Making: Mark, Matthew and the Didache*. Society for New Testament Studies, Monograph Series 97. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xvii + 241 pp. ISBN: 0-521-59137-6.

As the ninety-seventh volume in the prestigious Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series, Balabanski's University of Melbourne (1993) thesis will be approached by most with high expectations. Her goal is to undermine the widespread notion of a uniform waning of eschatological hope in the early church ('progressive de-eschatolization') on account of the increasing problem of parousia delay. She argues rather that the reality was more complex, with different communities displaying a notable variation of *Naherwartung*. Balabanski arrives at this conclusion on the basis of a selective series of exegetical studies of Matt. 25:1-13 (specifically vv. 5-7a), Mark 13, Matthew 24 and Didache 16. According to her, the evidence suggests that imminent expectation both increased and decreased and that parousia delay did not evoke the kind of crisis that many suppose it did. She contends that the deaths of community members, internal and external distresses, the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem were all more important factors shaping the early church's eschatological expectation than parousia delay.

After a brief but adequate introduction, we find six chapters and a summary conclusion. Chapter 1 provides a helpful survey of scholarship relating to the problem of parousia delay over the last century (since J. Weiss), with due special attention given to the important, more recent contributions of D.E. Aune, R.J. Bauckham and B.J. Malina.

In chapter 2 Balabanski maintains that Matt. 25:5-7a are a pre-Matthean interpolation (probably to be dated to the 40s or 50s) and perceives in it proof that at an earlier stage eschatological expectation had been reworked in the light of the deaths of Christians and the delay of the parousia. Specifically she claims the text reveals that the problem of the parousia's delay had been experienced and indeed grappled with on a theological level well before Matthew was written (imminence and delay had both been synthesized and the possibility that all first-generation Christians might die had been taken on board).

In the third chapter Balabanski propounds a situational hypothesis for Mark 13: the Markan community had undergone a significant heightening of eschatological expectation and consequent destabilizing, fueled by the destruction of the Jerusalem temple

and the influx of Judean Christians, accompanied by their enthusiastic prophets. She maintains that the present for Mark and his community is represented in vv. 5b-23, with vv. 24ff. being still future. According to Balabanski, Mark, writing shortly after AD 70, seeks to call the community back from enthusiastic eschatological imminentism to the way of the cross, warning against the prophets who had accompanied the immigrant Judean Christians. She judges that Mark includes the Judean flight oracle (vv. 14-16 and 18), which arose in very particular, local historical circumstances in Judea, because he wanted to 'humour' the Judean Christians and because he interpreted the destruction of the Temple as calling Christians back to the cross.

Chapter 4 is essentially an excursus on the Judean flight oracle and the Pella flight tradition (as found in Eusebius and Epiphanius), in which it is concluded that the idea of a single, unified flight to Pella is 'a piece of systematising fiction' behind which lies a kernel of truth, namely that a significant group of Jerusalem Christians had some kind of exodus, some going to Pella and some to Syria. Balabanski, building on Sowers, proposes that the circumstances leading to the flight were the assumption of the Zealots to power and specifically the appointment of Phanas as puppet high priest in 67, which was, for the Jewish Christian prophet who formulated it, the 'abomination of desolation.'

In chapter 5, Balabanski moves on to Matthew 24. She deduces that Matt. 24:4-31 consists of two parallel sequences: vv. 4ff. and vv. 15ff. Matthew writes after the Jewish War and destruction of Jerusalem to his community in Syrian Antioch at a time of false prophets, intracommunal conflict (what Matthew regards as the tribulation) and cold love, with the purpose of heightening eschatological expectation on the grounds that the eschaton is the next event in the divine schema. Matthew 24 is, she concludes, more imminentist than Mark 13.

Chapter 6 deals with Didache 16, which, Balabanski claims, was dependent on Matthew and indeed attempted to clarify Matthean eschatology. According to Balabanski, Didache 16 functions as parenesis and preserves an eschatological hope, but with a lessened imminentism, perceiving its era as lying before the last days, partly because of the lack of contemporary persecution.

Balabanski's conclusion summarises the content of the chapters, before deducing that parousia delay had been dealt with quite early on in the first century of church history. Persecutions, the Jewish War and the destruction of Jerusalem were more pressing influences on the early Christians' eschatology. The diversity of community situations gave rise to a diversity of responses to the expectation of Christ's return.

So what are we to make of Balabanski's work? Positively, Balabanski's thesis is admirably well-written and lucid, concise, and clearly connects the parts to the whole throughout. Her work is, for the most part, free of typographical errors (although note, for example, that ἐκστῶν on page 43 lacks its circumflex accent). Moreover, her attempt to debunk the oversimplistic notion that parousia delay led to a progressive de-eschatologization in the early church is certainly to be applauded as worthy. And her proposal that the eschatological expectation of early Christians may have varied according to circumstances is well taken.

However, certain aspects of Balabanski's work leave us dissatisfied. Concerning her 'selective' choice of texts, why did she include Didache 16, which seems to contribute so little to her overarching case, and yet exclude Luke 21 (and 17:20-37), which would have been

particularly interesting in light of its explicit references to the destruction of Jerusalem and which would have been a natural and relevant concomitant of Mark 13 and Matthew 24?

More seriously, Balabanski's work suffers from her presupposition that the precise details of each Synoptic eschatological discourse corresponded with the contemporary *Sitzen im Leben* of the Synoptic authors and their communities. Hengel, in his review of Sanders' *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah and Judaism: Practice and Belief* (JTS 46 [1995], 7), wrote: 'The widespread superstition that the Gospels deal primarily with problems of their immediate present frequently leads *ad absurdum*.' Balabanski's assumption leads her to what most will regard as extremely dubious conclusions. For example, regarding Matthew 24, how plausible is it that the tribulations of Dan. 12:1 would have been understood as referring to intracommunal strife, false prophets and lawlessness? And, with regard to Mark 13, how convincing is it to suggest that the repeated use of βλέπετε in vv. 5b-23 reveals that these verses represent the present for the evangelist and his community, and then to deduce from the absence of βλέπετε in vv. 14-18 that the flight from Judea is already past? Moreover, is it not easier to believe that vv. 14-18 are rooted in authentic Jesus tradition than building an unwieldy and somewhat bizarre hypothesis, proposing that Judean Christians had only recently emigrated to Mark's community, bringing with them an oracle which identified the abomination of desolation with the installation of Phanas as puppet high priest? Furthermore, how convincing is Balabanski's logic when, from the warnings to beware of false prophets in Mk. 13:22-23, she deduces that charismatic prophets had accompanied these Judean Christians?

Finally, a few more criticisms of Balabanski's treatment of Matthew are in order. First, her decision to give more weight to Matthew 24 than Matthew 25 in determining the nature of eschatological expectation at the time of Matthew's writing is questionable; Matthew 25 leaves no doubt that delay was as important an element of Matthew's message to his readers as was imminence. Second, Balabanski's argument that the addition of εὐθὺς in Matt. 24:29 and the mention of the 'coming of the Son of Man' in 16:28 constitute sufficient grounds for deciding that Matthew has a more imminent eschatology than Mark is extremely tenuous. Third, she fails to substantiate adequately her somewhat surprising claim that Matthew 24 has two parallel sequences, but that Mark 13 does not.

In conclusion, we find Balabanski's ultimate objective to be a worthy one, the undermining of the widespread simplistic notion that parousia delay led to progressive de-eschatologization in the early church. Sadly, however, the particular case which she has developed is unconvincing and, quite frankly, disappointing.

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Chilton, Bruce. *Pure Kingdom: Jesus' Vision of God* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 178 pp.

Bruce Chilton's thesis is captured in his title. In Jesus' teaching about the kingdom, as in the Old Testament and in early Judaism, 'the emphasis is on the dynamic, personal

presence of God" (11). "The kingdom of God fundamentally is God, as he manifests himself for his people" (12). For Jesus the kingdom is not merely the goal of social reform (Albrecht Ritschl), nor is it purely eschatological (Albert Schweitzer); nor are Jesus' words about the kingdom mere symbols for supra-temporal realities or mystical experiences (certain members of the Jesus Seminar). No single concept is adequate to express the strength, scope and splendor of God's rule.

The author discerns five dimensions of the kingdom "in Jesus' authentic sayings" (97), all five rooted in the Psalms, all consistent with early Judaism, and all closely joined together. (1) *Eschatology*. God's heavenly rule is already invading the world ("The kingdom of God has drawn near"), anticipating its ultimate disclosure ("Thy kingdom come"). (2) *Transcendence*. God's rule, already immanent (e.g. in Jesus' exorcisms, Matt. 12:28), is destined to supersede all boundaries and to exert its power throughout the world (the parable of the leaven). (3) *Judgment*. The nearness of the kingdom both temporally and spatially calls for decisive action—abandoning routines (parables of the banquet, Matt. 22 & Luke 14), renouncing wealth (the eye of the needle), and seizing the true riches (parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl). (4) *Purity*. The worst of sinners, whether harlots or Gentiles, need not become ceremonially clean before eating with Jesus. It is their very response—like that of an eager child—that makes them pure (85). By table fellowship with Jesus they are drawn to the holy God, and share a foretaste of celebrations at the kingdom's consummation. (5) *Radiance*. Through the preaching of John and Jesus, the kingdom forcefully goes forth, calling for an equally forceful response (Matt. 11:12; Luke 16:16), and radiating outward until God's power is universally acknowledged ("The kingdom is as ordinary and miraculous as a mustard seed," 99).

Jesus' total activity is "a parable of the kingdom" (101); Chilton focuses on two especially. (1) *Jesus' commissioning of the twelve*. The first four co-ordinates named above are all clearly represented in his charge—*eschatology* ("The kingdom of heaven is near," Matt. 10:7), *transcendence* ("heal the sick," 10:8), *judgment* ("shake the dust off your feet," 10:14), and *purity* ("take no bag...or sandals or a staff," 10:10, items that pilgrims were not allowed to take into the temple; the twelve tread the land of Israel "as on holy ground, shoeless, without staff or purse," and treat offers of hospitality as themselves signs of purity, 11:2). But what of *radiance*? To be sure, the preaching itself is a "radiating center" (Matt. 11:12 & Luke 16:16); but what "reliable place or institution" is there in Jesus' commission (114) to correspond to Zion and the temple in the Psalter? (2) *Jesus' occupation of the temple* offers a partial answer to that question. By this action Jesus asserts his authority over the place (so Chilton prefers "occupation" to "cleansing"), and denies the priesthood's failure to safeguard "the link between worshiper and offering in the sacrificial action" (122; see 118-23). Jesus goes further: he creates an alternative *cultus*. "Jesus made his meals into a rival altar" (125)—a new radiating center. In his words over the bread and cup at the Last Supper, "Jesus' point was...that, in the absence of a Temple that permitted his view of purity to be practiced, wine was his blood of sacrifice and bread was his flesh of sacrifice" (125).

The heart of Chilton's discussion—chapters 3-5, summarized above—is rewarding. I especially appreciate his stress on the Hebraic, theocentric and richly diverse character of Jesus' teaching about the kingdom. Yet questions may be raised, especially at two points.

1. *Jesus and the Evangelists*. In Chilton's judgment some of the sayings placed on Jesus'

lips are "authentic" (97), others have been contributed by the evangelists or their communities. For example, Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Your kingdom come" (Luke 11:2); "your will be done" (Matt. 6:10) was a later expansion (58). Sometimes a word or work of Jesus "has been significantly changed" in the course of transmission (51): in their accounts of the cleansing of the temple, "the Gospels' picture of Jesus is distorted" (116). The Synoptic Gospels "are designed to awaken and inform faith, not to provide historical data" (50). But why should awakening faith be put at odds with providing historical data? Was it not precisely in the service of evangelism and theology that the writers determined to be responsible and trustworthy historians? See Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30-31; 21:24-25; Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (1987); I. Howard Marshall, *Luke, Historian and Theologian* (new ed., 1998). Moreover, would we not expect the evangelists—guided as they are by the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), and seeking as they do to make Jesus known to their readers—to unfold rather than to alter his teachings? And to honor rather than to obscure his intentions? And why may Jesus himself not be responsible for both versions of the Lord's Prayer (as for variations on a theme in a pair or a triad of parables)? Would not the variety serve in part to discourage a magical use of the prayer?

2. *Jesus and the Kingdom.* Chilton discerns a shift of emphasis between Jesus' preaching and the writing of the Gospels. Whereas Jesus preached the *kingdom* (Mark 1:14-15) the evangelists preached *Christ* (Mark 1:1)—or so joined the two as to make allegiance to Jesus essential for entering the kingdom. "[H]e who had at first preached the kingdom was now at the forefront, explicitly and without compromise, as the means—and the only means—of access to the kingdom" (140). In "the Synoptic transformation... Jesus' preaching of the kingdom becomes the seal of the divine mission, not the principle point at issue" (136). Chilton speaks of "the elaborate, largely secondary developments that the Gospels represent," and suggests that "Jesus' gospel of the kingdom may claim a hearing on religious grounds within its own terms of reference, quite aside from whether the bulk of the interpretations in the New Testament are accepted" (144). I would rather say (i) that Jesus' own understanding of the kingdom is thoroughly Christological, and that the establishing of God's rule is inseparable from his person; and (ii) that the evangelists rightly represent Jesus' own understanding, and that we perceive Jesus' view of the kingdom not by avoiding but precisely by heeding the evangelists. Their focus on Jesus as herald and guarantor of the kingdom is not "innovative," as Chilton thinks (136), but traditional. He rightly says that "[a]t the end of a generation of development, the kingdom remained God's realm: ultimate, transcendent, perfect, holy, inclusive" (140). He would do well to stress also that each dimension of the kingdom, in Jesus' own understanding, shines with a Christological luster. *Eschatology.* The kingdom is inaugurated because Jesus has come (Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:16-21, 43). It is his work—not that of contemporary exorcists—that manifests the kingdom (Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20). It is at his return that the kingdom is consummated (Matt. 16:28). *Transcendence.* It is by his incarnation that the glory of the transcendent God is disclosed (John 1:14). It is the Son of God who announces the kingdom (Mark 1:1-15). "The virgin's sweet boy is the Lord of the earth" (Luke 2:9-11). *Judgment.* Persons are being judged in accord with their responses to Jesus (Luke 7:22-23; 10:13-16). It is he who will judge them at the End (Matt 25:31-46). *Purity.* A person does not become pure merely by receiving the kingdom (cf. 142). Only at great cost does God

embrace people "in the purity of forgiveness" (144): it is far easier for him to cure paralysis than to forgive sins (cf. Mark 2:9). The Cross is not only the inevitable penalty for Jesus' view of the temple (123-26): it is a redemptive sacrifice, voluntarily and deliberately offered by Christ himself (Mark 10:45; 14:22, 24). For Jesus, no less than for the evangelists, "Jesus' death and the kingdom are...mutually explicating" (136). *Radiance*. The kingdom spreads abroad under the authority, and in the company, of the exalted King (Matt. 28:18-20). He is himself "a light for revelation to the Gentiles," he the embodiment of the salvation offered to them (Luke 2:25-32; John 8:12).

My thanks to Dr. Chilton for a stimulating and provocative study, and to Eerdmans for a volume almost entirely free of printing errors.

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Martin, Ralph P. and Peter H. Davids, eds. *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*. Leicester/Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1997. xxx + 1289 pp.

This volume, along with *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels* (1992) and *Dictionary of Paul and His Letters* (1993) by the same publisher, is the most recent installment in a major Bible dictionary project showcasing English-language evangelical scholarship of the 1990s. (One more similar volume, on New Testament backgrounds, and four volumes on the Old Testament are envisioned for the future.) It treats primarily the Hebrews-Revelation portion of the New Testament. But its purview stretches beyond canonical parameters. Therein lies its particular value. There are significant treatments of the apostolic fathers (D.A. Hagner), textual criticism (P.W. Comfort), and topics like hospitality, Diaspora Judaism, and worship and liturgy; and each of these is treated not only in first-century terms but also in light of subsequent developments down to about AD 150. The New Testament did not appear in a vacuum, and its first-century importance must be gauged in part by its second-century effects. So a systematic foray into the early patristic period by most contributors is much to be welcomed.

This is an excellent reference volume for scholars, pastors, and students alike. (I am using it as required collateral reading for a seminary course covering the general epistles.) Among commendable pieces may be mentioned "Death of Christ" (M.A. Seifrid), "Mission, Early Non-Pauline" (E.J. Schnabel), and "New Testament Theology" (D.A. Carson), the last of which is eighteen pages long and contains three full double-columned pages of bibliography. S. Motyer ("Cross, Theology of the") rings the changes on the old but still influential view that Luke minimizes Jesus' death and crucifixion (p. 260; cf. important discussion by Seifrid on pp. 268-271). Many more exemplary studies could be cited. This is only to be expected in a work whose list of contributors reads like a Who's Who of evangelical biblical scholars: Clinton Arnold, Richard Bauckham, Craig Evans, William Lane, Scot McKnight, David Scholer, Graham Stanton, Ben Witherington.

Technical miscues crop up here and there, as with type sizes on p. xxx and spelling on

p. xxvi (should be *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*), p. xxv (THKNT refers to *Theologischer Handkommentar*; at TRE it should be *Realenzyklopädie*), p. xxiv (at NTD there should be a space between *Das* and *Neue*), and p. xxii (at BET the proper spelling is *Beiträge*). Overall however the impression is of technical excellence and editorial care.

More problematic is the uneven theological stance reflected in various writers. Of course lockstep conformity would be neither expected nor desirable. And we are not speaking here of occasional paragraphs with no apparent place in such a work: why the Homiletics 101 lesson in a dictionary of New Testament and patristic scholarship (see "Shaping the Sermon," pp. 954f.)? Yet one is surprised to read that after the New Testament the orthodox churches, just like the gnostics, "distort the fine balance in Paul's thought about the resurrection" (p. 1020). This seems to blur the rather drastic distinction between those who upheld Christ's bodily resurrection and those who did not. There is evenness between the views expressed in "Woman and Man" and "Women in the Early Church," but at the cost of hearing from a pair of partisan voices (C.S. Keener and C.C. Kroeger, respectively) rather than a more balanced combination of scholars.

Another article asserts that Peter did not write 2 Peter (pp. 924f.). Elsewhere we are told that the New Testament contains a large number of pseudepigraphic writings; J.D.G. Dunn argues that "the most appropriate analogy" for understanding this sizable non-apostolic corpus is "the paintings that come from the studio of a great master, where the brushstrokes may not have been made by the master himself, but the character and quality and inspiration of the work can properly be said to be his, even when the work was conceived and executed after his death" (p. 984). To my knowledge, however, a signed Rembrandt discovered to have been produced by a Rembrandt disciple would still be adjudged a forgery, so the force of the analogy is limited unless one is convinced by Dunn's arguments that false attribution does not involve "an intent to deceive and mislead" (p. 977).

A.G. Padgett avers that "Marcion's influence on the canon of the NT...is beyond doubt" (p. 708), though it has long been argued (e.g. by Harry Y. Gamble) that Marcion chose the writings he did in part because they already held authority for pre-Marcionite churches. L.M. McDonald outstrips Padgett and states that even against Marcion in the second century the church did not respond with a canon of Scripture; the canon was rather the product of moves first decisively underway in the fourth century (p. 135). We see then that the *Dictionary of the Later New Testament* at times reflects scholarship considerably removed from that of e.g. B.F. Westcott on this point, who wrote: "It is a very significant fact that the first quotation of a book of the New Testament as Scripture, the first Commentary on an Apostolic writing, and the first known Canon of the New Testament, come from heretical authors. It is impossible to suppose that in these respects they suggested the Catholic [i.e. universal; orthodox] view of the whole Bible instead of following it" (*A General History of the Canon of the New Testament*, 6th ed., p. 312 n. 1; emphasis added).

Of course scholarship does move on, and some old views are proven inadequate. But the reader of this dictionary does well to be alert to the disparity of tones and outlooks represented. While some contributors are intelligently discriminating regarding contemporary scholarship and appropriate it positively but cautiously, others seem largely to assume the findings of the current critical hegemony and then try to articulate an evangelical perspective within this contemporary given. The composite effect of the work as a whole is

salutary, but discerning readers will find not only a gold mine of information on the topics treated but also much to provoke thought on the future of a house in some ways remarkably divided against itself.

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Eaton, Michael. *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*, Downers Grove, InterVarsity Press, 1995.

In *No Condemnation: A New Theology of Assurance*, Michael Eaton addresses one of the key stumbling blocks that keep modern Christians from having full assurance of salvation. Eaton's writing is driven by experience: his own experience as a Christian and as a pastor. He describes a crisis period in his life as follows: "My preaching seemed to be producing converts who were narrow-minded, introspective and pharasaical.... I went to various 'Reformed' churches, some of them famous for their preaching. I found them cold, formal and legalistic.... Worst of all I knew that some of that hard legalism was present in my own life and I possessed neither the assurance nor the spiritual power that I had had as a teenager" (6-7). Though Eaton writes from the perspective of the Calvinist tradition, those of a Wesleyan bent will find their Arminian tradition addressed here as well. Calvinists have no doubt that salvation is eternal and that the elect will persevere but have trouble knowing whether they are indeed elect. Arminians, on the other hand, can have assurance of present salvation, but no guarantee that it will last.

The negative side of Eaton's thesis is that both the Calvinist and Arminian branches of evangelical Christianity have failed to understand properly the relationship of the Mosaic law and salvation, resulting in an inability to have true assurance of salvation. He argues, against tendencies in both, that "the Christian is totally free from the Mosaic covenant, that it is a mistake in theology to take the law as recorded in the Decalogue as a 'rule of life,' or as a needful tool in bringing about conviction of sin, that the Sinai covenant is in radical antithesis to the movement in history that began with Abraham, that it was an intrusion into the history of redemption...exclusively an interim measure and therefore is now of no direct relevance to the Christian."

The first section of the book is about the "mistake in theology" made by both the Reformed and Arminian traditions. More central to his argument, however, is the detailed analysis of the biblical materials (both Old and New Testaments) that makes up the bulk of the book. Key to his discussion of the Old Testament is the nature of covenant. Eaton differentiates strongly between "covenants of grant" and "covenants of imposed obligation." In the former, God is the oath-maker, in the latter the human participants. He notes another distinction (which I will investigate below), that the former are offered to individuals and the latter to the nation of Israel.

If the law has nothing to do with justification, and here I think Eaton is quite right, what about holiness? What is the role of Christian behavior? Dealing with this issue, Eaton distin-

guishes between salvation and "inheritance." Salvation refers to the Christian's eternal destiny and standing with God, while "inheritance" refers to the Christian's experience of God's blessings in this life and the next. Salvation is by faith, but rewards come through persistence in the faith (Eaton notes Paul's reference to Abraham in Romans 4 as an example of such persistence). As long as the Christian walks in obedience to God, he or she will enjoy these blessings. The many warning passages in Scripture (taken by Arminians to be warnings to the Christian lest salvation be lost) are, in fact, warnings about losing blessings.

It is a mistake, I believe, to focus solely (as Eaton does) on theological and hermeneutical reasons for the decline of assurance. With the rise of modern philosophy roughly paralleling the development of Calvinism (and the rise and development of Arminianism as well), it seems natural to see if there is any connection between the modern Christian's elusive search for assurance of salvation and the modern person's equally elusive search for certain knowledge in other areas. How much of the desire for certainty on salvation is an outgrowth of the larger Cartesian quest? How often has certainty been sought in the place of assurance?

Obviously there are biblical and theological reasons for speaking of assurance of salvation that antedate modernity. My guess is, however, that the proximity of the two searches for types of certainty has produced at least some philosophical influence on the doctrine of assurance. The similarity in ways assurance can go wrong in both areas seems instructive. Theologians (especially in the reformed tradition) speak of the capacity of the individual for self delusion. Descartes speaks of the quest for knowledge being impeded by the possibility that all our empirical data is the result of a "lying devil." The place to go for certainty, says Descartes, is inward: exactly the same place Eaton shows the later Calvinists pointed. Eaton is right to point to the role introspection plays in preventing assurance of salvation (23ff). The same kind of introspection reigned in modern philosophy from the time of Descartes, leading ultimately to the "problem of other minds" being taken seriously in this century.

I find a related echo of modern thought in Eaton's account of individualism. While he rightly critiques the traditional connection between Law and salvation, he nowhere questions the traditional assumption that salvation (at least for the Christian) is an individual phenomenon, comprehended under the terms of acceptance by God. In the Old Testament salvation clearly has a communal dimension, even outside the Mosaic covenant. God's saving work for the people of Israel (as described in Exod. 19:3-6) seems to fit as an outgrowth of God's prior promises to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3). A significant part of what salvation is about in the Old Testament is inclusion in the people of God. This element carries over into the New Testament, most explicitly in Ephesians and 1 Peter 2.

Accepting an inescapable communal dimension of salvation would require three reconsiderations of Eaton's work. First, is the hard distinction between the "covenant of grant" and the "covenant of imposed obligation." I think Eaton is close to the right track here, but must reevaluate the role of individuals and communities in each kind of covenant. Second, and more importantly, Eaton must move beyond the parameters of this work and reconsider his underlying commitment to a theory of the work of Christ that focuses solely on the cross. If salvation has a corporate dimension, there is new reason to include the life and ministry of Jesus (which includes the gathering of a band of disciples) in any understanding of the nature of salvation. This will in turn require a third reconsideration. If inclusion in the

people of God and life in the Body of Christ is part of what salvation is all about, the dividing line between salvation and "inheritance" becomes less clear.

Eaton qualifies his work as a "beginning" of the answer to the problem of assurance. I look forward to his future contributions to the study of salvation.

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Toulouse, Mark G. & James O. Duke, eds. *Makers of Christian Theology in America*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997. 568 pp. pap. Price not listed. ISBN: 0-687-00766-6.

Ninety-one profiles were culled from a list of more than two hundred prospects by two editors working with nearly two dozen scholars of American religion offering comment and criticism in order to select the data for this volume. Then seventy-five scholars served as the writers of the final product which undoubtedly deserves to be listed as an important new reference work presenting critical, analytical, and interpretive essays as a superb introduction to America's theologians for the beginning and specialist student.

This volume is a response to the blossoming of serious interest in American theology in the 1960s, and represents a more inclusive and even-handed selection of those individuals who have contributed to this discipline than previous attempts have achieved. A wider definition of what constitutes theology in America is embodied in the selections made in the book. Brite Divinity School and Texas Christian University are to be commended for supporting and funding this venture. It is probably unfair to single out names of contributors, but the following cannot escape mention (for various reasons) as representative of the full list: Martin E. Marty, Mark A. Noll, E. Brooks Hollifield, Jerald C. Brauer, Nancy A. Hardesty, Susie C. Stanley, Russell E. Richey, Robert T. Handy, W. Creighton Peden, James H. Cone, Delores E. Rogers, George M. Marsden, Dennis P. McCann, and Roger E. Olson.

Makers of Christian Theology in America offers students of religion a resource for understanding the unfolding story of Christian theology in America. It provides orientation to the field rather than persuasion for a particular orientation in theology. This is an intellectual history of all the important themes and theologians in American history. One notes the absence of Douglas John Hall, a Canadian, as well as Enrique Dussell, an Argentinian who now works in Mexico; these are probably not included in the definition 'American', but what about Justo L. Gonzalez (albeit Dussell and Gonzalez are church historians).

The essays include basic biographical data on the life, work, and writings of each theologian, analyses of the key theological issues or concerns in their careers, critical reflection on these major themes, and assessments of their influence and significance for subsequent developments. Brief bibliographies at the end of each essay guide readers to the most useful primary and secondary sources. This is one of the book's key features: it awakens interest in direct access to the primary sources. Something of the depth and breadth of the riches of American theology are proffered to the reader.

Specialists and non-specialists will find it needful to consult this volume. Ideal as an

introduction to the field of theology in America, it also provides strong resources for students of the history of Christian thought and historical theology. Students of ecclesiology too will find this a necessary resource. The work calls for another volume in the style of editor David Lotz's *Altered Landscapes: Christianity in America, 1935-1985 (Essays in Honor of Robert T. Handy)*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989. Such an analysis of the shifts in the theological landscape over the period in question would be invaluable. Have the shifts been from the mainstream to the margins? From christological to pneumatological symbols and language? From denominational and institutional structures to the growth of small groups and private and personal fulfillment? (for example, see Robert Wuthnow, John Wilson, and other commentators).

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Miller, Glenn T. *The Modern Church from the Dawn of the Reformation to the Eve of the Third Millennium*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1997, 304 pp.

Glenn Miller's new book on modern church history is a contribution to what is in reality a three-volume series on the history of the church from the early church (Glenn Hinson) through the Medieval church (Carl Volz) to Miller's volume. Though each volume can stand on its own, the authors have been careful to avoid undue overlap and clearly have intended all three to be read as a set. Moreover this set is one of the relatively few works, considered as a whole, in recent years which has attempted the grand sweep of church history. For this, each author individually and all three as a group are to be commended, as this task is fraught with historiographical "land mines" at every turn—what to select and what to omit in a modest sized book intended to appeal to the layperson without insulting the intelligence of the scholar. Miller, in particular, faces a formidable selection process for several reasons. First it is not altogether clear that the late Medieval church should be considered along with Volz's volume instead of Miller's work. In addition, so much has happened in church history in the last 200 years that the selection process can become nightmarish. In a book of its size and with its apparent intent, how much detail should be given to the Reformation versus the Ecumenical Movement, how much to Catholic versus Protestant traditions? With these issues in mind, below I will point out some of the strengths of Miller's book along with its weaknesses, knowing that in the process my own criticisms are subject to question and the demand for justification.

The greatest strength of this book is its inclusion of clear and readable historical context in "secular" history as a backdrop for the history of the church. For example, Miller ties his discussions of the greater and lesser individual writers and theological currents to movements and events such as the scientific revolution (if it can be denominated as such), the Enlightenment and its 17th-century background in the general intellectual milieu, the American and French Revolutions, the Industrial Revolution, the major philosophical developments which affected the history of the church and its theology, the American

Civil War, and the 20th-century dictatorships and the cold war. In doing so, Miller provides a valuable service to his general readers and even to those scholars outside the church who might use the text for a general background in the religious realm.

In addition Miller has not succumbed to the temptation to treat only the major individual theologians and movements. In other words, he does not adopt the "great man" theory of history writing to an inordinate extent, though it is inevitable to a certain degree. Many more obscure, interesting and influential (despite their relative obscurity) figures are treated with clarity (for example, the Dutch mystics, the so-called "popular enlightenment" which Miller argues "forced the churches to become a 'popular' movement" [p. 89], and the Dutch Precisionists [pp. 72ff]). Clearly Miller's work attempts to draw upon the best of social historical methods while at the same time not ignoring intellectual currents. Such a balance is difficult to achieve but Miller in my estimation has achieved it with reasonable success.

However, the book does contain a few flaws and one particularly glaring omission. To take the latter first, nowhere in the book (nor did I find any reference to it in the index) was I able to find any discussion of the origins and rise of Arminianism in the 17th century and on. He does of course, as expected, treat Wesley and related movements, but it seems that to leave out Arminius and the movement which followed him (and modified his own views) is to commit a cardinal sin in the writing of church history. The Arminian tradition has continued to exert a tremendous and virtually incalculable influence upon the church and as such it deserves at least some treatment. In addition, though less crucial but yet important, Miller has no discussion of the development of Protestant Lutheran and Reformed Orthodoxy of the 17th and early 18th centuries, though he does mention the related, but also very different because of its use of Ramist logic versus Aristotelian logic, Puritan movement, thereby touching to a small degree on theological rationalism (which however was only one aspect of the Puritan movement). Miller does mention briefly American Presbyterianism which by and large carried on the banner of the continental Reformation and even the Post-Reformation period (students of Hodge at Princeton Seminary for many years read Turretin's massive Latin theological, and Aristotelian, tome), but even here he gives but short shrift to the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions which were so influential until the mid-19th century and even today have many, at least partial, adherents (for example the Particular Baptists). Beyond those faults, I have enjoyed my forays into Miller's book immensely, as he writes quite clearly and succinctly.

In summary, this work is especially recommended, subject to the limitations mentioned, for the lay reader and for the history scholar who needs an easy and short work on the place of the modern church and its relation to the broader historical contexts of its day. Nevertheless, I would like to see the author expand his work to include the important Reformed traditions after the Reformation period itself, including and especially Arminianism. Finally, Miller's suggestions for further reading, while adequate, could have been a bit more comprehensive, though again, I am aware that his audience will probably not be found among scholars. Nonetheless, nothing would have been lost had Miller included a lengthier list of works related directly to church history at a more advanced level. In addition, since the author was concerned to give the reader the social and historical contexts of the various movements in church history in the modern period, he might

have included in his bibliography some mention of one or two good texts dealing with intellectual history generally of this period, for example, Franklin Lee van Baumer, *Modern European Thought: Continuity and Change in Ideas, 1600-1950* (somewhat dated but still a sort of traditional classic) or Perry Miller, *The Life of the Mind in America* or the same author's *The New England Mind*. The above mentioned works do not, to be sure, represent the latest scholarship in intellectual history, but they and others like them would serve usefully for further and more advanced reading for those wishing to pursue the background of church history in greater depth.

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Rightmire, R. David. *Salvationist Samurai. Gunpei Yamamuro and the Rise of the Salvation Army in Japan*. Lanham, Md.: The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1997. 187 pp. ISBN: 0-8108-3270-4.

David Rightmire is uniquely qualified to write this biography of *Gunpei Yamamuro* (1872-1940), the leading Salvation Army officer in the establishment of The Salvation Army in Japan. David Rightmire has written extensively on The Salvation Army, including his previous significant work for The Scarecrow Press entitled *Sacraments and The Salvation Army: Pneumatological Foundations*. The son of Salvation Army officer parents whose overseas appointments included Japan, David lived in Japan for many years and therefore was able to write this biography with insights into Japanese life and culture which would be impossible for another author.

Rightmire places the rise of The Salvation Army within the context of the rise of Protestant Christianity in Japan, and the concerns of missiological methods and goals of the nineteenth century. But more important to the subject matter, the author places the rise of The Salvation Army in the context of the Wesleyan-holiness mission to Japan, the Army being one of the earliest expressions of that aspect of Protestant missions to arrive, in 1895, in Japan. The young Yamamuro was attracted to the ministry of The Salvation Army, moved by both its holiness message of sanctification for the believer and the natural expression of Christianity in caring for the poor.

This book provides an excellent and enlightening analysis of how Yamamuro adapted the measures of this militaristic and disciplined branch of the Christian church to Japanese life and culture, and demonstrates precisely how invaluable Yamamuro was to the establishment of The Salvation Army in Japan through his tireless ministry, which included both the spoken and the written word as well as various administrative responsibilities and work for social justice. His *Heimin no Fukuin* [*Common People's Gospel*], written in colloquial Japanese and published in 1899, "was to become a classic in Japanese Christian Literature" (p. 57). It went through approximately 530 printings and sold up to three million copies. Also, Yamamuro well represented the work of the Army to the general public and to the Emperor. The Emperor would grant an audience to General William Booth, the founder of

The Salvation Army, as well as to two of his children and successors.

The author provides invaluable insight into the relationship of The Salvation Army to the state, and deals sensitively with the issue of Yamamuro's cultural adaptation of the mission of the Army in Japan while at the same time maintaining a firm commitment to biblical Christianity. Likewise, he does not ignore the difficult days of Yamamuro's ministry when a spirit of ultranationalism leading up to World War II infected The Salvation Army, and called into question the British governance of this international movement. Yamamuro would not live to see the day when the Army was disbanded by the state. However, it was undoubtedly largely through the work of Yamamuro that The Salvation Army in Japan survived any ultimate recriminations and is at work in Japan today.

David Rightmire has done a service in remembering that man whom the Japanese government proclaimed in 1956 as "one of the greatest social workers in Japanese history" (p. 164). He has well portrayed a man within his religious and cultural contexts, but has not ignored the question of precisely how to relate the message of the gospel to national purpose and national identity. Especially critical in this book is the reminder of the influence and leadership of non-Westerners in the life and ministry of the Church, and therefore the book is a timely reminder that when we look at the body of Christ on earth we look at an international community of believers.

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Spohn, William C. *What Are They Saying about Scripture and Ethics?* 2nd ed. New York/Manwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1995.

A renewed interest in Christian ethics and ethical theory has produced a number of recent works that attempt to identify proper foundations and methods for a distinctively Christian ethic. In the revised edition of his book, *What Are They Saying about Scripture and Ethics?* William C. Spohn explores how leading theologians are using Scripture in writing about ethics (p. 5). Spohn's purpose is to examine the use of Scripture in modern ethical theories that have a distinctively Christian content, and offer a constructive argument in favor of the model of Scripture as a basis for responding love. In order to accomplish this Spohn first examines and evaluates four different ways in which Scripture has been used as a basis for moral guidance: Scripture as the command of God, as moral reminder, as call to liberation, and as call to discipleship. Spohn then explores and argues in favor of a fifth model, which understands Scripture as the basis for responding love.

Spohn uses four theoretical and methodological presuppositions that serve as premises for his exploration of how Scripture is used in ethics. The first presupposition is the need for a sound hermeneutical method for applying Scripture to ethics. "In order to discover what transforming truth and promise Scripture has for us we turn to *hermeneutics*, that is, engaged interpretation of authoritative texts" (p. 8). Spohn focuses on three stages of reflection that originate from Thomas Ogletree. First, one must recognize one's own point

of view by acknowledging "biases that stem from race, class, gender, and the like" (p. 9). Second, one must discern the points of view of the biblical authors by understanding their socio-historical contexts. Third, one must bring these two points of view into a dialogue that results in a discovery of "shared meanings and critical disagreements in a creative interpretation which expands the world of meaning of the reader" (p. 10).

The second presupposition maintains that, because the rhetorical setting of Scripture is dominated by a community orientation, Scripture cannot be approached by an isolated individual (p. 11). Therefore, since social ethics is also communal in nature, the "connection between what the text meant morally in its setting and what it means today" must be made in community (p. 12).

The third presupposition is a set of four sources from which a Christian ethic may be drawn. The first source is Scripture from which is drawn the mandates that must characterize a Christian ethic. The second source is tradition, which provides ethics the accumulated wisdom of one community's presentation of the gospel. The third source is moral philosophy, which "incorporates the best rational accounts of human value and obligation" (p. 12). Spohn identifies the fourth source as empirical data, which is gathered from the social, biological, and personality sciences. This source provides "the descriptive foundation for normative reflection guided by Scripture, tradition, and ethics" (pp. 12-13).

The fourth presupposition concerns three stages that are necessary to analyze properly the use of Scripture in ethics. The first stage concerns the *selection* of texts. This involves questions such as, which authors, eras, and literary genres are to be given greater importance in selecting the texts to be used in developing a Christian ethic? The second stage involves the process of *interpretation*, which focuses on the *why?* question. Because "any consistent theology hangs together around particular theological symbols and doctrines," Spohn maintains that sound interpretive methodologies must be practiced for developing a sound ethic (p. 16). The third stage, *application*, focuses on the *how?* question, such as how are texts to be interpreted and applied to the ethical mandates of Scripture?

Spohn considers this final stage particularly essential because many past ethical theories have suffered from either weak or assumed applications to the needs of the community.

The first model Spohn examines is Scripture as the command of God. As examples of this approach Spohn engages the writings of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. For Bonhoeffer Jesus "demands that the individual leave behind ordinary life and pursue an uncharted path of fellowship with him" (p. 22). As a result, Bonhoeffer focuses on those passages of Scripture that illustrate this understanding, such as the calling of the rich young man (p. 25). As a result of this model, Bonhoeffer views the message of the cross as a moral standard for the believer.

Barth, on the other hand, had a different approach. Spohn asserts that Barth offers the most theologically thorough approach to Scripture as the command of God. For Barth, according to Spohn, divine commands are direct and absolute. Hence, "the important moral virtues for Barth are attitudes that lead to prompt and wholehearted obedience" (p. 29). Spohn identifies in Barth two criteria for discerning a command of God. First, since a divine command is permission prior to it being a command, it must correspond to the "central quality that God has manifested in history, namely, graciousness" (p. 33). Second, a divine command always directs one towards imitating the example of Jesus Christ, because

"he is the pre-eminent and definitive manifestation of God's grace" (p. 33). For Spohn this model is incomplete and inadequate because it often leaves the moral agent underdeveloped (p. 37). However, Spohn believes this model continues to have a positive influence.

The second model is Scripture as moral reminder, and is based largely on the concept of natural law, and uses moral philosophy as the starting point for Christian ethics.

Spohn examines the writings of Josef Fuchs and Bruno Schuller in order to explore this model. However, because of this model's naturalistic approach to ethics, Spohn criticizes those Catholic moral theologians who question whether Scripture adds any significant information to ethics. These theologians, known as *the autonomy school*, deny that there is any specific Christian ethic. Spohn rejects this approach based partly on challenges to it by Vincent McNamara. Spohn believes that McNamara argues "convincingly that there is considerable confusion in the distinction between *religious motivation and autonomous moral content*" (p. 49). Christian moral practices, such as voluntary poverty and self-sacrifice, are difficult to "fully establish" on purely natural grounds (p. 50). Other theologians, such as Pope John Paul II, who maintain that Scripture does teach a Christian ethic, propose an approach called *the faith-ethics school*. Spohn finds this approach more helpful, but still insufficient because, like the autonomous school, it appears to give priority to the biblical material that will reinforce its application based on natural law.

The third model is Scripture as call to liberation. "Liberation theologians," writes Spohn, "use Scripture to underwrite a commitment to the oppressed" (p. 56). Spohn identifies two main veins of this approach, the liberation theology that emerged from Latin America and feminist theology. Gustavo Gutierrez pioneered understanding Scripture and ethics from the perspective of social and economic oppression. Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, on the other hand, seeks to "reclaim the biblical heritage for the emancipation of women" (p. 69). Spohn recognizes that this model "highlights the attitudes necessary for social transformation" (p. 76). However, there are some disadvantages to this model. One major drawback of the liberation approach for the use of Scripture in ethics is the limited scope of some liberationologies (p. 62). For instance, Jon Sobrino does not develop an adequate theory of justice. Consequently, it is difficult to prevent his idea of social transformation from becoming corrupted by "retribution and vindictive violence" (p. 67). A second liability is the tendency of feminist theology to disregard the authority of Scripture based on the gender biases of its authors (p. 75). As a result, Scripture often becomes separated from ethics in this model. Therefore, Spohn considers this an unacceptable model for using Scripture in ethics.

The fourth model is Scripture as call to discipleship. "Christian discipleship," writes Spohn, "approaches the moral life with the conviction that the most appropriate path is the one already blazed by Jesus and that the Christian must creatively embody that way of life in all situations" (p. 77). Stanley Hauerwas, whose narrative theology has championed this approach, interprets the biblical narratives in a particular ecclesiastical manner that emphasizes the church's responsibility to shape "its members' stand against the dominant liberal culture of secular society" (p. 79).

Spohn finds several advantages to this model. First, it emphasizes the community aspect of the role of ethics in the church. Second, it critically challenges the rationalistic ethical theories from the Enlightenment period (p. 87). Third, it "broadens the definition of ethics to include the normative guidance that symbolic material brings to disposition

and character" (p. 93). However, one major problem resulting from this model is that truth often becomes what is claimed to be truth by the community (p. 87). As a result, it is difficult to understand how this model "makes its conclusions intelligible to those who have different stories" or traditions (p. 93).

The fifth model is Scripture as a basis for responding love. This model "answers the moral question, 'What ought I to do?' by replying, 'Love others as God has loved you in Jesus Christ'" (p. 96). In this model Christ plays a normative role in Christian moral reflection through the "analogy of experience" (p. 95). Spohn believes this model is the most effective of the five. He proposes that Jesus should be understood as a concrete universal, in that his story "embodies a paradigmatic pattern which has universal moral applicability" (p. 102). Hence, a Christian is able to move from Christ's story to his own by analogical reasoning. In this manner, the concrete universal (Christ) guides the Christian in three main phases of moral experience (perception, motivation, and identity) by answering three questions. First, it discerns which patterns of a particular situation are religiously or morally significant. Second, it indicates how one is to act even when it is unclear what should be done. Third, it indicates what type of person a believer is to become as an individual moral agent and as a member of a community (p. 102). Though advocating this approach, Spohn is careful to maintain that Scripture as a basis for responding love is not to be understood as the definitive model for using Scripture in ethics. Rather, it is "a constructive account which spells out the implications of character and virtue ethics, which is emerging as an important way of doing ethics today" (p. 123).

There are two main ways in which this book is deficient. First, a thorough analysis of other leading Christian ethical thinkers, such as Thomas Aquinas, James Gustafson, Gene Outka, and Oliver O'Donovan would have benefited Spohn's work. Outka's recent work on love as equal regard, self-sacrifice, and mutuality, and O'Donovan's theory regarding the relationship between the resurrection and moral order would have fit well into the scope of this book, and would have given Spohn's argument a more comprehensive foundation. Second, Spohn does not fully examine the role of virtue in natural law ethics. A more thorough analysis of the main elements of Thomas Aquinas' biblical and philosophical theory of ethics would have accomplished this and strengthened chapter two.

Despite these difficulties, Spohn's book has several valuable characteristics. First, Spohn thoroughly and critically engages the work of those who represent the models he examined. He also is careful to disregard the results he finds inadequate, while at the same time embracing those he believes are useful. Second, Spohn's treatise is comprehensive in scope. He examines ethical theories from a wide variety of Christian communities and traditions, such as Roman Catholic, Methodist, Reformed, Mennonite, and Lutheran, based on both liberal and conservative positions. Third, Spohn's work illustrates that he understands the difficulty in dealing with Christian ethics in a pluralistic world. Yet, despite this, he succeeds in presenting a balanced, thoughtful, critical, and compassionate appraisal of five leading models of how Scripture should be used in ethical theory and practice.

Overall, Spohn's book is both unique and instrumental in understanding and evaluating the state of how Scripture is being used in Christian ethics today. Through strong critical thinking Spohn provides an excellent resource for researching the dominant models of using Scripture in ethics today: Scripture as divine command, as moral reminder, as call to

liberation, as call to discipleship, and as a basis for responding love. Spohn also provides a superb example of how one may biblically, philosophically, theologically, and socially critique and learn from each theory.

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Steinmetz, David C. *Luther in Context*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1995. 146 pp. ISBN: 0-8010-2082-4.

Understanding the context of any theological enterprise is absolutely essential, and the context of the development of Luther's theology is no exception. David Steinmetz has provided an invaluable guide for the study of Luther with this work. As mentioned in the preface, this work "began as a series of lectures marking the five hundredth anniversary of the birth of Martin Luther" (p. ix), and the author noted further study in Luther which these lectures afforded him. This book is the result of a diligent study not only of Martin Luther, but of those who preceded him and those who were contemporary with him in the work of the Church and in the development of theology.

The book is divided into ten well-written and concise chapters. Some of the chapters reflect the context of Luther's theology against others equally well known for their views. This is the case, for example, in the chapter dealing with Luther and Calvin on Church and tradition, or the chapter dealing with Luther's view of the Lord's Supper in contrast with Zwingli. In these chapters the major players of reformation thinking will be known to the reader. However, there are other chapters which are rich for their dealing with people perhaps not so well known to the reader but important for understanding the formation of Luther's theology. This is the case, for example in the chapter dealing with Luther among the anti-Thomists where Steinmetz spends time explaining the writing of John Pupper of Goch, or in the chapter focusing on Luther's hermeneutics where he compares Luther's exegesis of Genesis 9 with that of Denis the Carthusian.

The reader's possible lack of familiarity with some of the people mentioned in the book should not, however, be seen as a deterrent to reading this work. Steinmetz provides enough information on these people and their historical and theological contributions to easily identify their importance, especially in relationship to Luther. In fact, the thinking of all those mentioned in the book, whether theological friend or foe of Luther, is readily available to the reader precisely because of the clear, concise writing of the author. This is a well-written text, made accessible because some of the otherwise difficult philosophical or theological concepts are made understandable with clear explanations.

The subjects for the chapters are well chosen and demonstrate the wide range of Luther's thinking as well as the reasons for his theological convictions. The personality of Luther also shines forth in the disputations that he has with friends and enemies alike, and occasionally Steinmetz will make an observation about that personality. For example, in the chapter on Luther and Calvin on Church and tradition, Steinmetz noted that Calvin

"could not agree with the ferocity of Luther's attacks on other Protestant reformers—even reformers with whom Calvin disagreed—or overlook the self-indulgent character of Luther's piques and rages" (pp. 85-86).

Steinmetz well noted in his preface that "Luther was born to theology as Bach was born to music or Dürer to color and light. Theological talk, disputation, and writing were meat and drink for him. It is therefore not possible to capture his full human reality without giving serious attention to his consuming theological vocation" (pp. ix-x). Steinmetz has done a masterful job of giving such attention to that vocation, but has done so by comparison and contrast rather than by merely outlining Luther's theology. It is the context of Luther's theological vocation which is so important to understand and which is provided with insight in this work.

This book can be helpful to many who are attempting to understand the theology of Luther—to the college or seminary student, the pastor, or the layperson interested in further theological exploration. It is not only a tribute to Martin Luther and to his enduring contributions these hundreds of years after his birth, but it is a witness as well to how a scholar like Steinmetz can make those contributions readily available and accessible to the broader Christian world and to the interested reader.

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Stonehouse, Catherine. *Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1998. 237 pp.

Through an engaging and thought-provoking discussion of spiritual formation, Catherine Stonehouse invites her readers to join children on their spiritual journey. For Stonehouse, "The goal of spiritual formation is a maturing faith and a deepening relationship with Jesus Christ, through which we become more like Christ in the living of our everyday lives in the world." (p. 21) In her discussion, the author proposes an "integrated approach" to spiritual formation that takes into account Scripture, theological foundations, the tradition of the church, and social science theory. Since the truth of God is revealed in all of creation, the mutually critical interaction between the various parts of God's creation teaches us more about God's truth and God's will for humanity. In addition, Stonehouse clearly demonstrates how parents, teachers, and the faith community itself can use these sources for the benefit of the spiritual journeys of children.

This book makes three major contributions to students of spiritual formation. The first is the author's passion for children, and this work adds a needed perspective to the literature on ministry with children. Stonehouse clearly values children and their spiritual growth as she draws on her own work with children to illustrate her proposals. The discussion of "Children in the Bible" (chapter 2) examines Scripture passages in order to draw helpful insights about nurturing children's spiritual journeys.

A second strength of this book lies in the author's attention to a shared role between

parents and the faith community in nurturing a child's spiritual journey. But the author is quick to note that both rely on God's agency and initiative at work in the spiritual formation process and in the participants. Suggestions of specific tasks and responsibilities of parents and the faith community provide helpful guidance for those who seek to respond to God's truth in their work with children.

Stonehouse's work with the developmental theorists is the third and major strength that particularly commends this book for church school teachers and seminary students. She represents these theorists with integrity and creativity so that the theory is accessible to students, parents, and professionals alike. Stonehouse implicitly demonstrates how developmental theory informs the church's work with children and Scripture. Bringing developmental theory into dialogue with the process of spiritual formation demonstrates how church education is enriched by the work of the social sciences. Stonehouse notes that Scripture, in turn, raises theological questions for developmental theory.

A major problem of the book is the lack of explicit connection between the first two chapters dealing with theological foundations and children and the Bible and the rest of the text. Stonehouse indicates that the goal of her work is an "integrated approach" when she asks, "Might it be possible that tradition, human experience, social science research, and Scripture all provide insights for understanding a child's formation?" (p. 14) and affirms that this indeed is her goal.

The unmodified utilization of the Ward and Dieter models in Stonehouse's discussion of theological foundations (chapter 1) creates a sacred/secular split that she overcomes in practice, but not in her argument for an integrated approach. Ward's model is represented in a two-sided diagram with God revealed in creation and science as creator on one side and God revealed in Scripture and theology as author on the other. Revelation of God's truth through creation and Scripture, as well as the human search for truth, unites the two sides. Modifying Ward's diagram to add two-way arrows between Creator and Author, Creation and Scripture, and Science and Theology would more clearly represent the integrated goal and outcome of the author's work.

A similar problem exists in the use of the Dieter model of theological reflection that Stonehouse adopts. Dieter diagrams two-way relationships between Tradition and Scripture, Reason and Scripture, and Experience and Scripture. This series of bilateral relationships ignores the importance of the dynamic interaction between each of these sources for theological reflection. Noting the interaction between the other three sources does add complexity to the model, but it would more accurately reflect what Stonehouse does in her work. For example, she describes a worship experience using the Good Shepherd story that brings into play all four sources for theological reflection interacting with each other, e.g., use of reason and experience in the "work time" as children interact with the Scripture story. In this modification, Scripture would still hold "special authority," but the importance of the interaction between tradition and experience, for example, would then be viewed through the lens of Scripture for the purpose of accountability in faithful discipleship.

Stonehouse's final two chapters bring her work together in a helpful discussion of religious language, the dangers that await those who are on the journey, and the hope that comes from a master story that guides the journey. The author describes a worship experience with children so the reader gets a visual picture of how all of the elements come

together. However, an explicit review of the components of an integrated approach and a model developed out of Stonehouse's own constructive work would have added strength to her conclusion. But for parents and teachers of children, as well as the faith community as a whole, Stonehouse has provided new insights into the foundations and nature of spiritual formation. She challenges her readers and the church to accept their calling to join children on the spiritual journey.

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Strong, Douglas M. *They Walked in the Spirit: Personal Faith and Social Action in America*. Westminster John Knox Press, 1997. xxxvii pp., 128 pp.

Doug Strong has set out to offer an olive branch to American Christians, asking them to stop bickering at the Christian family reunion long enough to listen to some stories at the knees of their aunts and uncles, grandmothers and grandfathers in the faith. Addressing the late twentieth century split in American Protestantism between liberal social activists and conservative evangelical pietists, Strong suggests that a far more richly textured legacy is available for Christians today if we will only look hard enough at our own history.

To both the church and the academy he offers the stories of eight unsung heroes, Christians who embody the integration of these two impulses, pietism and activism, inward faith and outward action, private religion and public transformation. If we have never heard of some of these witnesses to the faith, no wonder, argues Strong, given the virtual hegemony of this "two-party system" mentality (a phrase coined by Martin Marty) within American Protestantism. In the struggle over who is right or who will win, we have lost our eyes to see "holistic spirituality" that "combines social witnesses and evangelical faith." So much so, that the church historians have been unwitting accomplices, lifting up figures who fall easily into one camp or the other and leaving untouched Christians whose lives reflect a deeper integration of the two. At the same time, the church, in almost every denominational form, has found in itself polarized into the camps of each party, squaring off for dominance at the end of the twentieth century. It is time, then, to remind both church and academy of the strong tradition of Christians in America who have "nurtured a profoundly deep relationship with Christ and simultaneously worked for the transformation of society, thereby transcending the public/private split in American Protestantism" (x). In eight chapters Strong offers the life stories of each of eight figures who represent the best of an integrated Christianity: William Goodell (1702-1878), Julia A.J. Foote (1823-1900), William Seymour (1870-1922), Charles Stelzle (1869-1941), Via Scudder (1862-1954), E. Stanley Jones (1884-1973), Clarence Jordan (1912-1969), and Orlando E. Costas (1942-1987). In each case, the basic outlines of biography provide the framework for showing the theme of the person's ministry and showing how he or she successfully embodied both the evangelical and social activist impulses of Protestant Christianity.

Especially nice is the use of primary source material in the last portion of each chapter.

They are indeed "neglected gems," as Strong calls them and offer, in some cases, the first opportunity for scholars to encounter these writings. Including excerpts from the pens of these exemplars adds depth and richness to the picture we are given. While their biographical vignettes are impressive and inspirational, it is in their own voices that these figures come alive. In their writings we can hear the "holistic spirituality" that Strong wants to present. It comes across as natural not forced, adding to the power of the witness each life makes.

Before the first chapter Strong has included a twenty-page "Introduction" which chronicles the historical developments of American Christianity beginning in the colonial period. In it he identifies the dynamics at work which have pushed the two strands of American Protestantism toward the two poles, creating this "two-party system." In an amazingly compact space he covers a lot of ground. It is very useful as a quick survey that avoids the tedium of a blow-by-blow account giving instead a broad map to the landmarks that have defined the landscape in which Christianity finds itself at the end of the twentieth century. Strong is a careful writer, avoiding gross generalizations in the context of setting the stage for the figures he will introduce in the succeeding chapters. In the process Strong provides a mild corrective to church historians and social scientists who have treated these developments. For example, he challenges the reductionism of scholars who conclude that the primary motive of benevolent societies in the nineteenth century was social control. It is this one-lens scholarship, whether the lens is economic, social or political, that has blinded us to the historical actors who operate with multiple motives and integrate multiple lenses.

For academic settings, this book would be useful and usable in either the college or seminary classroom. It is careful, well-documented and readable. Its use of primary source material in each chapter would be especially important for students to encounter. As a supplement to an American church history survey, it may challenge some paradigms often used by offering the real lives of real Christians who defy traditional divisions.

For church settings, this book would be a great read for an adult Sunday School class, albeit a fairly committed one. While this is a scholarly book, it is not a book for other scholars only. With each chapter at about fourteen pages, it could easily be a quarter's curriculum. Students would find models of comprehensive Christianity that challenge readers to think more comprehensively about their own spirituality. In addition, these witnesses push readers to think beyond the boxes we often use to mentally organize other Christians.

Strong has made an important contribution not only to our understanding of the history of Christianity in America, but also to ongoing conversations within American Christianity.

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Torrance, James B. *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997. 130 pp.

In recent years the form of worship has become a point of contention. No matter the tone of the discussion, the primary question in these discussions has been, "How

do Christians worship?"

As Christians have attempted to answer this question, much attention has been directed to the acts of worship employed in the worship service. Christians have considered styles of music, experimented with liturgical dance, tested drama, and have examined ancient forms of Christian worship. The question noticeably missing from the discussion of worship has been, "Why do Christians worship?" Or, "What is the objective of Christian worship?" In other words, many Christians have overlooked the theology of worship in their rush to determine the way in which they are to worship.

According to James Torrance, Christians cannot accurately determine how they are to worship without first understanding the theology of worship. Torrance is convinced that how Christians worship God must reflect who God is—the triune God of grace, and what God has done and is doing for humanity through Jesus Christ and by the Holy Spirit (p. 10). Only as Christians know who God is and what God has done and is doing can they determine how to worship (p. 70).

Torrance warns Christians that they cannot allow the contemporary quest for relevance to influence the way they understand worship. The contemporary quest for relevance, the modern preoccupation with "how," draws attention to human experience and distracts attention from the true object of worship. The result is a form of worship that centers on human experience, rather than on the triune God of Grace. Torrance identifies this form of worship as "unitarian."

The unitarian form of worship conflicts with the New Testament form of worship, according to Torrance. The writers of the New Testament recognized Jesus Christ as the "true agent" of worship. He is the true worshiper. Even as Jesus Christ is a Christian's salvation, so is Jesus Christ the Christian's worship. Proponents of the unitarian form of worship emphasize what participants do in worship. This form of worship excludes essential theological truth, and centers attention on human experience. Torrance condemns this form of worship as Arian or Pelagian. It is not evangelical, not truly Catholic, and not Trinitarian.

Torrance defines worship as Christians' "participation through the Spirit in the Son's communion with the Father, in his vicarious life of worship and intercession." It is a response to what God has done for humanity in Jesus Christ. "It is our self-offering in body, mind, and spirit, in response to the one true offering made for us in Christ, our response of gratitude (*eucharistia*) to God's grace (*charis*), our sharing by grace in the heavenly intercession of Christ" (p. 15).

Worship, Torrance explains, is Trinitarian in character. The Trinitarian form of worship contrasts with the unitarian form of worship in that its proponents emphasize the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is the basis for Christian experience. Furthermore, the Trinitarian form of worship incorporates essential theological truth, it is Trinitarian and incarnational, evangelical, and it unifies the body of Jesus Christ. This form of worship is represented in the Nicene Creed, and in the writings of John Calvin, John McLeod Campbell, and Karl Barth.

In *Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace*, Torrance makes a legitimate statement against the pragmatism that so often governs the way Christians, especially Protestant Christians, understand worship. He repeatedly reminds the Christian communi-

ty that theology does matter.

Anyone who is interested in worship, either as a worship leader or as a participant, will benefit from Torrance's instruction. Torrance's devotion to Barth and his pejorative comments will cause readers to react negatively at certain points, but in spite of these weaknesses he exposes truth from which all will benefit.

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Vanhoozer, Kevin J., ed., *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age: Theological Essays on Culture and Religion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997. x + 166 pp. Paper, \$20.00. ISBN: 0-8028-4117-1.

The ten essays in this volume originated in 1993 at a theology conference held in Edinburgh, Scotland. The "pluralistic age" in the title means that the focus, scope, intent, and boundaries of these articles are wide and far ranging. The contributors, however, are not particularly global in provenance, coming mostly from the United Kingdom, with two from France. Most American readers will likely recognize only two or three of the essayists: Colin Gunton, of the group the only trinitarian theologian of true eminence, and the late Lesslie Newbigin, in what may be one of his last published works, "The Trinity as Public Truth." Newbigin's essay does not so much explore the intricate depths of trinitarian theology in and of itself as it assumes the apologetic and proclamatory value of orthodox trinitarian theology in the arena of public discourse.

Culture and religion, as noted in the subtitle, are themselves very big ideas, hard to shackle within any one definition. The essays correspondingly cover a great deal of territory when taken as a whole—everything from Roland Poupin's musings on Sufism to Gerald Bray's essay on the second century apologists—although are scholarly and disciplined when taken essay by essay.

The longest paper by volume editor Kevin Vanhoozer, is arguably the best. Raimundo Panikkar, the Indian Christian theologian with strong Hindu affinities, is often overlooked and is not here. Vanhoozer also examines the reductive thinking of pluralist John Hick, and ably demonstrates that his approach may well contain the seeds of its own destruction. Rightly seen, God as triune is both exclusivistic and pluralistic, and is "the transcendental condition for interreligious dialogue" (p. 71).

The essayists may be largely British, but the trinitarian heavyweights most often invoked are from the German orbit: Karl Barth, Karl Rahner, Jürgen Moltmann and, less decisively, Wolfhart Pannenberg. The final three essays are about, respectively, Barth, Rahner, and Moltmann's work *The Trinity and the Kingdom*. Gary Badcock's treatment of Rahner is the most eye-opening, claiming that Rahner is not really interested in the immanent Trinity and that the links between Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are underdeveloped in his theology.

Two other recent collections on the Trinity are of interest, but neither covers the precise ground of this book. *Speaking the Christian God: The Holy Trinity and the Challenge of Feminism* (Eerdmans, 1992) addresses the specific complex of issues pressed by feminists,

that is, how to name God properly. The general outlook of process theology dominates *Trinity in Process: A Relational Theology of God* (Continuum, 1997).

There is therefore room for *The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age*. Pluralism continues to assert itself not just in Christian theology, but across the entire academic spectrum. Indeed, every six to eight years a similar volume to this one could well appear, with new themes, fresh approaches, refined angles of vision.

Perhaps its main weakness is that its subtitle is not represented significantly in the essays themselves, at least not at the point of cultural analysis. The book promises but does not deliver a theology of culture. Robert W. Jenson's *Essays in Theology of Culture* (Eerdmans, 1995) is a better place to turn. Jenson engages cultural realities at greater penetration than the ten essayists in Vanhoozer's book, and Jenson at crucial points argues trinitarianly also.

The Trinity in a Pluralistic Age would be well served by an index, especially considering the book's expense. *Speaking the Christian God* and *Trinity in Process* both contain indexes. Since the essays were first conference speeches, they are not overly technical but in the main "listener and reader friendly." The essays' greatest appeal may well be to professional theologians with a strong interest in the doctrine of the Trinity. However, given the pluralistic world we all inhabit, no thinking Christian can afford to remain unreflective on the very points these timely, and in some ways timeless, essays raise.

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Wainwright, Geoffrey. *Worship with One Accord: Where Liturgy and Ecumenism Embrace*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Worship with One Accord offers us an insightful commentary, progress report, and analysis of the Christian ecumenical movement today. The book is primarily a collection of essays and lectures that Wainwright has written and delivered on aspects of Christian unity. And who could better give us the analysis, progress, and hazards of this noble venture? Wainwright's credentials include not only the magisterial (to use Don Saliers' term) *Doxology*, but nearly three decades of earnest work in behalf of ecumenism. *Worship with One Accord* draws specifically on Wainwright's work with the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches (Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry) and his experiences as the chairman of the Methodist side of the Joint Commission of the Roman Catholic Church and the World Methodist Council.

In this work Wainwright puts before us the WCC Lima Text as the best available document around which Christians are called to unite. "The division of the churches is a counter-testimony to the Gospel of reconciliation...the reality of the Gospel itself is called into question by disunity among Christians.... Can the church proclaim and transmit a gift it shows no sign of possessing?" (164).

Wainwright and Lima call us back to Patristic worship, that period before Medieval Roman Catholicism and Protestantism, as the classic practices and content around which we may

"arrive at an agreed reading of the Gospel, a unified confession of Christian faith, and a shared participation in the benefits of redemption." (p. 8) Wainwright and the Lima text cite 10 worship essentials around which they call Christians to unite.

1. The Eucharist as the Central Act of Worship.
2. Kerygmatic Preaching.
3. The Scriptures: as internal norm and instrument of transmission.
4. Prayer-particularly the Lord's Prayer
5. Trinitarian Creeds
6. Liturgic Songs
7. Icons
8. Epiclesis: Invocation of the Holy Spirit.
9. Baptism as Initiation Rite.
10. Ordination

Each of the 10 "essentials" suggests possibilities and problems. For example, number 1. Can Protestants who formed the Church of the Word become the Church of the Table? Again, can Pentecostals, Quakers, and Charismatics who believe they encounter God directly in worship make a symbolic encounter with God the central event in worship? Wainwright does not deal with these questions.

The Trinitarian creeds Wainwright sees as absolutely essential. To these we must hold or be the victims of a militant syncretism that will emasculate the Christian faith. Wainwright sees threats of a one-world, non-trinitarian faith among many of the members of the WCC. He cites a number of examples, but the most powerful one is the "kerfuffle at Canberra." In this 1991 meeting Chung Hyun-Kyung, a woman theologian from Korea, declared that she sees the Holy Spirit as coming from Kwan-In, a bodhisattva, and goddess of compassion and the first female image of Christ. Wainwright noted that the "speech was favorably received by the bureaucratically entrenched Liberal Left" but offensive to Evangelicals and Eastern Orthodox members. (pp. 254-258).

Wainwright is realistic about the problems that face the cause of Christian unity. The challenges of trinitarianism, of the papacy, of the warring Christians in Ireland will not be solved in a fortnight. Wainwright knows this, but still chooses to give himself to the cause. "I am a systematic theologian," he says, "who holds that the Christian faith begins and ends in worship, which is therefore a constant reference point for theology.... For all my adult theological life I have been engaged for the cause of Christian unity.... To the realization of that vision I devote my theological energies." (pp. 230, 273).

WESLEY D. TRACY

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White, James Emery. *Rethinking the Church: A Challenge to Creative Redesign in an Age of Transition*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997. 142 pp., paperback.

The strength and weakness of this book is its simplicity. It is lucid, easy to read, and plainly organized into seven bite-sized chapters, all beginning with the word "Rethinking." Yet at points readers may wish for more depth.

White focuses in turn on "Foundational Questions," evangelism, discipleship, ministry, worship, structure, and community. If you are familiar with the ideas of George Barna, Bill Hybels, Leith Anderson, and Rick Warren, you've already read this book, or at least can quickly intuit where it's going. If you're not familiar with these writers, White's book is an excellent introduction to the "seeker sensitive" approach to church life. Though the book is largely derivative, its material is packaged in a useful, accessible way.

James Emery White is the founding pastor of Mecklenberg Community Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. A Southern Baptist with a Ph.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, he has written previous books on the church, including *Opening the Front Door: Worship and Church Growth*. According to the author blurb at the back of the book, Mecklenberg Community Church is "one of the fastest growing church starts in the United States, experiencing over 80 percent of its growth from the unchurched."

This book is not the story of the Mecklenberg church, though it is grounded in White's pastoral experience there. White describes his congregation as "seeker targeted" (a step beyond "seeker sensitive") "targeted on facilitating the process of evangelizing seekers"—adding that the "best-known example" of this type of church is Willow Creek Community Church (located in South Barrington, Illinois, well west of Chicago).

Four kinds of churches (in terms of congregational style and structure, not necessarily doctrine) are common today. We might call these *traditional*, *megachurch*, *metachurch*, and *microchurch*. Mecklenberg, Willow Creek, and a growing network of similar churches fit what Carl George calls the "metachurch model." One of the watchwords of these churches is "Growing smaller while growing bigger"; multiplying small-group units as the church increases in size. Because of their growth, media savvy, flexible organization, and laserlike focus, these are the churches that currently get the most public notice. They exist in conscious distinction from traditional churches and are really something different from megachurches, whose chief characteristic is size. ("Microchurch" is essentially the house church model.) *Rethinking the Church* is a good exposition of the concept, rationale, and to some degree methodology of the metachurch approach.

In content, the book is a blending of insights from Scripture, pastoral experience, and cutting edge business practice. Its strengths include its affirmation of spiritual gifts, the ministry of all believers, and the importance of small groups and intentional discipling. It also makes the case for more contemporary styles of worship. This could be a very useful study book (together with other resources) for a leadership group in a local church that wants to rethink its role and strategies.

Throughout the book, White makes good use of illustrations and apt quotations. Personally, I found his most pungent citation this one from the book *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*: "If you add enough branches to a tree and intelligently prune the deadwood, then you'll likely evolve into a collection of healthy branches

well positioned to prosper in an ever-changing environment." White uses this to illustrate that effective organizations (churches or businesses) make "their most creative developments through trial and error." It is certainly true that one of the marks of creative, growing churches is their openness to venture, adapt, and learn from mistakes.

I found the book's first chapter, "Rethinking Foundational Questions," to be the weakest. White's questions are probing and apt, but the answers don't go deep enough. Citing Acts 2:42-47 and Matthew 28:18-20, White says "the mission of the church is to reach out to nonbelievers and develop them, along with existing believers, into committed followers of Christ." Later he says, more simply, "The purpose of the church is to fulfill the Great Commission." Certainly these are central to the church's role and mission, but biblically the definition is too narrow. White simply assumes (apparently) that Acts 2 and Matthew 28:18-20 are the key biblical passages on the church's mission. He doesn't give his reasons for selecting them. There is no reference to the "Great Commandment," social justice, or ministry to and among the poor; no mention of Luke 4, for instance. These are not denied; just ignored. Consequently the later chapter on discipleship is fairly shallow—excellent on process, but fuzzy on cost. Because of the narrowness of the initial focus, throughout the book the "success" of the church seems to be equated almost exclusively with its numerical growth. Thus, despite the focus on evangelism and discipleship, the book is more about the church for the church than the church for the kingdom of God.

One of the most intriguing things in this book is a comment in Leighton Ford's foreword. Recalling his early days in Youth for Christ when "a visionary group of young pioneers" started many new outreach ministries, Ford detects a shift now from "parachurch" organizations to church planting: "Many of those who might have gone into parachurch ministries forty or fifty years ago are selecting church planting" today, he says. A perceptive comment.

Rethinking the Church covers a lot of material in the brief compass of 120 pages. Fairly extensive endnotes guide the reader to useful additional resources, adding some depth. The book has a select bibliography of recent books on church life and growth, but no index.

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1998 FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

BILL T. ARNOLD

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DONALD E. DEMARAY

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BRIAN DODD

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MAXIE D. DUNNAM

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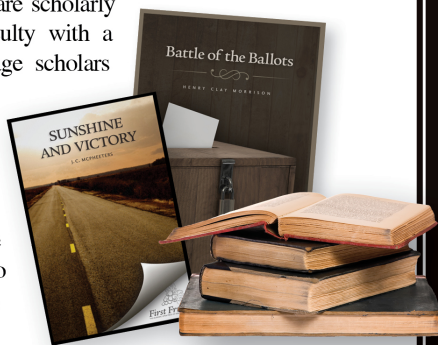
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