

THE ASBURY *Theological* JOURNAL

PUBLISHED BY THE FACULTY OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

SPRING 1987 • VOL. 42, NO. 1

The Asbury Journal

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SPRING 1987
VOL. 42 NO. 1

USPS 546-440
Continuing
The Asbury Seminary

Published in April and October by
Asbury Theological Seminary.

Postmaster: Send address changes to
The Asbury Theological Journal
Asbury Theological Seminary
204 North Lexington
Wilmore, KY 40390-1199

- David L. McKenna
Publisher
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Subscriptions: One year (2 issues), \$5.00 (outside the U.S. \$8.00); Two years, \$8.00 (\$14.00); Three years, \$11.00 (\$20.00).
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Printed in U.S.A.

THE ASBURY THEOLOGICAL JOURNAL provides a scholarly forum for thorough discussion of issues relevant to Christian thought and faith, and to the nature and mission of the church. *The Journal* addresses those concerns and ideas across the curriculum which interface with Christian thought, life and ministry.

The primary resource for contributions to *The Journal* is the Asbury Seminary faculty who engage in dialogue with both the roots of our religious heritage and contemporary thought. Scholars from other academic disciplines and various backgrounds are invited to submit articles for publication.

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Books for review and articles for consideration should be mailed to: Eric H. Johnson, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY 40390-1199. Telephone (606) 858-3581. Manuscripts should be in English and typed double-spaced on white bond paper, 8½ x 11 inches, with an accompanying computer disk copy when that is possible.*Sermons, poetry and devotional materials are not used. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless a self-addressed envelope with sufficient postage is provided. Queries are welcome, and a style sheet is available upon request. Modest honorarium payments to authors follow acceptance.

Articles in *The Journal* are indexed in *The Christian Periodical Index* and *Religion Index One: Periodicals (RIO)*; book reviews are indexed in *Index to Book Reviews in Religion (IBRR)*. Both RIO and IBRR are published by the American Theological Library Association, 5600 South Woodlawn Avenue, Chicago, IL 60637, and are available online through BRS Information Technologies and DIALOG Information Services.

Volumes in microfilm of *The Asbury Theological Journal* (Vol. 41-) and *The Asbury Seminarian* (Vol. 1-40) are available from University Microfilms International, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

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Editorial Note

This issue of *The Asbury Theological Journal* is dedicated to two highly significant professors whose lives have made a lasting contribution to Asbury Theological Seminary and whose writings have been prolific and influential among students, teachers, pastors and the Church in general. I speak of Dr. John T. Seamands and Dr. Herbert W. Byrne, who retire at the end of this academic year.

Dr. Seamands joined the faculty of Asbury Theological Seminary in 1961 as the John Wesley Beeson Professor of Christian Missions. He was the founding director of the E. Stanley Jones School of World Mission and Evangelism at Asbury in 1981. Dr. Seamands served as a missionary to India from 1940 until 1961 under the board of missions of The Methodist Church. After a highly successful ministry as a missionary, Dr. Seamands came to Asbury where he has served with distinction for twenty-seven years. He has preached the gospel around the world in numerous mission retreats, conferences, universities and churches of all denominations. He is particularly noted for his close relationship in working with Dr. E. Stanley Jones in the United Christian Ashram movement. His writings include eight books in English on various themes as Christian mission, the Holy Spirit, daily devotions and Christian biography: *The Supreme Task of the Church*, *On Tiptoe with Joy*, *Pioneers of the Younger Churches*, *On Tiptoe with Love*, *Around the World for Christ*, *Power for the Day*, *The Gift of the Spirit is Yours* and *Tell It Well: Communicating The Gospel Across Cultures*. Many of these books have been translated into German, Spanish and Korean. Dr. Seamands has four books published in the Kanarese language of India. His writings also include numerous articles and chapters written in edited books. Dr. Seamands has served well as a model of a missionary and scholar. His professional career has been more than a career; it has been a testimony of conviction and commitment to the academic and spiritual dimensions of a divine calling.

Dr. Byrne came to Asbury Theological Seminary in 1967 as professor of Christian education. Prior to that time, Dr. Byrne had served as academic dean at Fort Wayne Bible College and Huntington College, and also served as chairman of the division of religion and philosophy at Asbury College. His writings are numerous, including *A Christian Approach to Education*, *Christian Education for the Local Church*, *Improving Church Education* and *Motivating Church Workers*. As an ordained minister of The United Methodist Church, Dr. Byrne has been active in the ongoing life of the church in preaching missions, retreats and in advancing the educational ministry of local churches. For twenty years, he has served Asbury Theological Seminary with distinction. His scholarship and personal commitment to the gospel have helped to form the academic and spiritual life of many seminarians. His involvement in administrative responsibilities has helped to form the character of several institutions, including Asbury Theological Seminary. Dr. Byrne has not only been a professor of Christian education; his teaching and life serve as a model to the Church.

We offer this issue of *The Asbury Theological Journal* as a festschrift to Dr. Seamands and Dr. Byrne. The variety of articles covers apologetical issues and missionary-pastoral themes. Some of these essays are written by former students and admirers of Dr. Seamands and Dr. Byrne.

LAURENCE W. WOOD

Miracles and Physics

STANLEY L. JAKI

The most incredible thing about miracles is that they happen.

—G. K. Chesterton*

PRIOR TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

In writing about miracles it is hardly possible not to think first of David Hume. In many quarters he is remembered as the one who had once and for all divested miracles of intellectual respectability. Such a reputation is part of the awe in which Hume as a man of intellect is still held. Yet, as far as intellectual construction goes, Hume himself admitted that his theory of understanding resembled not so much an edifice as a heap of bricks.¹ To his credit he also perceived that his premises provided only for one kind of glue, plain sentiment or mere habit, to make those bricks stick together into some sort of intellectual framework. About such an outcome Hume was both very despondent in his truly philosophical moments and also very outspoken. Already his first major philosophical work, *The Treatise on Human Nature*, contains the unabashed declaration, "Reason is, or ought only to be, the slave of passions."² That a leader of the Enlightenment did not rather speak of the enslavement of passions to reason may tell something of the true nature of the light generated by that much glorified movement. To be sure, by "passions" Hume meant a dignified, quiet, urbane comportment, a foremost existential commodity in his eyes. Indeed all of Hume's philosophy was meant to be a shield against harsh, disturbing truths, especially the ones that bespeak of man's subordination to transcendental dimensions. He correctly perceived that none of those dimensions were a potential threat to a tensionless lifestyle if the idea of God were a matter of mere wishful thinking.

Hume's relentless effort to justify intellectually a *Weltanschauung* free of transcendental constraints was in part a reaction to Calvinist tenets, zealously preached in the Edinburgh of his youth, about God's wrath on those He had positively predestined to hell. Another source was Hume's own personal make-up in which Epicurean traits, as amply revealed by his classic portraits, clearly dominated. Epicurus, who figures prominently in the closing section of Hume's

**The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911: Penguin Books, 1950) p. 11.

Dr. Stanley L. Jaki, a Hungarian-born Catholic priest of the Benedictine order, with doctorates in physics and systematic theology, is distinguished university professor at Seton Hall University (South Orange, NJ) and the 1987 recipient of the Templeton Prize.

Enquiry, was certainly Hume's model in seeking the intellectual grounds for a peace of mind which consisted in being left alone by the gods.³

Nothing has, of course, ever been so much a threat to that ideal of splendid isolation as the One for whom the "Hound of Heaven" is still the psychologically most expressive name.⁴ Awareness of Him has three main sources of which one, moral consciousness or the sense of the holy, affected Hume little if at all. In a sense, however civilized, he was a counter image of a Bunyan, a Wesley, let alone of John Henry Newman.⁵ He did not pretend indifference toward the two other sources, one philosophical, the other historical. This is not to suggest that his style showed emotional overtones as he went about dissecting the classical proofs of the existence of God: the cosmological and the teleological. He skillfully played the role of uninterested bystander intent only on incontrovertible verities. He could not, however, mask his sarcastic contentment as he completed his picking apart the cosmological argument with a celebration of the idea of aborted, incoherent, botched-up universes.⁶

That such an outcome was destructive of the notion of universally valid laws did not seem to bother him. Nor did he seem to be mindful of the fact that years earlier his attack on miracles⁷ assumed the notion of immutable laws of nature. He also failed to come to grips with the fact that on the basis of the bare inductionism he advocated one could never establish the existence of such laws. An inductionism severed from metaphysics could not yield that completeness which was meant by universally and permanently valid laws. Most importantly, Hume did not offer satisfactory explanation of the role he accorded in his philosophy to the recognition⁸ of facts. As far as he was a sensationist or empiricist philosopher he had to grant equal credibility to the recognition of any fact, usual or unusual. That recognition had to be certain, if the philosophy built on it was to give assurance of certainty. But as far as he was a genuinely Humean philosopher, who subordinated reason to sentiments, he had to part with his professed impartiality vis-à-vis any kind of fact, usual or unusual. But partiality for some facts, which meant distrust for others, invited uncertainty about all facts. This is why when arguing against miracles Hume switched grounds.⁸ From a mere probability argument against miracles (the trustworthy witnessing of regular recurrences far outweighed that of exceptional events) he went on dismissing entirely the credibility of witnesses (whatever their number, learnedness, and integrity) on behalf of exceptional or "miraculous" events. Behind such a tactical shift there had to be a fundamental consideration at play. Hume gave a glimpse of it as in the same context he declared, "If the spirit of religion join itself to the love of wonder, there is an end of common sense."⁹ Hume's philosophy in general and his arguments against miracles in particular, are pivoted on the meaning he gave to common sense.

In Hume's century common sense had many champions, the first of them being the Jesuit Claude Buffier, today almost completely forgotten. They all believed that common sense was the best assurance for certainty about the existence of external reality, that is, of objective facts, things, and events.¹⁰ That Father Buffier's contention had no less an admirer than Voltaire,¹¹ was not without a common though least noted instructiveness. The praises of an unsound *philosophie*

were not the clue toward the best philosophical meaning which an expression, be it common sense, was susceptible of. Insofar as it became equated with mere common opinion, it certainly had no chance in securing, and certainly not among philosophers, a certainty about the reality of objective facts. That a commonly shared opinion is a most variable commodity was implied in the phrase, "climate of opinion," made popular early in this century by Whitehead, who borrowed it from a "seventeenth-century writer" (Joseph Glanvill) without naming him.¹²

A recall of the times which witnessed the coining of that phrase should not appear useless for Christian theologians. They all, of course, know that defense of miracles has from those times on been an increasingly uphill battle against the climate of opinion taken for common sense. But perhaps not all of them are aware of the unsoundness of a defense of miracles that seeks an ally in the successive climates of opinion, philosophical and scientific. As will be clear later, the present status of that defense provides much for a new chapter in a now old story. That there will be no end to it may be surmised by those mindful of a biblical phrase with a sceptical touch, "There is nothing new under the sun" (Ecclesiastes 1:9). In respect to controversies about miracles, history turns out to be once more the past written in that present tense in which grammarians have long ago recognized the beckoning of the future.

But there is an additional reason in a paper on miracles and science to go back to the past in order to understand the present and be prepared at least for the immediate future. The reason relates to the measure to which science contributed to the formation of climate of thought—as difficult to escape as the air one breathes—ever since the days of Glanvill. Those days saw the rise of Newtonian science with all its dazzling successes that opened unsuspected vistas in man's understanding of nature. No less dazzling, though in an opposite or blinding sense, were some philosophical presuppositions grafted on that science by men of science, Newton included, dabbling in philosophy, and by philosophers with little if any expertise in science.

The chief and strictly scientific lure in that dubious game was the inverse square law. Had the seventeenth century not been the age of scientific genius, it might have witnessed serious interest in its own immediate intellectual past. As that past was in good part a matter of printed record, disregard for it could not be excused with a reference to the difficulty of gathering manuscript material, a task difficult even in this age of instant copies and tele-copying. Even a cursory reading of the printed record in question, say of the works of Kepler, Horrocks, and Hooke, would have shown that the inverse square law was not a generalized statement derived from individual observations or experiments. Such an interpretation of the provenance of the inverse square law would have fitted only the empiricist-inductionist strait-jacket tailored by Bacon for science as its foolproof method. For that garment, which only some foolhardy amateurs cared to don, no scientific genius of the century of genius had any use. Certainly not Newton. But Newton was also a genius in that he was most unwilling to credit other geniuses. Because of his jealousy of Hooke, Newton did not give enough credit to Hooke's ideas on the inverse square law of gravitation.¹³ To anyone familiar with Leibniz's work,

equally suspect would appear Newton's claims about his having been the sole discoverer of infinitesimal calculus.

Newton certainly belied his own overbearing self-centeredness when he voiced a twelfth-century statement (resurrected in the seventeenth-century debate concerning old and new learning) that the moderns saw farther because they were sitting on the shoulders of giant forebears.¹⁴ Newton certainly had such a giant to help him see the inverse square law loom large on his mental horizon. The giant was none other than Kepler whose three laws of planetary motion were mediated to Newton through a little-appreciated mid-seventeenth-century English astronomer, Jeremiah Horrocks. Those three laws and Huygens' law of centrifugal force could easily be combined in such a way as to yield the inverse square law.

Whether Newton had performed early enough that elementary algebraic operation is disputed.¹⁵ But he did not need to do so in order to convince himself about the validity of the inverse square law. As one with keen interest in optics, Newton was certainly familiar with Kepler's explicit statements on the decrease of light intensity with the square of distance from a point source.¹⁶ Nor could Newton be ignorant of the fact that Kepler's own certainty about that law of optics was not based at all on observations. Reliable photometry was still two centuries away. Kepler's certainty rested on an a priori philosophical assumption about nature. According to that assumption space was homogeneous. The spreading of any physical effect—optical, thermal or gravitational—in such a space could only follow the inverse square law. Those aware of the influence of the Cambridge Neoplatonists on young Newton, with their markedly a priori speculations, and of old Newton's divinization of homogeneous Euclidean space as God's sensorium,¹⁷ will easily perceive the irresistible attractiveness which Kepler's train of thought had to have on Newton. The latter had been fully convinced about the inverse square law of gravitation long before he compared the fall of the moon in its orbit with the fall of an object on the earth and before he had elegantly derived that law from the notion of a central field of force.

The first important thing to note here is the a priori certainty as the source of Newtonian science pivoted on the inverse square law of gravitation. This source was duly and quickly overlooked as Newtonian science proved ever more successful, but it did not fail to act less potently. Newton could lull himself into believing that he was really a "Newtonian" natural philosopher, starting from facts, experiments, and observations and never from hypotheses or postulates. Few leading men of science have ever indulged in so many a priori hypotheses as the one who boasted: *hypotheses non fingo*.¹⁸

These historical details about seventeenth-century science will reveal their bearing on our topic as soon as one notes the second important point. It is implied in the first about the certainty felt on a priori grounds about the inverse square law. This chief and spectacularly fruitful law of Newtonian science could easily create a most portentous illusion about the status of the laws of nature. Was it not tempting to assume that the laws of nature were not only accessible to the human mind on an a priori basis but were also ontologically necessary in the form in which they were unveiled by a priori reasoning? And, if such was the case, could there be any real

need for experimentation? More importantly, could there be any need for a Creator if nature necessarily had to be what it appeared to be through that very same *a priori* reasoning?

Such questions about science as well as natural theology could hardly be answered in a clear-cut way in the seventeenth century, a transition from Christian to secularized thought. Ambivalence, hesitation, and confusion about these questions were everywhere in the utterances of Galileo, Descartes, Newton, to say nothing of lesser figures with quite a few divines among them, eager to explore the new science for the purposes of theology.¹⁹ As to science, the potential pitfalls were in full evidence when Galileo slighted Kepler's discovery of the elliptical orbits of planets. He did so on the patently *a priori* ground that the heavenly motions had to be perfectly circular, a position which allied Galileo with Aristotle, the cosmologist-scientist, whom he wanted to vanquish above all.²⁰ Descartes could never warm up to the indispensability of experiments.²¹ Had Newton not been the scientific genius he was, his philosophical *a priori*ism (with strong Cartesian touches) would have weakened his attention to observational evidence on more than a few occasions.²² He was not attentive at all to a very specific question raised by that evidence. If the latter was the ultimate truth about the law of nature, what was the true heuristic value of the *a priori* approach?

This question might have been definitively answered in the seventeenth century had its scientific geniuses not represented a transition between Christian and secular thought. The minds of Galileo, Descartes, and Newton were not sufficiently Christian to perceive the pseudo-deity (be it pantheism or materialism or deism) lurking behind *a priori* thinking. They were, however, sufficiently Christian to give no serious consideration to a world without a Creator. Belief in creation thoroughly conditioned their minds to think of nature as suffused by reason and law even in that sublunary realm which was a realm of disorder for pagan minds such as Plato and Aristotle, whatever their intention to celebrate cosmic rationality. But if one was to consider in all its consequences the denial of an infinitely rational Creator, could the inference be avoided that in such a case no rationality whatever could appear in nature?

This inference was not broadly recognized even when in the nineteenth century the secularization of Western thought began to unfold its full logic. Even such a master logician as John Stuart Mill failed to recognize the full implications of his own speculation about other worlds where two and two would not necessarily make four.²³ For in that case there beckoned the specter of absolute contingentism against which Mill's 'god' (half good, half evil) was hardly a logical shield. Mill was, however, logical to the point of admitting that Hume's notion of the invariability of nature's laws as a refutation of miracles rested on the presupposition that God does not exist. For as Mill put it, a "miracle is a new effect supposed to be produced by the introduction of new cause...; of the adequacy of that cause, if present, there can be no doubt."²⁴ Even less recognition was given during the nineteenth century to the fact that absolute contingentism was but a replay of the occasionalism advocated by al-Ashari and Ockham.

At any rate, was the order of nature provided by absolute contingentism or

occasionalism different from that radical form of positivism according to which the laws of nature are mere commodious devices created by the mind for its own convenience to deal with facts?²⁵ Scientists, who endorsed that theory, did not do so to the logical extent of advocating a closure of laboratories. But this conflict of their theory with their practice provided no answer to the question as to why there was order in nature, that is, why nature obeyed specific laws. Refusal to anchor that order in the Creator could but leave one with the fearful prospect of a radically random state of affairs. There stones would not regularly fall, but just as likely hang in mid-air or take off unexpectedly in any direction. There it would be most unlikely that the hatching of a chicken egg would yield a chick. There a flower would perpetuate its own kind only as an exceptional case. In other words, in a world severed from its Creator, lawfulness would be the miracle, that is, a most unexpected event.

The foregoing examples are a mere paraphrase of the most incisive pages written on the laws of nature. The time, 1908, was the high water mark of the worst misrepresentation of science once cast in the mold of scientific ideology. The book, not surprisingly, had *Orthodoxy* for its title. Its author, Gilbert Keith Chesterton, was not a scientist, not even a philosopher of science.²⁶ But he was certainly a thinker most independent of the climate of thought of his time if there ever was such a thinker. No such independence was evident in the geniuses of the seventeenth century, with Pascal being a major exception. A famous remark of his portrayed Descartes as the one who really had no need of God.²⁷ Pascal could have just as well stated the same about Galileo, who could exalt the human mind and debase the divine mind in the same breath. As he stated that the human mind was the greatest marvel of creation, Galileo also equated human knowledge of geometry with that of the Creator.²⁸ From there it was but a step to deriving nature's geometrical structure from the mind. Such a nature soon was seen to be in no need either of mind or of God. The perception was achieved just a decade or so before science came of age through Newton's *Principia*. In that perception of Spinoza, nature and God were made identical which simply excluded the possibility of miracles.²⁹ Much less noted was the most devastating consequence of the Spinozian position. It consisted in Spinoza's thorough perplexity about the existence of concrete, specific, limited things making up nature and providing science with its subject matter.³⁰

To be sure, few at that time, and certainly not the scientists, became Spinozians. But whereas there was no pressing need for following Spinoza, the question of miracles pressed itself on in the measure in which the laws of nature began to appear as subtly ultimate entities. Undoubtedly, Newton was sincere as he assigned to God's direct action certain arrangements in the physical realm for which his science contained no answer. One such arrangement was, according to Newton, the separation of fiery from cold matter, or the separation of celestial bodies into stars and planets.³¹ His other example, the periodic intervention of God to secure the stability of the solar system, made a better known intellectual history through Laplace's scientific solution to that problem.³² It was the history of holes in which divines, ready to jump on the bandwagon of science without seriously studying it

and unwilling to probe an essentially philosophical question to its very bottom, were eagerly locating Almighty God as one busy doing what science could not do.

Many divines, in fact, lost their faith in miracles as they saw those holes being filled up with the relentless progress of science. They turned to an increasingly radical reinterpretation of biblical miracles culminating in the exegesis of Bultmann and in the philosophy of Ernst Bloch.³³ They might have saved themselves from this intellectual and spiritual debacle had they pondered Newton's own position vis-à-vis miracles. Newton's unwillingness to admit the reality of biblical miracles never cut ice with unbelievers. It was quite possibly a tactic on Newton's part to cover up his Unitarianism, which, if discovered, would have cost him the Lucasian chair in Cambridge and, later, the Directorship of the Mint. Unbelievers could, of course, be but reassured by Newton's categorical denial of Christian miracles postdating New Testament times.³⁴ Clearly, Newton believed less in Christianity than he should have and believed more than a Christian should in the laws of science and nature. One wonders whether Newton had ever as much as suspected the miracle of creation in the beginning that lurked behind each and every law of nature, or the miracle of a nature stable in its orderliness. For only with an eye on that miracle can the possibility of miracle be raised meaningfully.

The miracle of creation in the beginning implies, of course, the Creator's sovereign freedom to create or not to create. No less importantly, his creative freedom is divine also in the sense that the actual universality of things created by him is only one of an infinite number of possibilities at His disposal. Such a Creator is not contradicting the rationality and consistency of His creation if it includes an intellectual and moral realm which the physical realm is to support and serve. With such a notion, and only with such a notion of Creator and creation in focus, it was natural to say, as did George G. Stokes, a prominent physicist of the late nineteenth-century, "Admit the existence of a God, of a personal God, and the possibility of miracle follows at once."³⁵ The contrast could not have been greater with Voltaire's often quoted utterance that "to suppose that God will work miracles is to insult Him with impunity."³⁶ The ground for that insult was, according to Voltaire, that a miracle meant the inability on God's part to accomplish any particular end by immutable laws. The fallacy of Voltaire's reasoning lay in his own inability to see in the realm of existence anything but a mere clockwork in which there was no room for free beings. Of human freedom, a most immediately evident factual experience, he could speak only with the gravest perplexity.³⁷

Voltaire was not the first or last worshiper of the laws of nature for whom the freedom of the will was a source of continual nightmare. One wonders what latter-day Voltaires felt on hearing no less a physicist than Arthur H. Compton declare that the evidence on behalf of man's conviction to move his little finger at will was immensely greater than all the evidence on behalf of Newton's laws. From this it followed, according to Compton, that should a conflict arise between our sense of freedom and Newton's physics, it is the latter that needed to be revised.³⁸ Recognition of man's freedom means, of course, the recognition of a moral order which alone is to be served by miracles. That they were never for entertaining the

curious was called to the attention of the Pharisees and Sadducees of all ages by none other than the greatest miracle worker of all times, Jesus of Nazareth.³⁹

In 1934, when Compton spoke, Newtonian physics had for some time been superseded. The mathematical tools of the new physics—quantum mechanics—were statistical. They were very different, nay irreducible to pure differential equations, which are the backbone of Newtonian physics. Those equations are all translatable into geometry in which the lines or curves representing various parameters are always continuous. (It may be worth recalling that the *Principia's* mathematics were invariably given in geometrical figures equivalent to what later became known as differential geometry.) The geometrical continuity implied, in principle at least, the possibility of measuring with perfect accuracy the physical processes described by those figures. It was at that point that an elementary error in reasoning gained currency among physicists who were then readily echoed by philosophers overawed by the success of a field they did not really know. The possibility of perfectly accurate measurements became quickly taken as *the* justification of ontological causality in physical interactions. The inference was equivalent to putting the cart before the horse. Worse, that mistaken philosophical maneuver began to function as the *exact* foundation of the ideology of immutable laws of nature, of absolute physical determinism, and of the absurdity of miracles.

Spokesmen of that ideology were a dime a dozen. Ironically, their self-confidence and public acceptance reached its peak just in the decades when the handwriting became increasingly visible on the superb edifice of Newtonian physics. The decades were the ones saddling the turn of the century.⁴⁰ The moderately comforting aspect of that intellectual debacle was that some prominent men of science had not lent their voice to a chorus wholly out of tune with science. Henri Poincaré, the foremost mathematical physicist of the time, had for all his agnosticism the presence of mind to warn that "it is with freedom that one demonstrates complete determinism."⁴¹ Philosophers and divines lacking that modicum of common sense were all too numerous. Thus E. Goblot, professor of logic at the Sorbonne, wrote "All induction rests on the confidence we have in determinism. There is therefore in nature neither contingency nor caprice, nor miracle, nor free will; any of these hypotheses ruin our mental ability to reason about things."⁴² The only logical merit in that statement was the juxtaposition of miracles and free will. A most glaring fault from the logical viewpoint was Goblot's reference to confidence, hardly a matter for rigorous logic. Last but not least, was Goblot entitled to praise—and to royalties—for his book if in terms of his declaration it was a necessary result of his brain mechanism, or more rudely, of his nourishment and lodgings?

Unintended instructiveness is no less glaring in the declaration of the philosopher of religion, A. Sabatier, "Miracles have no basis in modern philosophy. The method inaugurated by Galileo, Bacon and Descartes gives to our thinking a turn which necessarily excludes it."⁴³ Such a turn could come about only through a very selective reading of those three and of others with whose names Newtonian science became synonymous. Whatever the inadequacies of their dicta on scientific method, those three certainly wanted no part in an ideology restricted

to matter and motion. They would have undoubtedly rejected the declaration of G. Séailles, a chief late-nineteenth-century spokesman of empiricist and scientific secularism, "By its principles as well as by its conclusions science excludes miracles."⁴⁴ The empiricist Bacon's dismissal of miracles as means never used by God "to convert the heathen," was still balanced by his emphasis on the evidence which an orderly nature brings to its Creator,⁴⁵ a position unacceptable to Séailles and his cohorts among empiricists. Séailles could hardly be ignorant of Descartes' often quoted dictum "God performed three miracles: the creation of things out of nothing, the freedom of the will, and the Incarnation."⁴⁶ The point, which the scientific antagonists of miracles might have most profited from and which they would have most resented, was also already made in Descartes' century and by no less a scientist than Leibnitz: "If geometry were as much opposed to our passions and present interests as is ethics, we would contest it and violate it but little less notwithstanding the demonstrations of Euclid."⁴⁷ The pseudointellectual's sneering at miracles grew into a crescendo in the decades straddling the turn of the century when Christian morals, private and public, which Christian miracles were to support above all, became for the first time a major target of secularism.

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

But to return to physics, or rather to the momentous turn it took about that time. Of the two new branches of physics representing that turn, one, the theory of relativity, offered no direct handle on the question of miracles. It has, however, an important indirect bearing on it which is worth recalling in a few words and all the more so because it is generally overlooked or simply ignored when set forth. The theory of relativity was born out of young Einstein's awe for the intellectual beauty of Maxwell's equations.⁴⁸ Since beauty is inseparable from form, it was all too natural for him to be concerned about the distortion of the simple form of those equations as they applied to a reference system moving with respect to the observer. Einstein's great insight consisted in perceiving that the transformation of those equations from one reference system to another would leave intact their form provided the speed of light is taken for something absolute, independent even of the speed of its source. A quick recall of the fact that the speed of sound is never independent of the motion of its source may help one realize the enormity of the departure which the Einsteinian postulate of the absoluteness of the speed of light represents with respect to Newtonian physics. In the latter, which is rightly spoken of as mechanistic physics, the speed of the propagation of any mechanical or physical effect is always a function of the speed of its source. That Einsteinian relativity is based on the unconditionally absolute value of the speed of light may also help one perceive the measure of skullduggery whereby the relativization of all ethical and social values is asserted on the basis of Einstein's relativistic physics. The latter is the most absolutist physical theory ever proposed.⁴⁹

The foregoing considerations relate to the theory of special relativity which, with its uniformly moving reference systems, is a particular case of the theory of general relativity. The latter deals with accelerated frames of reference. Since the most

obvious case of acceleration is gravitational motion, it was almost a foregone conclusion that Einstein should make an effort to deal with the gravitational interaction of all matter. He did so as he presented in 1917 the last of his memoirs on general relativity. That memoir was a great first in physics in that it contained the first, contradiction-free scientific account of a gravitational universe.⁵⁰ The importance of this can easily be seen with a recall of the point on which Kant staked his critique of the cosmological argument. The point was that science (the science of Kant's time as he poorly knew it) provided no contradiction-free account of the universe. This is why Kant felt entitled to call the notion of the universe a bastard product of the metaphysical cravings of the intellect and, therefore, unsuitable to serve as the final and crucial jumping board in the intellectual recognition of the existence of the Creator.⁵¹ This objection of Kant continues to command credibility only on the part of those unmindful of Einstein's achievement. The latter should, however, loom large in the eyes of those hopeful about a genuine harmony between science and miracles. The latter can rationally be discoursed about only if the existence of the Creator and of a moral order (inconceivable without Him) are assumed. Einstein's contribution to the scientific grasp of the universe should seem therefore of greatest importance. In fact he perceived late in his life that his cosmology may be an unintended pointer to the One beyond the *totality* of consistently interacting things which is the universe.⁵²

While the indirect support which the theory of relativity brings to miracles remains unexploited, quite a vast literature has arisen about the alleged support which the other main branch of modern physics, quantum theory, allegedly has for miracles.⁵³ That literature certainly proves the naiveté with which theologians try to cash in on science even when they are not properly trained in it, or appraise it with false philosophical premises. They still have to learn that a wrong starting point can only lead to blind alleys regardless of the subject, be it as lofty as theology or as down-to-earth as physics. In following up philosophical blind alleys theologians have no excuse just because prominent scientists give them the lead. Theologians staking their fate and fortunes on the divinity of the Logos, which alone makes Christian miracles reasonable and meaningful, should view most seriously any misstep in logic, in particular, and philosophy in general. It should seem most un-Christian to espouse mental somersaults or plain verbal tricks that abound in the literature of the philosophy of quantum mechanics as well as of the demythologization of miracles.⁵⁴

As to the philosophy of quantum mechanics, the pattern for somersaulting was provided by none other than Heisenberg, one of the architects of quantum mechanics and the first to unfold a principal consequence of it. Since its formulation in 1927 that consequence has made intellectual history (not necessarily coextensive with the history of truth) under the label of the principle of indeterminacy or uncertainty principle. A much less misleading label would have been the principle of imprecision. For what Heisenberg found was simply that measurements of physical interactions involving conjugate variables, such as momentum and position, time and energy, will always contain a margin of imprecision, which can be significant on the atomic level. (On the level of ordinary

perception or macroscopic level, the quantum mechanical imprecision can be safely ignored because it is many magnitudes smaller than the probable error acceptable for laboratory or industrial practice on that level.) Heisenberg, however, jumped to the conclusion that because of the significance of inevitably imprecise measurements on the atomic level, the principle of causality should be considered as overthrown.⁵⁵

This inference, a sheer non sequitur, was not without an important though often overlooked merit. If, indeed, the imprecision in question meant the overthrow of causality, the latter could not be salvaged on the ground that the imprecision in question is wholly negligible on the macroscopic level of ordinary existence and operations. The absence of the ontological factor, causality, in the foundations cannot issue in its presence in a superstructure which is their extension. At any rate, was Heisenberg right in claiming that there was no causality because of the inevitable imprecision of measurements of physical interactions? That question should have been answered in the negative. Instead, it was given an affirmative answer and to the extent as to become a climate of thought.⁵⁶ It was largely overlooked that Heisenberg's principle states only the inevitable imprecision of measurements on the atomic level. From that principle one can proceed only by an elementary disregard of logic to the inference that an *interaction that cannot be measured exactly, cannot take place exactly*.⁵⁷ The fallacy of that inference consists in the two different meanings given in it to the word *exactly*. In the first case it has a purely operational meaning, whereas in the second case the meaning is decidedly ontological. The inference therefore belongs in the class of plain non sequiturs that, as a rule, are severely strictured in better-grade courses on introductory logic.

The alleged demise of ontological causality should have called for a general sounding of alarms. For that demise could mean but the opening of a chaotic abyss with neither a bottom nor with safe perimeters limiting its extent. A recognition of this, coupled with a consistent attention to it, could not be expected either on the part of prominent physicists or on the part of those in excessive awe of their mental prowess. Einstein's admission that the man of science is a poor philosopher has much more to it than meets the eye. He himself failed to suspect this as he led a very small group of physicists who refused to accept the counter-casual twist which Heisenberg gave to his principle and which later became the cornerstone of the Copenhagen philosophy of quantum mechanics with Niels Bohr and Max Born as its chief articulators. Einstein never came to realize fully that his disagreement with those two was not so much about causality, which he too equated with the possibility of perfectly precise measurements,⁵⁸ but with the ontology implied in causality, physical or other. It was left for W. Pauli, another prominent physicist, to call to this point the attention of Born who grew as much dismayed by his inability to convince Einstein as by the cooling of Einstein's feelings toward him. But Born could hardly desire much enlightenment from Pauli's scornful remark that Einstein's concern for physical reality was not worth more than the medievals' debate about the number of angels that could be accommodated on a pinhead.⁵⁹

The inability to articulate the question of ontology underlying the debate on the status of causality in the perspective of quantum mechanics took monumental

proportion in some lengthy essays of Planck on causality, world order, and freedom.⁶⁰ Ontology and the consequent distinction of it from the merely operational level could hardly emerge on the mental horizon of Planck, a professed Neo-Kantian. For him causality was a mental category which did not depend at all on the observation of the external world. Within the iron grip of that category were, according to Planck, all events, including all mental operations, even those of the greatest geniuses. Consequently the freedom of the will as a mental decision could be but a practical convenience resulting from the fact that our introspection did not permit a fully objective, that is, completely accurate evaluation of our motivations. It was that practical impossibility that, according to Planck, made even Laplace's superior spirit a free agent. As to the Supreme Wisdom or God, Planck refused to discuss whether He too was free only in that practical sense, or whether He was not free at all because His nature implied a perfectly accurate introspection.

The word accurate is worth noting because the possibility of accurate, that is, quantitatively exact measurements was an integral part of Planck's notion of causality. He borrowed it from the physicists' world in which he lived and worked. There the notion of causality had been as widely based on the notion of exact measurements prior to the advent of quantum mechanics as was the denial of causality following the overthrow by quantum mechanics of their practical possibility. In a broader cultural consciousness the foregoing shift appeared as a departure from a deterministic notion of nature to a non-deterministic one. The inference that thereby belief in the freedom of the will received a scientific approval was quickly made, and by no less a scientist than Eddington.⁶¹ Much less attention was given to his reconsideration of the matter, a few years later, in 1939 to be specific, when he declared that his earlier arguments on behalf of the freedom of the will on the basis of the uncertainty principle were wholly mistaken.⁶² References to a new "scientifically" approved approach to the freedom of the will kept popping up in the philosophical and theological literature, a story that may be worthy of detailed documentation. Philosophers and theologians may not be less inclined to learn from the errors of the past than are politicians and scientists.

That the origins of scientifically-coated rescue operations on behalf of the freedom of the will antedate the advent of quantum mechanics shows that theologians can be quite naive in trying to cash in on some glittering straws in the wind. The simile may seem all the more appropriate because it relates to the development of statistical methods in gas theory during the closing decades of the nineteenth century. That this development was often appraised well outside theological circles as a departure from the deterministic world view is, of course, true, but this is not necessarily a guarantee of reliability. As a matter of fact, the statistical gas theory was based on a strictly deterministic application of the Newtonian laws of motion about the collision of gas molecules taken for perfectly elastic and spherical bodies. In such a situation the initial conditions determine with complete accuracy any subsequent state, however far removed from the initial state. A rigorous interpretation of gas theory did not therefore justify the inference that most out-of-the-ordinary configurations were only most improbable but not

inherently impossible. They were impossible in the measure in which the initial conditions were ordinary or fairly symmetrical configurations or not. When some early twentieth-century defenders of miracles reported that "the old rigid system of the laws of nature is being broken up by modern science,"⁶³ they were very far from reliable scientific grounds which are always very different from current fashionable appraisals of the latest in science. The same is true of some scientists who tried to discredit miracles by calculating the enormous improbabilities of deviations from the ordinary course of nature. The figure $10^{10^{10}}$ given by J. Perrin, a French Nobel-laureate physicist, to illustrate the improbability of a tile to deviate from its vertical fall,⁶⁴ may impress even the layman by its being incomparably larger than all the atoms in the universe and all the microseconds that have elapsed since its expansion got under way sixteen billion years ago.

The super-astronomical improbability of this happening does, however, in no way weaken the certainty of that outcome provided the initial conditions are in exact conformity with it. But about those initial conditions the scientist could only admit his ignorance, although he should have kept in mind that it was that very ignorance that prompted him to calculate mere averages. Since the latter were useful only for the gaseous state, in which the motion of molecules is extremely restricted, the application to miracles was in fact tantamount to specious blowing of mere hot air, worthy only of less than average intellects.

The grafting of scientific respectability on miracles had a far greater appeal with the advent of quantum mechanics as it was taken to be equivalent to the breakdown of strict physical determinism. Here again a detailed account of what actually happened is still to be written. That there was an early rush of divines to a terrain which, as it will be clear later, was a ground where angels would have feared to tread, may be gathered from a book of Bernhard Bavink, published in 1933 and immediately translated from German into English under the title, *Science and God*.⁶⁵ The book was the substance of lectures which Bavink had given in various parts of Germany on science and religion. A graduate of the University of Göttingen, where he majored in physics, Bavink had a deep interest in theological questions. This was almost natural on the part of one who had among his paternal forebears Dutch Mennonites and was converted to Lutheranism by his wife, the daughter of a pastor. By the early 1930s Bavink had for some years been looked upon as a leading Christian interpreter of the relation between science and religion. This was due to the half a dozen editions, between 1913 and 1929, of his magnum opus that appeared in English translation in 1932 under the title, *The Anatomy of Modern Science*.⁶⁶ That miracles and science are not discussed in those editions (and in that translation) is an indication of the fresh interest created in that topic by the uncertainty principle, still a novelty around 1930 or so.

In recalling Perrin's calculation of the enormous improbability of a macroscopic object, such as a tile, from deviating randomly from its vertical fall, Bavink noted that miracles, such as Peter's walking on the water, were macroscopic events where the laws of classical mechanics were, with their strict determinism, invariably valid. Such was the immediate background for Bavink's warning, "The theological world cannot be too strongly warned against attempting to make capital in this way of

the new discoveries.”⁶⁷

By new discoveries Bavink meant those aspects of modern physics according to which the microscopic or atomic level was ruled by chance alone. That chance meant for Bavink the absence of physical causality, and not merely our ignorance of causes, was suggested by his admission that a world steeped in the haphazard may seem much less in keeping with the traditional Christian view of the world as thoroughly ordered. Would a world of chance evoke, Bavink raised his typically German question, the recognition of the Creator in the same way in which the starry realm bespoke to Kant of a cosmic lawgiver? Bavink answered this question in the affirmative. His reason was that, after all, nothing happens or exists unless God directly brings it about. This meant, in Bavink’s resolution of the theological question raised by Heisenberg’s uncertainty principle, that the difference between classical physics and the physics of quantum mechanics was very simple. Within the former God created the original initial conditions in the Beginning; in the latter God keeps creating the initial conditions at every instant and for all events:

In the literal sense, not a single quantum of action exists in the world which does not proceed directly and immediately from God. No natural law, not even a statistical one, compels its existence. Such a notion is just as meaningless as if we were to imagine that the statistics of railway accidents or marriages made one year compel those accidents or marriages taking place the next year, to occur. I think that the enormous liberation which this insight brings to religious thought makes it worth while to accept the apparent chance which it requires. For in truth, believers have always hitherto regarded chance as God’s direct will (Matthew x. 29). This now becomes an evident fact for the chance in the final elementary actions of existence is nothing other than the completely free decision by God.⁶⁸

None of this should have surprised anyone who had carefully read the first line of the paragraph out of which this passage has been taken. There Bavink endorsed the “nominalist protests” against classical physics and against the inference that it was enough for the regular sequence of physical processes that their initial conditions be provided by God. That protest seemed to Bavink so well founded as to dispense of the need for going into “any great philosophical trouble of getting rid of objections to it.”⁶⁹ It was, of course, another matter whether it was unreasonable to assume that God was capable of creating a physical realm with stable laws which He did not have to re-create at every moment but only had to conserve in its existence. This age-old Christian distinction between the erstwhile creation of things out of nothing and the conservation of the existence of things already created did not arise on Bavink’s mental horizon. His claim that in the viewpoint endorsed by him chance was only apparent, rested on a theology harking back to Ockham who sought answer in miraculous interventions by God at every moment to essentially philosophical questions. That theology was eager in resorting to biblical phrases, such as the one (Matthew 10:21) invoked by Bavink about sparrows none of which falls to the ground without the Heavenly Father’s willing

it. The fact that in many biblical passages the world is spoken of as firmly established and that even the endurance of God's covenant is asserted in terms of the endurance, stability, and unfailing regularity of his physical creation,⁷⁰ did not seem to have any relevance for Bavink.

The problems—scientific, philosophical, and theological—that transpire from the few pages Bavink devoted to miracles reappear in one way or another in all the subsequent discussions of miracles with an eye on modern physics. That the remaining pages will be mostly concerned with two books entirely devoted to miracles and modern physics is in part due to their wide availability to English readership. Another reason is that their respective authors are both professional physicists. One of them, William G. Pollard, is also an Anglican clergyman. The other, Donald M. MacKay, showed more than a passing interest in matters theological. Most importantly, their discussions are detailed and therefore provide their instructiveness in their own terms.

Pollard would have done better justice to his book had he called it not *Chance and Providence*⁷¹ but “chance is providence” or, perhaps, “chance is your providence,” though not “Providence is your chance.” This is not to suggest that by Providence he did not mean most emphatically the one portrayed in the Bible. By chance he meant the randomness associated with quantum mechanics. He called it the “very task” or “primary thesis” of his book to show the full harmony of these two viewpoints.⁷² It should therefore be no surprise that for Pollard quantum mechanics is the last word in physics. Conclusive for him had to be the failures, rather numerous by the mid-1950s, of efforts aimed at constructing a quantum mechanics with hidden variables, that is, a quantum mechanics which would rest on a mathematical formalism allowing for absolute precise measurements in principle at least. He undoubtedly found further proof of the statistical character of scientific explanation when in the mid-1960s J. S. Bell set forth his famous theorem on the impossibility of hidden variable theories. Pollard may have derived further assurance when the early 1980s witnessed the completion of experiments verifying some consequences of Bell's theorem.⁷³ Yet, no such theorem or experiments would ever dispose of the question whether an operational restriction on the precision of measurements is equivalent to an ontological incompleteness of the interactions to be measured. To anyone, such as Pollard, not facing up to this question, it is natural to state, as he does, that “the world is so *constituted* that the *ultimate* as well as present characteristic mode of scientific *explanation* in all fields is statistical.”⁷⁴ (Italics added.)

Of the three words italicized (above) the first clearly carries an ontological meaning. Furthermore, if that meaning is valid, and only then, that is, if the world really embodies a basic randomness, the use of the two other italicized words is unobjectionable. To Pollard's credit, he is very conscious both of that logical connection and of the burden of proof it entails. “In order to establish my primary thesis that this is a necessary characteristic of scientific knowledge dictated by the nature of things rather than a merely temporary result of inadequate information, it is clearly necessary for us to probe much deeper than we have so far.” Unfortunately, he does not fathom philosophical depths. In the same breath, and

elsewhere too, he reasserts the fundamental ontological status of chance in the actual world "in which indeterminacy, alternative, and chance are *real* aspects of the fundamental nature of things, and not merely the consequence of our inadequate and provisional understanding."⁷⁵

Ironically, this statement of Pollard is preceded by his dismissal of Einstein's disagreement with the celebration of chance on the basis of quantum mechanics. Pollard does so with the characterization of that disagreement as a "philosophical conviction." Philosophy fares indeed poorly in Pollard's book. Even elementary consistency is in short supply in connection with pivotal terms he uses. Thus he states about chance not only that "it cannot be the cause or reason for anything happening," but also that "chance and probability in modern physics are...real and essential elements of the world which it describes."⁷⁶ The last statement implies, of course, the question of the value of scientific explanation. This crucial, philosophical problem is never met head-on by Pollard as if he had not heard of the countless books written on the subject both prior to and after the advent of quantum mechanics. Nor is the question, already aired in this paper, about the legitimacy of inference from the operational to the ontological, so much as hinted at by him.

As one living in the physicists' world, he should not be too severely judged. The scientific community ignored countless warnings concerning that inference. If not the very first, certainly the most concise of those warnings was carried to the four corners of the scientific world through a letter that appeared in the December 29, 1930, issue of *Nature*, the leading scientific weekly. The concluding sentence of that letter written by J. E. Turner, of the University of Liverpool, in connection with a prominent physicist's popularization of the chance world of atoms, contained more depth than much of the literature celebrating quantum mechanical chance, "Every argument that since some change cannot be 'determined' in the absolutely different sense of 'caused,' is a fallacy of equivocation."⁷⁷

Whether Pollard perceived something of the sadly inadequate character of his reasoning on behalf of universal chance is a secondary matter. Nor is one to be appalled by the fact that as a scientist he fell completely under the sway of the extraordinary successes of quantum mechanical techniques and took them for basic and ultimate explanation. The same happened to countless colleagues of his, from the most outstanding to the most ordinary. What should seem to be especially instructive within the perspective of this paper is that he failed to perceive the devastating consequences devolving for Christian miracles from the very method he offered as their only safeguard. For underlying that method there seems to be a measure of respect for science as it actually is that may undermine science as well as miracles (Providence) by the same stroke. Such undue measure of respect lurks between the lines as he states about his stated purpose of showing the full harmony of providence (Bible) and science (quantum mechanics). It is "to be accomplished in such a way that the essential integrity and unity of science, both as it is now and as in principle it may become, is fully preserved."⁷⁸

Undoubtedly a God who created human reason and is Reason himself deserves in full that *logike latreia* which Saint Paul enjoined (Romans 12:1) on Christians

and Pollard may have had in mind. Such worship is incompatible with the slighting of anything that human reason can safely ascertain. By the same token that same kind of worship assumes as verity that there can be no contradiction between the historical revelation (be it in words or in deeds) of such God and His self-revelation through nature which according to the same Saint Paul (Romans 1:20) is irrefutably clear, regardless of the resolve of some to ignore it. But the non-existence of contradiction between revelation and reason can only be established if careful attention is given to the possible sources of a misrepresentation of either or both. Contradictions are again bound to loom large if reason is limited to science, and even more so if the science of the day is taken for Science in its ultimate form. Neither science nor Revelation was served whenever God's basic way of action was taken to be equivalent to the workings attributed by *that* science to nature.

The story, several centuries old by now, is replayed with a new twist in Pollard's book. The great success of mechanistic or Newtonian science was a powerful motivation for casting God in the role of a clockmaker. But those theologians, whom Voltaire merely echoed in celebrating such a God,⁷⁹ were not eager to project him into the Bible. Pollard, however, is most emphatic in saying two things: One is that the idea of a God who suspends now and then the workings of the machinery of the world is "almost wholly unbiblical." The other is that only the notion of a God continually casting dice (that is doing what the chance of quantum mechanics is supposed to represent) is *wholly* and *alone* biblical. After taking issue with those who speak disparagingly of "mere" chance, Pollard waxes dogmatic:

To Einstein's famous question expressing his abhorrence of quantum mechanics, "Does God throw dice?" the Judeo-Christian answer is not, as so many have wrongly supposed, a denial, but a very positive affirmative. For only in a world in which the laws of nature govern events in accordance with the casting of dice can the Biblical view of a world whose history is responsive to God's will prevail.⁸⁰

Before considering the allegedly biblical character of a dice-throwing God it should be worth considering the dice in question. Nothing would be more mistaken than to think of an ordinary die. The latter has six faces, eight corners, twelve edges, all definite parameters with such others as specific weight, elasticity, temperature, and so forth. Were God to be using such a die He would have to throw it but once. Its first and all subsequent bouncings off from a specific ground would strictly follow from the initial conditions of the first throw that could be known to God with complete accuracy. Nor would the case be any different were the various parameters of the die subject to statistical variations. What had already been said about statistical gas theory would apply here too. There one would still be within the framework of classical or deterministic physics. While we humans can only start from an average value of the parameters, to God all the individual cases of possible variations would be equally known and also their actual sequence as fully determined by the initial conditions.

Quite different would be the case of God throwing a quantum mechanical die. The latter, radically different from the ordinary die, would display a random variability in the *actually existing* number of its parameters such as faces, edges, corners, etc. This has to be so as long as one does not disavow the very core of the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, that is, the logical somersault according to which an interaction that cannot be measured exactly cannot take place exactly or rather can take place only with an ontological defect in it. Instead of measurement one can, of course, refer to what it presupposes, the specification of parameters needed to carry it out. The necessary incompleteness of those specifications means, according to the Copenhagen philosophy, an ontological incompleteness.

To supply that defect the Copenhagen camp or the overwhelming majority of physicists invokes chance or, as will be seen shortly, their short-sighted wizardry with mathematical operators. A theologian-physicist like Pollard, with equal allegiance to both of his professions, will of course invoke God in addition to chance. The result is that all events in the physical realm (where all events are ultimately chance events according to the Copenhagen philosophy) become so many direct events actually performed by God, who alone can supply all parameters of the die which are (partly or entirely) unspecifiable by quantum mechanics and therefore (partly or entirely) non-existent according to that philosophy. If, however, such is the case, all natural events become miracles and all miracles become strictly natural events.

To his credit, Pollard minces no words: "It is an error to think of a miracle as being 'unnatural.' " (According to him only the moral significance attributed by the faithful to very rare events turns them into miracles.)⁸¹ To be sure, in another passage he restricts that sweeping statement to the "majority of biblical miracles." They "are the result of an extraordinary and extremely improbable combination of chance and accidents. They do not, on close analysis, involve, as is so frequently supposed, a violation of the law of nature."⁸² He thinks that in such a way all miraculous healings listed in the New Testament are accounted for. As for large-scale nature-miracles, such as the one connected with the Exodus, they are still but natural coincidences for him. His exegesis is, of course, a rehash of ideas of liberal Protestant and modernist divines. He seems to follow them too as he ascribes most biblical miracles to the hunger which "late elaborators" of those stories had for the miraculous.⁸³ In fact he retains only three events as miracles: the creation of all, the Incarnation and Christ's Resurrection.

But is there a logical way of saving the reality of these three miracles while turning the Gospel account about many others into morality tales however exalted? One wonders whether Dr. Pollard thought of the price paid by so many liberal theologians for their being ashamed of miracles as so many violations of the "sacred" laws of physics. Their fate is grippingly mirrored in the spiritual odyssey of Leo Tolstoy who took them for a guide. With his genius of a writer he could portray grippingly their starting point as well as their state in the end. The former is succinctly given in the precept laid down in a notebook of his where the effort "to reinforce the teachings of Christ with miracles" is declared to be equivalent to

"holding a lighted candle in front of the sun in order to see better." The end is illustrated by Tolstoy's harmony of the four gospels with so many passages cut out from the originals as to make a major biographer of his speak of it as "the Gospel according to St. Leo."⁸⁴ Better known is Tolstoy's novel, *Resurrection*, in which Christ's rising from the death is turned into a mere myth, shared, of course, communally.

Almost a hundred years later the Anglican bishop of Durham, Dr. Jenkins, served memorable evidence that the principle of demythologization inevitably turns, in the hands of a consistent devotee to it, the Gospel account about Christ's resurrection into a symbolic communal expression of hope in eternal life. Pollard's caveat that the Resurrection of Christ is an individual event and therefore cannot concern science, that is, quantum mechanics which deals with aggregates of events, is wholly beside the point. Christ's bodily resurrection does not come under the competence of quantum mechanics because it is a macroscopic event, though, in its terms, it would still ultimately be a chance event for which Pollard should have invoked God as the One who supplied ontologically, though "randomly," the parameters that would not be specified by quantum mechanics. Nor is this the place to deal with Pollard's view that the ultimate truth of miracles rests with the faith of the community which endows a very rare event with a religious significance. Here let it suffice to say that such a falling back on communal faith would force the Christian to abandon the biblical injunction in terms of which he has to render a fully reasoned account of his faith and comportment. The same tactic also deprives him of the possibility of challenging on a rational ground others not sharing his faith. They—agnostics, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists, Marxists, or Voodooists—are given by that tactic the same right to rest their case ultimately on their respective shared "faith." Clearly, what Pollard offers as a rational defense of Christian miracles is in fact a fearsome boomerang depriving that defense of all rationality.⁸⁵

The disservice which Pollard's explanation of miracles does to Christian faith derives ultimately from a distortion of the biblical portrayal of God's relation to the physical world created by Him. Of that relation Pollard mentions only God's full sovereignty over nature and His most intimate involvement in all its events. He is silent about another no less noticeable aspect of that relation, namely, the constancy, endurance, stability, lawfulness and consistency of the universe and its parts. As was already noted, the importance of that aspect is nowhere revealed more powerfully than in passages in which God's faithfulness to his covenant with David is supported with a reference to the faithfulness and stability with which the physical world created by Him follows its course and endures.

That the biblical world view implies regularity and constancy was briefly recognized by Donald M. MacKay, author of the other book to be considered here.⁸⁶ He did so, however, in a way that runs the risk of destroying the natural knowability of those two cosmic qualities. The stability of the solid contents of the world is, according to MacKay, declared in the Bible:

to be a dynamic, contingent, stability. It is only in and through the

continuing say-so of their and our Creator that they cohere or “hold together.” He is the giver of being, moment by moment, to all the events in and through which we encounter the world of physical objects...But however uncompromisingly realist its tone, the Bible has no room for the idea of matter as something eternally self-sufficient or indestructible. The Psalmist may praise God for the stability of the earth and the reliability of the normal links between events on which our rational expectations are based, but the same Book of Psalms speaks of a time when the earth and the heavens will perish and will be changed “as a vesture” at the will of their Creator. In the end, for biblical theism, the only solid reality is God and what God holds in being.⁸⁷

What this account leaves out of consideration is whether all those beings are kept by God in existence from moment to moment or are created anew out of nothing at every moment. MacKay’s inveighing against what he calls the Greco-Medieval view of the cosmos consisting of “necessary natures” known by a priori reasoning is part of that partial vision.⁸⁸ It suggests that he cannot or is not willing to conceive of a “nature” which in itself is only one of the many possibilities available for God’s creation but which by being a “nature” assures that it is maintained by God in existence in conformity to it. MacKay’s oversight of the medieval philosophical and theological thinking (so critical of the Greeks on at least three crucial points) as the spark of the rise of modern science⁸⁹ is a corollary of his broader and distinctly Calvinist (Ockhamist) perspective.

This should be no surprise. From the moment Calvin (or Ockham) rose against apostolic succession, they rose against ecclesial or sacramental continuity across time. To buttress philosophically their break with historic continuity they were instinctively pushed toward a world view steeped in discontinuities, that is, toward a Nature without “natures.” No wonder MacKay is pushed by the logic of his own position to asserting that continuity and objectivity in nature can only be known by one’s surrendering to biblical revelation, or rather to MacKay’s reading of it. Thus in discussing the lure of quantum theory, which challenges the distinction between the observers and the observed, and the lure of relativity theory, which challenges the validity of a single description of the world valid for all observers, MacKay concludes: “True our Christian scientist in God’s world may have no access to the Creator’s eye view of his situation; but because he knows that he is under judgment by that criterion, he is saved from the trap of confusing relativity with a denial of objectivity.”⁹⁰

It is the same condition of standing under the judgment of biblical revelation as he interprets it that saves MacKay’s believing scientist from the pitfalls of quantum theory. This declaration of MacKay is all the more instructive because he does not invoke revelation or biblical perspective as an indispensable ground for recognizing that Einstein’s opponents “had no rational grounds for claiming that the absence of an *observable* causal precedent for an event meant that it had *no* causal precedent.”⁹¹ But no sooner had MacKay seemed to sight the ontological

perspective of the problem, he lost sight of it, or perhaps he deliberately tried to cover it up with a theological smokescreen which is, however, rather transparent. For the question is not whether God can play dice in a manner worthy of Him. The question is once more about the way in which the parameters or details that cannot be specified by quantum mechanics become presently existing in order to let things go. MacKay tries to resolve that question on the basis that God is most directly involved in all events as a Sovereign Lord over all his creation. But in doing so he merely sidesteps the problem which once more surfaces as he states: "From a biblical standpoint it would be equally mistaken to argue that if there were no causal precursor for an event, then its Creator must be thought of as 'playing dice.'"⁹² For the absence of a causal precursor, or even the partial absence of such a precursor, is an ontological gap. Does it fall upon MacKay's "biblical God" to fill that gap with continual instantaneous creations? That such is indeed the thrust of MacKay's reasoning may be surmised from his further talking around the problem without being ready to meet it head on:

The God of biblical theism is beholden to none to account for his creative agency. If he freely wills into being a succession of events in which one half of the sub-microscopic details at any time are unspecified by their precursors, this would involve no inconsistency with his character, still less with his sovereignty, as portrayed in the Bible. Belief in a sovereign God does not in the least entail a belief that there *must* be "hidden physical variables" sufficient to determine the behaviour of electrons on the basis of precedent. For biblical theism all events, equally, with or without precursors according to precedent, need God's say-so in order that they occur at all. The choice of "God or Chance" is simply not a meaningful alternative, if "Chance" is meant in the scientific sense. As the Book of Proverbs (ch. 16, v. 33) has it: "The lots may be cast into the lap, but the issue depends wholly on the Lord."⁹³

Whatever the appropriateness of that particular biblical passage, MacKay's banking on God's sovereignty seems to be very inappropriate. The issue is not that God is sovereign but whether He is at least as rational as human beings are. The latter can clearly recognize the difference between being and non-being. It is that difference which is the real issue concerning the theory of hidden variables. Whether most professional supporters and opponents of that theory have realized this is irrelevant. As was already stated, physicists have for centuries been apt to limit their vistas to quantitatively exact measurements and this is why they have taken it for mechanical (and implicitly for ontological) causality. Insofar as hidden variables have an ontological relevance, the biblical God, whose self-revealed name I AM WHO I AM is ontology incarnate,⁹⁴ is bound to provide them in one way or another. MacKay seems to suggest that He does so by continually creating out of nothing at least one half of the ontological specifications of all atoms to fill the ontological gaps created by quantum mechanics or rather by its Copenhagen

pseudo-philosophy.

In a manner characteristic of the entire Ockhamist tradition that heavily conditioned the Reformers' theologizing (for all their dislike for philosophy), MacKay goes straight to God's sovereignty as if this could dispose of a plain question whether the existence or non-existence of certain things is meant by some staple phrases of quantum mechanics. No wonder that he sees but the veneer of the fallacy of setting up Chance as a kind of anti-deity standing for chaos and absence of meaning.⁹⁵ He fails to see that the basic issue about chance is whether it can be a substitute for reality, be it the reality of physical parameters that "do not exist" because quantum mechanics cannot specify them. Understandably, MacKay did his utmost to make it appear that his train of thought did not force him to charge God with the task of supplying the reality of those unspecified parameters with special creative acts performed every split second. His fellow scientists would have been taken aback, though not for the right reason. The latter, not a matter of theology but of plain philosophy, could not, however, be seen by the ones who had bartered sound reasoning about reality for the hollow glitter of mathematical operators which give no certainty about anything real, let alone about miracles and Providence in human history.

PERENNIAL PERSPECTIVES

Certainty about real events or things, usual or unusual, can never begin with science, and not even with "the Lord's quantum mechanics"⁹⁶ as Schrödinger once spoke in quasi-mystical awe of his own specialty. Science rather presupposes real things in order to ascertain their quantitative properties; it cannot provide any of those uncountable things. Of course, nothing reveals so forcefully the reality of things as their limitedness which has many quantitative components. But whether they, or the things in which they are embedded, do exist or not is not a scientific question. Being a question about the real, it cannot be answered except by a philosophy which provides the perennially proper place for the question. To be sure, even idealist philosophies make claim to reality, to say nothing of the philosophies known as rationalism, empiricism, sensationism and pragmatism. They all claim to be *the* place for the real. But not the proper or primary place. They are indeed betrayed by their labels, which are almost always the choice of their chief articulators. Those labels invariably relate to an aspect of the real insofar as it can be conceptualized, sensed, tested, manipulated and so forth.

None of those philosophies would carry their special labels if the very start of their program and method would be an unconditional acknowledgment of external reality. Only that acknowledgment is a guarantee of its being known with certainty. This may appear a kind of plain arguing in a circle. Actually, it is the only starting point which can save one from arguing ever in such a way. It is a consciously and methodically-taken starting point. A chief recommendation of that method is that all other philosophical approaches to knowing the real with certainty have turned out to be so many seeds of doubt about reality or means whereby the thinking man found himself cut off from the external world. Cartesian

rationalism that aimed at complete certainty (equating it with mathematics which is a series of tautologies, however useful) led to Spinoza's perplexity about any and all finite real things.⁹⁷ Francis Bacon's empiricist "instauration" of a new age in thinking revealed in Hume's hands the fragmentation through it of all judgment about reality. Kant's effort to restore certitude through the a priori character of mental categories led in Fichte's hands to the exaltation of the will and, in Hegel's hands, to the divinization of the individual ego, the least reliable commodity one can think of. The sensationism advocated by Mach locked him in solipsism which is undoubtedly the highest conceivable measure of certainty although not communicable. As to pragmatism, its chief spokesmen, William James and John Dewey, would in vain try today to disavow the uncertainty which it has generated about everything except, of course, one's selfish and all too often very transient success.

The other chief recommendation for taking the certainty of knowing external reality for the starting point in all philosophy is that any refutation of it implies knowledge of that type. Thus to argue that a specific registering of a fact, thing, or event was a mere hallucination, one must assume that it is possible not to be under its influence in registering this or that fact. The same holds true about the argument based on any partial deception or error of one's senses or on any exaggerated claim about the extent of one's observations. Those "critical" philosophers who have succeeded in spreading the belief that nothing can be known unless first critically proven have in fact assumed this very knowledge without first critically proving it. Moreover, just as colors cannot be discoursed upon in terms of non-colors, the knowledge of external reality cannot be proven in terms of knowing only one's mind, "critical" or not.⁹⁸

This is basically *all* that is needed to show the certainty of facts called miracles. The *all* in question may sound very little, but actually it is co-extensive with that largest entity called the world of the real, and also co-extensive with all reasoned discourse relating to it. In a sense that *all* is very restricted as it is ultimately reduced to the evidence of one's unaided senses. This may appear ridiculously little in an age of science that probes such realms of the very small and the very large that are inconceivably beyond the reach of the senses. It should not, however, be forgotten that the ultimate certainty of all the esoteric findings of science in the farthest reaches of space and in the deepest layers of matter rests on the reliability of the senses that register the position of ordinary pointer needles. This is what no less an "idealist" physicist than Eddington recognized when he stated that "molar physics has the last word in observation for the observer is molar."⁹⁹ And if the physicist takes no stock of this, he can embroil himself in the kind of embarrassment which left speechless for a moment the famed astronomer-cosmologist W. H. McCrea. After being heard to state in a lecture that the star images seen through the telescopes have a strict relation to reality only insofar as they are sensations on the retina, he was asked in the question-answer period: "Would you also hold the same about the reality of the wall which you are facing?" His answer, "I am not really sure," speaks for itself.¹⁰⁰ Not even that much comment is deserved by the inconsistency of those astronomers (some world-famous) who after boasting of

their solipsism during dinner,¹⁰¹ do not blush as they spend the night looking through their telescopes.

Immediate direct observation of things and the certainty of that observation (or at least the certainty with which it can be corrected or improved) is the rock bottom basis not only of philosophy but of science as well. In view of this and of what already has been said about the true status of scientific laws, it should not be difficult to perceive the disingenuousness of the indignation with which miracles are denounced as violations of the laws of nature. The indignation is essentially a clever form of the strategy: attack is the best defense. But if it is impossible to start a march (physical or mental) with the second step, concern about the laws of nature should give second place to concern about man's ability to register things and events with certainty. And since without that ability nothing can be known about the laws of nature, the chief intellectual concern should be not so much about the possible violations of the laws of nature as about the actual violation, if not plain rape, of man's mind whose natural function is to know reality with immediate certitude.

Such a rape is committed when individuals reporting extraordinary events, and in fact lay down their lives on behalf of their witness, are declared at the outset to be hotheaded enthusiasts, uncritical minds, or plain fakers. This is done on the patently dogmatic ground that nature cannot change its course. Those taking that ground rape their own intellect to the point of declaring that they cannot even have one. A startling admission of this came from such a prominent spokesman of the absolute unchangeability of "nature's laws" (a form of sheer materialism) as J. B. S. Haldane:

If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true. They may be sound chemically, but that does not make them sound logically. And hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.¹⁰²

The defense of miracles done with an eye on physics should include a passing reference to meteorites. Characteristic of the stubborn resistance of scientific academies to those strange bits of matter was Laplace's shouting, "We've had enough such myths," when Pictet, a fellow academician, urged a reconsideration of the evidence provided by "lay-people" as plain eyewitnesses.¹⁰³ Laymen were they in the sense that they had no telescopes, no training in celestial mechanics, no knowledge of trajectories, azimuth, right and left ascension. But they could register with absolute certainty that a fiery body had just hit the ground nearby and could unerringly distinguish its still warm stony remains as something not belonging to the soil around it. That such a kind of witnessing stands in its own right was the point recognized by a doctor on being confronted with the objection of a colleague who insisted that the wide-open fracture below the left knee of Pieter De Rudder (1822-1898), the subject of possibly the most startling cure related to Lourdes, could not be accepted for a fact because the two ends of the broken bone

protruding through the skin had not been certified by a medical commission. The reply of that rightly indignant physician, "it does not take a tailor to see that a coat is full of holes,"¹⁰⁴ contains an instructiveness that is practically inexhaustible.

The case of sighting meteorites, however extraordinary, is not the same as the case of miracles. Unlike meteorites that repeat themselves, any given miracle is a strictly individual event that cannot be expected to occur again. Again, unlike the fall of a meteorite, always a purely physical event, a miracle is also a historical event, however physical it may be. Its verification, even in the case of a fresh miracle, is essentially one involving the historical method with its reliance on direct witnesses, on indirect observation, and circumstantial evidence. This is why ancient miracles as objects of historical verification are a much more difficult matter than are recent miracles. Only upon the latter does beat "the bright light of modern history," to recall a felicitous expression of that famed Jewish novelist Franz Werfel in his introduction to *The Song of Bernadette*, his memorable reconstruction of what happened at Lourdes.¹⁰⁵

For all his certainty about the miracles of Lourdes, and for all his gratitude to the Lady of its Grotto and to the memory of her humble maidservant Bernadette Soubirous (whose body he knew to lie incorrupt in a glass casket in Nevers), Werfel did not become a Christian, a Catholic. As to Alexis Carrell, who received in 1912 the Nobel Prize for his study of the rate at which wounds heal, he first went in 1903 to Lourdes,¹⁰⁶ where incredibly fast healing of festering wounds had by then been attested for almost half a century. Yet, it was not until 1940 or so that Carrell was able to get rid of all his agnostic reservations and become a Christian, a Catholic, although long before that he had known of the powerful argument that reason could forge from an attentive consideration of those cures. The argument had already been voiced on more than one occasion when in 1909 Teilhard de Chardin cast it into a classic form with his powerful prose:

If a common antecedent for the cures could only be discovered; if we could extract from all these authentic facts something which marks them off or conditions them! But we find only this: *Lourdes*; and it is not the Lourdes imagined or hoped for in the excitement of pilgrimages...but it is Lourdes alone--Lourdes, a naked and objective reality, to which is attached a mysterious virtue, independent of anything the sick and the praying crowds can take there.

If the cures of Lourdes were characterized by any family likeness, attached to one category of diseases or appeared under determinate circumstances of time or place, I might invoke with show of reason, some magnetism, some appropriate vibration with which the human body would enter into a vivifying resonance. The precise cause would escape me, but a certain regularity in the phenomena would assure me of the existence of this cause and entitle me to imagine it. But there is nothing of the kind...effects follow each other without apparent rule. These cures are distributed as if by chance, and sometimes there are alarming relapses. In all truth, what renders Lourdes altogether extra-

medical is less what occurs there than the manner in which the prodigies take place. If what happens there astonishes the scientists, the way it happens is absolutely beyond him.¹⁰⁷

The purpose of this paper was to call attention to the role which the recognition of "naked and objective reality" (or of plain facts) plays in the philosophy that alone can do justice to facts be they so extraordinary as to be called miracles. The chief recommendation of that philosophy is that it alone can cope also with the facts of ordinary life as well as with the facts which science carefully isolates for its purposes. For even in the systematic isolation or carefully controlled conditions which science demands for its facts, their usefulness ultimately depends on the reliability of plain human witness about them. Without that witness not only the vast enterprise known as scientific endeavor would lose its claim to truth, but also the far more vast social life would be deprived of right to justice. Courts of all levels, governments of all jurisdiction, depend on witnesses and their plain witnessing¹⁰⁸ and so do laboratories. In none of those forums can a discrimination against plain witnessing of unusual facts be condoned or else the most important cases may be prejudged and the only avenues for progress be blocked. Had Oersted refused to believe his eyes when they noted that the magnetic needle which he placed under a live wire turned in a direction which he believed to be impossible, the discoveries of Faraday and Maxwell might not have followed as they did. The discovery of the world of atoms depended on Roentgen's chance witnessing the formation, that was not expected to happen, of the negative image of a key on a photographic plate. Far more importantly, would Newtonian science have developed at all if Kepler had not unconditionally trusted Tycho Brahe's eyes in making countless naked-eye observations about the positions of the planet Mars? Luckily for science, it witnesses relatively rarely the brushing aside of a report about a really *new* case with the remark: "It cannot be really different from the thousand other cases we have already investigated." The brave reply of the young assistant, "But, Sir, what if this is the thousand and first case?" which after more than half a century is still whispered in the corridors of psychoanalysis,¹⁰⁹ is precisely the rejoinder which is to be faced in connection with facts that fall under suspicion because of their miraculous character.

The witnessing of facts is, of course, to be coupled with a willingness to face up to the consequences of the fact witnessed. If the author of the Book of Joshua did not mean an extremely dark cloud cover in speaking about the stopping of the sun "in the middle of the sky" and staying there "for a whole day" (Joshua 10:13),¹¹⁰ then one has on hand astronomical consequences that even from a distance of three thousand years could be verified. No other biblical miracle would pose a similar problem. Such physical miracles as the multiplication of the bread, the changing of water into wine, Christ's and Peter's walking on the water, represent disturbances that cannot be detected from a distance of two thousand years. This would be the case even if they were to be contemporary events. The reason for this is not so much the relative minuteness of the physical effect they represent, but the impossibility of making the scientific apparatus ready for the event. This is not to

say that there would not be countless men of science ready to stand by with all sorts of sensors to register the physical parameters of a physical miracle, including the rapid healing of festering wounds, of broken bones, of collapsed lungs, and of lumps of cancerous tissues. But those men of science would in vain wait for an invitation from on High or from any of the Almighty's saintly agents. Miracles are not for order. They never were.

This is the only point about miracles which puts the believer at a disadvantage. Humiliating it may be, but a humiliation fully consistent with the humble framework in which the two Covenants were offered to man across the span of over a dozen centuries. An insignificant corner of the earth was chosen to be the scene of both Covenants. The chosen recipient was a people that should seem most insignificant compared with the cultural, artistic, and organizational magnificence of great neighboring civilizations. There is, of course, a silver lining inside that humiliation, a silver lining which is nothing short of a miracle: a unique interpretation of history, human and cosmic, physical and moral, compared with which all other interpretations, ancient or recent, are a poor second. That ultimately the rise of science was sparked by that interpretation¹¹¹ is hardly a point to let drift from focus in the often theatrical confrontation of miracles with science.

No humiliation is involved in the fact that miracles are never automatically overwhelming proofs. They represent the challenge of external reality, not of axioms of logic.¹¹² That true miracles are never coercive, whatever their occasional impact on skeptics and scoffers, is their chief recommendation. A dispensation would never be truly divine that would take man's freedom away because such a dispensation would not also be fully human. Clearly, it all depends on the perspective or, to use the technical term, philosophy or epistemology. That all, not only miracles but everything else, depends on it is implied in the recognition that, to borrow a forceful phrase from a famed analysis of the origins of modern science, "the only way to avoid becoming a metaphysician is to say nothing."¹¹³ What the author actually meant was the very opposite of the meaning which is usually ascribed to metaphysics: the art of bartering facts for ideas. Unfortunately, the author in question did not know of the only metaphysics, Aristotelian-Thomistic metaphysics, that begins with the recognition of facts and claims in fact that all the rules (categories) of man's mental operations are a distillation from his registering of facts.¹¹⁴

To approach any subject, be it the subject of miracles, in any other way will land the mind in mirages as witnessed by the despair of modern man about his intellect. That man will find help only from those Christians who have not lost sight, even for a moment, of the truly realistic epistemology. Such Christians and only such can fully seize their intellectual opportunity which is offered by those unbelievers who at least admit the fact of certain extraordinary events, though not their miraculous character. They are at one with T. H. Huxley who urged that unreserved attention be given to all facts, however extraordinary. They would emulate also that Huxley who, following the death of his first son at the age of seven, firmly declined the comfort of Christian perspectives. Huxley did so with a profession of faith in the facts of nature as seen by science as he understood it:

Science seems to me to teach in the highest and strongest manner the great truth which is embodied in the Christian conception of entire surrender to the will of God. Sit down before fact as a little child, prepared to give up every preconceived notion, follow humbly wherever and to whatever abysses nature leads, or you shall learn nothing. I have only begun to learn content and peace of mind since I have resolved at all risks to do this.¹¹⁵

The defender of Christian miracles should, of course, be able to demythologize that notion of science which Huxley in the same context made an object of worship with his eyes fixed on the inverse square law, in obvious ignorance of its not entirely "scientific" provenance:

It is no use to talk to me of analogies and probabilities. I know what I mean when I say I believe in the law of the inverse squares, and I will not rest my life and my hopes upon weaker convictions. I dare not if I would.¹¹⁶

But even with that demythologization of science done, the Christian defender of miracles must tirelessly return to them insofar as they are facts, and insist that they be faced with the openness of a child. He can do no more than that teenage peasant girl, Bernadette Soubirous, whose mental aplomb under endless questioning was no less a miracle than the cures her visions had triggered. To a visitor pressing her with doubts about those visions, she gave this reply of astonishing balance: "Je suis chargée de vous le dire, je ne suis pas chargée de vous le faire croire."¹¹⁷ This is all a Christian can do about miracles. He has to reassert them as facts in all their details and context but he should under no circumstances confuse the skillful and honest presentation of facts with the art of convincing. About miracles, however factual, conviction is a matter of God's grace which, however, has an intimate tie to facts, however miraculous, that can be heard, seen and touched. It is these very terms that are the object of a perception which is as sensory as it is an understanding or *episteme*. A biblical proof of this is the very start of the first epistle of John, a casting of the entire Christian message into a realist epistemological frame:

This is what we proclaim to you:
 what was from the beginning,
 what we have *heard*,
 what we have *looked* upon,
 and our hands have *touched*--
 we speak of the word of life.¹¹⁸ (Italics added)

Clearly, this kind of epistemology stands somewhere in the middle between the classic extremes of positivism and idealism. In positivism, the tangible facts can never lead to metaphysical heights, let alone to heights where the Word of Life is heard. In idealism, the metaphysical heights are not supposed to be rooted in that

reality which human touch and sight alone give access to. Only when imbued with a median epistemology will Christians be liberated from a veneer of sophistication about miracles which is but a throwback to a leery Humean scepticism. Only then will they instinctively avoid either ending or beginning their discussion of miracles with the despondent sigh, a transparent admission of an intellectual failure of the nerve: "Miracle was once the foundation of all apologetics, then it became an apologetic crutch, and today it is not infrequently regarded as a cross for apologetics to bear."¹¹⁹ Only when Christians will relearn to glory in their minds as an organ whose natural function is to have certainty about facts and things, will they be able to derive intellectual glory from miracles. On that certainty and on it alone can that intellectual platform be built which provides proper perspective about science, about miracles, and even about God insofar as He can be grasped by that reason which makes man a being created in His very image.

Notes

1. D. Hume, *Treatise of Human Nature*, Bk. I, Pt. 4, sec. 2, in the Everyman's Library edition (London: J. M. Dent, 1940), vol. 1, p. 200.
2. Ibid., Bk. II, Pt. III, sec. 3, vol. 2, p. 127.
3. And with a vengeance whose relevance for Hume's critique of miracles is very relevant though often overlooked. Hume's Epicurus is not the one who actually based the formation of everything on the chance swerving of atoms, but a representative of the strict cause-effect method based on empiricism! Assuming that his reader will overlook his manhandling of the record, Hume then expects him to admit that, on the basis of a non-empiricist or a priori philosophy, the power of creating matter out of nothing can be ascribed not only to the Creator but to any mind, as if the maxim *ex nihilo nihil fit* were not impiety itself. Having gone through this double somersault, Hume's reader is supposed to be dazed enough not to remember that Epicurus was a chief proponent of that maxim which makes creation and miracles impossible by the same stroke. Hume does all this in a seven-line footnote to his *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1956), p. 172.
4. A most appropriate caption to Ps. 138 (139) in *The Psalms. A New Translation* (London: Collins, 1963), p. 237.
5. Since miracles serve primarily the moral order, Hume could have only been infuriated by Newman's relentless emphasis on moral consciousness as a conclusive proof of the existence of a *Holy God*.
6. D. Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, ed. N. K. Smith (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1947), Pt. V, pp. 167-169.
7. "Of Miracles," in D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 121.
8. As pointedly noted by R. Swinburne, *The Concept of Miracle* (London: Macmillan, 1970), pp. 16-17.
9. D. Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p. 117.
10. Buffier wanted to ward off the solipsism which the Cartesian "inner" sense ushered in, by postulating a "common" sense. That he assigned as its primary function the recognition

of the external world shows that his intentions were right. But insofar as it was a "sense" anterior to reason, it could logically become, through its articulation by Reid and Lamennais, the kind of subjective intuition whereby one postulates, almost irrationally, the existence of external world in order that it may be known. See on this development E. Gilson, *Thomist Realism and the Critique of Knowledge*, trans. M. A. Wauck (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1986), pp. 33-37.

11. Ibid., p. 33.

12. A. N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (1925; New York: The New American Library, 1959), p. 11.

13. Although R. S. Westfall's sympathies lie with Newton, his article on Hooke in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972), Vol. VI, pp. 481-88, sheds enough light on the matter.

14. For details, see my Fremantle Lectures, *The Origin of Science and the Science of its Origin* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1978), p. 16.

15. See R. S. Westfall, *Never at Rest: A Biography of Isaac Newton* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 387-388.

16. Those statements are in Kepler's widely read textbook on optics published in 1604. For relevant passages in English translation, see my *The Paradox of Olbers' Paradox* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), p. 33.

17. The subject has been amply treated in the second half of A. Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (1957; New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958).

18. As amply shown by A. Koyré in his *Newtonian Studies* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1963).

19. The topic, which has generated a large literature, is treated in the perspective of a realist metaphysics in ch. 6 of my Gifford Lectures, *The Road of Science and the Ways to God* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978).

20. Galileo's attitude was all the more reprehensible, because Kepler explicitly called his attention to the elliptical orbits as established in his *Astronomia nova de motibus stellae Martis* (1609).

21. On the one hand Descartes urged all *savants* to communicate their experiments to him as the one who alone can properly interpret them; on the other, he sought refuge in the alleged difference between the real world and a world of true laws when confronted with experimental evidence at glaring variance with his theories.

22. Newton did not, of course, wish to be known as a Cartesian. In his later years he spent much time erasing the name of Descartes from the manuscript notes he took as a young scientist.

23. For details and documentation, see my *Road of Science and the Ways to God*, pp. 390-391.

24. J. S. Mill, *A System of Logic, Ratiocinative and Inductive*, III, xxv, 2 in *The Collected Works of John Stuart Mill* (University of Toronto Press, 1970), vol. 7, p. 623.

25. Commodism received its most concise formulation when Poincaré declared that "one geometry cannot be more true than another; it can only be more convenient." *Science and Hypothesis* (New York: Dover, 1952), p. 50. The French original was published in 1902.

26. Yet, the relevant chapter, "The Ethics of Elfland," of *Orthodoxy* was in part reprinted in 1957 in a book *Great Essays in Science*, put together by Martin Gardner, associate editor of *American Scientist*. For details and discussion, see my *Chesterton, A Seer of Science* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), pp. 12-16.

27. *Pascal's Pensées*, trans. W. F. Trotter, with an introduction by T. S. Eliot (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1958), p. 23.
28. Galileo did so with a distinct touch of apriorism. See the concluding pages of the "First Day" of his *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, trans. Stillman Drake (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1962), pp. 102-104.
29. "We may conclude," states Spinoza in ch. vi, "Of Miracles," in his *Theologico-political Treatise*, "that we cannot gain knowledge of the existence and providence of God by means of miracles, but that we can far better infer them from the fixed and immutable order of nature. By miracles, I here mean an event which surpasses, or is thought to surpass, human comprehension: for in so far as it is supposed to destroy or interrupt the order of nature or her laws, it not only can give us no knowledge of God, but, contrariwise, takes away that which we naturally have, and makes us doubt of God and everything else." See *Spinoza's Works* (New York: Dover, 1951), vol. 1, pp. 86-87.
30. Spinoza's attention to this problem arising from his philosophy was called by E. W. von Tschirnhausen, a gentleman-philosopher from Heidelberg, in 1676. All Spinoza offered in reply was that he hoped to put the matter "in due order," an impossible project insofar as it was to reduce the order embodied in the specific varieties of things to an order conceived a priori.
31. A consequence of this was, according to Newton, the sun's uniqueness as a heat- and light-giving body. Other features of the solar system, for which Newton gave credit to a direct intervention by God, were the proper adjustment of the distances, masses, and velocities of planets, their rotation on their axes, the measure of the inclination of the earth's axis, the exact amount of each planet's angular momentum, and the orbiting of all planets in the same direction and in the same plane. For further details, see my *Planets and Planetarians: A History of Theories or the Origin of Planetary Systems* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press; New York: John Wiley, 1977), pp. 70-73.
32. It was that solution that prompted Laplace's boastful remark to Napoleon: "Je n'ai pas besoin de cette hypothèse," that is, an intervention by God.
33. According to Bloch, miracles are a mythical projection by man into a still unknown future state in which mankind will reach its "divine" form through the purely natural mechanism of biological evolution. Bloch, of course, merely reiterated, with respect to miracles, ideas that had been set forth by Henri Bergson and Samuel Alexander under such labels as *élan vital* and *nisus*.
34. Here Newton merely followed none other than Robert Boyle, who wished to be known as the chief "Christian virtuoso" of the new mechanistic science and who claimed to rise from the mechanistic contrivances constituting nature to the "seraphick love" of God. Boyle's dismissal of post-biblical miracles as being unworthy of God, the clockmaker, is a perfect example of the vengeance which one's lack of sound philosophy can take both on one's theology as well as on one's broader interpretation of science. For further details, see my *The Road of Science*, p. 89.
35. G. G. Stokes, *Natural Theology* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1891), p. 24. This book is the text of the Gifford Lectures delivered by Stokes at the University of Edinburgh in 1891.
36. Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique ou la raison par Alphabet*, ed. J. Benda and R. Naves (Paris: Garnier Frères, n. d.), vol. 2, p. 147. The same "concern" for the dignity of God is R. W. Emerson's utterance in the address he gave to the senior class in the Divinity College at Harvard College on July 15, 1838: "To aim to convert a man by miracles is a profanation of the soul." See his *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures in Emerson's Complete Works* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1888-90), vol. 1, p. 131.
37. As, for instance, in his *Le philosophe ignorant* (1766); see *Oeuvres de Voltaire* (Paris,

1877-85), vol. XXVI, p. 55.

38. See Compton's Terry Lectures, *The Freedom of Man* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 26.

39. His denunciation of the "evil and faithless age" looking for signs in Matthew 12:39 and 16:4 was certainly sharp, but just as keen was the frustration he felt over his inability to work even more miracles because of the lack of faith in some cases and localities.

40. Those decades witnessed more than one prominent physicist celebrating classical physics as the final form of man's knowledge of nature. For details, see my *The Relevance of Physics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), pp. 84 and 90.

41. "C'est librement qu'on est déterministe." Poincaré noted the obvious fact with consummate conciseness in his article, "Sur la valeur objective des théories physiques," *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 10 (1902): 288.

42. E. Goblot, *Traité de logique* (Paris: F. Alcan, 1918), pp. 313-314.

43. A. Sabatier, *Esquisse d'une philosophie de la religion d'après la psychologie et l'histoire* (Paris: Fischbacher, 1897), p. 80.

44. G. Séailles, *Les affirmations de la conscience moderne* (Paris: A. Colin, 1903), p. 32. Séailles' declaration had, of course, been many times anticipated by freethinkers throughout the nineteenth century. Thus, Thomas Jefferson wrote to John Adams on June 20, 1815: "The question before the human race is, whether the God of Nature shall govern the world by His own laws, or whether priests and kings shall rule it by fictitious miracles." *The Adams-Jefferson Letters*, ed. L. J. Cappon (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), vol. 2, p. 445. It escaped Jefferson that precisely by allowing God to perform miracles, priests truly recognized God's laws about nature to be really *His* and not of scientists and philosophers making half-hearted concessions to a God who was as much the prisoner of his own laws as they were to their own preconceived notions.

45. The position, which is introductory to Bacon's essay "Of Atheism," is certainly characteristic of the heavy drifting of many seventeenth-century Puritans from classic Calvinist positions concerning natural theology.

46. "Tria mirabilia fecit Dominus: res ex nihilo, liberum arbitrium & Hominem Deum," reads the original in Descartes' youthful "Cogitationes privatae." See *Oeuvres de Descartes*, ed. C. Adam and P. Tannery (Paris: L. Cerf, 1897-1913), vol. 10, p. 218.

47. *New Essays on the Human Understanding*, trans. A. G. Langley (London: Macmillan, 1896), p. 93 (Bk. I, ch. ii, 12). Were this to happen, continues Leibniz's mouthpiece, those demonstrations would be called "dreams" and to be "full of paralogisms."

48. They impressed him as they were a "revelation," to recall his reminiscences in his "Autobiographical Notes," in *Albert Einstein Philosopher-Scientist*, ed. P. A. Schilpp (1949-51; Harper Torchbook, 1959), vol. 1, p. 33.

49. As I argued in my article, "The Absolute beneath the Relative: Reflections on Einstein's Theories," *The Intercollegiate Review* 20 (Spring/Summer 1985): 29-38.

50. The price of that success was of course a parting with a universe infinite in the Euclidean sense, a universe plagued also by the optical paradox, better known as Olbers' paradox. But since that infinite universe had often been taken during the nineteenth century for a substitute ultimate entity, the net gain for natural theology was enormous. For a more detailed discussion, see my article, "The Intelligent Christian's Guide to Scientific Cosmology," *Faith and Reason* 12 (No. 2, 1986): 124-36 and "Teaching Transcendence in Physics," to be published in *The American Journal of Physics*.

51. On Kant's strategy, see ch. 8 in my *The Road of Science*.

52. He did so in his exchange of letters with M. Solovine in 1950-51. For passages in

English translation from those letters, see my *Cosmos and Creator* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1980), pp. 52-53.

53. The contribution of theologians to that literature can be gauged from the lengthy footnote in the best modern Roman Catholic monograph on miracles: L. Monden, *Signs and Wonders: A Study of the Miraculous Element in Religion* (New York: Desclee, 1966). His own comments (pp. 329-330) make it clear that the dozen or so publications listed by him were not such — and this is certainly true of the best of them, F. Selvaggi, “Le leggi statistiche e il miracolo,” *La Civiltà Cattolica* 101/IV (1950): 45-56 and 202-213 — as to make him perceive the core of the question: the non sequitur of inferring from the uncertainty of measurements to an ontological incompleteness in natural interactions. The same is true of the equally representative recent Protestant monograph by Colin Brown, *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. E. Eerdmans, 1984), pp. 178-79.

54. Few students of Bultmann’s method dared to be so outspoken as L. J. McGinley was in his *Form Criticism of the Synoptic Healing-Narratives* (Woodstock, Md.: Woodstock College Press, 1944) in commenting on Bultmann’s demythologization of New Testament miracles: “It is such a mixture of arbitrary statements and detailed analysis, of capricious bias and clever dissection that it leaves the reader overwhelmed and confused” (p. 43).

55. W. Heisenberg, “Über den anschaulichen Inhalt der quantentheoretischen Kinematik und Mechanik,” *Zeitschrift für Physik* 43 (1927): 197: “The invalidity of the law of causality is definitely proved by quantum mechanics.”

56. This climate of thought was memorably capsulized by H. Margenau: “No simple slogan, save ‘violation of causal reasoning’ was deemed sufficiently dramatic to describe the revolutionary qualities of the new knowledge.” *The Nature of Physical Reality* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1950), p. 418.

57. This is my rephrasing of Turner’s remark, quoted above, and a fair summary of a chief contention in my article, “Chance or Reality: Interaction in Nature versus Measurement in Physics,” first published in 1981 and reprinted in my *Chance or Reality and Other Essays* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America and Intercollegiate Studies Institute, 1986), pp. 1-21.

58. This is why Einstein looked for the success of hidden variable theories and this is why he kept speculating about a thought experiment which would show the possibility of measuring with perfect accuracy interactions involving conjugate variables.

59. For details and documentation, see my *Chance or Reality*, p. 10. Pauli’s scoffing at the ontological question was not untypical of the attitude of many of his fellow physicists. Relatively unimportant is their readiness to perpetuate that allegedly medieval preoccupation whose first written appearance does not antedate the fifteenth century, well known for its scorn for anything medieval.

60. For further details, see my article, “The Impasse of Planck’s Epistemology,” in *PHILOSOPHIA* (Athens), 15-16 (1985-86): 143-165.

61. Eddington did so at Cornell University. See his *The New Pathways of Science* (Cambridge University Press, 1934) p. 88.

62. He in fact strictured his earlier suggestion as nonsensical in his *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (London: Macmillan, 1939), p. 182.

63. As, for instance, J. T. Driscoll in his article “Miracle” in *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: The Gilmary Society, 1913), vol. 10, p. 341, who in turn took that phrase from the October 1908 issue of *The Biblical World*.

64. The figure in question is about 20 magnitudes larger than the total number of atoms in the expanding universe. When a calculation involves such unimaginably large numbers, even a wide margin of error fails to impair its instructiveness.

65. B. Bavink, *Science and God*, trans. H. Stafford Hatfield (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1933).
66. B. Bavink, *The Anatomy of Modern Science: An Introduction to the Scientific Philosophy of Today* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1932), xiii + 683pp. In the USA, it appeared under the title: *The Natural Sciences*.
67. Bavink, *Science and God*, p. 132.
68. Ibid., p. 136.
69. Ibid.
70. It is certainly not a coincidence that celebration of God's creation always precedes in the Psalms the celebration of the Covenant as, for instance in Psalms 18, 32 and 96. In Psalm 73, uncertainty about the Covenant owing to the destruction of Jerusalem is overcome with a portrayal of God's creative powers over the chaos. The same is true concerning the perplexity voiced in Psalm 88 about the eternity of David's throne. The unending outcome of salvation history is predicated on God's unfailing power evidenced in created nature in Isaiah 40:12-14, 21, 22, 28 and 40:24 and 45:12. Jeremiah's scoffing at idolatry with an eye on God's creative power (10:11-16) echoes the train of thought in Isaiah 40, but the succinctness of Jeremiah 33:19 bears being quoted: "Thus says the Lord: If you can break my covenant with day, and my covenant with night, so that day and night no longer alternate in sequence, then can my covenant with my servant David also be broken. . . ." Of course, only if the thinking of the prophets or the psalmists had been tainted with the notion of a world being created anew at every moment, could one come across in the Bible, say, with a contrast between the Mosaic and the Messianic covenants in terms of a comparison between a shaky physical world, ready to collapse at every moment, and a world which is stable, a comparison nowhere as much as hinted there. A detailed treatment of this question will be given in the first chapter of my forthcoming book, *The Only Universe*.
71. W. G. Pollard, *Chance and Providence: God's Action in a World Governed by Scientific Law* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).
72. Ibid., pp. 35 and 43.
73. The real significance of Bell's theorem goes far beyond the technical question whether a physical theory which implies perfectly exact measurement is possible or not. The theorem's negative answer to that question entails instantaneous communication between particles traveling in opposite direction with the speed of light, which, if true, entails instant communication among measuring instruments, and in terms of the Copenhagen philosophy of quantum mechanics, among observers. This situation is, however, equivalent to the utter futility of communication among all those who by adopting that philosophy have opted for solipsism in ultimate analysis.
74. Pollard, *Chance and Providence*, p. 38.
75. Ibid., pp. 54-55.
76. Ibid., p. 104.
77. *Nature* 126 (Dec. 27, 1930): 995.
78. Pollard, *Chance and Providence*, p. 35.
79. While Voltaire's inference from the world as a clockwork to its Maker is well known, little attention has been paid to his far more expressive description of God as "the eternal machinist." Ironically, it is found in his half-serious, half-mocking *Traité de métaphysique* (1734). See *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. L. Moland (Paris: Garnier Frères, 1877-85), vol. 22, p. 223.
80. Pollard, *Chance and Providence*, p. 97.

81. Ibid., p. 117.
82. Ibid., p. 83.
83. Ibid., pp. 115-116. Needless to say, Pollard does not name those late elaborators.
84. H. Troyat, *Tolstoy*, trans. from the French by N. Amphoux (1967; New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1969), pp. 476 and 483.
85. Ibid., p. 115. Pollard is but one of the many Protestants who fall back on that societal-fideist stance. In the same year (1958), M. Polanyi articulated the same stance on a vast scale in his *Personal Knowledge*. To his credit, Polanyi faced up to the spectre of boomerang as he quoted a statement of Lenin about the party spirit as the ultimate (enforced) foundation of Marxist materialism (Harper Torchbook edition, p. 245). Whether the *free* sharing of faith (party spirit) in (Protestant) Christian society (Polanyi puts Communists and Roman Catholics in the same boat!) is sufficient epistemological defense against that boomerang may have a reply in what Polanyi said about miracles:

Ever since the attacks of philosophers like Bayle and Hume on the credibility of miracles, rationalists have urged that the acknowledgment of miracles must rest on the strength of factual evidence. But actually, the contrary is true: if the conversion of water into wine or the resurrection of the dead could be experimentally verified, this would strictly disprove their miraculous nature. Indeed, to the extent to which any event can be established in terms of natural science, it belongs to the natural order of things. However monstrous and surprising it may be, once it has been fully established as an observable fact, the event ceases to be regarded as supernatural (p. 284).

Polanyi's contention is faulty both historically and philosophically. Hume and others attacked miracles not on the basis of their factuality, but on the basis of the *necessarily* unchangeable character they attributed to the laws of nature and on the basis of the credibility of witnesses. Polanyi confuses the observation of a fact with its account in terms of natural science. The confusion arises from the fact that as a fideist philosopher and Christian, he could have no appreciation of the direct "commonsense" registering of facts as the simplest and plainest form of *knowledge*, as the ultimate assurance about all knowledge, including its "tacit" kind.

86. D. M. MacKay, *Science, Chance and Providence* (Oxford University Press, 1978). The book is the text of the Riddell Lectures delivered by MacKay at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in March, 1977.
87. Ibid., p. 8.
88. Ibid., p. 11.
89. Ibid., p. 10. MacKay cites as authority M. B. Foster's article, "The Christian Doctrine of Creation and the Rise of Modern Natural Science," which was markedly dated when published in *Mind* in 1934, and woefully behind historical scholarship in 1977. The reason for this is Foster's ignorance of, or deliberate silence about, Pierre Duhem's gigantic and epoch-making presentation, in ten big volumes published between 1904 and 1916, of the medieval theological origins of Newtonian science. For details, see ch. 10, "The Historian," in my *Uneasy Genius: The Life and Work of Pierre Duhem* (Dordrecht, London, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff, 1984; paperback reissue, 1987).
90. MacKay, *Science, Chance and Providence*, p. 19.
91. Ibid., p. 30
92. Ibid.
93. Ibid.
94. This is not to suggest, to recall a memorable remark of E. Gilson, "that the text of

Exodus is a revealed metaphysical definition of God: but if there is no metaphysic *in* Exodus, there is nevertheless a metaphysic *of* Exodus," vastly articulated by the Fathers of the Church and medieval philosopher-theologians. *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1936), pp. 51 and 433-434.

95. One wonders whether Emerson, who scorned "the ancients [who], struck with this irreducibleness of the elements of human life to calculation, exalted Chance into a Divinity" (*Emerson's Complete Works* [Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1888] vol. 2, p. 71) would not now choose for target some moderns who are theologians to boot.

96. E. Schrödinger, *What is Life? and Other Scientific Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1956), p. 83. It is only fair to note that a generation later no less an erstwhile architect of quantum mechanics than Dirac conjured up the vision of its future form which "will have determinism in the way that Einstein wanted" though at present, physicists may still have to endorse its indeterminateness à la Bohr "especially if they have examinations in front of them." This startling "confession" of Dirac, made at the Jerusalem Einstein Centennial Conference in 1979 and duly reported by one of the participants, R. Resnick, in *Journal of Chemical Education* 52 (1980): 860, may help one see a prophetic ring in the words of H. Landé, another architect of quantum theory, and one of the few cries in the philosophical wilderness produced by Bohr and his vast coterie: "Using the age-old scepticism of philosophers as to the reality of the external world to serve as a cover for our temporary ignorance and indecision, is the policy of 'if you can't explain it, call it a principle, then look down on those who still search for an explanation as unenlightened.'" *From Dualism to Unity in Quantum Mechanics* (Cambridge: University Press, 1960), p. 56. This is not to suggest that Landé really saw the difference between exact measurements and ontological causality in the things of the external world as objects of immediate knowledge. But at least he did not turn against his right cognitive instincts. For a very recent example of the same ambivalence, see F. Rohrlich, "Reality and Quantum Mechanics," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 48 (1986): 373-381.

97. See note 30 above.

98. This is in substance Gilson's objection to the very nerve center of the Kantian theory of knowledge according to which knowledge begins with its own criticism.

99. A. S. Eddington, *The Philosophy of Physical Science* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1939), p. 77.

100. The objection was made by me as a participant at the Second International Colloquium held at the University of Denver in November, 1974, whose proceedings are available in *Cosmology, History and Theology*, eds. W. Yourgrau and A. D. Breck (New York: Plenum, 1977).

101. I was sitting across from A. Sandage prior to his delivering a lecture at my university, Seton Hall, South Orange, N.J., in the spring of 1971.

102. J. B. S. Haldane, *Possible Worlds and Other Essays* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927), p. 209. This passage is praised by C. S. Lewis in his *Miracles: A Preliminary Study* (5th ed.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1955, pp. 28-29) as "the shortest and simplest form" of the argument that "the Naturalist cannot condemn other people's thoughts because they have irrational causes and continue to believe his own which have (if Naturalism is true) equally irrational causes." Yet he does not quote the crucial second sentence in the passage. The same is true of the use of that passage in *Miracles in the Critical Mind* (see note 54 above) by C. Brown, who obviously took the passage "on faith" from Lewis (p. 230) and did not care to look up the original.

103. During the decades of the Enlightenment, the resistance of those Academies, influenced largely by the Académie des Sciences in Paris, became so great as to result in the discarding of all meteorites from museums. Fortunately, the bishop of Zagreb refused to be

influenced by that “scientific stampede” when an iron meteorite fell in Hraschina in 1751. He ordered his consistory to collect sworn statements of eyewitnesses which he sent, together with the meteorite, to the Emperor in Vienna. The documents became a principal tool in the hands of the German physicist, E. F. Chladni. His paper of 1794, which marks the beginning of the modern science of meteorites, opens with an ardent defense of the trustworthiness of those eyewitnesses.

104. Quoted in L. Monden, *Signs and Wonders*, p. 244.

105. F. Werfel, *The Song of Bernadette*, trans. L. Lewisohn (New York: The Viking Press, 1942), p. 7. Werfel adds: “And their truth has been confirmed by friend and foe and by cool observers through faithful testimonies.”

106. Carrell’s account of that trip, written in third person, was published five years after his death under the title, *Voyage de Lourdes; suivi de Fragments, de Journal et de Méditations* (Paris: Plon, 1949). The introduction provides incontrovertible evidence of Carrell’s profession of Catholic faith and of his reception, in full mental strength, of the last sacraments of the Church. It is in that light that one should see Carrell’s references to Lourdes in his widely available *Man the Unknown* (1935; New York: McFadden, 1961) p. 101.

107. P. Teilhard de Chardin, “Les miracles de Lourdes et les enquêtes canoniques,” *Etudes* 118 (1909): 161-183; for the passages quoted see pp. 176-177. The passages follow Teilhard de Chardin’s consideration of the possibility whether the cause of those miraculous cures could be attributed to a physical force still unknown. Father Teilhard is not quoted as an *authority*. No book or article, by an author however prominent or popular, deserves such status. But the author of every book or article deserves protection against being misrepresented, a point also appropriate à propos the events and facts connected with Lourdes. C. Brown, the author of *Miracles and the Critical Mind* (see note 53 above) can be taken to task in both respects in that connection. He presents (p. 349, note 18) L. Sabourin’s work, *The Divine Miracles Discussed and Defended* (Roma: Officium Libri Catholici, 1977) as one drawing heavily on D. J. West’s *Eleven Lourdes Miracles* (London: Duckworth, 1957) and adds that West “complains of the lack of thoroughness in the investigation of cases, which he believes does not preclude wrong diagnosis and natural remission of the illnesses.” The fact is that Sabourin called attention to the facts (p. 158), not mentioned by Brown, that West did not meet any of those cured, nor did he study all the documents relating to them, and, last but not least, “as especially interested in psychical research, West will more or less consciously be inclined to find what he was looking for: psychical explanations of exceptional cures.”

108. Last but not least, Congressional hearings, that have been making the headlines ever since Watergate, derive their value from the trust placed in the testimony of witnesses.

109. The young research assistant was, if my memory is right about a story told me more than a dozen years ago by Sir John C. Eccles, none other than Alfred Adler, one of the first rebels against Sigmund Freud.

110. Darkness was obviously an effect of the “hailstones of tremendous power which he (God) rained down upon the hostile army” in reply to Joshua’s prayers, according to Sir 46:5-6.

111. The essence of that interpretation is the linear notion of cosmic and human history, with a most specific absolute beginning toward a no less specific end. It was the keeping in focus of that absolute beginning that enabled Buridan and Oresme to formulate in the fourteenth century the idea of inertial motion and impetus (momentum). This great discovery of Duhem around 1909 is discussed both in my *Science and Creation: From Eternal Cycles to an Oscillating Universe* (1974; 2nd rev. ed., Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1986), pp. 231-241 and *Uneasy Genius: The Life and Work of Pierre Duhem*, pp. 390-400 and 428-429.

112. This should seem an all-important point in an age which has increasingly equated proofs with mathematical demonstrations. There is no such demonstration or formula of

logic that would cope with the relation between the knower and the external objective world known by him. Therein lies the ultimate futility of reductionism based on science.

113. E. A. Burt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (1924; rev. ed., Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, n.d.), p. 227.

114. The point is made most explicitly by Aquinas: "Some believed that the *intellectus agens* to be nothing else but a habit in us of undemonstrable principles. But this cannot be so because we know even the undemonstrable principles by abstracting [them] from the sensory [evidence]." *Quaestiones disputatae de anima*, I, art. 5, ad Resp. (Latin ed., Turin, 1953).

115. L. Huxley, *The Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* (London: Macmillan, 1900), vol. 1, p. 219.

116. *Ibid.*, pp. 217-218.

117. "It is my duty to tell it to you, it is not my duty to make you believe it." Quoted in A. Olivieri, M.D., and Dom Bernard Billet, *Y a-t-il encore des miracles à Lourdes? 21 dossiers de guérisons* (New ed., Paris: P. Lethielleux, 1979), p. 58. It was about that time that she gave a no less astonishing glimpse of her utter certitude about her sense perception as she replied to the searching question, "What would you have replied if the bishop of Tarbes had judged that you were mistaken?" posed by the abbé Corbin, with the words: "I would have never been able to say that I did not see and did not hear." Quoted in R. Laurentin, *Vie de Bernadette* (Paris: Desclee de Brouwer, 1978), p. 124.

118. This statement of John, offered in part as a shield against the Hegélians (Gnostics) of his time, is of course a perfect echo of the thoroughly realist tone of the entire biblical revelation.

119. R. Seeberg, "Wunder," *Realencyklopädie für protestantische Theologie und Kirche* (Leipzig, 1908), vol. XXI, p. 562. Immediately preceding this statement of Seeberg is his disapproval of Christian theologians who accept Rousseau's remark that the truth of miracles conditions the truth of Christian revelation. C. Brown, who uses Seeberg's statement as the motto of the first chapter of his *That You May Believe: Miracles and Faith Then and Now* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1985) concludes on a not much different note by quoting the words, "My grace is sufficient," addressed to Saint Paul looking for a cure of a still unidentified disability of his. Colin should have added that for the same Paul miracles were an essential help in his spreading the message about God's grace. Suffice it to recall here his healing of the boy who fell from the upstairs window, his immunity to the viper's bite on the island of Malta, and the escape of all 276 on board the ship that fell apart nearby, after being tossed around by a violent storm for a full fortnight.

Reflections on the Death of a Monk

JERRY L. MERCER

Tucked away in the rolling hills of central Kentucky is Our Lady of Gethsemani Monastery. Founded in 1848, this austere order of Trappist monks is committed to silence, prayer and work. One of their ministries is a retreat house where men may go to renew their search for God. As often as possible, I drive the 70 miles from my home to the monastery for a time of spiritual deepening. Something happens to me at Gethsemani. It is too personal to communicate here. But when I listen to the chanting of the psalms, walk the grounds in silence, sit in the woods before the statue of Christ praying in agony, I know for sure God loves all creation.

At some point in my retreat I spend time in a small reading room near the retreatant's library, browsing through books and periodicals, occasionally napping. Recently while there I noticed on a table several pages stapled together. I glanced at the words typed on the blue cover:

Br. Elias Simpson
1939-1970
One With The Lord

At first I pushed them aside without much attention. Moments later the dates struck me: "1939-1970." This monk died at age 31 (actually 30½, as I learned later). I picked up the thin makeshift pamphlet and began to read. What I found was an intriguing story of the last hours of Br. Elias's life, written by a fellow monk. I wish to share this story with you, along with some of my reflections on Br. Elias's experience.

You should know that Elias (or Elijah) was the monastic name for Charles William Simpson. Born on December 15, 1939, he entered Gethsemani at age 17, took his solemn vows at 26, and died of cancer on June 21, 1970. The young monk was considered by his brothers a model of the virtue of simplicity.

It was in the fall of 1969 that a mobile x-ray unit made its annual visit to the monastery. Chest x-rays indicated that two of the monks needed further diagnosis. One of them was Elias. Exploratory surgery confirmed that he was already beyond human help. Elias was frightened at first, but in a letter to his brother monks indicated that God was helping him. He returned to the monastery to continue his regular routine during the time he had left. The following account of his last days, focusing on the Sunday he died, is a moving one and should be read several times in order to gain a deepened perception. The letter was not signed; the community would know the author.

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THE DEATH OF ELIAS

I write this to you after a very sobering and religious experience. Our brother Elias has passed over to his true home with the Lord. I had the great grace and privilege of leading the prayers for the dying, and watching his final moments in this world. Just two weeks or so ago we were all thinking that he surely had at least another year with us, but the Lord was growing impatient to bring him home and we didn't know it. "Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years, for his soul was pleasing to God. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul."¹ For, just a week ago, he developed blood clots in the leg and took to bed. Then his breathing grew more difficult, and they said he wouldn't live through August. A day later they were saying July. Finally, about Wednesday, he took a sudden and marked turn for the worse and his breathing became extremely labored. The cancer was acting far faster than even Fr. Eudes² expected, and by then had entered his liver. Br. Camillus, our infirmarian, called me to come and sit by his bedside while Fr. Eudes went to get an oxygen tent to aid his breathing; it was so difficult for him to breathe that Br. Camillus was afraid he might slip away. This was Friday. I sat by his bed, held his hand and talked to him.

He said, "I didn't expect this, but He wants it. Whatever He wants."

I told him, "This is what you came here for; this is what you gave up all for. Cleave to Him with your heart in trust and leave it there in His hands."

I began to fear that Fr. Eudes would not get back in time, because Elias was very pale already. But Fr. Eudes did get back, and the oxygen temporarily relieved his breathing. Fr. Eudes said his condition was grave and requested the community to take turns watching at his bedside. We each took an hour's watch while he steadily grew worse. His breathing grew more and more difficult, though he experienced little physical pain. He was completely resigned to God's will, and would kiss the cross he held—the cross so many before him had held on their deathbed.

The whole community experienced the tension of waiting for him to expire—more than for many others who had gone before, and all were constantly praying for him and visiting him. The love they had for him was very evident. His parents in Cincinnati were notified and they drove down immediately. His mother didn't expect to see him since he was in the infirmary and couldn't be moved, but she wanted his dad and brothers to see him. [By special arrangement, Elias's mother and sisters were admitted to his room for a long visit.]

Saturday night and Sunday morning Fr. Eudes had given Elias several shots to help him get some sleep. He woke twice in some fear, because he was experiencing fantasies that he couldn't control. Fr. Eudes told him to let them go and not to worry about trying to control them.

[Fr. Eudes] asked, "Are you at peace?"

Br. Elias answered, "Oh yes, I'm at peace."

"Then that's all that matters," said Fr. Eudes.

Br. Elias said, "I'm very groggy from those shots."

"It's not the shot, but your breathing that's making you groggy," said

Fr. Eudes, "any[way] you'll get more groggy gradually until you finally fall asleep and wake up again with the Lord."

"Oh, how wonderful!" Br. Elias replied.

On Sunday, June 21st, the Lord's Day and the Day of Resurrection, which had been preceded by three days of bleak, black, stormy weather, the whole community gathered to celebrate the Eucharist and the Death and Resurrection of the Lord. During the Mass, Br. Elias awakened from his last shot in terror—the terror of dying. I am told that at the Consecration there was a marked change that came over him. Precisely at the end of the final hymn of the Mass he began to enter his death agony. The whole community was available, and we all went to the infirmary and began the prayers for the dying. Fr. Eudes was inside the tent with him telling him that we were all there and praying with him. Shortly before we got there, he had said, "Oh, we don't realize how good God is!" It was right after the Consecration that he began to say the Our Father³ with an intensity and fervor that Br. Camillus said he'll never forget. Then he wanted to say it again, after which he said, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit."⁴ While I stood in the door of his room, leading the community in the prayers for the dying, Fr. Eudes had his head inside the oxygen tent speaking to him and saying prayers. Br. Elias was also saying prayers quite loudly and intensely, one of which was "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me a sinner."⁵ Then Fr. Flavian⁶ knelt beside his bed and, with his head also inside the tent, began to say the prayers for the dying to him. We finished them all, but since he was still conscious and breathing, Fr. Eudes prayed Psalm 26⁷ for him, at the end of which he gave his last breath..

Elias's final days and last hours were a profound experience for the whole community. One could feel a unity and intensity of concern and prayer for and with him that has never before been experienced for a death here, and many are certain (including myself who knew him intimately) that he died a saint. Judging from what others have told me, I think the whole community experienced many graces at his death. Certainly I have. After his death, the sky cleared within a few minutes, and the sun shone brightly and brilliantly. Elias was buried beside Fr. Louis.⁸

One additional note of uncanny "coincidence": Br. Alan, who was standing near the entrance to the infirmary, told me that precisely at the moment Br. Elias drew his last breath, and as Fr. Eudes stepped out of his room and said, "He just drew his last breath," the tower

began to strike 12:00 high noon; at that very moment the Sun reached its zenith in the heavens! I leave this to your reflections, but to me, everything including Nature itself seemed to be proclaiming, "He is not dead! He is alive and in glory!"—just the opposite of what appeared to be happening. In addition, not only was it the Lord's Day of the Resurrection, it was also June 21st, literally "Sun-day," the day of the Summer Solstice, when the Sun "stices," "stands still in the heavens."

In our Resurrection and our Life.

I have mulled this letter over in my mind many times, and have even read it to my classes and some of my friends. It never fails to make an impression and always sparks discussion and reflection. Several things emerge from this account that can benefit people of faith, especially when they ponder the reality of their own death.

ELIAS REMINDS US OF OUR BAPTISMAL VOWS: TO LOVE AND FOLLOW CHRIST

The news of his physical condition hit Elias with force, but his response was perfectly natural and understandable. In spite of the obvious—that we all know people die—we normally seem psychologically ill-equipped to seriously believe in our own death. That Elias was a professional "religious" did not exempt him from feelings of terror upon learning of his own approaching death. As a monk he was very familiar with biblical statements on death—that on earth we have "no continuing city," that our final destiny is in the Kingdom of God. Had Elias been, say, 75 and "full of years," he may have been better prepared. But at age 30 he was initially dismayed and anxious. The important thing is that he was not overwhelmed by the diagnosis. He was able to gather his concerns and begin the process of reconciling them in God.

As Elias neared his death he was seemingly consoled by the words, "This is what you came here for, this is what you gave up all for. Cleave to Him with your heart in trust and leave it there in His hands." These words seem to have been tenderly but forcefully spoken. Certainly the abandonment to God of mind, spirit and, eventually, body is the primary goal of a monastic vocation. It is also to be the goal of all baptized Christians. Every Christian is a stranger and pilgrim in this world. Every Christian moves toward complete union with God, here and hereafter. The advice given to Elias is for us all; that is, "Cleave to Him . . . leave it there in His hands." An important insight from Elias's experience is that it does not really matter how long a person lives if complete union with God is the final goal of living—and dying. Our lives are God's possession. We need only learn to follow Christ and love His good will for our lives.

ELIAS'S DEATH TEACHES US TO LOVE EACH OTHER WITHOUT JUDGMENT, RECALLING OUR OWN HUMANITY

The monastic community was totally loving and supportive during Elias's anxious times, especially in his bouts with "fantasies," or wild dreams. The physician, Fr. Eudes, was extremely sensitive. His only question was, "Are you at

peace?"—and that was answered affirmatively. On that basis nothing else mattered at that moment. No expectations were laid on the young monk. There was no role to play. He was allowed to be a *human being* in Christ, with a mixture of fears and triumphs. After all, victory over death was God's doing, not his own. The only requirement of a faithful person is to be open to God, which he apparently was.

Too often we expect people to die without fears, fuss or doubts, notwithstanding St. Paul's view of death as an "enemy." In its early days, my own tradition emphasized dying well. It was expected that faith enabled one to meet the grim reaper triumphantly. I think Elias's statements and his community's perceptions support this view. But we must avoid a smug triumphalism, especially in cases where dying is a slow process. Lingering illness sometimes breaks down our normal defenses, and when that happens something of the deeper self comes to the surface. Christians should not be put off by any expressed fears, angers or frustrations of the seriously ill or dying. The grace of God is with them, and their long battle is almost over. We should rather thank God for His grace, keeping in mind our own limitations.

ELIAS'S EXPERIENCE ENCOURAGES US TO FACE DEATH HONESTLY, TRUSTING IN CHRIST'S TRIUMPH

Those who tended Elias were refreshingly honest about his physical condition. As soon as it was confirmed that he had inoperable cancer, he was told. Again as he neared death, the gravity of his condition was never skirted. I especially appreciated the following exchange between Elias and Eudes: "... you'll get more groggy until you finally fall asleep and wake up again with the Lord."

A man of faith, Elias responded, "Oh, how wonderful."

And it will be, if we take our Lord at His word that where He is now, we also will be one day. Perhaps one reason Christians are so apprehensive about death is that we do not prepare ourselves by meditating on heaven and the Kingdom of Glory.

There are those who think we should keep the news of impending death from those about to experience it. I do not share this view. The thought of going to be with one's Lord should be a source of real strength. The idea concerning Elias—that "the Lord was growing impatient to bring him home"—affirms a basic Christian teaching that all of our experiences, including death, are redeemed by the love and power of God. God wants us home! And that kind of sensitivity ought to have force in our lives. Through God's grace, our destiny is His Kingdom. For lovers of God, that is a happy thought indeed.

THE CHRISTIAN'S TRIUMPH IS IN HUMILITY

As the end drew near, Elias prayed "loudly" and "intensely." These were not prayers of desperation—looking for someplace to land! Rather, Elias's statements of resignation to God's will and his prayers, including the Our Father and the Jesus Prayer, blended together into an appropriate posture for entering heaven. In monastic thought, prayer heightens the notion of one's absolute dependence on God. Prayers at the time of death intensify the confessional aspect of Christian spirituality; that is, that we are unworthy of God except as He makes us worthy by

His grace.

Salvation is always the gift of God, never the result of good works. The redemptive process is God's doing. In one sense He is active and we are passive. If everything depends on Him, then we are stripped bare before Him. If we have no righteousness of our own, then we must plead for the free gift of His love. In another sense the salvation process shows our activity as well. We are called to respond to the grace which is given. Prayers are expressive of our dependence and our soul's desire to be obedient. Our sense of the distance between ourselves and God is bridged by prayers of faith. These prayers provide a sense of God's nearness and goodness. Intense prayer at the time of death can be a sign of mature spirituality entering its destiny.

OUR LIFE AND DEATH ARE IMPORTANT TO THE LARGER BODY OF CHRIST

At Gethsemani death is a community experience. Elias was loved; that is clear. He was surrounded by love. Death at an early age was seen neither as a tragedy nor a punishment (both popular notions), but as an act of grace. Remember the unidentified quote?

Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years, for his soul was pleasing to God. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul.

Such an evaluation of his life fulfills the apostolic injunction to think better of others than we do of ourselves. It is also a good example of the "golden rule" about doing unto others.

The monks joined in the Prayers for the Dying at Elias's infirmary room. They were there as brothers, experiencing Elias's death as a mixture of triumph through Christ and battle with the force of illusion—the illusion that death is final. At the moment of his death Elias represented the hopes of all Christians that we will have pleased God and be admitted into His Kingdom. The physician and the abbot were inside the oxygen tent with Elias, praying the same prayer for Elias that he had prayed for others. This is another instance where the life of the Church is intertwined with the life—and death—of its members. Each of us is a microcosm of the whole. Each of us needs the life of the whole Church to sustain our individual faith and hope.

NATURE IS A WITNESS TO FAITH

There is an innocence in the suggestion that nature became a sign of Divine approval at the death of Elias. With our present understanding and control of weather patterns, this notion must seem odd to many moderns. Existentialist thought, which emerged with force during the World Wars, sees nature as a neutral reality, totally unconcerned with the dilemmas of human life. In biblical thought, however, nature often cooperates with Divine intentions. Nature seems to have a hidden life of its own, rejoicing in the goodness of God and even anticipating its peculiar destiny in the Kingdom of Glory. Although the writer leaves it for us to decide, we know where he stands. For him nature bears witness to the faith of the

Church—that things are not as they appear. The monk's body may be wrapped in linen and laid on evergreen boughs. Dirt may be thrown in the open grave while the brothers pray. But Elias has joined the great procession of the redeemed as it makes its way to the foot of the throne. And so will we who serve God!

PARTING WORDS

I am always uplifted after reading this fascinating letter. I have replayed it in my mind many times since I first read it on that warm spring afternoon. It served me well in my own struggle with my father's death. The letter has been for me an example of Christian care at its best.

Frankly, I hope for such a death myself: having resolute confidence in God's redemptive love and being surrounded by the support of a genuinely Christian community. Then the last line of the Elias letter will become my last line as well: "In our Resurrection and our Life." I wish the same for you.

Notes

1. Unidentified source.
2. Fr. Eudes Bamberger, at the time physician to the monastery.
3. Commonly known among many Christians as The Lord's Prayer.
4. Our Lord's words as recorded in Luke 23:46.
5. A form of the Jesus Prayer, which is the heart of Orthodox Christian spirituality.
6. Fr. Flavian Burns, at the time abbot of the monastery.
7. According to the numbering system of the monastic psalter the psalm is 26; for most other English Bibles it is 27.
8. Fr. Louis, better known to many as Thomas Merton. His writings continue to exert influence in the areas of Christian spirituality and Christian ethics.

A Distinctive German-American Credo: The United Brethren Confession of Faith

J. STEVEN O'MALLEY

Among the "landmark documents" of the United Methodist Church is the *Confession of Faith* of the former Evangelical United Brethren Church. The historical antecedents to that *Confession* were the *Confession of Faith* of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ and the *Articles of Faith* of the Evangelical Church, which were rewritten to produce the new *Confession* in 1962. The 1962 *Confession* shows its indebtedness to that of the former United Brethren both in its title and in the use of specific phrases which were characteristic of the older *Confession*.¹

The earlier document, which was officially promulgated at the United Brethren General Conference of 1815, has not been the subject of historical and theological analysis since the era of nineteenth-century denominational historiography. The historians of that era were in accord in their intention to show the uniqueness of the *Confession*, but their conclusions were at times either misleading or not fully explicated.²

An examination of the old United Brethren Confession of Faith brings to light a long-obscure perception of the Christian faith which in its early setting had direct and living ties with the deeply personal witness of its adherents. How this document became progressively "stereotyped" and made more distant from the living faith of the "Brotherhood" is a concern subsequent to the question under focus. This first concern is to discern what made the early Confession of Faith of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ a distinctive German-American credo, one which added its own distinctive elements to the emerging pattern of American evangelical Protestantism.

In reconstructing this confessional tradition, attention will be given to its historical context, its form and function, and to the alteration of the Confession which occurred in the first half century of its existence.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE POST-REVOLUTIONARY ERA

Henry Spayth, one of the earliest historians of the United Brethren, asserted without supporting evidence that the *Confession* was written by Philip William Otterbein for use in his Baltimore congregation, the Evangelical Reformed Church of Baltimore, and that this document, along with Otterbein's *Constitution*

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and *Ordinances* of 1785, was the one adopted as the credo of the nascent movement at its meeting in Otterbein's Baltimore parsonage in 1789.³

In the 1814 manuscript version of the *Confession* one finds the primitive form for the document that was officially adopted by the first General Conference of the church in 1815. A comparison of the two brings to light differences which indicate that the distinctively Reformed-Pietistic character of the document was being eroded. In its place, denominational consciousness was emerging, and the amended forms of the *Confession* from 1815 onward increasingly show the tendency of the United Brethren movement to become gradually assimilated into the mainstream of American evangelical Protestantism.

The historical milieu of the German *Aufklärung* in which the *Confession* appeared provides a perspective for assessing its distinctiveness. In Germany, the established territorial church orders (*Kirchenordnungen*) were frequently being overturned in favor of universalistic credos asserting a secularized "rights of man" ideology.⁴ The venerable *Heidelberg Catechism*, which had assumed a confessional status among the German and Dutch Reformed in the era of Protestant orthodoxy,⁵ was less frequently being expounded after 1700 in pulpit and school. Georg Gottfried Otterbein (1731-1800), a brother of William and a pastor in Duisburg, Germany, published sermons and primers on the *Catechism* which were used extensively in those homes of Germany and the American Middle Colonies where streams of Reformed Pietism kept alive a witness to the Christian faith when it was elsewhere being eroded.⁶ By invigorating a theologically-informed, popular piety in a period of marked religious decline, the Otterbeins contributed to the evangelical wing of the German Reformed Church and helped to provide a basis within that tradition for the "unsectarian" (*unparteiisch*) United Brotherhood movement to emerge.⁷

This milieu points to several distinctives which may be claimed for the *Confession*. It exists as one of the first post-Revolutionary War credos to be developed by an American religious body, and it was contemporary with that period of United Brethren history when Otterbein was its guiding influence. Second, it emerged from a quite different environment than the sixteenth-century confessions to which the great "confessional" church bodies, the Lutheran and the Reformed, remain committed. Unlike these, the United Brethren *Confession* was the expression of a lay, revivalistic movement that was admittedly unsectarian and less polemical in tenor. While the Reformation confessions contained strongly polemical articles that were anti-Roman, anti-Anabaptist, and occasionally anti-Lutheran or anti-Calvinist, as the case may be, the only polemical tone in the United Brethren *Confession* was its implicit critique of the godlessness of the Enlightenment Age. Its distinctive status as an unsectarian rallying point for all "awakened" German-Americans of differing traditions was obscured as it became the official credo of a new American denomination. Third, the United Brethren *Confession* is distinctive as an eighteenth-century response to the divisive, sectarian ferment that was a characteristic of the German-American culture.⁸ The other major proposal to unify these divergent voices upon a new confessional basis was that of the Moravian leader, Count Zinzendorf. In the 1740s he proposed the

formation in Pennsylvania of the semi-ecclesiastical "Congregation of God in the Spirit," that was intended to supersede all other church traditions and would fuse a highly subjective piety focusing upon Christ's passion with a rigorous, hierarchical organization. Only a few ministers remained fitfully committed to this ideal during this decade.⁹ Otterbein arrived in Pennsylvania in 1752, during the eclipse of this abortive effort. The movement which came to be associated with him reflected both his sense of churchmanship as a Reformed pastor and his conviction that awakened believers may participate in a "higher unity" in the Spirit without sacrificing their responsibilities to their historic churches. This outlook is first reflected in the records of his "Pipe Creek Conferences" (1774-1776) with fellow Reformed pastors of evangelical persuasion and later in the United Brethren movement, which included a significant number of Mennonite participants.¹⁰ For Otterbein, the millennial kingdom would be a divinely-initiated "more glorious state" within the future of the church in history.¹¹ It was the United Brethren *Confession of Faith* that gave concrete form to that hope.

FORM AND FUNCTION IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The following is the text of the 1814 manuscript version of the United Brethren *Confession of Faith*, with an accompanying English translation by this author.¹²

Die Lehre der Vereinigten Bruder in Christo

Artikel 1. Im Namen Gottes bekennen wir vor Jedermann, dass wir glauben an den Einigen wahren Gott, Vater, Sohn und heiligen Geist, dass diese drey Eins sind, der Vater in Sohn, der Sohn in Vater, und der heilige Geist gleiches Wesen, mit beiden, dass dieser Gott, Himmel und Erden, and alles was darinnen ist, sowohl sichtbar als unsichtbar, erschaffen hat, und alles traget, regiret, schitzet and erhält.

Art. 2. Wir glauben an Jesum Christum dass er wahrer Gott und Mensch, Heiland und Versohner, der ganzen Welt ist, dass alle Menschen durch ihn seelig werden können, wenn sie wollen, das dieser Jesus, für uns gelitten, gestorben und begraben, am dritten tage wider auferstanden, gen Himmel

The Teaching of the United Brethren in Christ

Art. 1. In the name of God we confess before every man, that we believe in the only true God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; that these three are one, the Father in the Son, the Son in the Father, and the Holy Spirit of the same essence with both; that this God created heaven and earth and everything which is within them, visible as well as invisible, and he sustains, governs, protects and supports them.

Art. 2. We believe in Jesus Christ; that He is true God and true man and the Savior and Mediator of the whole world; that all men can become blessed through Him if they will; that this Jesus suffered and died and was buried for us, and rose on the third day, ascended into heaven, and will

gefahren, und am jüngsten tage, wieder kommen wird, zu richten die lebendigen und die toden.

Art. 3. Wir glauben an den heiligen Geist, das er vom Vater und Sohn ausgehe, dass wir durch ihn müssen geheiligt werden, und den glauben erlangen, welcher uns reiniget von Aller befleckung des fleisches und des geistes.

Art. 4. Wir glauben das die Bibel Gottes Wort ist, dass sie den wahren weg zu unserm seelenheil und seligkeit enthalte, das ein jeder wahrer Christ, dieselbe, mit den einflüssen des geistes-Gott, Einzig und allein zu seiner richtschnur nehmen müsse, und das ohne buse und glauben, an Jesum Christum vergebung der sünden, und nachfolge Jesu Christi, niemand ein wahrer Christ seyn kann.

Art. 5. Wir glauben das die Lehre, welche die heilige Schrift enthält, nämlich der Fall in Adam, und die errettung durch Jesum Christum der ganzen Welt geprediget und verkündiget werden sollte. Aeussere Zeichen und verordnungen, nämlich die taufe, und das gedächtnis des Herrn, in austheilung des brods und Weins, werden anempfohlen, wie auch das fusswaschen, wo es begehret wird.

come again on the last day to judge the living and the dead.

Art. 3. We believe in the Holy Spirit; that He proceeds from the Father and the Son; that we must become blessed through Him and attain unto the faith which cleanses us from all blemishes of the flesh and of the spirit.

Art. 4. We believe that the Bible is God's Word; that it contains the true way to our spiritual welfare and happiness; that every true Christian might receive it with the influence of the Spirit of God singly and solely as his guideline (lit. "plumbline"); and that without repentance and faith, without the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, and without following after Jesus Christ, no one can be a true Christian.

Art. 5. We believe that the teaching which the holy Scripture contains; namely, the fall in Adam and the deliverance through Jesus Christ should be proclaimed and made known throughout the entire world. The outward signs and ordinances, namely baptism and the remembrance of the Lord in the distribution of the bread and wine, we will recommend, as also the washing of feet, where it is desired.

It is evident that this *Confession*, with its grammatical errors, reproduces the basic form of the Apostles' Creed with the addition of a paragraph on the Bible and one on the "outward means of grace."

As for its more immediate historical antecedents, the *Confession* bears some resemblance to the Anabaptist credos, of which the *Schleitheim Confession* (1527) of the Swiss Brethren is the most notable. Like the latter, it is marked by a non-scholastic, lay-oriented simplicity, with emphasis upon the ethical demands of the faith, explained in terms of "following after Christ" (*Nachfolge Christi*). Implicit in its teaching is a doctrine of two worlds, the fallen, coercive *corpus*

Christianum, and the gathered, eschatological community of the redeemed. The believer is the one who forsakes the former (in *Absonderung*) and obediently presses into the Age of the Kingdom, whose first fruits are to be discovered within the bounds of the believers' fellowship.¹³

Although the only explicit reference to Anabaptist teaching is in the final statement which permits different modes of baptism¹⁴ and recognizes the practice of footwashing, there are other parts which reflect some commonality with the Anabaptist credo. For example, the *Confession* links "forgiveness of sins" (*Vergebung*) with "following after Christ" (*Nachfolge Christi*), as a clear indication that there is to be no one-sided, antinomian stress on justification without sanctification. For the Anabaptist, his credo was a witness which was to be personally lived out in the midst of a fallen, hostile society. Is there not an echo of this legacy when the *Confession* affirms "...that every true Christian is bound to receive it as his only guideline," or again, "Christ shall be preached and *made known* throughout the whole world" (*italics mine*)?¹⁵

The most likely link with Anabaptism is provided by Martin Boehm (1725-1812) and other former Mennonites, notably Christian Newcomer (1750-1830), who participated in the United Brotherhood movement after 1789.¹⁶ These men were also guaranteed full participation in the life of Otterbein's Baltimore congregation by virtue of the church constitution which he implemented in 1785.¹⁷ Newcomer was willing to baptize children, while Boehm was not, and in his *Journal* he recorded that the washing of feet was practiced in connection with the Lord's Supper at the first General Conference in 1815.¹⁸ The 1833 General Conference enacted a rule that retained the Mennonite opposition to the swearing of oaths, although it was not included in the *Confession of Faith*¹⁹. The provision "against the world" was interpreted by Mennonites to be a mandate to continue the wearing of simple attire.²⁰ One of the few existing documents reflecting the critical stance taken by conservative Mennonites toward the revivalist preachers is a book by the Mennonite Bishop Christian Burkholder of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, entitled *Nützliche und erbauliche Anreds an die Jugend, von der wahren Busse* ("A Useful and Edifying Discourse to the Young on True Repentance," according to the English edition of 1857).²¹ He upholds discipleship ethics against the revivalists' emphasis upon emotional experience, saying, "My experience can help you nothing, nor can your experience help me anything." Rather, says Burkholder, "Christ identifies the new birth with the following of Him . . . A follower of Christ is in his whole course of life a light of the world and salt to the earth . . ."²² As we have seen, the *Confession* balances an emphasis upon a conscious awareness of repentance and faith (*Busse und Glauben*) with a recognition of the need for "following after Jesus Christ" (*nachfolge Jesu Christi*).²³ Yet, it may be that, in practice, many United Brethren gave less attention to the ethical implications of *Nachfolge* than to the conscious experience of the penitential struggle (*Busskampf*) and rebirth (*Wiedergeburt*).

Another historical antecedent to the *Confession* which gives a somewhat different perspective to its distinctiveness is the *Confession of Faith of the Czech Brethren* of 1535 (The Bohemian *Unitas Fratrum*), which was reprinted and given

new life by John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), the most celebrated Moravian scholar.²⁴ Comenius reconstituted the Czech Brethren and worked toward the dawn of a millennial kingdom which would supersede the fallen, coercive era of his own day. There is here no direct, personal link, as in the case of Boehm and Otterbein, but both traditions share in part a common historico-theological rootage that has been insufficiently noticed. Only Lawrence, an early historian of the United Brethren in Christ, suggested that the work of Comenius be regarded as a precursor to the movement associated with Otterbein.²⁵ However, Lawrence was also preoccupied with a denominational polemic with contemporary German Reformed historians.²⁶ His intention was to establish the preeminence of his denomination by showing how, in spirit, it was in the line of succession to the "righteous remnant" in Christian history—from the Waldensians and the Hussites to the reconstituted *Unitas Fratrum* under Comenius and then Zinzendorf. A closer examination of Comenius reveals that his work in restoring the confessional unity of the Czech Brethren was the direct product of his theological education which he received at the Herborn Gymnasium in Nassau, the noted Reformed school where Otterbein and his brothers studied and lectured a century later.²⁷ From the days of the great Johann Alsted (1588-1638), who was Comenius' teacher, to the time of the Otterbeins, Herborn was known throughout Europe as a center for non-scholastic, irenic Protestantism. It was here that both men acquired a taste for learning that was to be integrally related to the practice of the Christian life. Comenius published *A Manual, or the Kernel of the Holy Scriptures* which was to serve a similar pedagogical function for the Czech Brethren that the *Lehre* ("Teaching"), which later became the *Confession* of the Otterbein movement, served.²⁸ It was also at Herborn that both men received a vision of the worldwide mission of the church which prompted them to embark on divergent missionary careers.²⁹ Finally, the reordering of creation which Comenius had in view—church unity, world freedom and the conversion of the globe through the enveloping mission of the gospel—might also characterize the early outlook of the Otterbein movement. The *Confession* speaks of the possible salvation "of the whole world" (Article 2), of God's graceful intention "that all men can become blessed through [Christ], if they will," and of the goal that there is to be made manifest "one holy church" (*eine heilige Gemeinde*).³⁰ In this vein, Otterbein frequently implored that the Brotherhood be careful to remain unpartisan (*unparteiische*).³¹

To summarize, the form of the *Confession* is noted for its simplicity, brevity and capacity to reach quickly the marrow of Reformed Pietistic theology with a narrative and even poetic deftness. To this is joined an array of Anabaptist themes which is interwoven to produce a unified statement. In function, the *Confession* intended to assist the earnest pilgrim on the way of salvation (*Heilweg*) in "making his calling and election sure"³² amid a hostile world of Enlightenment secularism on the one side and sterile theological orthodoxy, on the other.

THE ALTERATION OF THE CONFESSION

An indication of the manner in which the self-identity of the United Brethren in

Christ was being altered in its early, formative years is to observe the way in which its *Confession* was amended. The earliest version reflects most closely the unique blending of themes from classical Reformed Pietism with Mennonite elements, which was first symbolized by the personal meeting of Otterbein and Boehm. These themes are gradually obscured as changes and additions begin to take place as early as 1815, when the general conference of the new denomination placed it at the front of its first published *Discipline*. What were these changes?

First, the earliest edition, entitled the "*Teaching (Lehre) of the United Brethren in Christ*" was changed in 1815 to the *Confession of Faith (Glaubens-Bekenntniss)*. The former term was the one used by Otterbein in the *Constitution and Ordinances* for his Baltimore congregation, when he wrote that the pastor shall "*impart instruction (Lehre)*" to the youth (Rule 8) and that he "shall make it one of his highest duties to watch over the rising youth, diligently instructing them in the principles of religion, according to the Word of God (Rule 9)."³³ The new term gave the document the preeminence befitting its new status as the official symbol of an ecclesiastical body, although the word "church" is not yet included in the title of the denomination. The arrangement of the pre-1815 version into five articles emphasized its function to provide points of instruction in the faith, after the manner specified in Otterbein's church order.

Second, the object of Christ's saving activity was changed from "the whole world" ("*der ganzen Welt*," in the early text) to "the whole human race" ("*des ganzen menschlichen Geschlechts*," 1815). The earlier formulation allows for a more comprehensive view of salvation which could rightly be seen to include nature as well as history. Here is a theme found in Paul in Romans 8:22f and in Ephesians 1:10 and, more directly, it had been extensively developed in the "federal" theology of Friedrich A. Lampe (1683-1729), which Otterbein had studied at Herborn.³⁴ The close correlation which Lampe maintained between the redemptive Word and nature and history is illustrated in this citation from his important work, *The Secret of the Covenant of Grace (Geheimnis des Gnadenbundes)*: "Since new discoveries in nature are daily being made through field glasses, what is it to wonder that new discoveries are also taking place through the increasing diligence in the examination of the godly Word, and the promised growth in knowledge in the last times is always being further enhanced toward fulfillment."³⁵

A third strategic change which occurred in this article alters the expression of the human response in the covenant of grace. In line with Reformed Pietism, the early version tells us that the goal of Christ's saving work is the creation of new moral beings who are "*seelig*" or controlled by an inclination of heart through the action of the Divine Spirit.³⁶ This term was eliminated in 1815, and the new formulation merely emphasizes the need for our free acceptance of Christ's grace, in Arminian fashion, but without reference to the quality of life which results.³⁷ Article Three, which concerns the Holy Spirit, was likewise altered in 1815 so as to diminish somewhat the emphasis upon a complete spiritual and moral transformation as the goal of salvation. This change appears to reflect the growing influence in the Brotherhood of former Mennonites, for whom the theme of Christian

perfection was less significant than it had been for Otterbein, whose treatment of the theme reflected Reformed Pietist rather than Methodist influence. The earliest text simply expressed that "We *must* become holy through the Spirit," and that we "will attain unto the faith which purifies us from all blemishes of the flesh and of the spirit."³⁸ In 1815, this clause was stricken and in its place appeared the following: "that through Him we are enlightened, justified through faith, and we become holy (or sanctified)."³⁹

Fourth, in 1815, this new article was inserted following the affirmation concerning the Holy Spirit: "We believe in a godly communion, (*Gemeinde*), the fellowship of the godly, the resurrection of the body, and a life everlasting."⁴⁰ This addition from the Apostles' Creed reflects the emerging ecclesiastical self-awareness of the fledgling spiritual brotherhood. While *Gemeinde* was translated "church" in the English edition of 1819, the German context denotes a spiritual *koinonia* rather than church in the externalized sense, as in *Kirche*.

The next article in the early *Confession* is devoted to the Bible and the final one to the essence of its teaching. It says that the Bible "contains the true way to our spiritual welfare and happiness." Scripture functions here in a hermeneutical sense as the path for the pilgrim to follow through the labyrinth of early life *en route* to God's Kingdom. This outlook is reminiscent of the *Heilweg* methodology of the Reformed Pietists, who discerned in Scripture, with the help of their *Heidelberg Catechism*, a precisely-structured guide—sometimes referred to as a "ladder to heaven" (*Himmelsleiter*)—which every earnest believer is in the process of ascending. "The Bible is the source," wrote Georg Otterbein, "and the *Catechism* points out the order which is derived from this source."⁴¹ Referring to this "order of salvation," he exclaimed, "How beautiful it is to learn to know the order itself, ... what we originally were, what we have become through the fall, and what we shall again become through the fully gracious design of God."⁴² In this tradition, the pastor's task is not so much the proclamation of the Word as a *fait accompli*; rather, it is to function as a spiritual counselor who escorts his pilgrims through the steps of the order of salvation according to the readiness for discernment that they manifest. It was in this vein that Johann Daniel Otterbein (1736-1804), the brother who was pastor of the parish of Berleburg, published a narrative of his counseling sessions with a condemned murderer.⁴³ It was from this perspective that Georg Otterbein, pastor at Duisburg, published a primer on the *Catechism* that was used both by the German Reformed and by the earliest United Brethren in this country.⁴⁴ It was also in this vein that William Otterbein instituted his rules for examining communicants at his Reformed parish in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to ascertain their readiness for participation in the Lord's Supper.⁴⁵ This theme is further developed when, in the next line, the *Confession* affirms that "every true Christian is bound to receive it with the influences of the Spirit of God, purely and simply as his only guideline (*Richtschnur*)...." The 1819 English translation renders *Richtschnur* in a more legalistic context as a "rule." This affirmation of the role of Scripture was retained by subsequent revisions, including the major one of 1889.⁴⁶

Finally, the statement in Article Five, concerning the sacraments, was made

into a separate article beginning in 1815. Actually, the word "sacrament" is not used. Instead, reference is made to the "outer signs (or testimonies) and ordinances" ("*Aeussere Zeichen und verordnungen*"), which designates the sacraments not as objective means of grace, or "converting" ordinances, but rather as public signs of the presence of saving grace within the reborn believer. The 1815 revision of the *Confession* strengthened the place of the sacraments in the life of the Brotherhood. Whereas the earliest statement had said that the ordinances are "recommended," the subsequent statements all say "they *shall* be used according to the example of the Lord Jesus among His children."⁴⁷ However, it was also added that "the mode and manner should be left to each one according to his judgment." In addition, the 1815 revision replaced "outer testimonies and ordinances" with the "outer means of grace"—an indication of the apparent rise of more traditional sacramental theology befitting a movement that was now acquiring a conscious churchly status. Similarly, subsequent revisions of this last article indicate that the practice of foot washing was also becoming less important.⁴⁸

SOME CONCLUDING PERSPECTIVES ON THE UNIQUENESS OF THE CONFESSION

The document which we have examined is a major product of a little-investigated but formative tradition in American religious life that emerged from the interaction of the "Pennsylvania Dutch" culture with the revivalism rooted in the Great Awakening. It was conceived in an irenic milieu of Reformed and Mennonite spirituality that is perhaps best characterized by William Otterbein's expression that it was to be an "unpartisan" (*unparteiisch*) Brotherhood in Christ. This irenic temper, in which Otterbein had been nurtured in Herborn, conditioned the manner in which theology was articulated in word and in life among the early United Brethren.

Its distinctiveness begins to appear as the early *Confession* is compared with its later revisions. Emerging from our in-depth study of the alteration of the early German text, it is now evident that the changes in content and expression which occurred as early as 1815 were in no way "minor changes of no great significance" as Drury had summarily concluded.⁴⁹ Instead, they possibly reflected more basic doctrinal matters than did the new *Confession* of 1889, which led in part to a painful schism in the denomination.⁵⁰ Although these changes in the early *Confession* frequently obscured the visible influence of themes deriving from earlier Reformed Pietism, they also reflect a fluid, dynamic era in the life of the movement in which the issues of faith and order were widely and extensively discussed in the conferences of the Brotherhood.

Not only do the early revisions of the *Confession* tend to detach it from its Reformed roots; they also were inclined to render its formulation of the faith more akin to the Articles of Faith of the Evangelical Association and the Articles of Religion in Methodism. To be sure, the "middle period" (1833-1889) was not a time of significant sentiment for church union with these bodies, but this growing doctrinal kinship would seem to be a natural occurrence at a time when the United

Brethren were acquiring a more definite connectional system *vis-a-vis* the Methodist model. The Evangelicals had a more Methodist-like doctrinal statement and discipline from their outset, since their Articles of Faith were in large measure based on Ignatius Roemer's German translation of John Wesley's *Twenty Five Articles of Religion*, with the addition of an article on the Last Judgment that was likely derived from the *Augsburg Confession*.⁵¹ Wesley's document was a twenty-four article abridgement of the *Thirty Nine Articles* of the Church of England, plus a loyalty article to the American nation.

The major points of difference between the early United Brethren *Confession* and its Evangelical and Methodist counterparts can be summarized as follows. The one is short and compact, consisting of seven paragraphs. It reads more as a narrative, reciting the events of God's saving activity with the human race, stemming from its reliance upon Reformed Pietism and especially Cocceian biblical thought, with its covenantal mode of theologizing. The other documents present the faith in a declarative, third-person fashion and not in a first-person, confessional sense. Being more scholastic in tenor, they make greater use of the substantial metaphysics of the early Greek Fathers, who were concerned with defining the essence of God and man as an ontological undergirding for the biblical faith.

The recovery of the vision of the early *Confession* may hopefully raise the possibility of its transformed influence today. It embodied the piety of those who lived a concrete existence, close to nature and the harshness of an often unfriendly English cultural hegemony.⁵² Its language was also vernacular, concrete, and even poetic in its style, with no apparent inconsistency between their vital piety and the only language they knew. As a theological formulation, it was not critical, sustained, or dominating; rather, it narrated a spirituality that was intimately in touch with the wisdom of a lived Christian piety and whose service it commended. While it did not busy itself with a rational defense of an abstract "Arminianism,"⁵³ the *Confession* affirmed concretely that Christ's work was available to all on the same basis and that it might be experienced as participation in a new, "unpartisan" *Gemeinde*. As a manifesto of "New Pietism" transformed by the American Revolutionary epoch, it embodied a living protest against the artificiality of the rationalist theology and served as a vehicle for adjusting the "requirements of orthodoxy to the demands made by intensity, diversity, and the liberation experienced in Christ."⁵⁴

Notes

1. E.g., Article III on the Holy Spirit follows the tripartite order of the *Heidelberg Catechism*, upon which the old *Confession* also relied. "(The Spirit) convinces the world of sin,....He leads men through faithful response to the gospel into the fellowship of the church

(the work of redemption). He comforts, sustains, and empowers the faithful and guides them into all truth (the life of faith)." "Comfort" is the soteriological mode in which the doctrine of election is presented in the tradition of the *Catechism*, which is reflected in the United Brethren *Confession of Faith*. See *The Discipline of the Evangelical United Brethren Church* (Dayton, Ohio: The Board of Publication, The E.U.B. Church, 1963), p. 26.

2. John Lawrence, *History of the United Brethren Church* (Dayton: United Brethren Publishing House, 1868), p. 80 f., placed the *Confession* in an anti-Reformed, "Waldensian" tradition; A.W. Drury, *History of the Church of the United Brethren in Christ* (Dayton: Otterbein Press, 1924), believed that the *Confession* was of a later origin than Otterbein's Baltimore Conference of 1789, but he provided no evidence to verify this (see p. 275 ff.).

3. See Arthur Core, *Philip William Otterbein: Pastor, Ecumenist* (Dayton: E.U.B. Board of Publication, 1968), p. 109 ff.

4. Among the favorite "rationalist" catechetical works which gained prominence was written by the Cartesian, Solomon Van Til, in the eighteenth century. See Heinrich Graffman, "Die Erklärung des Heidelberger Katechismus in Predigt und Unterricht des 16. bis 18. Jhrhds," p. 77; in *Handbuch zum Heidelberger Katechismus* (Duisburg: Lothar-Coenen, 1963).

5. Walter Hollweg, *Neue Untersuchung zur Geschichte und Lehre des Heidelberger Katechismus*, 2 Folge. (Lemgo, 1968), p. 12.

6. Duisburg: Helwing, 1800; (and) Lemgo: Meyer, 1803; and *Unterweisung in der Christlichen Religion nach dem Heidelbergischen Katechismus*. (Zweyte Auflage, Frankfurt: Julicher, n.d. [1788?]). On page vi of Volume 2 of the first work, Philip Wilhelm Otterbein, "Prediger zu Baltimore in Amerika," is listed as having taken 50 volumes of this work (vol. 1?) for distribution in America.

7. In this way, William's brothers, especially Georg, had an indirect role in the emergence of the United Brethren which has not heretofore been acknowledged.

8. Much of this sectarian ferment centered around the activities of the Seventh Day Baptists at Ephrata, Pa., as documented in Julius Sachse, *The German Sectarians of Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Stockhausen, 1899).

9. Sidney Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven: Yale, 1972), p. 242.

10. See J. Steven O'Malley, *Pilgrimage of Faith: The Legacy of the Otterbeins* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1973), chapter 7.

11. "Letter Concerning the Millennium" by P.W. Otterbein, (N.D.); quoted in Core, p. 102.

12. This manuscript version was published by Drury, p. 3.

13. The *Schleitheim Confession* was published in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review* XIX, 4 (October, 1945); 247-253.

14. Different ages of subjects for baptism were also recognized to accommodate both Reformed and Mennonite practice.

15. "...geprediget und verkündigt werden sollte." (Art. 5, pre-1815 text.)

16. See the *Journal of Christian Newcomer*, edited by S.S. Hough (Dayton: U.B. Board of Publications, 1941).

17. Rule 14 of the *Constitution* read "No preacher can stay with us who will not, to the best of his ability, care for the various churches in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, which churches, under the superintendence of William Otterbein, stand in fraternal unity with us." (Cited in Core, p. 112).

18. See Sem C. Sutter, "Mennonites and the Pennsylvania-German Revival," *The Mennonite Quarterly Review*, L, 1(January, 1976):49 ff.
19. Lawrence, II, p. 180 ff.
20. This theme is suggested in the last clause of Article 3.
21. Christian Burkholder, *Anrede an die Jugend* (Ephrata, Pa.: Bauman u. Cleim, 1804); cited in Suter, p. 50 f.
22. Ibid.
23. A. W. Drury, ed. *Disciplines of the United Brethren in Christ, 1814-41* (Dayton: U. B. Publishing House, 1895) Part II, p. 4.
24. See Matthew Spinka, *John Amos Comenius: That Incomparable Moravian* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943).
25. Lawrence, part 1, ch. 1-6.
26. See Lawrence, especially part 2, ch. 2 and 3. He failed to see that many of Otterbein's Pietist innovations, such as his use of conventicles, had been indigenous to the Reformed heritage.
27. Spinka, p. 27 f.
28. Ibid., p. 142.
29. Otterbein responded in 1752 to the call of Michael Schlatter to become one of six missionary recruits of the Dutch Reformed Church to the American colonies. Comenius had left Herborn in 1613 and, after a study tour in Heidelberg, began his missionary career in Bohemia.
30. Otterbein expressed disapproval of the doctrine of double predestination, which was part of the decrees of Dort (though not contained in the *Heidelberg Catechism*) in a letter addressed in 1788 to the deputies of the Synod in Holland; See Core, p. 100. Otterbein, however, nowhere referred to his position as "Arminian," as did Wesley. However, his view had evolved from the Cocceian, "federal" theology that had prevailed at Herborn and was still, in political terms, regarded by the Dutch authorities as "orthodox."
31. Drury, Part 11, p. 4.
32. This is a concept Otterbein used in a published sermon from 1763, entitled "*Die Heilbringende Menschwerdung...*"; see Core, p. 77 ff; he uses this exact phrase in a letter concerning the millenium (n.d.), found in Core, p. 103.
33. Otterbein, p. 111 f.
34. See J. Steven O'Malley, *Pilgrimage of Faith* (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1973), Ch. 2A.
35. Friedrich Adolph Lampe, *Geheimnis des Gnadenbundes* (Bremen: Saueremann, 1748), IV, p. 124.
36. "...dass alle Menschen durch ihn seelig werden können."-Supra, p. 4.
37. The 1815 text, which is continued in the major revision of 1889, reads, "...if they with faith in Him accept the grace proffered in Jesus." ("*Wenn sie die in Jesus angebotene Gnade im Glauben an ihn annehmen.*") Drury, p. 12.
38. Italics mine.
39. "*Dass wir durch ihn erleuchtet, durch den Glauben gerechtfertigt und geheiligt werden.*" Supra, p. 11 f.
40. "*Wir glauben an eine heilige Gemeinde, Gemeinschaft der Heiligen, Auferstehung des Fleisches und ein ewiges Leben.*" Ibid., p. 12.

41. Georg Gottfried Otterbein, *Predigten über den Heiderbergischen Katechismus* (Erster Theil, Duisburg: Helwing Buchhandlung, 1800), I, p. 45; It was the Swiss Pietist, Christoph Stähelin, who made fullest use of the *Himmelsleiter* theme: "Here, dear reader, you have, as it were, a ladder to heaven with three rungs. If you would use it to reach heaven, then you must step on each of the three rungs and not step over any one of them."—from his *Catechetischer Hauss-Schatz* (1737), cited in O'Malley, p. 98.
42. *Predigten*, I, p. 40 ff.
43. Johann Daniel Otterbein, *Jesus und die Kraft seines Bluts...* (Lancaster: Neue Buchdruckerey, 1790).
44. Georg G. Otterbein, *Lesebuch für Deutsche Schulkinder* (Philadelphia: Cist, 1790).
45. O'Malley, chapter 7.
46. See Article 5 of the *Confession* of 1889; quoted in the 1959 *E. U. B. Discipline* (Dayton: E. U. B. Board of Publication, 1959), p. 22.
47. Italics mine. "...die sollen nach dem Befehl des Herrn Jesu, unter seinen Kindern geübt werden..." (1815 text); This is made even stronger in the 1817 revision: "...His children are especially obligated to use the outer means of grace."
48. "...die Art und Weise soll aber einem jeden nach seiner Erkenntniss überlassen werden." (1815 text.)
49. Drury, *History*, p. 319.
50. In 1889, the minority party left to form the "Church of the United Brethren in Christ, Old Constitution" which numbered about 20,000.
51. See the text of the Articles of Faith in the 1959 *E. U. B. Discipline*, p. 23-31. It is possible, as James Stein has suggested, that the noticeable changes between 1814 and 1815 were occasioned in part by the forthcoming "social conference" of 1817, when an equal number of Evangelical and United Brethren preachers met to discuss organic union.
52. For these insights I am indebted to Richard E. Wentz, "The American Character of the American Revolution: A Pennsylvania-German Sampler," in the *Journal* of the American Academy of Religion, xliv, 1 (May, 1976): 118 ff.
53. As was the case with leading Methodist apologists, such as Fletcher and Miley.
54. This is Wentz' summation of the core of Pennsylvania-German Pietism, p. 130.

Harold Sloan and Methodist Essentialism

FLOYD T. CUNNINGHAM

As leader of Methodist conservatives in the 1920s, Harold Paul Sloan defended the divinity of Jesus against modernism. Though he sometimes associated with Fundamentalists, he disavowed two of their chief concerns, the verbal inerrancy of the Bible and the premillennial return of Christ. Sloan wanted Methodists to retain the cultural forms, the language and the inner experience of previous generations. Only on such bases, he believed, could men and women maintain a rooted sense of themselves and a clear view of God's purpose in the world. Sloan trusted only proven answers to age-old problems. He felt no compulsion to alter the resolutions of the past.

After graduating from Drew Theological Seminary, Sloan served several obscure parishes before winning a place of leadership in the New Jersey conference. For twenty years after 1915 he pastored some of its largest churches: Red Bank; Central Church, Bridgeton; and Haddonfield, a Philadelphia suburb. In 1925 he began the League of Faith and Life, the main organization of the Methodist response to modernism, and served thereafter as its president and publicist. The League had at least 10,000 dedicated followers, and perhaps many more. Several bishops and other national leaders supported Sloan behind the scenes. In 1934 he became superintendent of the Camden district and two years later the general conference elected him editor of the denomination's most influential weekly, the *New York Christian Advocate*. From 1941 to 1953 he pastored the Wharton Memorial Church in Philadelphia.¹

After entering his first pastorate, Sloan began to perceive modernism as a threat to The Methodist Church and he lamented the neglect of the preaching and experience of new birth among fellow Methodists. When the New Jersey annual conference in 1913 appointed him a member of a committee instructed to review both Sunday school literature and the books assigned to prospective ministers in the course of study, Sloan found opportunity to rebuke those who emphasized Christian nurture over spiritual rebirth. The committee reported that the church was entrusted with certain inviolable doctrines: the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ; the supernatural works of Christ, especially his atoning death for sins; the resurrection and ascension of Christ; and the outpouring and continued presence of the Holy Spirit. The committee "heartily agreed" with the "method of biblical criticism." This set of "fundamentals" evidenced the primary concern of Methodist conservatives for the doctrine of salvation through Christ, rather than for the

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inerrancy of Scripture or the Second Coming.²

After the 1916 General Conference failed to remove certain books from the course of study, as recommended by Sloan, the New Brunswick district directed him to renew his investigation into the denomination's modernism. A book, *The Child and the Church*, resulted from his efforts, and for the next four years Sloan mounted an assault upon Methodist modernism. Aiming to produce a confrontation at the next general conference, he distributed to denominational leaders *The Child and the Church* and resolutions which the New Jersey Conference had passed against the course of study. He received favorable responses from across the country, including those of Bishops Charles B. Mitchell of Minneapolis, and Joseph F. Berry, newly appointed to the Philadelphia area; Clarence True Wilson, head of the denomination's board of temperance, prohibition and public morals; James R. Day, chancellor of Syracuse University; and Henry Clay Morrison, president of Asbury College.³

Meanwhile, Professor John Alfred Faulkner of Drew helped Sloan formulate positions to be used against the Methodist liberals. Faulkner tried to keep Sloan's critique of modernism on an intellectual level, while believing that Methodists faced a choice of modernism's lifeless rationalism and John Wesley's "apostolic enthusiasm."⁴ He feared that "in a few years Unitarians will have percolated through our whole structure,"⁵ and he became discontent with the theological direction of his colleague at Drew, Edwin Lewis. Liberals seemed to be "on the saddle everywhere." It was a "queer old world," Faulkner said, when Methodist ministers were "far more radical" in their beliefs than the "old Unitarians."⁶ Because of Faulkner's warnings, doctrines which seemed to threaten the divinity of Jesus became the focus of Sloan's attacks.

By the time of the 1920 General Assembly, thirty-one annual conferences had passed resolutions regarding the removal of certain books from the course of study for preachers. A commission authorized to deal with the matter, however, recommended few changes. The books that were finally substituted for controversial ones seemed to Sloan and Faulkner no less modernist. So Sloan immediately prepared for the next general conference.⁷

In 1922, largely because of Faulkner and the proximity of Drew, Sloan began to direct much of his discontent with modernism against Professor Edwin Lewis, who taught theology at Drew.⁸ As the two men vented their concerns in letters to each other, Sloan admonished Lewis to refute his "naturalistic thinking" and join the battle against "proud-hearted unbelief."⁹ But Lewis minded a different agenda. He explained to Sloan his intent to reach those who rejected the old supernaturalist reasons for following Jesus as Lord.¹⁰ But Sloan remained convinced that men and women needed a "fearless advocacy" of faith, not Lewis's "mediating opinions."¹¹ Though Lewis tried to persuade Sloan that he was as fully "evangelical" as any Christian insofar as he stated the faith in a constructive rather than defensive manner, and insofar as he was personally devoted to Christ, Sloan warned that "heart devotion" did not guarantee orthodox theology.¹²

Meanwhile, Sloan progressed with his conservative drive and believed that he and his allies won a victory for the faith at the general conference held in June 1924. Bishop Berry, reading the key address, affirmed the deity of Jesus, the virgin

birth, the Bible as the inspired Word of God, and the necessity of repentance for sin and justification by faith for personal salvation. Sloan himself could hardly have said it better. Indeed *Christian Advocate* editor James R. Joy reported that Sloan's "impassioned" appeals for the "standards of evangelical belief" had "carried the convention."¹³

After the conference, Sloan organized the "Methodist League for Faith and Life." Its initial aim was to purge modernist books from the course of study, but it soon focused upon seminary professors suspected of heresy. With its headquarters in Philadelphia, in April 1925, Sloan began publishing the League's *Call to Colors* (renamed the *Essentialist* in 1927). The publication maintained a sometimes vicious attack on modernism and supposed modernists. The League relied on the financial contributions of professionals and small-business proprietors, and received money from various sources, including manufacturing companies, life insurance agencies and law firms. Perhaps the leaders of such enterprises felt left out of the vast organizational networks transforming the national economy and found satisfaction in joining one devoted to renewing the kind of evangelical faith which they believed had built America.¹⁴

Sloan's cause united many theologically conservative Methodists. He was a leader in rallies the League held throughout the nation and his paper advertised anti-modernist resolutions passed by various groups.¹⁵ A few Methodists hoped he would be elected bishop, and occasionally laypersons solicited his advice as if he were already one. In response to queries, Sloan affirmed that Christians might attend motion pictures, that Catholics were "beautifully devoted to the faith," and that infant baptism was consistent with the New Testament and the entire history of Christianity. He refused to adopt positions which deviated from the historic stream of Methodism. By such means he held many Methodists back from joining fundamentalist or holiness sects. He refused to become a demagogue.¹⁶

Remaining within Methodism, Sloan sought allies among the more conservative bishops. Berry often defended him before the board of bishops. Adna Leonard advised Sloan on the wording of various resolutions. Sloan tried to persuade Leonard to head the League and later approached him about a plan to start a Methodist seminary committed to the denomination's stated creeds. Sloan considered Bishops Brenton T. Badley, Anton Bast, Frederick D. Leete, and Ernest G. Richardson friendly to his cause.¹⁷ Leete, for instance, told Sloan that he was also eager to save what was "most vital in the Christian religion."¹⁸ Sloan criticized liberal bishops Francis J. McConnell, Edwin H. Hughes and Edgar Blake, but they generally ignored him. After the League was expanded into the South, a few southern bishops, including Warren A. Candler, Collins Denny and Horace M. DuBose, supported Sloan's efforts. Some dreamed of creating a denomination composed of conservatives from both branches of Methodism.¹⁹

Sloan resumed heated attacks on Edwin Lewis. In *Jesus Christ and the Human Quest*, published in 1924, Lewis had tried to present the religion of Jesus in such a way as to make it personally and socially appealing to modern men and women. He attempted to prove the divinity of Jesus on the basis of his ethical character.²⁰ Sloan tried to elicit from Drew students and from direct correspondence with

Lewis any evidence that his teachings were unorthodox.²¹ In December, 1927, Sloan proclaimed that the struggle against Lewis was "the next major battlefield in Methodism."²² Lewis should either "return to the faith or else leave Drew Theological Seminary," Sloan declared, for there he robbed "young men of their faith."²³

Prior to the 1928 General Conference, Sloan circulated a petition calling upon the church to demand of its pastors, teachers and laypersons an unqualified pledge to uphold its creed. Though "we are tolerant of any and all opinions that do not strike at the essential truths of Christianity," the petition read, "we will not tolerate any teaching that compromises Christ and His Word." The petition criticized books in the course of study, indicted several seminaries, including Drew, for "employing professors who teach contrary to our doctrines," and criticized the Sunday school literature and most other material being published by the denomination. Ten thousand Methodists signed the petition before the general conference convened. During one session Sloan dramatically strode to the podium in order to speak on behalf of the signers and to urge the petition's adoption. He was quickly turned away without being allowed to make his appeal. Embittered, Sloan returned home to renew his attacks on Lewis and modernism.²⁴

Throughout the controversies in the 1920s, Sloan recognized that his ideas regarding what was crucial to Christian faith differed not only from those of Methodist liberals but from those of most American fundamentalists. Sloan's criticism of modernism was that it offered a "whittled-down" Christ. His criticism of fundamentalism was that it made the verbal inerrancy of the Bible and the pre-millennial coming of Christ as important as his divinity and the possibility of new birth. A decisive conversion, Sloan believed, was necessary in order to change an individual's destiny from eternal punishment to salvation, and this was the central Methodist doctrine in danger of being lost.²⁵

The view of biblical inspiration which Sloan defended was that of Olin A. Curtis. Not every word of the Bible was given directly by God, Sloan said. God revealed Himself to men and women in the context and language of their cultures. Nevertheless, Sloan declared that the Bible was inerrant in all matters essential to Christian faith. Since higher criticism did not directly undermine that way of interpreting the Old and New Testaments, it could be accepted. The Bible, Sloan wrote, was "God's progressive revelation of Himself," and as such some parts testified more nearly than others to the central Word of God in Christ. Since Hebrew writers lacked the full light, the Old Testament needed to be judged by the teachings of Jesus.²⁶ Sloan's idea of biblical inspiration paralleled his view of salvation. Both stressed the human response to divine initiative. Though he wanted to retain a high view of Scripture, he actually depended more upon the creeds than biblical authority to support his positions against modernism. This reflected an uncertainty among many Methodists as to how they should best combine historical criticism and biblical inspiration.²⁷

Sloan did not at first see the theory of evolution as a threat to the biblical theology of creation. Faulkner believed that the theory posed no threat to Christianity. At one point Sloan declared himself *for* the teleological implications

of evolution, that history was proceeding toward a goal.²⁸ But later Sloan repudiated the theory. He noted the use of Darwinism to attack supernaturalism and to advance novel theological ideas. Too many scientists speculated on ethical and religious matters and endeavoured to impose their naturalism and behaviorism on others. Those who were truly objective would not move so readily from their own fields. When Darwinism "ceased to be a hypothesis" and became a "creed" the conflict became one between two faiths.²⁹ Yet such theories could never really touch inward faith, he declared. "The progress of science has not made Christ obsolete." Therefore he did not make evolution a major issue in his attacks on modernism.³⁰

Sloan's ambivalence toward premillennialism further separated him and other conservative Methodists from fundamentalists. Postmillennialism had encouraged nineteenth-century Methodists to find humanitarian ways of expressing the gospel, and Sloan did not criticize their efforts. In April 1922, William Bell Riley invited Sloan both to participate in an Indiana campaign and to speak at the July assembly of the "World's Christian Fundamentalist Association" in Los Angeles. Initially Sloan agreed, affirming his belief in every historic Christian doctrine, including the Second Coming. Sloan believed that the event would occur someday, but did not specify whether he believed that Christ would come before or after the millennium, or whether he believed in a millennium at all. He told Riley that the question was trivial and that its emphasis prevented a broader coalition of evangelicals. Riley rebuked him, declaring that the premillennial coming of Christ was "as plainly taught in Scripture as any other doctrine," and that to "soft-pedal" it was to "suppress" the Bible's "plain statements."³¹ Meanwhile San Francisco Bishop Adna Leonard reminded Sloan that Methodists would never support premillennialism and warned him that his participation in the convention would embarrass the denomination.³² Sloan had hoped that by offering to swing "the whole of Pacific Methodism" behind the fundamentalist movement he might persuade Riley to drop his stress on premillennialism; but Riley refused to budge or to widen the fundamentalist fray.³³ So Sloan decided that he would not attend the convention. He recognized Riley as a "friend and ally," and his influence as "vital to saving faith in Jesus Christ," but he did not think it wise for him to concentrate on a doctrine not truly central to historic Christianity.³⁴

Sloan refused to alter his stands in order to suit fundamentalists. In 1931, when plans were being laid for a fundamentalist convention in Philadelphia, Sloan's credentials in it, despite his renown as Methodism's leading conservative, were challenged by its organizer, Charles G. Trumbull. Sloan defended his right not to subscribe to either the premillennial Second Coming or the verbal inerrancy of the Bible. The latter more than the former jolted Trumbull. In response, Sloan affirmed that he believed in biblical authority, but repeated his long-held view that the Holy Spirit had spoken in a variety of situations to writers with different capabilities of understanding and expression. This, he said, was the true and historic position of the Christian Church. If fundamentalism would return to this truth and refute the novel theory of verbal inerrancy, he told Trumbull, its

influence would be much greater.³⁵ Though he declined a leading part in fundamentalism, Sloan lectured at the Winona Lake School of Theology, spoke occasionally at Moody Bible Institute and was instrumental in the reformation of the League of Evangelical Students in 1921.³⁶

Sloan felt closer to the faculty at Princeton Theological Seminary than to the premillennialist wing of fundamentalism. In the 1920s he encouraged Methodist ministerial students to attend Princeton in order to study under such men as J. Gresham Machen. Though Machen welcomed these Methodists, he concentrated his efforts on his own denomination. Princeton, Machen believed, was succumbing to modernism. He felt sure, nevertheless, that though "evangelical Christianity" might be driven out of Princeton and other citadels in the Presbyterian or Methodist churches, it could never be rooted out of the hearts of believers.³⁷ When Machen started Westminster Theological Seminary in 1929, Sloan suggested that the school's faculty include a professor of Methodist doctrine and discipline. Having taught theology part time at Temple University for the previous two years, Sloan clearly was proposing himself. But Machen was as convinced that Calvinism represented true Christianity as Riley of premillennialism; so he did not offer Sloan a job.³⁸

Sloan distinguished Calvinist from Wesleyan evangelicalism. Strict Calvinists taught that sin was inherent to human life, that God chose which individuals would be saved, and that the atonement of Christ reached only those so chosen. True Methodists, Sloan said, believed that God offered salvation through the atonement of Christ to all who would believe and that individuals freely chose whether or not to accept this grace.³⁹

Because his fight was not over verbal inspiration or the Second Coming, but over the divine nature of Jesus and his power to transform lives, Sloan declared that Methodist conservatives were "fundamentalists" on a "broader basis than the organized movement."⁴⁰ His League of Faith and Life attracted Lutherans and other evangelicals without ties to either the premillennialist or Calvinist wings of fundamentalism.⁴¹ Bishop Leonard proposed the word "essentialism" to differentiate the Methodist movement from fundamentalism, though Curtis had used the term in 1907. "Essentialists," Sloan wrote, were those who believed that Christ's incarnation was the means by which God offered salvation to a fallen humanity and that the Bible was the "providentially produced and guarded record of this redemptive work." "Fundamentalism" was a perfectly good word, Sloan added, but in the recent controversy it had been taken over and distorted by Calvinists.⁴²

Despite these efforts to strengthen the conservative position in Methodism, Calvinist fundamentalism lured some away from the denomination. The most notable was Harold John Ockenga, who Sloan hoped would succeed him as editor of *The Essentialist*. Ockenga had graduated from Taylor University, then enrolled at Princeton and followed Machen to Westminster. Though Ockenga continued to work closely with Sloan and the League, he came to believe that the crucial battle was not between Wesleyans and the Calvinists, but between true Christians and modernists. In order to defeat modernism, he wrote in 1930, "all evangelicals must unite." He described Sloan as standing virtually alone in

Methodism, "a true, balanced and uncompromising witness in the days of its apostasy."⁴³ But the logic of Machen's Calvinism proved "irresistible."⁴⁴ To Sloan's sorrow, the promising young preacher left the Methodist church and joined the Presbyterians. By his conversion to Calvinism, Ockenga was headed toward leadership in post-war evangelicalism in America.

This was only part of Sloan's woes. In the summer of 1930 Sloan suffered an illness that he himself called a nervous breakdown. An "obscure infection" accompanied severe head pains, a rapid pulse and trembling hands.⁴⁵ His controversies now pressed upon him "like a continent," while his "strength and resource" seemed like those of a "fly."⁴⁶ His anxiety was deepened by the economic depression of the 1930s, which left his Haddonfield congregation struggling to pay a \$19,000 debt, and left both his broadcasting ministry and *The Essentialist* in jeopardy.⁴⁷ The crusade against Lewis took its toll emotionally as it became evident that Drew's new president, Arlo A. Brown, was not about to take Sloan's side in the dispute, and much less appoint him to the Drew faculty. A revival at Ocean Grove campmeeting, conducted by evangelist Gypsy Smith, brought scores of ministers to the altar of prayer. Sloan described it as a "modern Pentecost." Perhaps it was a turning point for him.⁴⁸

Other reasons as well prompted changes in Sloan's attitudes toward the role he was called to play in Methodism. After the merger of *The Essentialist* with *The Bible Champion* in January, 1931, he left its control to others. Later that year Faulkner died. Though a faithful mentor, he had burdened Sloan with his nagging pessimism. Most important, Edwin Lewis's new book, *God and Ourselves*, seemed to Sloan a major return to the faith. In the book Lewis commented at length on the failure of Methodism, and stressed the limitations of human speculation regarding God in comparison to his divine revelation.⁴⁹

The two men began to reconcile their differences. Sloan told Lewis that he would recommend *God and Ourselves* to young people who had lost their faith. When they met in Atlantic City during the 1932 General Conference, Sloan admitted to Lewis that he had come "short of the grace" anyone could expect of a Christian in many of his tactics, and that where he still could he would make amends.⁵⁰ Sloan even advised his son to attend Drew, so that he might experience Lewis's "vision of Christ."⁵¹ Sloan was further astonished by the completeness of his agreement with Lewis's *Christian Manifesto*,⁵² and he was also impressed by the book's generally positive reception. "What you have affirmed in your 'manifesto' is what I have striven to hold," Sloan wrote Lewis; "I will honor you as a chosen instrument of Christ."⁵³

Sloan considered his own election to the editorship of the New York *Christian Advocate* in 1936 the ultimate vindication for his ideas.⁵⁴ Sloan used his position as editor to promote a revival which he hoped would center Methodists once more upon a vital, saving faith. Upon such faith Methodists might lead the nation upward toward "spiritual renaissance."⁵⁵ He reported signs that revival was indeed on its way. Indeed the conference that united the northern and southern branches of Methodism in 1939 declared evangelism to be the church's primary task.⁵⁶ Bishop Edwin H. Hughes, once on Sloan's list of liberals, edited a book entitled

Are You an Evangelist?, which explored new methods of accomplishing the old aim of winning souls to Christ.⁵⁷ The Federal Council of Churches sponsored large-scale preaching missions, many of them conducted by E. Stanley Jones.⁵⁸ And Sloan also considered neo-orthodoxy a part of the revival. It recovered many essential Christian truths, he believed, even though he could not accept Reinhold Niebuhr's seeming equation of human finitude with evil. He tried to preserve a distinct Methodist viewpoint toward neo-orthodoxy, despite the parallels between his moral relativism and Niebuhr's Christian realism.⁵⁹

As the war approached, Sloan found himself drawn to spiritual assurances that while all else gave way it could be well within his own soul. The 1940 General Conference decided to combine the denomination's regional papers, and to his great disappointment he was not selected to edit the national *Christian Advocate*. Instead, he became pastor of the Wharton Methodist Church in Philadelphia. He affirmed as he always had the provisions of faith.⁶⁰ Despite the horrendous evils all around, Sloan continued to believe that individuals who possessed faith in eternal verities could remain unshaken. Nevertheless, he later described the war period as one when "demons" seemed incessantly attacking him.⁶¹

During the war Sloan no longer attacked modernism, which he considered dead, but he still blamed the war on the decline of religious convictions in the face of rising secular forces. Men and women, entranced by the notion that they could remake the world, had blinded themselves to the brutalities of Hitler. Sloan believed that the war was being fought to protect sacred institutions and to preserve free societies. But he had few illusions regarding a permanent moral victory. He did not preach hope or optimism regarding the future.⁶²

As Sloan later saw the power struggle between the United States and the Soviet Union emerge, he sensed that communism was a threat to Christianity as well as democracy. Because communism made no efforts to change men and women spiritually, it ultimately would fail, Sloan believed. Rather than relying on God, Communists tried to find salvation in their own social schemes. He linked the deficiencies of the social gospel (which he had not often criticized before the war), to those of communism. Both the social gospel and communism, he now said, taught that men and women could be perfected by social engineering. He attacked communism with the same vengeance with which he had attacked modernism. But he knew that this new menace was quite out of his reach. He charged the entire nation to preserve Christianity against communism.⁶³

Throughout the years when great change in society took place, Sloan professed to have consistently maintained the faith he long before had been personally given.⁶⁴ His emphases were lines of defense against the enemies which seemed to encroach upon his faith and even threaten him personally. Sloan believed that his holding on to belief in the divine nature of Jesus had helped thwart the intrusion of modernism. By 1940, events seemed to confirm that Christians could not exist for long without faith in a divine Savior and in God's transforming grace. Sloan found theologians and bishops he had opposed coming around to his long-held beliefs. He sensed a revival sweeping over the country. But during the war it seemed obvious that the forces which threatened the collapse of Christianity and

civilization itself were much larger than modernism. His faith remained, but even he clung more dearly than he ever had to the inward assurances central to his Methodist beliefs.

Notes

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2. Sloan, *The Child and the Church* (Red Bank, NJ: Standard Publishing, 1916), 68, 73; Sloan, "Annual Conference Report, 1914, On Church Publications," (ms., 1914), 4, Sloan papers; Sloan, autobiographical notes, (1958), Sloan papers, Drew University.

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4. Faulkner, *Modernism and the Christian Faith* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1921), 230.

5. Faulkner, Madison, to Sloan, Red Bank, 1 June 1917, Sloan papers.

6. Faulkner, Madison, to Sloan, Bridgeton, 6 May 1919, Sloan papers.

7. Sloan, "Course of Study," *New York Christian Advocate*, 95 (29 January 1920): 154; Sloan, "The Laws of the Church Not Fulfilled by the New Course of Study," *Methodist Review*, 104 (September 1921): 792-797; Sloan, *Historic Christianity and the New Theology* (Louisville, KY: Pentecostal Publishing, 1922), 21, 23.

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11. Sloan, Bridgeton, to Lewis, Madison, 19 May 1923, Sloan papers.

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14. Sloan, Haddonfield, to Faulkner, Madison, 20 August 1924; E. M. Conover, Wenonah, NJ, to Sloan, Haddonfield, 18 September 1928; Sloan, "The League and Its Origin," *The Call to the Colors*, 1 (April 1925): 1-2.

15. *The Call to the Colors*, 1 (January 1926): 151; *The Essentialist*, 3 (June 1927): 76; *ibid.*, 3 (July-August 1927): 110-112; *ibid.*, 3 (October 1927): 155-156; *ibid.*, 6 (May 1930): 33.

16. Sloan, Haddonfield, to Carrie V. Firer, Baltimore, 31 December 1927; Sloan, Haddonfield, to J. Foster, Flanders, NJ, 1 August 1928; Sloan, Haddonfield, to Miriam A. Coddington, Atlantic (December 1929): 166-168.
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18. Leete, Indianapolis, to Sloan, Bridgeton, 1 July 1923, Sloan papers.
19. Robert Crawford, "A Real Methodist Unification," *The Call to the Colors*, 1 (February 1926): 153. See Horace M. DuBose, Nashville, to Sloan, Haddonfield, 22 February 1929, Sloan papers; DuBose, "Introduction," in Sloan, *The Apostles' Creed* (New York: Methodist Book Concern, 1930), 7-11; Collins Denny, Richmond, to Sloan, Philadelphia, 29 June 1925; Warren A. Candler, "What Is At Stake," *The Call to the Colors*, 1 (July-August 1925): 49-51.
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26. Sloan, *Historic Christianity and the New Theology*, 9.
27. *Ibid.*, 8, 32, 53-59, 96, 100, 143, 169-197; Sloan, "The Ninety-Five Theses of the New Reformation," *The Call to the Colors*, 2 (December 1926): 147; Sloan, editorial, *The Essentialist*, 4 (January 1929): 159-161; Sloan *Personality and the Fact of Christ* (Nashville, TN: Cokesbury, 1933), 73-80. Cf. Olin A. Curtis, *The Christian Faith Personally Given in a System of Doctrine* (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1905), 161-180.
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Literary Structure and Unbelief: A Study of Deuteronomy 1:6-46

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The theological themes and the literary structure of the Book of Deuteronomy combine to communicate the message of the book: "You shall love the Lord (YHWH) your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart" (Deut. 6:5-6). According to Jesus this is the word of God *par excellence* from the Old Testament. He quotes Deut. 6:5-6 in Matt. 22:37 (cf. Matt. 22:34-40; Mk. 12:28-34; Lk. 10:25-28). He also quotes Lev. 19:18 as its corollary: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

However, Deuteronomy develops the concept and practice of neighbor love fully and more consistently than Leviticus or any other Old Testament book. It illustrates in theory and by concrete cultural scenarios the corollary of the great commandment. Love for God and love for other persons are enjoined concomitantly throughout the book.

The word love ('ah^abâh) is used sixteen times (4:37; 6:5; 7:8, 9, 13; 10:12, 15; 11:1, 13, 22, etc.). Yahweh's love for his people (eleven times) and Israel's love for Yahweh (five times) encompass the past, present and future purview of the writer. The unity of Israel and the solidarity of brotherhood are emphasized¹ throughout the material. In 3:18-20 the point is made that members of the various tribes are brothers. The phrase "all Israel" (kôl yisrâ'el) is employed twelve times and the word for brother(s) ('ah/ 'ahhîm) is found twenty-eight times (cf. 1:16; 3:18, 20; 10:9; 15:3, 7, 9, 11). The use of the term "brother" inspires obedience to commands concerning relationships within Israel; it encourages the hearer to see Israel as the family writ large.² Even the King is chosen from among "your brothers" (17:15).³ In fact, Moses teaches that all Israel's leaders or representatives (judges, kings, levites, prophets) are leaders among brethren (1:18; 17:14-20; 18:1-5, 15-18).

In Israel the concept of "caring for one's brother" influenced all of life. The question of Cain is answered positively in Deuteronomy: Yes, you are your brother's keeper. This motif regulates the suspension of debts, making loans, releasing slaves, dealing with perjury, foregoing interest, kidnapping, slave trading and the avoidance of excessive penalties (15:2, 3, 7, 9, 11, 12; 19:18-19; 23:20-21 [19-20]; 24:7; 25:3). The concern for mutual support and brotherhood among Israelites motivates the command for the Transjordanian tribes to commit themselves to the other tribes to help them receive their inheritance in Canaan (3:18-20). Never was an Israelite to harden their heart or shut their hand to

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withhold what was needed by their poor brother (15:7-8). An Israelite was to let his Hebrew slave go free with joy (15:18), and the King was to see “that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren” (17:20). Brotherly love was possible only when Israel loved the Lord supremely, as he had loved them: “because he loved your fathers and chose their descendants after them” (4:37); “because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers” (7:8). The ideal community is presented by the deuteronomic writer in this way.

But what happens to this ideal community that trusts and loves its God, to a community that knows that her God loves her, when an attitude of unbelief and rebellion arises? Deuteronomy 1:6-46 provides insight into what happened in Israel when such a situation arose. Paul reminds us that all of the stories in the Old Testament were written down so that we could learn from those lessons of faith.

The past history of Israel, her responses in thought and acts to Yahweh’s words, is narrated by Moses in Deut. 1:6-3:29.⁴ These chapters present two paradigms (models) of Israel’s responses to Yahweh in the face of his persistent covenant faithfulness. Chapter 1:6-46 is the *locus classicus* in Deuteronomy for Israel’s trajectory of failure, fueled by her incorrigible unbelief and rebellious ways. After Yahweh’s discipline of Israel (2:1, 14-15), verses 2:2-3:11 record a paradigm of Israel’s success as she conquers the Transjordanian lands. As Yahweh led, she followed and was successful. The structure and theology of Deuteronomy in the paradigm of 1:6-46 will be examined in this study.

STRUCTURE AND THEOLOGY IN 1:6-46

The introductory verses (vv. 1-5) of Deuteronomy can be set out in the form of a palistrophe⁵ to illustrate how their literary structure underlies the theological message of Deuteronomy:

- A. What-Where: Words of Moses; in the Desert (1:1)
- B. When: Fortieth year, first day, eleventh month (1:1-2)
- C. Key theme: ALL THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES (1:3b)
- B’. When: After Og and Sihon were defeated (1:4)
- A’. Where-What: East of the Jordan; this Torah (1:5)

This brief chiastic structure focuses on the theme of the Book of Deuteronomy. Its major purpose, goal and character is to communicate all the WORDS THAT THE LORD COMMANDED MOSES. The concentric structure places this theme at the center of the outline and highlights it. The words of Moses impart the burden of the Lord, for they are the words that Yahweh commanded to Moses. In a similar manner the literary structure of 1:6-46 serves to pinpoint the theological *leitmotif* of the passage. The devastating factor that destroys Israel’s hope, her theology and corrupts her behavior is the lack of moral fortitude to trust Yahweh, i.e. unbelief.

Our passage (1:6-46) reflects a symmetry that is suggestive of chiastic or concentric structuring, although the detailed correspondences that would indicate perfect chiasm or a perfect concentric symmetry are lacking.⁶ However, the

general feature of parallelism of thought found in Hebrew poetry and narrative is clearly discernible. Certain key concepts occur in the central section of the passage (vv. 26-28), such as rebelliousness, unbelief, murmuring. These terms indicate the central theme of the passage. Similar ideas continue to be used throughout the second half of the passage (32, 42, 45). Unbelief is the generic term employed, as well as the key theological concept. After verses 26-28, the "hope" and the positive thrust of verses 6-25 are transformed into frustration and failure. A reversal of Israel's history occurs and thereafter her trajectory is downward.

The following arrangement of some of the parallel thought in the passage helps to illustrate a few of these issues.⁷ The major theological motif of the verses, and its significance for the life and worldview of Israel, stands at the center of the structure:

- A. go in and possess the land (vv. 6-8)
- B. triumphs and multiplication of Israel (vv. 9-12)
- C. wise leaders chosen (vv. 13-18)
- D. go up and possess the land (vv. 19-21a)
- E. do not fear the peoples (v. 21b)
- F. request for spies (vv. 22-24)
- G. good report of spies (v. 25)
- H. BUT, you were *not* willing, you rebelled; you did *not* believe
(vv. 26-28)
(v. 26 *welō' 'abîtem la 'alot wattamrû 'et pî yhw̄h 'elōhêkem*)
- G'. evil report of spies (v. 28)
- F'. rejection of the spies (v. 28)
- E'. expressed fear of the peoples (v. 28)
- D'. land is withheld, and given to others (vv. 34-40)
- C'. foolish choice by the leaders (v. 41)
- B'. defeats and decrease of Israel (vv. 42-44)
- A'. *do not* go in and possess the land (vv. 42, 45, 46)

The value of seeing the literary symmetry of the passage is that one can easily locate the key issue of the passage. And, the character of scripture *as literature*, with carefully constructed patterns to communicate its theological message, is evident. A significant fact in the structure is that the specific parallel elements listed after the crucial verses in 26-28 are *reversals* of the corresponding items in the first half of the passage. The turn from hope, possibility and proffered blessing in the first section to frustration, lost opportunities and cursing in the second half because of Israel's response *in unbelief* (vv. 26-28) is instructive. Unbelief is such a powerful factor in skewing Israel's perception of things that both her theology and her behavior are affected. And, as goes theology, so goes behavior. The lens of unbelief through which Israel sees the world clearly focuses both her theology and her lifestyle.

As noted, the parallel elements in the passage are striking because the parallels

between the first and second parts of the passage are negative (reverse) parallels (i.e. A=-A', etc.). The trajectory of Israel's mindset and hence her behavior is away from blessing to cursing, from hope to frustration, from possession to loss of inheritance, from increase in numbers to decrease in numbers, from being given the land to having it violently withheld from them (D=-D'). The extent to which unbelief in Israel causes a grotesque perversion of her theology and relationship with God is made clear in the central verses of the passage (26-27).

UNBELIEF AND BAD THEOLOGY

Moses charges Israel by asserting "you rebelled, you murmured, you did not trust" (cf. vv. 26-27). And, bad faith produces corrupt theology. Corrupt theology produces scenarios of despair and destructive behavior. The people's grotesque representation of the character and nature of Yahweh in verses 27-28 illustrates the claim. Because of adopting a perspective of unbelief, Israel concocts the following theology about Yahweh.

Verse 27: "The Lord hates us" (b^csinaṭ yhwḥ ôṭānû). This is a charge that our writer will correct shortly. The verse continues, "He brought us out of Egypt to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites so that they could destroy us." According to the people Yahweh's hatred finds its outlet in delivering his people to the Amorites to be slain.

Verse 28: The words of the people in verses 27-28 are in direct speech, a device used by biblical writers to emphasize the major issues in a passage.⁸ This verse completes a hideous transformation of Yahweh's true intentions for bringing his people out of Egypt. This time the issue is the people's charge of maliciousness against their brethren. According to the people, their brothers have "made our hearts melt" (hēmaššû et - l^cḥabēnû) by the reports they have given. They have implied, and even asserted, that the peoples in the land are awesome and are to be feared. They are too mighty for Israel to conquer. But the writer will note three ways in which this charge is false.

Israel has charged Yahweh falsely and maliciously. They have not only forgotten his great words and deeds on their behalf (1:29-33); paradoxically, they have proceeded to misconstrue them. The true intent of Yahweh's actions and words are not discernible to them because they have refused to believe. Unbelief has darkened their understanding. Yahweh's intent is now ambiguous to them. They do not have ears to hear or eyes to see because of their unwillingness to "read" Yahweh's plan correctly (Deut. 28:4). They have mocked him with his own words. Even after a show of repentance (1:41), they do not perceive things correctly because they will not yet seek his will rather than their own (v. 43). They insist upon being hot-headed and stiff-necked (cf. Deut. 10:16). Only one person in Israel is singled out for approval (1:36) and most readers want to identify with him. Caleb is considered a man of faith who will receive his inheritance. His faith produced action; he was ready to take the land.

The result of Israel's failure of faith was forty years of discipline in the desert (2:1, 14-15). Only those could enter the land now who had not taken part in the distrust of and rebellion against Yahweh. As Adam and Eve's rebellion had led to

their violent expulsion from the promised land (Eden), now Israel's rebellion and lack of trust keeps them from entering the promised land (the new Eden). Humankind's "original" perversion of God's ways through unbelief and rebellion is present in Israel. And, the primeval attempt to blame one's brother, or companion, is repeated as well (1:28).

The extent of Israel's failure is revealed when verses 27-28 are analyzed and contrasted with Yahweh's stated goals and purposes for Israel, to say nothing of his character. The rest of the book of Deuteronomy in its present form is an impassioned plea to Israel to establish themselves as God's people. The writer directs and encourages them to think correctly and thereby to live acceptably before Yahweh. Only then could they be God's people and he would be their God (26:16-19).

A comparison of Israel's assertions about Yahweh and Yahweh's own claims shows that the words of the people are a complete reversal of Yahweh's true purposes and character. Chapter four sums up and comments upon the preceding three chapters. The issues raised in 1:26-28 are addressed in 4:37-38. These verses declare that Yahweh does not hate Israel (cf. 1:27); he loves them and their forefathers (4:37). As a result of his love for them he has chosen them (v. 37, *wayyibhar*). And, the writer drives this point home even more emphatically in Deut. 7:7-8:

"It was not because you were more in number than any people that the Lord set his *love* upon you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples; but it is because the Lord *loves* you, and is keeping the oath which he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out . . ." (RSV).

The basis of Yahweh's *choice* is *love*, not hate as a disbelieving Israel perceives it. Her perception was wrong.

Moreover, Yahweh did not bring Israel out of Egypt to give them over to the Amorites (1:27); he brought them out *to give the Amorites into the hands of Israel* (4:38), for the iniquity of the Amorites was complete (cf. Gen. 15:16). Chapter 7:17, 23, makes the point clear:

"If you say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; How can I dispossess them? . . .'" (v. 17).

"But the Lord your God will give them over to you, and throw them into great confusion, until they are destroyed." (v. 23).

The people in the land are not too strong for Israel (1:28), the Lord will drive them out (4:38).

Our writer instructs Israel not to lose heart because of their brethren (1:28), but to take heart (4:34-35). They should respond to the good report of their brethren. Israel's past already had shown that Yahweh was to be trusted (Exod. 1-15). But following Yahweh demands a moral choice of whether to believe in his goodness or to lose faith because of a negative or ambiguous reading of the evidence.

Our writer records two options that were placed before Israel. Verse 25 records the spies' report as, "It is a good land which the Lord our God gives us." Verse 28

includes another report by other spies: "The people are greater and taller than we . . . moreover, we have seen the sons of the Anakim there" (cf. Num. 13; 14:1-38; 14:39-45). Because of the Exodus and because of Sinai, Israel's decision to refuse to take possession of the land is evaluated by our writer as a moral-religious failure, a failure to believe Yahweh. Under these circumstances, Israel could not inherit the land.

The brotherhood of Israel was to reflect solidarity. They were to be supportive of one another, not against one another. The model of Cain and Abel comes to mind as well as Adam's accusation against Eve. Yahweh's purpose from the time of creation was for the unity of mankind to be expressed by caring for one's brother (Gen. 4:8-10). The new community of God's people, Israel, was to experience that reality. Yahweh's purpose was that they realize that they were one in him, chosen for the same purpose (3:18-30; 4:38), to inherit the land and live in it.

Deuteronomy illustrates theological concepts by projecting them into real social settings. The brothers on one side of the Jordan are, therefore, urged to aid those on the other side until they have received their inheritance (3:18-20). The pattern of the spies who encouraged Israel to take the land is to be followed (1:25), rather than the pattern of the spies who discouraged their brethren (1:28). It is clear that Israel could not know Yahweh's ways and his theology unless they would trust him. They were called to an intimate personal knowledge of God that depended upon a hermeneutics of trust and obedience.⁹ Yahweh was a God who could not be manipulated by magic and put on display. He was a God who could be known intimately and truly only when his people would make a moral commitment to him. Otherwise, even his deeds and words on their behalf would be misinterpreted; he could not be known correctly from a perspective of unbelief. His words and deeds could become a stumbling block rather than a way that would guide them to a fulfilling relationship with their God. For Israel, knowing God and interpreting his words and deeds (hermeneutics) was a community affair that called for a life of obedience. And a hermeneutics of obedience presupposes a commitment of trust, not unbelief (vv. 27-28).

The misinterpretation of Yahweh's words and deeds follows Israel's decision not to obey him. Hermeneutics, from a stance of unbelief and rebellion, cannot discern the significance or the intent of Yahweh's words and deeds. There is, according to this passage, a moral dimension to the knowledge of God; indeed its major aspect is that it is a moral religious response of trust that produces an accurate knowledge of God. And, faith is not merely intellectual assent, it is a moral act. The stance of faith helps produce a meaningful reading of God's words and deeds. It discerns a convincing coherence in disjunctive events, and sees definiteness in what is otherwise ambiguous.

Goldingay helps us grasp the significance of the experience of the ancient people of God in the past. He observes,

OT theology, then, has to hold together an involvement with the past, with the present, and with the future, and the attitude toward God the OT looks for thus embraces remembrance, faith and hope. The

narrative books major on remembrance, and imply that God's constitutive acts lie in the past; the prophetic books, von Rad suggested, invite Israel to turn from what God has done to what he is going to do; the psalms and the wisdom books express faith in (and uncertainty about) him in the present. But the narratives do not speak of the past out of antiquarian interest, but because of its relevance to the present and future of their readers, a relevance which is written into the story as they tell it; the Bible is a book that¹⁰ "though on a first level narrating the past, on a deeper level was speaking of the future and for the future."¹¹

Notes

1. J. G. McConville, *Law and Theology in Deuteronomy* (University of Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1984), pp. 19-20.
2. John Goldingay, *Theological Diversity and the Authority of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987), p. 136-137.
3. Note the chiasmic or concentric arrangement of the passages (16:18-18:22) dealing with the leaders of God's people. The central topic narrows to "the King" in Israel:
 - A. Spokesmen for Yahweh's community: judges (16:18-20)
 - B. Things detestable to Yahweh (16:21-17:7)
 - C. Priests and Levites (17:8-13)
 - D. The King (17:14-20)
 - C'. Priests and Levites (18:1-8)
 - B'. Things detestable to Yahweh (18:9-13)
 - A'. Spokesmen for Yahweh's community: prophets (18:14-22)

Source for this observation is an unpublished paper by the author dealing with structure in Deut. 16:18-18:22.

4. It is well known that while M. Noth considers Deut. 1-3 (4) to be the introduction to the Deuteronomistic History, comprising Joshua-2 Kings, Childs stresses the more intimate relationship of these chapters to the preceding pentateuchal books (Gen.-Num.). Two works are especially helpful: Arnold Nicolaas Radjawane, *Israel Zwischen Wüste und Land* (Johannes Gutenberg Universität, Mainz: Offsetdruck: E. Lokay, Dec., 1972), esp. pp. 1-95; Georg Braulik, *Die Mittel Deuteronomischer Rhetorik* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978).
5. A palistrophe is also called chiasm or concentric structure. This literary device has been observed in the Hebrew Bible for centuries. Recent studies, however, are enlarging upon its significance for the literary-theological understanding of Scripture. The structure is documented in the following articles: B. W. Anderson, "From Analysis to Synthesis: The Interpretation of Genesis 1-11," *JBL* 97 (1978): 23-29; Gordon Wenham, "The Coherence of the Flood Narrative," *VI* 28 (1977): 336-348; J. P. Fokelman, *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Amsterdam: van Gorcum, 1975), chap. 1; Y. T. Radday, "Chiasm in Tora," *Linguistica Biblica* 19 (1972): 12-23.
6. What amount of detailed correspondence is needed in order to reflect chiasm *per se* is debatable. The requirements have not been sufficiently delineated. Even Wenham's

identification of chiasmic structure in Gen. 6:10a-9:19 leaves a few items unaccounted for in the passage. It seems that perfect esthetic or structural symmetry should not be expected in the biblical writers (cf. Childs, *An Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, p. 217). The biblical writers were preservers of tradition. They did not have the same amount of creative freedom to form the materials, therefore, that a modern novel writer or short story writer has. They were bound to some extent by the traditions passed on to them.

7. This study works on the basis of the literary unity in these verses (6-46). It is evident that the author used sources, probably both oral and written; but has created a coherent structure to suit his purposes.

8. Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (Basic Books, Inc., 1981), pp. 63-68, 182-183. Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1983), pp. 64-72, 96-98, 150-151, 101-110.

9. For a discussion of the significance of "a hermeneutics of obedience," see Ben C. Ollenburger, "The Hermeneutics of Obedience," in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Willard Swartley, Elkhart, Indiana; Institute of Mennonite Studies, 1984, pp. 45-61.

10. Goldingay, *Theological Diversity*, pp. 197-198.

11. James Barr, *The Scope and Authority of the Bible*, Volume 7 of Explorations in Theology (London: SCM; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1980), pp. 60, 126-127.

John Wesley and Liberation Theology: A Closer Look

KENNETH COLLINS, Ph.D.

In many respects, the opening of Vatican II by Pope John XXIII in October, 1962, was the beginning of liberation theology. Indeed, the reforming energies of that council, expressed in its openness to the modern world and its problems, provided a favorable setting in which the frustrations of the poor and the disinherited could be addressed. This impetus for reform — what many in the Church were considering “a breath of fresh air” — continued in the call of Catholic bishops for a general conference in Medellín, Columbia, in 1968 to explore the poverty indigenous to Latin America. Medellín, in many ways the heir of Vatican II, has been deemed the womb of liberation theology because of its concern to evangelize the poor, to usher in a more just system of distribution of resources, and to give preference to the most needy.

Even though the roots of liberation theology are largely Latin American, many contemporary theologians, ranging from Allan Boesak to Kim Yong-Bok, insist that this way of doing theology must not be viewed simply as the prerogative of Latin America, but must be seen as a vital endeavor of the universal church. For their part, many Methodist theologians and ministers, particularly in the United States and Great Britain, have sought to appropriate the genius of the “new” theology, and to incorporate it within the larger Wesleyan tradition. For some, this task has been relatively easy, for others less so. But is the theology of John Wesley really a useful resource for, and is it compatible with, liberation theology? Moreover, are there any elements in this eighteenth-century theology that could possibly issue in a critique of contemporary liberation theology and praxis?

Since these two major theologies under consideration are highly developed and extensive, the method of this present essay will be to focus on a representative area of liberation theology, namely its definition of liberation itself, in order to determine whether or not Wesley’s theological conceptions and practice are, in fact, salutary.

I

Gustavo Gutierrez of Peru, whom many consider to be the principal Latin American theologian, maintains that liberation must be understood in a threefold sense. He writes:

First, liberation means freedom from oppressive economic, social and political conditions. Secondly, liberation means that human beings take

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over control of their own historical destiny. Thirdly, liberation includes emancipation from sin and the acceptance of new life in Christ.¹

In the first area of liberation from oppressive economic, social and political conditions, the contribution of Wesley will be limited, chiefly due to the restrictive parameters of eighteenth-century political thought. Leon Hynson has argued cogently that the political thinking of the mature Wesley (1767-1782) revolved around the crucial issues of liberty and human rights. "Wesley believed that freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship, right to property, freedom of movement and of life were secured through the Glorious Revolution,"² and pertained to all English. A universal application of these same rights was also enunciated by Wesley in the specific relation he discerned between liberty, human rights and natural law. Here human rights were seen as imbedded in the very nature of things established by the Creator and were thus deemed inalienable. A corollary of this was that humans must be allowed the liberty to enjoy these rights guaranteed by God.

Moreover, although Wesley was an aggressive reformer, tackling the problems of unemployment, slavery, poverty, ignorance and war, his thought was, after all, more conducive to the liberal reform characteristic of his pre-Marxist age, for it lacked the kind of racial critique of institutional structures that has become the staple of liberation theology. In other words, although the father of Methodism was clearly a reformer, he was no revolutionary, and those theologians like Juan Segundo who closely identify Christianity and socialism will find little to feed upon in Wesley's political thought. On the other hand, those theologians who insist on arguing for compatibility in this area, can do so only by ignoring the historical problem posed in the form of Marxist thought as a watershed in political and economic analysis.

II

To insure that the fruits of the Methodist revival would not be squandered, and to provide some structure which could channel reforming energies into English society, Wesley followed in the wake of such pietists as Franke, Zinzendorf, William Law and his own father in emphasizing the place of religious societies in the discipline and renewal of Christian life. These small groups, these *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, were ranked according to spiritual progress and maturity. Thus, the United Societies consisted of all awakened persons; the Bands included those who knew their sins were forgiven, and the Select Societies embraced only those who appeared to walk in the light of God.

At first glance it may seem as if these eighteenth-century communities, created for both personal and social reform, are quite similar to the *comunidades eclesiales de base* or Christian base communities which have arisen within the context of Latin American liberation theology. But there are some important differences to be noted. First, the whole structure of Wesley's United Societies is reflective of the *ordo salutis* as seen in the spiritual progression from society to band to select society. But the *ordo salutis*, and any framework which is based upon it, is deemed a straitjacket by liberation theologian Jose Miguez Bonino.³

Second, the CBCs are decidedly corporate in emphasis, often calling for the kinds of broad structural changes in the social order of which Wesley was only dimly aware.

To be sure, these differences between the CBCs and Wesley's societies are significant, but the crucial distinction between them actually lies in their different valuations of history and human activity as agents in the process of redemption. Thus, if the CBCs are seen in the context of Gutierrez's second definition of liberation, as oppressed peoples taking control of their own historical destiny, then two important conclusions will follow. First, the CBCs become the locus of salvation, but only because they are reflective of, and closely associated with, the historical process which itself is deemed truly redemptive in much of liberation thought. As Dennis McCann wryly notes, the poor are not the objects of evangelism, but its subjects.⁴ It is they alone who are on the very fault lines of history which will usher in the next vigorous activity of God. To be close to them is to be close to God.

John Wesley, on the other hand, as leader of the Methodist societies, viewed God, not any historical process, as the efficient cause in salvation. In his sermon, "On Divine Providence," for example, history is clearly an instrumental cause utilized by the Divine agent. But in the writings of such Latin American liberation theologians as Leonardo Boff, Hugo Assman and Jose Miranda, the line between efficient and instrumental causation is sometimes blurred, and the historical process takes on a much greater role than Wesley's thought can allow. No doubt, this larger role for history in liberation theology is a function of its ongoing dialogue with Marxism—a dialogue to which John Wesley, quite obviously, was not privy.

Second, such language as "taking control over their own historical destiny" is perhaps too anthropocentric for Wesley, since it appears to place the emphasis on human activity and independence, rather than on Divine initiative and human dependence. Certainly, Wesley did not deny the importance of human efforts in the amelioration of poverty, disease and the like, but he simply insisted that such undertakings be viewed as the faithful response of the Church to the ever-active God. In this line of thought, it is God who acts by means of the instrumentalities of history and human achievement. In other words, it is God who initiates and empowers through grace, and it is humanity which responds and becomes one of the principal channels for the Divine activity in the world. Wesley expressed the point well in his sermon on "Working Out Our Own Salvation." He wrote: "God works; therefore you can work ... God works, therefore you must work."⁵

III

It should be apparent by now that the definition of liberation employed by Gutierrez is multi-dimensional, and is attentive, not only to the social and political aspects of human life, but to a personal dimension as well. Indeed, his third aspect of liberation entails emancipation from sin and the acceptance of new life in Christ. But Gutierrez's critics from the religious right have not always been appreciative of the inclusiveness of such a definition, since they have charged that

liberation theology repudiates the notion of personal redemption in favor of a political one. Nevertheless, liberation theology does not deny the importance of the individual, but believes that the extensiveness of salvation simply cannot be limited to this area; the social and political life of humanity must be redeemed as well.

Though Gutierrez posits a threefold sense of liberation, he does not indicate clearly the structural relationship between the various dimensions. For example, what is the justification and motivation for Christian social and political activity? Does such concern arise from a personal sense of gratitude in response to the liberating activity of God, or does it come from a sensitive reading of the Divine activity in the world on behalf of the oppressed, and a desire to identify with such a movement? It is perhaps here that Wesley can be most helpful, for although his understanding of the extent of salvation was more limited than that of contemporary liberation theologians, Wesley indicated quite distinctly the *raison d'être* for his reforming activity in the pithy phrase, "faith working by love." In other words, those who are in a trusting relationship with God through Jesus Christ are liberated enough from their own self-curvature to be able to love their neighbors personally, and to move beyond this level to engage in social and political renewal. Wesley's reforms in education, in easing the plight of the indigent, in attacking slavery and oppression, all grew out of his profound sense of gratitude to God, what Luther had referred to, in another context, as "*quellende liebe*." Indeed, one of Wesley's favorite texts in this area was 1 John 4:19, "We love, because he first loved us" (RSV).

But Wesley's theology is helpful in another way concerning the area of emancipation from sin and acceptance of a new life in Christ. For although, as has already been pointed out, liberation theology incorporates a personal realm in its conception of liberation, one of its chief temptations is to focus on social and political constructs in its consideration of sin and evil, an endeavor which sometimes results in a vapid and confused doctrine of sin. For example, Elsa Tamez, a liberation theologian, maintains that, "Being born again, we acquire the ability to distinguish between life and death. We can identify those who produce death, the principalities and powers that govern the earth, the anti-Christ^s."⁶ The danger here, of course, is that liberation theology, in its conversation with socialism, will be tempted to define sin along class lines, so that the dividing line between good and evil will be seen to run not through the center of the human heart, but through various classes, the oppressors and the oppressed, with the result that the oppressed will often fail to appreciate fully the extensiveness of their own evil.

John Wesley's hamartiology, on the other hand, as expressed in his lengthy treatise on original sin published in 1757, underscored the universality of sin in language reminiscent of the continental reformers. To be sure, the Elizabethan Articles of Religion, to which Wesley ascribed, were informed by both the Augsburg and Württemberg Confessions with their incisive understandings of the nature and extent of sin. But, interestingly enough, Gutierrez's principal work, *A Theology of Liberation*, contains no discussion of the doctrine of original sin at all.

Such an omission is clearly disturbing, and needs to be addressed, or else one can easily slip into the notion that there is, after all, a privileged position untainted by evil from which one can survey the sin of others and, in the words of Tamez, "identify the anti-Christ." The problem, then, is not that evil is identified in the public realm, as it should be, but rests in the failure to recognize also the evil within.

IV

Even within the narrow focus of this present essay, it is obvious that there is both similarity and divergence with respect to Wesleyan and liberation theology. Therefore, all broad-stroke assessments which see an easy accommodation between these two theologies are precluded in favor of more tightly nuanced and historically-attentive treatments. Clearly, Wesley was a vital reformer, but he could not discern that there are, at times, structural foundations to human evils that are impervious to sincere preaching and expressions of goodwill. His thought was pre-critical because he lived, moved and had his being in a pre-critical age. He can neither be faulted for this, nor can his differences from a critical theology be glossed over in an attempt to make his thought relevant. Nevertheless, some Methodist scholars have largely ignored Wesley's historical context and have transferred, without much ado, ideas from the eighteenth century into the twentieth. One such scholar writes:

If he [Wesley] did not attain to the purview of what we call the social gospel or liberation theology, the founder of Methodism nevertheless espoused some of their crucial principles so that when these developments appeared they could be readily drawn into alliance with the Wesleyan tradition.⁷

The reasoning cited above is especially problematic because it begs the question; it assumes what it should prove. No argumentation, either historical or theological, is offered to substantiate its sweeping claim. The mere observation of similar ideas, especially when they are extracted from their historical context, does not constitute compatibility or relevance. Saying it is so, does not make it so.

Now there might yet be a profound dialogue, even an alliance, between liberation and Wesleyan theology, but such claims must be substantiated by, and must await, more of the kinds of historical studies conducted by both Frank Baker and Leon Hynson. In addition, these studies should be supplemented by a thoroughgoing examination of the historical context which undergirds liberation theology. This latter task can be accomplished, in part, by an analysis of Latin American history and culture, especially in terms of Iberian influence, and more importantly, in terms of Roman Catholicism with its communitarian ideal, and its different conception and evaluation of vocation in commerce and industry from that of Protestantism.

To be as historically cognizant as possible is very much at the heart of what Outler has called Phase III of Wesley studies. This means that Wesley's theology, as well as liberation theology, must be understood on their own terms and in their own times before any sort of comparison can be made. To fail in this endeavor is to

allow Wesley's theology to be taken captive to contemporary ideologies and interests, or to allow liberation theology to be forced unnecessarily into Wesleyan molds. But first let liberation theology be liberation theology, and then let Wesley be Wesley. Only then can fruitful dialogue begin.

Notes

1. Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1973), p. 36-37.
2. Leon O. Hynson, "Human Liberty as Divine Rights: A Study in the Political Maturation of John Wesley," *Journal of Church and State* 25 (Winter 1983):84.
3. Theodore Runyon, ed., *Sanctification and Liberation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981), p.55.
4. Dennis P. McCann, *Christian Realism and Liberation Theology: Practical Theologies in Creative Conflict* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1981), p. 215.
5. Thomas Jackson, ed., *The Works of John Wesley* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1979), 6:511.
6. Elsa Tamez, "Wesley as Read by the Poor," in *The Future of the Methodist Theological Traditions*, ed. M. Douglas Meeks (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1985), p. 80.
7. Durwood Foster, "Wesleyan Theology: Heritage and Task," in *Wesleyan Theology Today: A Bicentennial Theological Consultation*, ed. Theodore Runyon (Nashville: The United Methodist Publishing House, 1985), p.32.

Suggested Reading

- Bonino, Jose Miguez. *Doing Theology in a Revolutionary Situation*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975.
- Ferm, Deane William. *Third World Liberation Theologies: An Introductory Survey*. Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1986.
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Book Reviews

Savary, Louis M., Patricia H. Berne and Strephon Kaplan Williams. *Dreams and Spiritual Growth: A Christian Approach to Dreamwork*. New York: Paulist Press, 1984. 241 pp. No index. Paper, \$8.95. ISBN 0-8091-2629-X.

The authors, specialists in spiritual formation, clinical psychology, and Jungian therapy (in that order), combine their perspectives and gifts in an attempt to bring dreams back into the repertoire of Judeo-Christian resources for spiritual growth.

Dreams begins where our twentieth century fears are: with the bad press dreams have had in the modern age. The book establishes, then achieves four goals. The authors intend to establish dreamwork psychologically as a holistic process which contributes to continuing transformation of personality along lines of holiness and maturity. They intend dreamwork to contribute spiritually, opening an additional resource and access to the supernatural, connecting inner and outer life. Furthermore the authors nicely connect historically, allowing us to see dreams in historical and cultural perspective. Finally, they insist that the dream may serve us theologically, especially as a contribution to the community of faith.

In establishing dreamwork as a useful tool for moderns in their search for wholeness and holiness, the authors link up with the pioneering work of John Sanford and Morton Kelsey, both Anglican priests and counselors. Kelsey's *Dreams: The Dark Speech of the Spirit*, and Sanford's *Dreams: God's Forgotten Language*, are laid over Karl Jung's *Psychology and Religion: West and East*, as foundational works to the dreamwork technique in this book.

The authors not only ground their dream theory in history, but also present it in the light of current dream research. They affirm that everyone dreams and typically is involved in intensive dreaming four or five times in a single night. (Research indicates "at 90 minute intervals," typically). Building on Kelsey's breakthrough when a friend suggested that he pay more attention to his dreams when he was facing a particularly difficult time in his life, the present authors suggest, but never demand, that any of us may find life enriched and helped if we learn to use the content of our dreams.

Some of the key guidelines for dreamwork include paying more attention to the most vivid, memorable dreams which linger in memory over several days, weeks or years, and looking for the "meaning" of the dream which is usually quite beyond the "literal" events which may have made up the dream. To assist in this more global use of the dream, the authors offer a four-stage grid through which to lay hold of the significance of a dream. They call the sequence TTAQ. (1) TITLE the dream, often asking "What title would the dream want me to give it?" (2) THEME analysis states the issues or urgent themes that might be seen in the dream. (3) AFFECT asks what the dominant feeling or emotional energy was which occurred during the dream or lingers with the dream memory. (4) QUESTION focuses on the lingering probe the dream poses, having asked a question of the dreamer.

Nearly one third of the book is devoted to thirty-six dreamwork strategies which unfold in direct relation to most of the chapters. The pastor, therapist, spiritual director, or confidant will encounter dreams as they listen to people's stories. Now, with this book, they are likely to raise the issue of dreams and possible dreamwork as a question when any major life decision or trauma is the occasion for consultation.

The book will be useful to all faith traditions which regard the human being in global, holistic terms. It will offend those religious traditions which follow the Gnostic distinction between the mind which can be trusted, and the body with its suprarational feelings, intuitions, and biology, which cannot.

The book would have been even more useful had the authors devoted a chapter to dealing with the linkage between "Rapid Eye Movement" dream studies, and sexual arousal which tends infallibly to accompany REM dreaming. While the authors wisely suggest that erotic dreams or sexually explicit dreams should be looked at for their larger than sexual meaning, they leave many people baffled at the nocturnal dream-accompanied arousal patterns which are more than common. They omit, too, the research-based discovery that dreaming is essential to sanity and that sleep deprivation leads inevitably to disorientation and perhaps to the mood-swing episode.

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Fitzmyer, Joseph A. *The Gospel According to Luke*. Anchor Bible, vols. 28, 28a. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1981, 1985. 1600 pp. ISBN 0-385-00515-6 (vol. 1), ISBN 0-385-15542-5 (vol. 2).

This review marks the appearance of the second volume of Fitzmyer's majesterial commentary on the Gospel of Luke. This volume deserves careful attention by pastors and teachers who work seriously with the New Testament.

Fitzmyer brings to his task a rich background in linguistic and historical aspects of Semitic studies from his work at the Catholic University of America. This commentary contains relevant background information. Fitzmyer has the rare ability to use the results of a rigorous, thoroughgoing historical study to illumine the theological meaning of the final text.

This commentary is primarily concerned with the *theological* meaning of the text. All who regularly use biblical commentaries know the frustration of endless discussions regarding sources, historical reconstructions, and the history of the tradition. Of course, such issues should and must be addressed; but the value of a commentary for use within the church is ultimately judged by its sensitivity to the

theological and pastoral issues that face persons who work within the community of faith. Fitzmyer's aim is to explain the meaning of the Gospel of Luke "for twentieth-century readers." To this end he uses various methods at his disposal, including form criticism and redaction criticism. But he is primarily concerned to interpret individual passages in Luke's Gospel in terms of their contextual function within Luke-Acts as a whole.

The value of Fitzmyer's work on Luke involves much more than simply his commentary on the text. His discussions of the difficult critical issues surrounding the Gospel of Luke are among the most thoughtful and thorough to be found anywhere. Fitzmyer's analysis of these issues is both original and balanced, and even the discussion of these critical issues is related to the meaning of the Gospel of Luke for the church. Moreover, the bibliographies, both in the Introduction and throughout the commentary, are thorough and represent various theological perspectives (including the evangelical).

This work has its weaknesses. For instance, the literary dimensions of the text which have recently been highlighted by the discipline of literary or narrative criticism receive very little attention. Further, the reader senses that at certain points much more could be done to relate individual passages to their function within the whole of Luke-Acts. Yet these problems are relatively insignificant in light of the tremendous values this commentary affords to those who use it.

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Webber, Robert E. *The Church in the World: Opposition, Tension, or Transformation?* Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986. 333 p. \$11.95. ISBN 0-310-36601-1

Robert E. Webber is associate professor of theology at Wheaton College and the author of several books, including *Common Roots*, *The Secular Saint*, and *Secular Humanism*. In *The Church in the World*, Webber provides a historical analysis of relations between the church and the world from New Testament times to the modern day. He then discusses theological strengths and weaknesses of the various church-world models concerning the role Christians play in political and social issues. As Christians progressively become aware of the church's social responsibilities in the world, Webber provides a timely study of church and society issues.

Like H. Richard Niebuhr's classic work entitled *Christ and Culture*, Webber presents models or types representative of how Christians deal with the relationship between the church and the world. Although Webber draws upon Niebuhr's

work, Webber undertakes a more comprehensive look at the church-world issue than did Niebuhr. Webber places greater emphasis upon the biblical basis for debate, and he includes contemporary attempts to remodel classic Roman Catholic and Protestant traditions, for example, those which see the relationship between the church and the world as one of "opposition," "tension," or "transformation."

Webber takes an ecumenical approach in the assessment of contemporary viewpoints concerning the role of the church in the world. For example, he indicates elements from an evangelical background in the social gospel movement as found in such men as John Wesley in England and Jonathan Blanchard in America. Without diminishing significant differences between Christian groups, Webber recognizes the contributions from and areas of agreement between the Roman Catholic Church, the World Council of Churches, and the World Evangelical Fellowship.

Webber warns that concrete "structures of existence," which are created by God, may be the context through which adverse spiritual powers work to produce evil in the world. Structural realities through which life is experienced include political, economic, educational, intellectual, religious and moral structures. Christians should concern themselves as much with these structures of existence of "principalities" as the diabolical influence of evil "powers." Webber draws upon Jacques Ellul's book entitled *The New Demons* to describe four "new gods": secularism, scientism, nationalism and political ideology, and economic utopianism. Webber suggests that these four provide an adequate (although not exhaustive) background for the study of the church-world issue today.

Webber concludes by noting that in the twentieth century, with its "global village," a new unanimity between the various Christian traditions is being formed. This "convergence of thought" theoretically pertains to the primary role the church must play in addressing social issues. However, Webber provides little practical consensus as to *how* the church is to address those powers that exercise their influence through the various structures of existence. Nevertheless, Webber's study of the church-world issue challenges Christians to reevaluate their relationship to the world and, correspondingly, to act responsibly *in* the world.

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Knight, Douglas A. and Gene M. Tucker, eds. *The Hebrew Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*. Chico, California: Scholars Press, 1985. xxvii, 516 pp. \$22.50 (\$14.95). ISBN 0-8006-0721-X

Douglas A. Knight is professor of Old Testament at the Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee. Gene Tucker is professor of Old Testament at Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. These two scholars serve as contributing editors of this volume.

Four series of books are planned to mark the 1980 centennial of the Society of Biblical Literature. The preface to this volume indicates the ambitious nature of these series (forty volumes are projected for the four series). "The Centennial Publication Program aims to scrutinize the history of biblical scholarship as well as the very diverse roles that the Bible has played in North American culture" (p. xi).

This book, edited by Knight and Tucker, is one volume of a trilogy in the series *The Bible and Its Modern Interpreters*. The three contributions planned for the *Bible and Its Modern Interpreters* examine the results of research on the Hebrew Bible (present volume), early Judaism, and the New Testament since 1945. The fifteen chapters of this first volume analyze the current state of biblical studies in all of the standard areas and in the important subdisciplines and cognate studies. The authors suggest future trends for research on the Hebrew Bible.

The explosion of cross-disciplinary approaches to and perspectives on the study of the Old Testament and, likewise, the multiplication of methodologies and hermeneutical viewpoints, make a volume like this one indispensable. The purpose of the present collection of essays is to present a general, but comprehensive, discussion of all of the major trends in Old Testament studies since 1945. These contributors successfully complete their task by surveying the state of studies on the Hebrew Bible from all of the relevant perspectives. The book does not intend to break new ground, but does report on the new ground that has been broken. Although the book does not examine current issues in great detail (Dever's chapter on Syro-Palestinian and Biblical Archaeology comes close), the contours of present approaches and methodologies toward the Old Testament are discernible.

The contributors present the following chapters: (1) Israelite History (Miller), (2) Syro-Palestinian and Biblical Archaeology (Dever), (3) The Ancient Near Eastern Environment (Roberts), (4) Criticism of Literary Features, Form, Tradition, and Redaction (Knierim), (5) Exploring New Directions (Cully), (6) Israelite Religion (Miller), (7) Theology of the Hebrew Bible (Coats), (8) The Pentateuch (Knight), (9) The Historical Literature (Ackroyd), (10) Prophecy and the Prophetic Literature (Tucker), (11) The Wisdom Literature (Crenshaw), (12) The Lyrical Literature (Gerstenberger), (13) Legends of Wise Heroes and Heroines (Niditch), (14) Apocalyptic Literature (Hanson), (15) The Hebrew Bible and Modern Culture (Harrelson). Several maps and an index of modern authors complete this study. A major contribution of this timely collection of essays is the extensive bibliography located at the end of each chapter. The chapters help the reader understand how the major bibliographical items have contributed to the topics under discussion.

All of the chapters are helpful and relatively well done. The strength of the volume, however, lies in its treatment of recent methodologies and approaches to interpreting the Old Testament that would not have appeared in a work such as this fifteen to twenty years ago. Those topics worthy of special attention and special mention deal with the "new directions" in the study of the Hebrew Bible. Robert C. Culley (pp. 107-189) discusses many aspects of poetics, such as discourse analysis, narrative analysis, structural analysis, symbol, forms of discourse, and text; folklore, anthropology and sociology. Gerstenberger treats lyrical literature and brings many interdisciplinary and integrative insights to bear on this genre of literature. Susan Niditch deals with the genre of legends, heroes and heroines. Harrelson discusses the influence of the Hebrew Bible on culture, and notes briefly the modern self-consciousness of biblical studies of the cultural interplay between the Old Testament and culture.

Rolf Knierim's attempt to bring all of the "new directions" of perspective and method under the umbrella of "historical criticism" helps to relate the new concepts of literary criticism, sociology and anthropology to the standard historical-critical approach. But, at the same time, he fails to recognize the different presuppositions held by some of the recent hermeneutical approaches. It appears that he is trying to pour too much new wine into old wineskins. How can, for example, new literary criticism be reconciled with redaction criticism? How can the new stress on the unity of the text in narrative criticism be absorbed by a source theory approach that threatens to atomize the text?

The book accomplishes its purpose; it does provide the reader with an informed guide to the *status questionis* in the research of the Old Testament in 1985. At the time of writing this review, the book is still on the cutting edge for reference works of this kind. One could have hoped for a discussion of the impact of the use of computer technology for the study of the Old Testament text. This new development needs to be addressed.

The book is written for Old Testament scholars, but scholars from several cross disciplines, such as sociology, literary criticism, anthropology, philosophy, psychology and linguistics will find an *entree* into the Old Testament in these pages relevant to their research. The many integrative cross references to other disciplines and cognate studies indicate a positive move toward an integrative reading of the biblical text. This work is an invaluable reference tool for anyone who wants to know the development of Old Testament studies during the past forty years.

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Kaiser, Walter C., Jr. *Toward Old Testament Ethics*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1983. xii, 345 pp. \$16.95, hardback. ISBN 0-310-37110-4.

One of the most neglected areas of Old Testament research during the past century has been inclusive studies in Old Testament ethics. Only six such monographs have appeared within the past one hundred years. Of these six, only three have been in English. The three English titles were published between 1883 and 1912 and have become quite dated in the advance of Old Testament scholarship. Since then the literature in the field has been largely piecemeal and is scattered in numerous individual essays. An updated synthesis has been long overdue.

This is the challenge to which the author committed himself in this book. It is the third in a trilogy of books which includes the designation "toward" in the title written by Walter Kaiser, academic dean and professor of Old Testament and Semitic languages at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. The author is aware of the enormity of the task in undertaking a general treatment of the ethical content of the Old Testament and he only claims for this work that it is a pioneering effort to update the discussion and to point out the more important issues and the fundamental structures of the theme.

The book is organized under five major sections. The opening section raises the methodological problematic for an Old Testament ethic and proposes solutions related to the revelatory character of the old covenant. The second section discusses the major moral texts contained within the Pentateuch. The general content of Old Testament ethics is then surveyed in part three. Common objections to the alleged inferior level of Old Testament morality are answered in the fourth section. The book closes with a final chapter on the significance of Old Testament law and ethics for Christians under the new covenant.

Against those authors who insist that the Old Testament is marginal as a source for Christian ethics because of its wide diversity of ethical values which are rooted in the cultural situation of the ancient world, and contrary to other authors who wish to make only indirect use of the ethical imagery and broad ethical witness of the Old Testament for informing Christian conscience, Kaiser contends that the ethical content of the Old Testament provides propositional norms for behavior which are prescriptive for the church and transferable to the modern situation. He is critical of a residual Marcionism which still affects Christians today, evidenced by an all-too-ready willingness to minimize the significance of the Old Testament for Christian faith. A thesis which permeates the book and which comes to fullest expression in the final chapter is that the moral law of the Old Testament is the foundation for New Testament ethics and that Christians have a continuing obligation to that norm.

Readers who are less interested in questions of methodology and more concerned to acquire a basic understanding of Old Testament ethics will find Part III (pp. 139-247) of the book most helpful. Wesleyan readers in particular will resonate with the author's premise that holiness is the controlling motif which

provides the cohesive center for the variety of Old Testament ethical norms. This central theme is shown to permeate the various dimensions of personal, marital and social life.

Kaiser writes as an evangelical Protestant and generally comes down on the side of conservative viewpoints on such contemporary issues as capital punishment, just war and the expression of human sexuality. He is not unaware of problems with these stances, however, and addresses biblical critiques to inappropriate and sinful exercises of these functions.

This book is a welcome addition to evangelical scholarship in the area of Old Testament studies in general and in Old Testament ethics in particular. It assists the reader to grasp the more significant moral teachings and to view them within a holistic context. Indexes of Hebrew words and scripture references, along with extensive footnoting which documents classical and recent literature in the field, are helpful for further study. Intended to be comprehensive rather than thorough, it provides a doorway of entry into Old Testament ethical themes which can then be pursued in more depth by reading the numerous individual essays which have appeared over the years.

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William R. Schoedel, *Ignatius of Antioch. A Commentary on the Letters of Ignatius of Antioch* (*Hermeneia* - A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible, ed. Helmut Koester; Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985). xxii, 305 pp. \$34.95. ISBN 0-8006-6016-1.

Schoedel's commentary on the letters of Ignatius of Antioch in *Hermeneia* continues the tradition of *Handbuch zum Neuen Testaments* (HNT) by including commentaries on selected portions of the non-canonical literature of early Christianity in a commentary series on the Bible. With the publication of this volume, *Hermeneia* has provided the scholar of Christian origins with the first full-scale commentary on the Ignatian writings since that of Walter Bauer (*Die Briefe des Ignatius von Antiochia und der Polykarpbrief* [*Die Apostolischen Väter*, 2; HNT; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-Siebeck, 1920]), recently revised by H. Paulsen as HNT, 18 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-Siebeck, 1985). In both scope and detail, Schoedel's work surpasses not only that of Bauer/Paulsen but also the only other English language commentary of this century, that of Robert M. Grant, *Ignatius of Antioch* (The Apostolic Fathers, 4; Camden: Nelson, 1966).

The method of the commentary is to begin with an extensive *status quaestionis* which establishes the parameters within which the commentary is to be focused.

William Schoedel, professor of religious studies at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, demonstrates his scholarly acumen as he reexamines the major critical questions of Ignatian scholarship. Beginning with the problem posed by the three recensions, he reviews the consensus structured by Lightfoot and Zahn in favor of the middle recension as well as the modern challenges to that consensus by Weijenborg, Ruiz-Camps and Joly. Schoedel finds the work of the more recent authors less than convincing and builds his commentary on the text of the middle recension as edited by Karl Bihlmeyer, *Die Apostolischen Väter: Neubearbeitung der Funkschen Ausgabe*, 2d ed. Wilhelm Schneemelcher (SAQ 2.1.1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr-Siebeck, 1956). Reservations about specific readings in the Bihlmeyer text are discussed in detail in the notes.

In the review of recent studies, Schoedel takes a number of positions, supported by his analysis in the commentary, which mark a departure from many earlier studies of the letters. Three in particular are noteworthy. (1) Schoedel argues convincingly that Ignatius is to be viewed not as a proto-martyr but as a bishop (however defined) who had lost a power struggle within the church at Antioch and had been delivered to the Romans by his own community. (2) The trip to Rome was a major effort in public relations. Ignatius was accompanied, and/or preceded by messengers who alerted communities to his arrival and argued, apparently successfully, for Ignatius' perspective on the situation at Antioch. (3) Schoedel demonstrates that Ignatius is thoroughly party to the Hellenistic intellectual and social synthesis and that his gnosticism is to be understood in that context. This is made obvious by the number of allusions to and parallels with Classical and Hellenistic-Jewish writers indicated in the commentary.

A cautious, judicious analysis of Ignatius' theological perspective (pp. 17-31) concludes the introduction. Here Schoedel takes specific themes and traces them through the letters (concept of God, eucharist, unity of the community, the nature of ministry, flesh and spirit, flesh and blood, faith and love, hope, passion and resurrection, eschatology, attaining God and imitation of Christ). These motifs are developed as functions of controversies in which their author found himself embroiled or interested.

At this point further elaboration of the socio-cultural significance of Ignatius' method and developing perspective would have been helpful. The autobiographical tendency and corresponding minimal appeal to Scripture (either Old or New Testament) for authentication of his assertions would suggest the fluid status of Christian theology and theological method, as well as evolving group structures, at the time of the composition of this corpus. Here a dialogue with the work of Pierre de Labriolle, *La Réaction païenne*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Artisan du livre, 1948) and Robert Wilken, *The Christians as the Romans Saw Them* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984) could prove illuminating. Any analysis of Christian structures and ideology which relies exclusively on Christian documents tends to read later conditions back into the text. Schoedel can rarely be accused of anachronistic reading of his documents. He is definitely aware of this material but does not make explicit the implications of his analysis of Ignatius for the social and intellectual configuration of Antiochene and western Anatolian Christianity.

There is much here to correct the anachronistic and triumphalistic reading of Ignatius promulgated by most handbooks of early Christian studies.

The commentary which follows is solidly philological and historical. Within the structure of the *Hermeneia* series, every significant issue presented by the text is discussed. Schoedel is always in dialogue with writers who have investigated facets of Ignatius' writings and thus expands upon the *status quaestionis* of the introduction. However, the commentary makes contributions beyond the mass of grammatical and historical data presented to elucidate the text. Especially helpful are the analysis of doctrinal and political issues in tension, the identification of parallels with other authors and the significance of those parallels, the careful attention to rhetorical devices, the examination of epistolographical techniques and suggestion of their importance for understanding the text, and the continuous awareness of the context in which Ignatius is writing.

Thus the scholar is provided with an essential reference point for all future research on the letters of Ignatius, the enigmatic Bishop of Antioch, as well as a model commentary on a patristic text.

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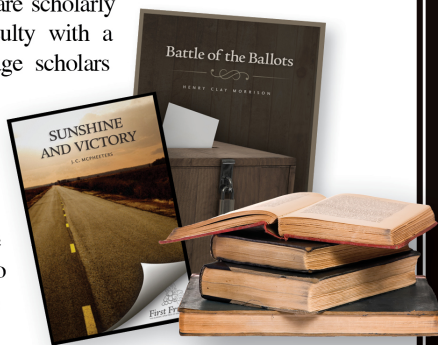
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